

EUROCITIES Broadband Manifesto





THE NETWORK
OF MAJOR
EUROPEAN
CITIES

EUROCITIES Broadband Manifesto

Ensuring the infrastructure for the Knowledge Society

EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. Founded in 1986, the network brings together the local governments of 129 large cities in some 33 European countries. EUROCITIES represents the interests of its members and engages in dialogue with the European institutions across a wide range of policy areas affecting cities. These include: economic development, the environment, transport and mobility, social affairs, culture, the information and knowledge society, and services of general interest.

EUROCITIES website: www.eurocities.org

Explanatory note

The EUROCITIES Broadband Manifesto contributes to EUROCITIES commitment to build an inclusive Knowledge Society and to the Lisbon goals by providing ten building blocks to ensure the data infrastructure necessary to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010. These building blocks are based on practical experience and a coherent vision developed within the Broadband Working Group of the EUROCITIES Knowledge Society Forum - TeleCities.

High speed data infrastructures are vital for the widespread use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in public services, SMEs and households. They should be considered as important to the development of the Knowledge Society as (rail)roads, canals and roads were for the Industrial era.

Although the ICTs developments in the last decade have been spectacular, the potential contribution of ICTs to economic growth and the quality of life is still enormous. EUROCITIES promotes high speed secure networks as an engine for growth and jobs, contributing to innovative economic, social, cultural and urban development of our cities¹.

EUROCITIES members have, and are taking their share of responsibility to ensure the deployment of broadband in several ways and in different roles, depending on the local situation. Together with the initiatives taken by the market, this has resulted in a situation in which a fast growing number of European households and businesses now have access to broadband.

The involvement of cities in the deployment of broadband infrastructures has resulted in cities having a great deal of expertise and knowledge of broadband. Members share know-how about proven models of broadband deployment and stimulate the development of (public) broadband services while taking into account the important differences that may exist in the local setting. Based on this practical experience, EUROCITIES feels it is necessary to take a forward looking approach with regard to securing the infrastructure for the Knowledge Society, while taking into account the dynamics of the ICT industry, the developments in other regions and technological developments. EUROCITIES feels that a fundamental new approach is necessary in which the public sector has an important role to play. The objective of the public sector is not to antagonize the private sector but to intervene in a competition-neutral way in the areas where the private sector is clearly not capable of meeting the demand for advanced infrastructures and services that would ensure a secure and future-proof open infrastructure to maximise the deployment of (new) ICTs and services for the knowledge society.

These changes will bring about many challenges for many actors involved and requires close collaboration between the different actors. EUROCITIES is offering to become a consulting partner in a constructive debate with the different actors involved. The i2010 initiative recognises the role of cities in the development of high speed networks and rich multimedia content. EUROCITIES

¹ 25% of EU GDP growth and 40% of productivity growth are due to ICTs. Differences in economic performances between industrialised countries are largely explained by the level of ICT investment, research, and use, and by the competitiveness of information society and media industries. ICT services, skills, media and content are a growing part of the economy and society. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS "i2010 - A European Information Society for growth and employment" {SEC(2005) 717}. COM(2005) 229 final

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/communications/com_229_i2010_310505_fv_en.doc

brings together experts from Innovative cities and is a natural consulting partner for the Commission when preparing further action with regard to the deployment of broadband such as the 7th Research Framework Programme, the review of regulatory frameworks and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

EUROCITIES calls upon the European Commission to:

- provide cities with a platform for the exchange of knowledge;
- to include the voice of cities in policy development as the natural consulting partner for the Commission when preparing further action with regard to the deployment of broadband such as the 7th Research Framework Programme, the review of regulatory frameworks and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

EUROCITIES calls upon all other cities and organisations who endorse the EUROCITIES Broadband Manifesto to come forward and become involved in ensuring the infrastructure for the Knowledge Society.

EUROCITIES BROADBAND MANIFESTO

No knowledge society without broadband and broadband services

EUROCITIES underlines the importance to cities of high speed and secure networks. Broadband networks make cities more attractive as places to live, play and work. Broadband is not only a precondition for the deployment of ICTs, it also boosts the development of the urban knowledge economy, connecting all citizens in the community to a high quality infrastructure and thus preventing a 'digital divide'.

No broadband services without fibre optics

Fibre optics is the only future-proof infrastructure. Investing in other permanent infrastructure will only yield short term results, will be less effective and may slow down innovation. EUROCITIES regards wireless broadband infrastructures as a useful addition, especially for mobile applications or applications in the public areas.

Independent fibre optic networks

Maximum access to fibre optic networks leads to social gains. Such networks should operate completely independently from the services offered in order to ensure open access for all. EUROCITIES supports the multi-layered model, which has been used in the liberalisation of the energy market. Broadband infrastructures should be open, affordable and widely accessible.

A fibre optics monopoly? Naturally!

The "passive" fibre optic infrastructure is a natural monopoly. It is a network infrastructure comparable to roads, sewers, and energy and therefore requires large one-off investment. Competition on this asset does not make economic sense, yet efficient network infrastructures are essential for society to function.

A market system, subject to...

The benefits of free market will not be provided by monopolies. Regulation can be used to correct earlier arrangements. EUROCITIES believes that an open and accessible "passive" layer of infrastructure would guarantee competition in the service layer. Finance, particularly for the "backbone" network, through local, national and European public funds, should be allowed in the same way as for (national) roads and highways or other basic infrastructures.

Make room for local initiatives

An open infrastructure creates a market whereby local entrepreneurs can offer their services and stimulate the local economy. The services themselves will lead to improvements in community and social life. The success of local bundling of demand underlines the need for such an infrastructure. Businesses and public sector should cooperate in local "smart" partnerships and funding programmes need to cater for such initiatives.

Connect the dots now

Trans-national Interconnected Open Broadband networks, based upon standard technology and regulatory frameworks, provide the critical mass needed to deploy services throughout the European Union. It is expected that by 2008 a large number of households will need the symmetrical connections that only fibre optics can provide. It takes five to eight years to complete large infrastructural projects. Time is therefore of the essence!

Platform for public services

In order to avoid 'reinventing the wheel' we recommend the development of EU-wide standardised interoperable platforms for public sector services (such as eHealth, eLearning, eSecurity and eGovernment).

The voice of cities: Consulting Partner

The i2010 initiative recognises the role of cities in the development of high speed networks and rich multimedia content. EUROCITIES brings together experts from Innovative cities and as such is a natural consulting partner for the Commission when preparing further action with regard to the deployment of broadband such as the 7th Research Framework Programme, the review of regulatory frameworks and the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme.

Collaboration: call for support

The European Commission and national governments are giving too much leeway to the market without demanding sufficient guarantees as to the quality of the development. Tailor-made arrangements are needed (financial, regulatory, etc.). Moreover, the desired development of broadband and broadband services calls for collaboration between all parties: cities, regions, national government, market parties, interest groups and other relevant organisations.