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Ladies and gentlemen, dear foreign guests,

We consider the Internet in Public Administration and Self-Government/Local and Regional Information Society (ISSS/LORIS) conference one of the most important events pertaining to information technologies to be held in Europe. The ever-increasing attendance over the previous years has shown the indisputable development and interest in information technologies. Every year, ISSS takes the lead in the development of information technologies in public administration. The conference positively affects the creation of websites of regions, cities and municipalities, which are evaluated in the Golden Crest competition. We do not underestimate the possibility of communicating with citizens via the internet and try to support, extend and optimise this.

Hence, a very interesting and full programme has been prepared for this year's conference, and I believe that everyone will have ample choice. In addition, this year's conference has been extended to include an important regional initiative—the international Visegrád Group for Developing Information Society (V4DIS) conference. I hope you all leave the seventh ISSS/LORIS conference with as much inspiring new knowledge as possible. In particular, I wish successful discussions and many incentives for new joint projects of the new Central European EU members to the participants in the international V4DIS conference at which representatives of governments, self-governing bodies of regions, cities and municipalities, as well as representatives of associations of regions and municipalities of the V4 countries and Slovenia, meet on the eve of their accession to the European Union.

I look forward to seeing you again in Hradec Králové in future years.



Oldřich Vlasák
Lord Mayor of Hradec Králové

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

The seventh Internet in Public Administration and Self-Government (ISSS) conference, regularly held in Hradec Králové, has kicked off. You have in your hands this collection of documents and conference papers. Over the seven years since first taking place, the conference has inscribed itself into the consciousness of representatives of state administration and self-government, experts in information technologies from both the Czech Republic and abroad., as well as representatives of exhibiting companies. The issue of public administration informatisation is at the centre of extraordinary interest. This has been reflected in the growing number of participants, conference partners and lecturers. Increasingly important have been the meeting's international dimension, strengthened in line with the preparation of new countries for EU accession, and close cooperation in information society development between the member and candidate states. At the present time, the conference is considered the most important activity pertaining to the development of local and regional information society. It has been greatly appreciated by the European Commission.

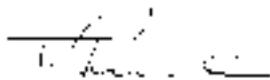
This exceptional position of ISSS has contributed to the fact that this year, alongside the traditional international LORIS conference, a prestigious international meeting of representatives of the Visegrád Four countries and Slovenia will also take place at the Visegrád Group for Developing Information Society (V4DIS) conference, which has also been supported by the International Visegrád Fund. We are fully aware of the fact that the basis for effective course of action of municipalities, cities and regions in information society development in the European Union will be close regional cooperation and exchange of experience, similar to the Scandinavian model. Within the framework of this project, we want to focus on creating the necessary basis for mutual communication, experience exchange and prospective cooperation at the level of specialised expert teams from the four countries of the Visegrád group and Slovenia.

Today, information society is a term paid enormous attention to and discussed at all levels. The internet has become an integral part of every day life, while the unprecedented development of mobile communication has brought with it new possibilities.

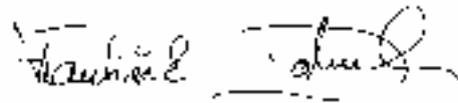
The idea of e-Government, actively materialised and asserted by the European Union and the entire developed world, results in the application and integration of information and communications technologies in the process of administrating public matters. Rapid development also requires fast and coordinated adaptation of legislation on the part of the Ministry of Informatics of the Czech Republic in cooperation with other departments and self-governments. Hence, this issue is devoted to in individual papers of these proceedings and the entire conference programme. At the conference, e-Government will be paid great attention and a number of papers will also deal with e-Strategy of towns and municipalities, portals, electronic signatures and communications infrastructure of public administration information systems. Undoubtedly, also of interest will be such topics as security of information systems, the role of information and communications technologies in crisis situations, GIS and education of public administration employees. The most topical themes will primarily include harmonisation of state administration and self-government with European Union standards and information concerning interesting European projects and programmes.

Owing to limited space, the proceedings could not capture the entire breadth of the issues discussed at the conference. There are also a number of topics that we will only get to in course of time. For example, all the possibilities of communication between public administration and citizens have by no means been exhausted. It will certainly take some time until the communication of the state with self-governments and citizens has been successfully optimised, and it must be said that information technology will not be necessary for solutions in every case. Information technologies will never entirely replace human-to-human communication.

We would be delighted if the materials of the conference proceedings and the conference itself became a source of inspiration and incentive for innovative solutions. We also hope that the conference discussions and workshops of the seventh ISSS/LORIS/V4DIS will be a broad platform for further debates, experience exchange and comparison of results achieved.



RNDr. Tomáš Renčín
Conference Executive Director



Ing. František Dohnal
Festival Programme Manager
Administrator of the Vysočina Region

Yours Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In exactly thirty-three days, The Czech Republic will officially join the European Union, along with nine other European countries. Ten years ago, your President, Václav Havel, had indicated the need for a Charter of European Identity. His initiative made clear to all of us that the process of European civilisation is based on the notion that Europe is a “community of destiny”. Europe has also been founded on the inalienable right of all our citizens to life, freedom, and the pursuit of happiness. In all our countries, we share a strong commitment to the belief that each of us can make a difference in shaping the world we live in, for our generation and the ones, which will follow, and all of us must try. So, it is nice to share with you today these common values that were born in the cradle of Europe and that make us have the thrill of the collective perception of both a rich legacy and a promising future.

When I came two years ago, I spoke about eGovernment—this remains indeed a high priority topic in Europe, and I’m happy that my colleague Paul Timmers is here to present to you the most recent developments. Last year, I spoke about Trust and Security—this is what I will do again this year, although I have just taken over another unit in the Information Society Directorate-General: “ICT for Business”. Let me say without excessive complaisance that the two subjects—eGovernment and eSecurity—are closely related, in fact more and more entwined.

The debate about the Information Society in Europe is only just beginning, but what happens in the coming months—that is, within our enlarging Union sailing in the midst of great opportunities but also of unprecedented challenges—will have a profound impact on citizens’ lives and decision-makers’ responsibilities.

Because 2004 is a formidable milestone for Europe, and because we are here today to discuss our common future, let me wish in front of you that this is the year to renew and revitalise our commitment to a user-friendly, competitive and inclusive information society—an authentic opportunity society within the enlarging European Union.

I’d like to finish by saying that I am very grateful for the many courtesies that Tomáš Renčín and, more generally, the organisers of this Conference have shown to me yesterday upon my arrival.

Děkuji

Gérald Santucci

Programme of the ISSS/LORIS 2004 conference

The blocks marked in grey will be interpreted CZ⇔ENG.

Saturday or Sunday morning

Arrivals to Prague

Sunday, March 28

- 09.00–13.00 Special Invitation Program in Prague (guided tour)
- 13.00 Reception in Lord Mayor of Prague's Residence
- 14.30 Departure from Prague
- 16.30 Accomodation in Hradec Králové
- 17.00–18.30 Meeting of the CEE Associations of Municipalities
- 19.40 Cultural Program in Hradec Králové

Monday, March 29

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Main hall | 10.40–12.00 | Conference opening, opening speeches
<i>Vladimír Mlynář, Minister of Informatics of the CR</i>
<i>Oldřich Vlasák, Lord Mayor of the City of Hradec Králové</i>
<i>Pavel Bradík, President of the Kralovehradecký Region</i>
<i>Pavel Bém, Lord Mayor of the Capital City of Prague</i>
<i>František Dohnal, President of the Vysočina Region</i>
<i>Mirek Topolánek, Deputy Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the CR</i>
<i>Evžen Tošenovský, President of the Moravian-Silesian Region</i>
<i>Pavel Gantar, Minister for Information Society, Slovenia</i>
<i>Branislav Opaterný, Deputy of the National Council of Slovakia</i>
<i>Gérald Santucci, Paul Timmers, European Commission</i>
<i>Javier Ossandon, President of ELANET</i>
<i>Tomáš Renčín, Conference Executive Director</i> |
| Small hall | 9.00–10.30 | Electronic signatures in public administration
<i>Presented by Mgr Dagmar Bosáková, Ministry of Informatics of the CR</i>
Amendatory Act on electronic signatures,
<i>Hana Nevřalová, Jan Hobza, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 15'</i>
Regulation on electronic registries, <i>Dana Bosáková, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 10'</i>
e-signatures in the public administration project,
<i>Dana Běrová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 15'</i>
Amendment to the Act on electronic signatures—the effect in practice, <i>Petr Budiš, PVT, 10'</i>
Use of qualified certificates in state administration, time stamps,
<i>Lenka Capoušková, První certifikační autorita, a. s., 10'</i>
Electronic tax statement submission,
<i>Michal Faltýnek, Ministry of Finance of the CR, Central Financial and Tax Directorate, 10'</i>
Panel discussion, <i>Michal Faltýnek, Ministry of Finance of the CR, Dana Běrová, Jan Hobza, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, Lenka Papoušková, PVT, 15'</i> |
| | 12.30–12.40 | Terms and possibilities of the ELITE contract of the company Symantec for public administration, <i>Jaroslav Techl, Abakus, 10'</i> |
| | 12.40–13.10 | Lecture of the general partner
<i>e-banking of Česká spořitelna, a. s., Luboš Louda, Česká spořitelna, a. s., 30'</i> |
| | 13.30–15.00 | Block of lectures of main partners I.
Summary and visions of Microsoft solutions for public administration in the Czech Republic, <i>Jan Toman, Microsoft, 40'</i>
Czech Telecom projects co-financed by public administration of the CR and the EU—a chimera or possibility?, <i>Ondřej Felix, Czech Telecom, 15'</i>
Process management in public administration, <i>Boris Šraut, IBM, 15'</i>
New trends in e-Government, <i>Pavel Hrdlička, IBM, 15'</i> |
| | 15.10–16.40 | Block of lectures of main partners II.
Solutions to content administration within the e-Government concept, <i>Pavel Vosáhlo, Siemens Business Services, 25'</i>
SAP solutions for public administration, <i>Jan Renc, SAP, 30'</i>
Oracle information architecture for state administration and public administration, <i>Petr Paukner, Oracle, 30'</i> |
| | 16.50–17.55 | Novell—a leading position in Linux, <i>Aleš Kučera, Novell-Praha, s. r. o., 30'</i>
Sun Java Enterprise system, <i>Jaroslav Malina, Sun Microsystems Czech, s. r. o., 15'</i>
News on the website of the Ministry of the Interior of the the Czech Republic, <i>Stanislav Gross, Minister of the Interior of the CR, 20'</i> |

Small hall	18.00–18.50	<p>Without e-munity, discussion programme <i>Vladimír Mlynář, Minister of Informatics of the CR</i> <i>Ivan Langer, Deputy Chairman of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the CR</i> <i>Karel Březina, Committee for Informatics ČSSD</i> <i>Branislav Opaterný, Deputy of the National Council of the Slovak Republic</i></p>
Lecture hall	9.00–10.30	<p>Coordination of regional public administration IS <i>Presented by Tomáš Holenda, Ministry of the Interior of the CR</i> Administrative and transport-administrative register, <i>Tomáš Holenda, Jiří Malátek, Ministry of the Interior of the CR, 20'</i> Experience of a municipal information system with the Central Population Register, <i>Jiří Škrabal, Svitavy Municipality, Vera, 10'</i> MUNIS register, <i>Tomáš Lechner, Triada, spol. s r. o., 10'</i> Personal documents of citizens in the European space in the Internet era, <i>Milan Štěrba, Hewlett-Packard, 15'</i> Passport agenda financed in the form of a PPP project, <i>Petr Adánek, Siemens Business Services, 15'</i> Regional and municipal information system (RAMIS) for municipalities with extended operation, <i>Petra Mikulecká, PVT, Libor Pokorný, Ministry of the Interior of the ČR, 15'</i></p>
	12.10–12.50	<p>Press conference of the Ministry of Informatics of the CR, <i>Vladimír Mlynář, Minister of Informatics of the CR</i></p>
	12.55–13.35	<p>Alternative to the current state of informatics and telecommunications, <i>Miroslav Topolánek, Evžen Tošenovský, Pavel Bém, Ivan Langer, Edvard Kožušník, ODS, 40'</i></p>
	13.45–15.00	<p>Education and e-learning I. Development of e-learning of employees in administrative authorities, <i>Jan Pícka, Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, General Directorate of the Civil Service, 15'</i> Blended learning programme for public administration employees, <i>Jana Prádllová, IBM, 15'</i> New forms of educating public administration employees, <i>Jan Knyttl, Microsoft, 15'</i> EDU portal: services for effective employee education and projects of EU structural funds, <i>Milan Štolba, Czech Telecom, 30'</i></p>
	15.10–16.40	<p>Education and e-learning II. Quality labour force as a resource of employment development and prosperity of regions, <i>Pavel Komárek, Prosperita, 30'</i> WWW.TOPREGION.CZ portal—a databank of best practices, instructions and experience for strategic management and human development in regions, <i>Petra Jedličková, Josef Schwarz, Ivana Sládková, National Education Fund, Martin Souček, Commercial Director, MathAn, 30'</i> Effective education for effective authorities, <i>Bohumil Havel, PVT, 10'</i> Experience of the Ministry of the Interior of the CR with e-learning, <i>Ministry of the Interior of the CR, 10'</i> Special electronic media for public administration, Matra–Solon Project, <i>Jiří Holub, Triada, spol. s r. o., Jana Voldánová, Education Centre for Public Administration of the CR, o. p. s., 10'</i></p>
	16.50–18.05	<p>IT projects within EU programmes Co-financing of IT projects from European programmes, <i>Jan Prokšík, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 15'</i> e-Government and management of European projects, <i>Irina Zálišová, BMI, 10'</i> Common regional operating programme, <i>Věra Jourová, Ministry of Regional Development of the CR, 15'</i> Development of infrastructure and communications technologies in regions, <i>Zdeněk Vašák, Ministry of Regional Development of the CR, 15'</i> Discussion of the topic, <i>Dana Běrová, Petra Bořkovicová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, Věra Jourová, Ministry of Regional Development of the CR, Eva Hillerová, EU experts, 20'</i></p>
Eliška hall	9.00–10.30	<p>Security of information systems I. Personal data security in public administration information systems, <i>Karel Neuwirt, Chairman of the Office for Personal Data Protection, 15'</i> Security of data networks, <i>Jan Zmij, Siemens, 15'</i> Support for solutions to IS security, <i>František Nemočovský, Unisys s. r. o., 20'</i> Security of internet applications, <i>Stanislav Biža, IBM, 15'</i> Advanced information security, <i>Ladislav Šolc, Microsoft, 15'</i> Practical implementation of security requirements of the Public Administration IS standard when creating information systems, <i>Jaroslav Vík, PVT, 10'</i></p>
	12.40–14.30	<p>Security of information systems II. Lucent worldwide professional services overview, <i>Hanusik, Lucent, 20'</i> e-Security: How is Europe Facing the New Challenges?, <i>Gérald Santucci, European Commission, 20'</i> Data exchange with classified systems, <i>Libor Kratochvíl, ICZ, 25'</i> Security products for govnet, <i>Jaroslav Techl, Abakus, 30'</i> Discussion of the topic, <i>Dočekal, Pavlica, Jirovský, 15'</i></p>

	14.45–16.20	Role of IT in crisis situations I. Information technologies for rescue information systems and crisis situations, <i>Vilém Adamec, Luděk Štolba, MV–General Director of the Fire Brigade of the CR, 15'</i> Support for decision-making in crisis management, <i>Jiří Vácha, IBM, 15'</i> State critical infrastructure, <i>Jan Müller, ICZ, 20'</i> Methodology and support tools for business continuity planning, <i>Jiří Hubálek, Siemens Business Services, 15'</i> Nationwide information support for crisis management, <i>Jaroslav Pejšoch, T-SOFT, s. r. o., 20'</i> Levels of adequate ICS security resistance of the CR's critical information infrastructure, <i>Václav Novák, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 10'</i>
	16.30–17.40	Crisis situations and communication with citizens Enabling Local Authorities and administrations to provide new services to citizens: Alcatel Multimedia call centers and security solutions, <i>Nicole Hill, 20'</i> SMiS Info–Municipality of Lety, <i>Tomáš Lechner, Triada, spol. s r. o., 10'</i> Emergency assistance for citizens, Use of IT in crisis situations, Provision of comprehensive security services, <i>Adéla Kolouchová, Town of Boskovice, 10'</i> Technical infrastructure of rescue information systems in the Vysočina Region, <i>Petr Pavlinec, Vaněk, Vysočina Regional Authority, 15'</i> Integrated security centre in the Moravian-Silesian Region, <i>Petr Berglowiec, Fire Brigade of the Moravian-Silesian Region, 15'</i>
	19.00–19.50	Golden Crest, meeting of the traditional competition's finalists, <i>Jan Savický</i>
Meeting hall	9.00–10.30	V4DIS Conference–opening Introductory word, <i>František Dohnal, Administrator of the Vysočina Region, Vladimír Mlynář, Minister of Informatics of the CR, Andrzej Jagodziński, Director of the International Visehrad Fund, 15'</i> e-Government, <i>Paul Timmers, European Commission, 20'</i> Presentation of the eTen program, <i>Dave Broster, European Commission, 20'</i> eContent Village, <i>Judith Pretty, Primesphere, s. a., 15'</i> Presentation of ELANET and the Prelude initiative, <i>Javier Ossandon, President of ELANET, 15'</i>
	12.30–13.20	Elanet workshop: Excellence in EU co-operation and projects: Round table discussion Moderated by: <i>Irina Zalisova, CEO of EPMA/BMI Association</i> Participants: <i>Dana Běrová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, Paul Timmers, European Commission, Javier Ossandon, President of ELANET, Coordinator for Prelude project, Anna Prus, Polish Ministry of Scientific Research and Informatics, Carlo Flamment, President of Formez, Italy</i>
	13.30–15.00	e-Strategy of V4+ countries State information and communications policy e-Czech, <i>Vladimír Mlynář, Minister of Informatics of the CR, 15'</i> State information and communications policy, Slovakia, <i>Mikuláš Kačaljak, Ministry of Transport, Post and Communications, 15'</i> State information and communications policy, Slovenia, <i>József Györkös, Ministry for Information Society, 15'</i> State information and communications policy, Poland, <i>Wojciech Szewko, Ministry for Research and Information Society, 15'</i> State information and communications policy, Hungary <i>Mihály Janbrik, Ministry of Informatics and Telecommunication, 15'</i> Discussion on the topic, <i>15'</i>
	15.10–16.40	V4DIS e-Strategy and international cooperation among cities Importance of cooperation, <i>Jaroslav Šolc, Prague City Council, 8'</i> TeleCities-eRights Charter, <i>Eberhard Binder, City of Vienna, 10'</i> The Major Cities of Europe IT Users Group, <i>Irene Weithofer, Leipzig, 10'</i> GCD presentation, <i>Oldřich Vlasák, Hradec Králové Lord Mayor, Christian Pezzin, Cento, 15'</i> eCitizenship for ALL Survey and Award, <i>TeleCities, Deloitte, 10'</i> e-Strategy and profile info–Bratislava, Budapest, Ljubljana, Prague, Warsaw
	16.50–17.50	Comparison of access to e-Government services in the EU and the CR, <i>Karel Březina, Pavel Dvořák, 15'</i> eCulture Principles of eCulture 2000 , <i>Romana Křížová, Cross Czech, 15'</i> EU portal, <i>Ondřej Větrovský, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 10'</i> V4-cooperation within the competence of the Ministry of the Interior, <i>Bureš, Ministry of the Interior of the CR, 10'</i> Comprehensive agency information about the EU, <i>Přemysl Cenkl, Czech Press Agency, 10'</i>

- Labe hall** 9.00–10.30 **Communication between public administration and citizens**
 SMiS Info, experience of Poděbrady Municipality, *Tomáš Lechner, Triada, spol. s r. o., 10'*
 Possibilities of using mobile communications in state administration and self-government, *Jan Křečan, T-Mobile, 30'*
 Amendatory Act on personal data protection, *Karel Neuwirt, Chairman of the Office for Personal Data Protection, 15'*
 Degree of information disclosure; Legal chaos of remote access to public administration registers and Act 106, *Oldřich Kužilek, 15'*
 Verification of excerpts–Amendatory Act 365, *Hana Nevřalová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 10'*
 Debate on access to information, *Oldřich Kužilek, Karel Neuwirt, Chairman of the Office for Personal Data Protection, Tomáš Chalupa, Mayor of Prague 6, Hana Nevřalová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 15'*
- 12.20–13.20 **Informisation of local governments I.**
 SAP solution for regions and municipalities, *Petr Slaba, SAP, 20'*
 Portal solutions for regions and municipalities, *Jan Toman, Microsoft, 30'*
 Portal of the Pilsen Region and its integration with other portals in the region, *Jaroslav Antoš, Regional Authority of the Pilsen Region, 10'*
- 13.30–15.00 **Informisation of local governments II.**
 Metropolitan network—an essential precondition for area development, *Petr Stiegler, T-Systems PragoNet, a. s., 30'*
 Necessity of data warehouses in public administration and self-government, *Petr Zeman, Tomáš Kočka, Adastra, s. r. o., 30'*
 Managerial approaches to municipal information systems, *Tomáš Lechner, Triada, spol. s r. o., 15'*
 The Self-Governing Bodies Need Proper Strategic Tools In The Communication Field, *Jaroslav Svoboda, Ministry of the Interior of the CR, Chris Ormalm, Sweden, 15'*
- 15.10–16.40 **Informisation of local governments III.**
 Fenix II—a modular IS solution for public administration institutions on the NET platform, *Michal Varga, PVT, 10'*
 Document and Archive Service—order in letters and documents, *Petra Benediktová, PVT, 10'*
 System for business education management—RAMSES AKADEMIE, *Oleg Spružina, CCA Group, a. s., 30'*
 Production systems in public administration, *Milan Beneš, LogicaCMG, 30'*
 Electronic archiving—a challenge for specialists in several branches, *Tomáš Kalina, Miroslav Kunt, State Central Archive in Prague, 10'*
- 16.50–17.40 **Informisation of local government IV.**
 Effective tools for record-keeping, administration and support for the office information environment, *Jan Ježek, Marbes Consulting, s. r. o., 15'*
 Information on the Kevis project, *Petr Pavlinec, Vysočina Regional Authority, 10'*
 Feasibility studies, small-scale integration and SDZA, *Václav Koudele, Pilsen Regional Authority, 15'*
 Use of process analysis in Ostrava City Council, *Drahomíra Matřová, Ostrava City Council, 10'*
- SAS lounge** 9.00–13.00 **Public Intelligence SAS**
 Introduction and summary of solutions pertaining to “Public Intelligence”: the example of Belgium
 Financial management, risk management and preventing misuse of public finance: the example of the Austrian Agrarian Agency
 Technical concept of a Public Intelligence solution: the example of the Ministry of Finance of France
 Discussion table—path to improvement of public administration services
- 13.00–18.00 **Public Intelligence SAS**
 Accession to the EU: Problems and their Public Intelligence solutions—in English
 Public Intelligence concept—modern management in an EU member state: the example of France
 Support for fiscal and control procedures: the example of the Ministry of Finance of Spain
 Discussion table with a guest—application of Public Intelligence solutions in public administration central bodies
 Support for management and decision-making processes of cities: the example of the City of Vienna

Lounge 1	9.30–10.00	Bentley PowerMap, <i>Ondřej Patočka, Bentley, 30'</i>
	10.00–10.30	Bentley—a universal platform for administration of geo-spatial data life cycle, <i>Ondřej Patočka, Bentley, 30'</i>
	13.30–14.00	Application of a procedural approach in public administration, <i>Michael Hanke, LBMS, 30'</i>
	14.00–14.45	Good web with WebToDate, <i>Jiří Pavlín, Macron, 45'</i>
	15.00–15.40	Press conference of the Minister of the Interior of the Czech Republic
	16.00–17.00	Issues of municipal newsletters, <i>Antonín Eliáš, Obec a finance, Petra Krajinová, Jablonecký měsíčník, 60'</i>
Lounge 2	13.30–14.15	Adobe Intelligent Document Platform, <i>Michal Metlička, Adobe Systems Europe, 45'</i>
	14.30–15.30	Meeting of Deputies of the Chamber of Deputies of the CR and the Slovak National Council, <i>60'</i>
	15.30–16.30	Meeting of regional information scientists with Czech MPs, <i>60'</i>
	17.00–18.30	Informal discussion: office document agendas, <i>Exprit, 90'</i>
Lounge 3	16.50–19.00	<p>Elanet workshop: Future cooperation with New Member States and CEEC countries (upon invitation)</p> <p>How to address their needs; how to involve them in EU projects? (Round table discussion), <i>Javier Ossandon, Heikki Lunnas, Krzysztof Glomb, 30'</i></p> <p>Integrating skills for e-Government and local development: The Italian experience, <i>60'</i></p> <p>The Elanet and Prelude portals: a practical tool for local and regional governments, <i>20'</i></p>
Aldis Congress Centre	20.00–02.00	<p>Evening social programme</p> <p>Announcement of the Golden Crest</p> <p>Announcement of the Eurocrest</p> <p>Prize of the Minister of Informatics</p> <p>Announcement of the Geoapplication of the Year</p> <p>Announcement of the Biblioweb</p> <p>Social programme, party</p>

Tuesday, March 30

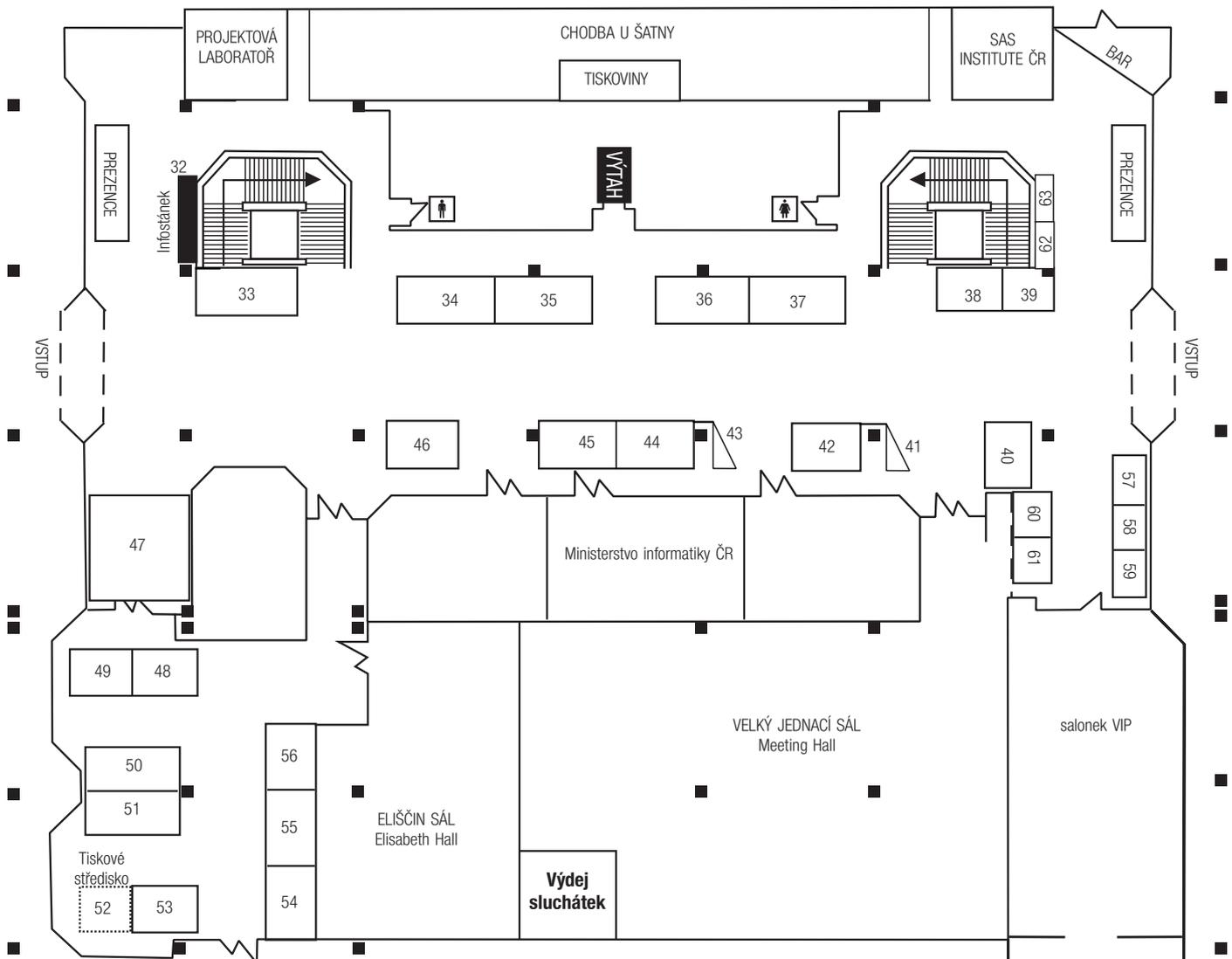
- Small hall** 9.00–10.35 **e-Government portals**
- Public administration portal and life situations, *Dana Běrová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 10'*
 Second phase of the public administration portal development, *Břetislav Moc, IBM, 15'*
 Public administration portals, *Robert Hernady, Microsoft, 30'*
 Občan.Sk—a public information portal, *Jakub Čech, Office of the Government of the SR, 10'*
 Project of building a public administration portal: a view of a system integrator, *Vratislav Paulík, Unisys, 20'*
 Official business portal –BusinessInfo, *Michal Sontodinomo, CzechTrade, Miloslav Marčan, Ministry of Industry and Trade of the CR, 10'*
- 10.45–12.15 Kiosks and the information portal of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, *Zbyněk Melkes, Oksystem, 30'*
 Information system on labour safety in the CR, *Evžen Bílek, Labour Safety Research Institute, 10'*
 Cooperation between ePUSA and the public administration portal, *Tomáš Holenda, Ministry of the Interior of the CR, Václav Koudele, Pilsen Regional Authority, 15'*
 Decentralised solution to the top level domain.cz administration, *Jiří Dohnal, CZ.NIC, z. s. p. o., Zdeněk Kaminski, T-Systems Pragonet, a. s., Petr Pomykáček, ICZ, a. s., 35'*
- 12.30–13.25 **Tools of public administration IS coordination**
- Changes in licensing in the education and health systems, *Jan Knyttl, Microsoft, 15'*
 Basic principles of data sharing, *Hana Nevřalová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 10'*
 Obligations of public administration IS administrators after Amendatory Act 365, *Hana Nevřalová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 20'*
 Use of inconsequential citizen identifier in electronic identification, *Jitka Krčilová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, Karel Lux, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the CR, 10'*
- 13.25–14.05 **Modernisation of public finance management, e-GOV**
- IS–Treasury and public budgets control, *Jiří Roudný, Ministry of Finance of the CR, 25'*
 IT backup for control processes in state budget and EU finance management, *Zdeněk Králík, Jiří Roudný, Milada Fritřzová, Ministry of Finance of the CR, 15'*
- Main hall** 9.00–10.30 **Geoinformation—part of public administration IS**
- Lecture section**
- Geoapplication of 2003, *prize-winning projects focused on utility GI(T) for international integration, 30'*
 Geo-Portal—Building of spatial data national infrastructure, *Petr Seidl, Petr Urban, Radomír Kuttelwascher, ARCDATA PRAHA, s. r. o., 15'*
 IT for making public administration data accessible, *Josef Havaš, Intergraph, 15'*
 Provision of land-register data after the Amendatory Land-Register Act, *Jiří Poláček, Josef Jirman, Czech Geodesy and Land-Register Office, 10'*
 GIS of regions 2002–2004, *Karel Pokorný, Association of Regions of the CR, 5'*
 Departmental GIS—the environmental portal ŽP, *Hradec, Ministry of the Environmen of the CR, 10'*
 MIDAS and the public administration portal, *WebCastle, Bronislava Horáková, Geoinformatics Institute, VŠB–Technical University Ostrava, 10'*
- 10.40–12.15 **Geodata accessibility in the Czech Republic and the EU**
- The role of Geographic Information within the evolving European Union, *Chris Corbin, EUROGI, UK, 15'*
 EU programmes for geoinformatics, *Eva Pauknerová, CAGI, 10'*
 Relationship Marketing Via Geographical Data Sharing, *Sebastian Stachowicz, GDC, PI, 10'*
 GIS and European projects, *Karel Charvát, CAGI, 10'*
 The study “Conditions of Accessibility and Utilisability of Geodata Acquired and Administered by Public Administration Bodies and Authorities in the CR”, *Josef Hojdar, Milan Martinek, TERIS Association, CAGI, 10'*
 Creation of the territorial identification and address register, *Karel Lux, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of the CR, 5'*
 State map work and services provided by the Geodesy Office in 2004, *Jiří Černohorský, Geodesy Office, 10'*
 Round table, *Pašek, Czech Geodesy and Land-Register Office, Běrová, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, CAGI, Union of Towns and Communities of the CR, Association of Regions of the CR, 15'*

Main hall	12.30–14.00	<p>WebGIS Prague—geographic information about the territory of the capital city for the authority and the public, <i>Jiří Černý, Prague City Council, 10'</i></p> <p>Microregions, data and information in relation to the EU, <i>Jaroslav Kepřt, Regional Authority of the South Moravian Region, 5'</i></p> <p>Data files for analytical and prognostic work at the level of administrative districts of municipalities with extended operation, <i>Alois Andrlé, ÚRS Prague, 5'</i></p> <p>GIS of the Kladno region municipalities on the internet, <i>Pavel Rous, Kladno Municipality, 10'</i></p> <p>ÚAP and JpDÚPO, <i>Drahomíra Zedníčková, Regional Authority of the South Moravian Region, 5'</i></p> <p>OGC and OpenSource webGIT, <i>Štěpán Kafka, CAGI, Stanislav Holý, HelpService Remote Sensing, 10'</i></p> <p>Road and street network data in GIS HZS, <i>Jaroslav Lapeška, KŘ HZS, Pilsen Region, Karina Uhlíková, CEDA, 10'</i></p> <p>GIS and crisis situations, <i>Josef Falt, Hradec Králové City Council, 10'</i></p> <p>IRIS and RIS in 2004, <i>Blanka Fischerová, Centre for Regional Development of the CR, 5'</i></p> <p>Obligatory GIS standard, <i>Jiří Hiess, Regional Authority of the Vysočina Region, 5'</i></p> <p>Land-use plans of Pilsen region municipalities on the web, <i>Michal Hadlač, Milada Kadlecová, Michal Souček, Pilsen Region, IRI Brno, 5'</i></p> <p>Development of registers of adding circuits of the CR, <i>Zdeňka Udržalová, Czech Statistical Office, 5'</i></p>
Lecture hall	9.00–10.30	<p>Projects supporting information society development I.</p> <p>Register of small-trade enterprise, <i>Jan Pokorný, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 10'</i></p> <p>Integration of applications, <i>Miloš Sobotka, Microsoft, 15'</i></p> <p>Electronic library of the Office of the Government, <i>Jan Duben, Office of the Government of the CR, 10'</i></p> <p>Application of electronic invoices in public administration and self-government, <i>Vladimír Beneš, PVT, 10'</i></p> <p>Monitoring and communications system supported by the Administrative Procedure Code, financed from EU funds, <i>Lucie Anna Matolinová, Securities Commission, 15'</i></p> <p>Can public administration afford IT outsourcing?, <i>Milan Nedvěd, Siemens Business Services, 15'</i></p> <p>eVote, <i>František Kohanyi, Košice Self-governing region, 15'</i></p>
	10.45–12.25	<p>Projects supporting information society development II.</p> <p>Novel exteNd—system integration on the basis of web services, <i>Aleš Kučera, Novell, 15'</i></p> <p>Network identity solution—a fundamental precondition for e-Government, <i>Jaroslav Malina, Sun Microsystems Czech, s. r. o., 15'</i></p> <p>SIPVZ yesterday, today and tomorrow, <i>Milan Hausner, Ministry of Education, Youth and Physical Education, 15'</i></p> <p>Šchool network, <i>Dalibor Škovronek, AutoCont On Line, 15'</i></p> <p>Infovek—open school, <i>Beáta Brestenská, Infovek, 10'</i></p> <p>Transport telematics, <i>Miroslav Svíték, Transport Faculty, Czech Technical University, 10'</i></p> <p>GIS and traffic information—Pilsen Region, <i>Martin Schejbal, Pilsen Regional Authority, 10'</i></p> <p>Individual accounts of the social security insuree, <i>Jiří Hoidekr, ČSSZ, 10'</i></p>
Meeting hall	9.00–10.30	<p>Communications infrastructure</p> <p>Communications environment of public administration IS, <i>Pavel Benda ADS Software, 10'</i></p> <p>Communications infrastructure of public administration IS—Key projects and development policies, <i>Petr Moldan, Czech Telecom, 30'</i></p> <p>New trends in communications for public administration, <i>Jan Kodad, Siemens, 20'</i></p> <p>Universal connector—conception and reality, <i>Miroslav Nováček, ANECT, 30'</i></p>
	10.45–12.35	<p>Support and development of public administration IS, <i>Lubomír Moravčík, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, 20'</i></p> <p>Dynamite ETHERNET—solution to reliable WAN infrastructure, <i>Rudolf Čihák, Lucent, 20'</i></p> <p>Alcatel, Local Authorities and eGovernment—Solutions for economic and social development, <i>Nicole Hill, Alcatel, 30'</i></p> <p>Convergence in electronic communications, <i>Michal Frankl, Ministry of Informatics of the CR, discussion, 40'</i></p>
Eliška hall	9.00–10.30	<p>e-Library</p> <p>Conception of library internetisation, <i>Vít Richter, National Library of the CR, 10'</i></p> <p>Internetisation of municipalities and libraries, <i>Pavel Parma, AutoCont On Line, 15'</i></p> <p>Calimera: co-ordinating IST innovation in Europe's local culture institutions, <i>Robert Davies, Calimera, UK, 15'</i></p> <p>Role of libraries as municipal info-centres with regard to a region's ethnic structure, <i>Remigiusz Lis, Silesian Library Katowice, Halina Molinová, Karviná Regional Library, 20'</i></p> <p>Eurovoc thesaurus—information retrieval language of EU documents and its use in the Czech Republic, <i>Kvetoslava Žigmundová, Office of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the CR—Parliament Library, 10'</i></p> <p>Barriers to electronic communication between citizens and authorities, <i>Pavel Šimoník, Ministry of the Interior of the CR, 5'</i></p> <p>Websites of municipalities as an information source for citizens, <i>Andrej Kyselica, Czech Statistical Office, 5'</i></p>

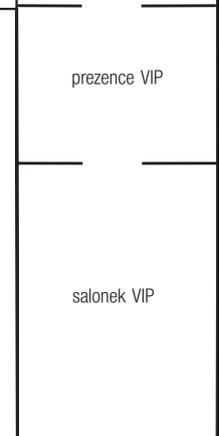
		Right for information and copyright—seeking a balance, <i>Martin Svoboda, State Technical Library, 10'</i>
Eliška hall	10.45–12.15	e-Strategy of cities in the Czech Republic and benchmarking Introductory information on IT in statutory towns in the CR, <i>Jaroslav Šolc, Prague City Council, 5'</i> Strategic benchmarking, <i>Jana Voldánová, Education Centre for Public Administration of the CR, o. p. s., 10'</i> Presentation of selected cities (profile info according to a questionnaire): Hradec Králové, <i>Josef Falt, 20'</i> , Prague, <i>Jaroslav Šolc, 15'</i> ; Ostrava, <i>Jaromír Tomala, 10'</i> ; Jihlava, <i>Jiří Zbránek, 10'</i> ; Liberec, <i>Jiří Hruboň, 10'</i> Discussion, <i>10'</i>
	12.25–13.50	Best practices of towns and municipalities Hradec Králové Board of Representatives and website, <i>Ondřej Vrabec, Karel Havlíček, Hradec Králové City Council, 20'</i> The chance of the countryside is in IT, <i>Vít Skála, PtL, 10'</i> Website of the Capital City of Prague, <i>Miroslav Váňa, Prague City Council, 15'</i> From the workshop of the Golden Crest and EuroCrest winners, <i>discussion, František Dohnal, Administrator of the Vysočina Region, Tomáš Holenda, Ministry of the Interior of the CR, Jan Savický, ČVI, 40'</i>
Labe hall	9.00–10.35	eForum Structural funds for e-Government development at the regional and local level <i>Marc Ribes, eForum, 15'</i> eForum presentation, <i>Charles Lowe, eForum, 15'</i> Development of the South European and Central European network for Best Practices, <i>Tunda Kallai, European Project Coordination, 10'</i> Project-management, management information and quality control, <i>László Békei, Trilobita Informatics Co., 10'</i> SIBIS, <i>Nerute Kligiene, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, 10'</i> The e-Pride Project: electronic platform for information dissemination on the regional level in Europe, <i>Monica van Leeuwen, FUNDECYT, 15'</i> Development of the e-Riga project, <i>Eriks Zegelis, City of Riga, 10'</i> ICT in education in Latvia, <i>Juris Mikelsons, University of Latvia, 10'</i>
	10.45–12.15	Prelude workshop Presentation of the clusters on e-Government: Gaudi, <i>Marta Almela, 20'</i> Presentation of the cluster on e-Transport (ETT), <i>Lars Holstein/Wolfgang Steinicke, 20'</i> Presentation of the Cluster on e-inclusion (Guarantee), <i>Irina Zalisova, 20'</i> The Prelude portal, <i>15'</i> Questions from the audience, <i>15'</i>
	14.10–15.30	Meeting of representatives of the Ministry of Informatics of the CR and the Ministry of Finance of the CR, suppliers of software for public administration, the ISMO Committee and the Informatics Committee of Regions, <i>Luděk Galbavý, Václav Koudele, 60'</i>
SAS lounge	9.00–14.00	Public Intelligence SAS Issues of reporting towards the EU: the example of the Thüringer region, Germany Support for central administration management and decision-making procedures, the example of the Ministry of Finance of Belgium Specific solutions for public administration—solutions for unemployment reduction in Slovenia Solutions pertaining to statistics and analysis: the example of the Statistical Office of Austria Support for regional promotion management: the example of the agency of the Piemonte region, Italy Discussion table—application of “Public Intelligence” solutions in self-government
Lounge 1	9.00–10.30	United organisation of the blind and weak sighted in the CR, <i>Hana Bubeníčková, 90'</i>
	10.40–11.10	WebToDate for public administration, <i>Krzysztof Dabrowski, Macron, 30'</i>
	12.30–13.30	Meeting of webmasters of central authorities, <i>František Špaček, Ministry of the Interior of the CR, 60'</i>
Lounge 2	10.00–10.45	Adobe Intelligent Document Platform, <i>Michal Metlička, Adobe Systems Europe, 45'</i>
	13.00–15.00	Meeting of the V4 expert group for IS in public administration, <i>Ministry of the Interior of the CR, 120'</i>

přízemí – 1st floor

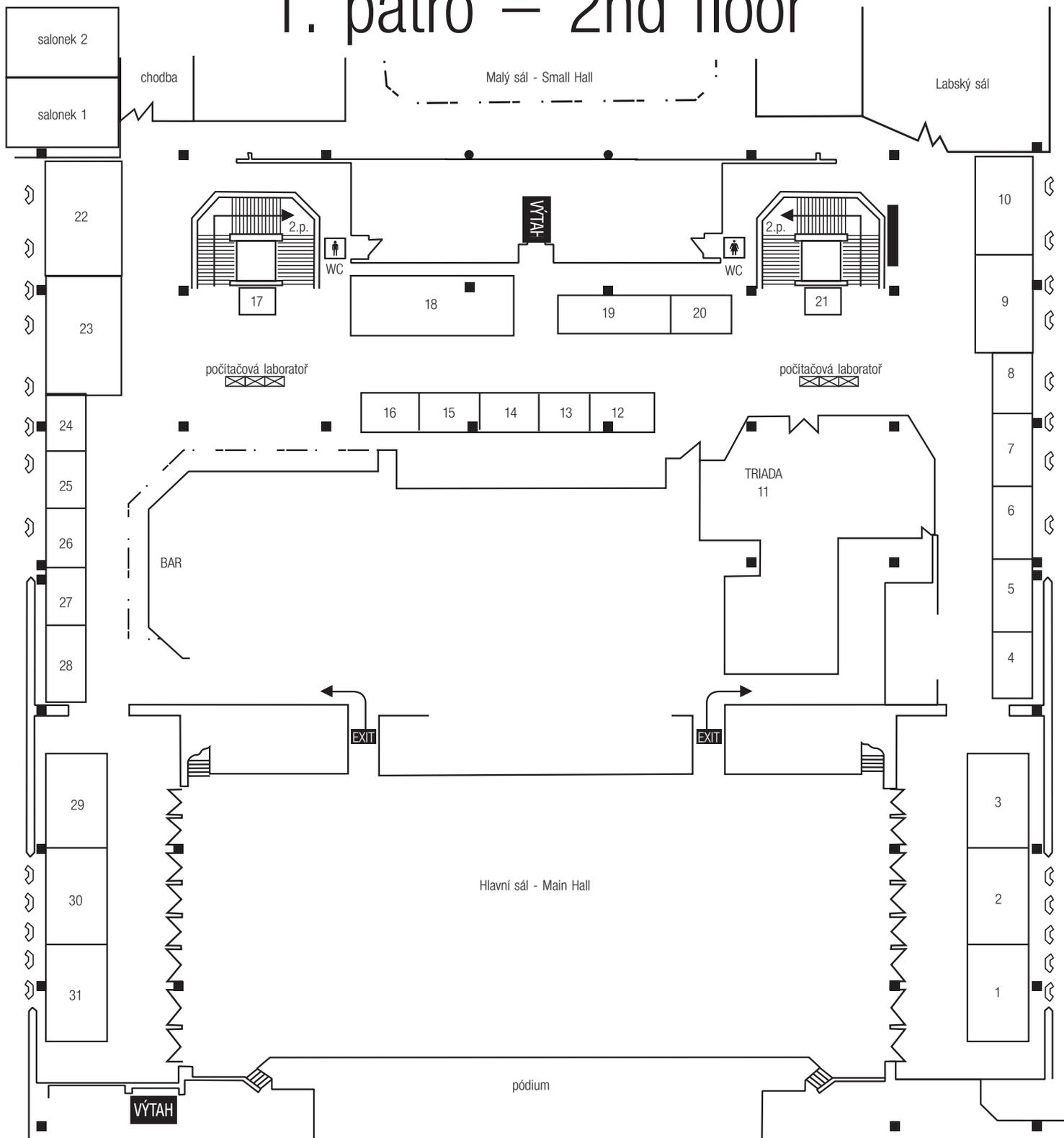
ŠATNA - DRESSING ROOM



číslo	firma	číslo	firma
Vystavující firmy			
63	ADVICE.CZ s.r.o.	47	Ministerstvo informatiky ČR
62	Atestační středisko Relsie pro ISVS	34	NOVELL – Praha, s.r.o.
40	BenchCom, s.r.o.	46	Olympus C&S, spol. s r. o.
44	CCA Group, a.s.	56	Oxygen Solutions, s.r.o.
51	Česká pošta s.p.	38	PavEx Consulting, s.r.o.
58	Česká vydavatelská pro Internet	33	Popron Consulting, s.r.o.
37	Europeum Praha a.s.	57	Prosperita, o.p.s.
49	FairNet Systems, s.r.o.	39	SAS Institute ČR s.r.o.
59	Geodézie Krkonoše s.r.o.	60	Sdružení BMI
54	GEODIS Brno, spol. s r.o.	43	SODAT SOFTWARE spol.s.r.o.
48	GEOMETRA OPAVA, spol.s r.o.	55	SPIKA s.r.o.
42	GEPRO s.r.o.	36	T–MOBILE CZECH REPUBLIC
53	Kadlec – elektronika s.r.o.	41	TOM – computer s.r.o
50	K–net Technical International Group s.r.o.	35	Zeměměřický úřad
61	MiCoS Software s.r.o.	32	INFO
45	Ministerstvo informatiky ČR	52	Tiskové středisko

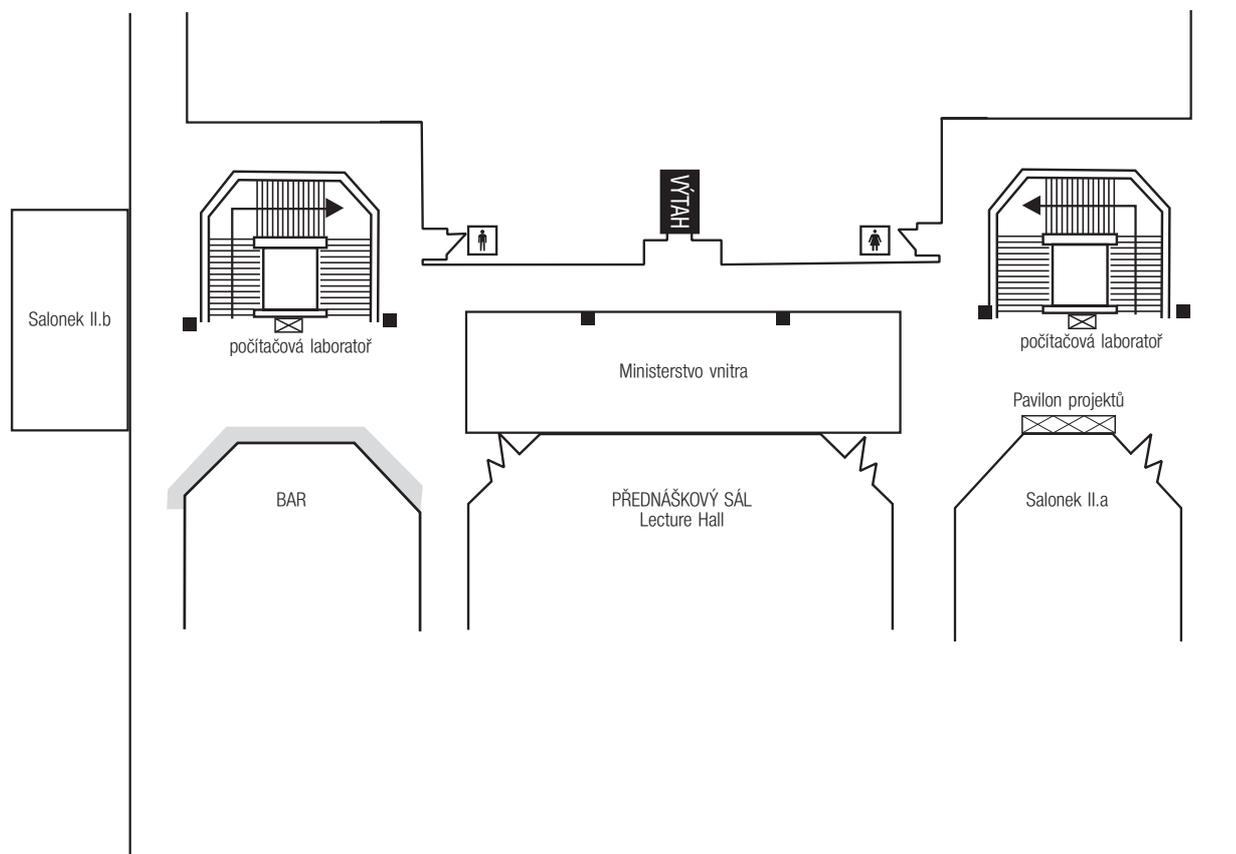


1. patro – 2nd floor



číslo stánku	FIRMA	číslo stánku	FIRMA	číslo stánku	FIRMA
23	Generální partner Česká spořitelna a.s.	28	ARCDATA PRAHA, s.r.o	17	ORACLE Czech, s.r.o.
	Hlavní partneři Český telecom, a.s.	12	ASPI Publishing, s.r.o	21	ORACLE Czech, s.r.o.
3	IBM Česká republika, s.r.o.	13	Corpus Solutions, a.s.	20	ORTEX, spol. s r.o.
1	MICROSOFT, s.r.o.	16	Eurotel Praha, spol.s.r.o.	22	PVT a.s.
31	SAP, spol. s r.o.	14	EXPRIT, spol. s r.o.	18	SUN Microsystems, s.r.o.
30	SIEMENS s. r. o	4	GEOVAP, spol. s r.o.	19	T- MAPY spol. s r.o.
29	UNISYS s.r.o.	7	GOPAS a.s.	11	TRIADA, spol. s r.o.
	Vystavující firmy	2	ICZ a.s.	10	T-Systems Pragonet a.s.
6	AEC, spol. s r.o.	8	Intergraph ČR, spol.s.r.o.	5	ÚRS PRAHA, a. s.
24	ANECT a.s.	15	LUCENT TECHNOLOGIES, s.r.o.	26	VERA, spol. s r.o.
		27	Macron Software spol.s r.o.		
		9	Město Hradec Králové/Krajský úřad Královéhradecký		
		25	OKsystem, spol. s r.o.		

2. patro – 3rd floor



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Information society—an idea-based economy

Vladimír Špidla, Prime Minister, Czech Republic

The present times are characterised by the intensive development of technologies that in their consequence change society and the way of life of every citizen. With the growing pace of using information and communications technologies and progress of the internet, citizens, state authorities, large and small companies acquire powerful tools. It may be stated that in the Czech Republic, one of the countries acceding to the European Union, an information- and knowledge-based society is being formed. The 2000 Lisbon conference and the e-Europe documents bind our country to this. The Czech Republic wants to be an information society open to everyone, a society with an economy capable of attaining sustainable development while creating more jobs and greater social cohesion. Hence, as regards information and communications technologies, the Government's statement of policy has repeatedly defined objectives pertaining to access to information, education, economics and services of public administration. I consider that partial successes have been achieved in these areas – liberalisation of the telecommunications market, introduction of the internet in the education system, the national programme of computer literacy, the public administration portal, preparation for using electronic documents and identifiers, legislative work concerning electronic communication, and public discussion on the State Information and Telecommunications Policy. Low penetration through the broadband internet is, hopefully, a thing of the past owing to competition between Czech Telecom, alternative, mobile and cable TV operators. It is clear that through these activities the value of the national operator has been rising, resulting in greater possibilities for citizens to have free access to information.

Modern information and communications technologies in a secure environment should improve and economise all administrative agendas of municipalities, regions and the state, as well as facilitate fulfilment of the obligation of the institution to inform the public about its activity to the maximum extent. They should result in improved, more efficient and horizontal coordination in the activity of public administration and its information systems. Better access to public information is the precondition for development of new forms of democracy increasing every citizen's participation in public administration's decision-making. This feedback function is also the ambition of the Public Administration Intranet project, which, I believe, under the direction and coordination of the Ministry of Informatics, will be gradually applied in practice. By means of information technologies, already today it is possible to interconnect distant workplaces, to create conditions for origination of jobs even in the most remote areas and for extremely vulnerable population groups. Creating such distant workplaces can become an important tool against rural depopulation. A rational course of action in making information accessible can then lead to renewal of the social role of traditional interaction places for citizens in towns and municipalities—at their schools, libraries, post offices and town halls. Up-to-date technologies will really fulfil their function at the moment when we stop perceiving them as technologies and they become an ordinary part of our citizens' life.

Naturally, the financial demands of implementing modern technologies logically require association of investment, synergy of departmental intentions and objectives. I believe that financial means allocated by the state and the national operator to the communications infrastructure can also serve for the purposes of other projects and draw us closer to the European communications highway. They can become the corner stone of virtual networks in internetisation of libraries, the broadband internet or places of public administration execution. I am convinced that this rational course of action can prevent the deepening of the digital gulf which is a threat in every information society.

“Within the framework of programme political documents, the Czech Social Democratic Party has drawn up its informatics and telecommunications doctrine bearing the title **“Information society—a tool for building a society based on education, participation and solidarity”**. Of the total of ten priorities for implementing the state information and communications policy, considered crucial are primarily informisation of public administration, the health system and social services; use of information and communications technologies for education; use of information technologies for enhancing the transparency of both the public and private sector; and assurance of communications infrastructure at the European level. Of the ten ways of implementing the policy, the party considers it important to continue focusing on creating the legal framework for information society development; programmed financing and coordinated building of public administration information systems (e-Government); applying Public Private Partnership in suitable projects; and, of course, close cooperation at the level of creating European information society.”

Informisation of regional public administration

Rudolf Bauer, Chairman of the Self-Governmental Region Košice, Slovakia

In the corporate sphere, information systems have undoubtedly proved their benefit for acceleration and better effectiveness of commercial processes, improvement of management and relations with customers. Slowly but surely, there comes a time when the importance of investment in up-to-date information and communications technologies also manifests itself in the sphere of the relatively short two-year-long operation of public administration.

The budget sector is a “company” with dozens of central offices and hundreds of subsidiaries, thousands of managers and tens of thousands of employees. Every four years, its customers decide about the new management.

Current status of technology and the IT-knowledge level of public administration employees

In this respect, we view this issue from two angles. These are the status in authorities at the level of self-governing regions and the status in subordinate organisations. There is a huge gulf between these groups, which historically originated through absorbing the relatively obsolete infrastructure of subordinate organisations. On the other hand, there is a precise personnel policy in hiring computer-skilled staff for the newly originated institutions, as well as the application of the latest trends of technology development in the process of purchasing IT hardware/software and services.

IT status in the Košice self-governing region in figures

The authority has been digitalising the attendance to matters. We have attained the total number of 150 PCs, i.e. a computer per official, including equipment of branches, notebooks and mobile devices.

The level of Win 2000 workstation and subsequent Windows XP

The server level

Two HP DL 380 servers in a common MSA 1000 disk field prepared for cluster

One Debian Linux server for the mail server, web server and firewall

One Windows 2003 server

Subordinate organisations

The structure of the hw/sw level and staff preparedness varies, mainly low.

We consider the Infovek project significant progress in this area, resulting in significantly improving secondary school equipment in our sphere of action.

One of the preconditions for improving the IT infrastructure at the level of higher territorial units is our successful drawing of finance from EU pre-accession funds in the area of building up infrastructure. At the present time, the Košice self-governing region is preparing for the submission of the respective projects. One of the examples is connection of the school computer centre in Michalovce to high-speed internet with subsequent building up of a metropolitan network of the Town of Michalovce. We have also recorded a number of projects of our schools pertaining to learning, training, interactive school portals, as well as informatics schoolrooms.

Our vision is digitalisation of information during its origination

We also call it “Digital Democracy”. What does it concern?

The fundamental problem many organisations face is non-transparent working methods and competences. Lack of transparency is not documented and searchable retroactively.

Digitalisation of processes and their subsequent integration into the authorities’ IS will not only resolve the problem of the detachment of officials’ work, but also—as a substantial secondary effect—optimise the processes in such a manner that it is possible, besides transparency, to achieve effectiveness of the authority’s work.

A great problem is transfer of competences, when passed together with them to public administration is also data of dozens of workplaces, many times duplicated in various mutually incompatible systems, with obsolete MS DOS platforms being no exception. Such inconsistent data appears as if it did not exist at all.

We see solutions in the paper-less office with digitalisation of information during its origination, in our e-registry, which will soon transform our authority’s website www.kosice.regionet.sk from an information to a transaction website. This is another level of e-Government. When it comes to electronicisation of processes, what processes does it concern? It not only concerns communication, although it forms the strongest perception of the change the public sector has been undergoing.

Another part of the transfer of competences to public administration, visible to the public, is data. Few people realise that public administration is becoming an important depository of various data, including information about drawing pre-accession assistance from the European Union, as well as a lot of other relevant information.

Solutions for the citizen

By means of public administration electronic services, citizens should be at the forefront of events. The possibility of electronic communication with authorities will also allow for possible participation in dealing with public matters through the E-Vote project—electronic elections and ascertainment of public opinions. As the first in Slovakia, the Košice self-governing region uses EU money for information society development. The project has its own website www.evot.sk.

Visit us on the internet

The authority’s website www.kosice.regionet.sk was one of the first priorities of building a new, increasingly transparent electronic office. Today, you can already find there information about the Board of Representatives, such as voting, amendment proposals, as well as a lot of other useful information, virtually in real time.

To enhance the knowledge of the public about drawing of pre-accession assistance, we are planning to introduce active notifications for registered users about new information on our website. Our priority is to elevate the publication system on the internet to becoming a transaction system, thus laying a solid basis for e-Democracy by means of e-Government in our self-governing region.

Short view of the future

We perceive public administration as a service for the public. To be capable of proving such a service effectively, we must optimise as many processes as possible, this being an ideal operation space for information technologies.

E-Government and intensive aid of information technologies will be applied in the future work of our officials on a large scale.

eTEN–Stimulating the Deployment of Electronic Services Across the European Union

John S. Beale and Hanneke Westerbaan, eTEN Programme, European Commission

eTEN – A Community funding Programme to stimulate the roll-out e-service for an information society for all.

Background

eTEN is the European Commission's Programme designed to accelerate the deployment of Information Society services with a trans-European dimension. The programme aims to accelerate the take up of e-services of common interest to sustain the European social model of an inclusive, cohesive society. Its objectives are at the very heart of the eEurope mission of „an information society for all“. It promotes public interest services which give every citizen, enterprise and administration full opportunity to gain from the e-Society, bridging the digital divide which threatens to create an information underclass.

Although, as its name suggests, eTEN contributes to the implementation of the Trans-European Networks Policy, unlike its sister programmes for transport and energy, eTEN does not fund infrastructure. Instead the emphasis is placed on those services which form the key objectives of the eEurope 2005 Action Plan (eHealth, eGovernment, eLearning, eInclusion and Trust and Security services).

eTEN does not fund research and development in these areas, as this subject is covered by the IST part of the Framework Programmes for Research and Development. Rather eTEN supports instead the critical launch phase of a service, so that investors or public authorities can make informed decisions based on a thorough analysis of the economics involved.

Trans-European nature

The aim of the eTEN programme is to contribute to increased competitiveness in the Internal Market, whose objectives are to establish the freedom movement of people, goods, services and finance. One of the success factors of the Internal Market is a cost efficient infrastructure in the transport, energy and information society sectors.

eTEN fits into this scheme by supporting trans-European e-services in the common interest which might not otherwise be set up. Increasingly people and businesses in Europe are moving for professional reasons. Moreover people move for personal and leisure reasons. All the eTEN target areas of eHealth, eGovernment, eLearning, eInclusion facilitate such migration and thereby contribute to the four freedoms of the Internal Market. But e-services can be especially difficult to introduce when they cross national borders. There are not only different languages, but also differences in culture and legal and administrative environments require efforts to adapt the service profiles. On the technical side, to make computer applications compatible with each other is a complicated task. Customer servicing, maintenance of information or physical stockpiles, delivery, marketing and promotion may also need to be adapted to local conditions. eTEN contributes to these costs in order to overcome the tendency for language groups and national administrative borders to interrupt the deployment and use of e-services.

Thus eTEN projects must have a Trans-European nature which is interpreted to mean that projects shall be implemented in several Member States.

Scope of services covered

eTEN's aim is to support the deployment of e-services in the areas of eGovernment, eHealth, eLearning, eInclusion and Trust and Security services, as illustrated by some example projects:

- eGovernment–EBP(Electronic Brokerage Platform): The Employment Brokerage Platform is an electronic job exchange marketplace system available to the whole employment sector. It is based on a central platform concept allowing change standardized information about vacancies and CVs.
- eHealth–NETC@ARDS(Trans_European Access to Health Services for Mobile citizens): The Netc@ards project is based on R&D results from earlier IST projects on interoperability of health smart cards between European countries. The project aims to validate the use of health smart cards to access health care for patients in other countries than their own, and replace the paper forms, e.g. E111, used today (for admission to health care in foreign countries) by an electronic service.
- eLearning–ORPHEUS (Online Alinari Photographic (heritage) Archive for European Educational System): The ORPHEUS project aims at making available a range of services targeted to the educational institutions in Europe, enabling them to access the European photographic heritage through the electronic interface of the Internet.
- eInclusion–SERCAL (Service Center Solution for Autonomous Living): SERCAL aims to provide a 24 hour home care service to the elderly and disabled through the use of call centre technology. The SERCAL project will be validated in 2 environments in Europe: the Netherlands and Italy.
- Trust and Security services – SPES (Setting Processes for Electronic Signatures in European Cities): SPES will accelerate the introduction of digital signatures into public administrations.

To ensure the full deployment of such services, eTEN encourages public administrations such as hospitals, educational establishments, public museums, public agencies in tourism, environment or commerce and NGOs to make proposals for participation. Public sector involvement, while not mandatory, would enable the consortium to ensure the sustainability of the services after the project has finished.

Funding Possibilities

What distinguishes eTEN from other Information Society actions is its „preparation for a roll-out“ approach. eTEN is there to help the partners overcome their project's initial investment and launch difficulties. This reduces the commercial risk during the project's early stages, and supports the trans-national implementation costs.

The European Community eTEN programme works by giving financial assistance to consortia consisting of public and private organisation, enabling them to make e-services available across the European Union. It focuses particularly on the critical validation and launch phases of a service, when assumptions about the operating costs and the potential revenues, savings and public benefits are put to the test.

eTEN can provide up to a part of the total investment required to bring a service into full operation:

- Up to 10% of the investment costs of initial deployment when the initial rollout to the service is performed.

The starting point for an initial deployment project is a clear business plan (or equivalent in the public sector), and accompanying investment plan. The Community contribution is paid out in parallel with the consortium's own investment. The outcome of the initial deployment phase should be the achievement of the initial market deployment of a new service or

application, opening to full commercial or public operation. It is not intended that Community funds should contribute to projects which are already profitable. Therefore it must be clear that competition is not at risk of being distorted.

Deployment projects may either bring a totally new service to the market for the first time, or they may replicate services that are already operating in a limited environment, but are seen as a best practice and achieve trans-European level through the project.

In order to increase the incentives for deployment, the Commission has submitted a proposal to Council and the European Parliament to increase the level of funding for deployment projects from 10% to 30%.

- Up to 50% of the costs of market validation (but not exceeding 10% of the estimated initial investment cost) for a project, showing its technical and economic feasibility and benefit to end-users.

With a proposal for market validation, there must be an established prototype of the service to be offered, it should be validated, and what the criteria will be when coming to a decision about the deployment of the service.

During the validation process, the Commission monitors performance of the project, periodically reviewing the results. On completion of the validation, a business plan or equivalent and a potential investment plan must be produced. This then forms the basis for the consortium to decide whether or not to go ahead with the deployment of the service.

Experience has shown that eTEN is a key tool for the exploitation of successful research and development activities when they are brought to the market. The research and development may have been carried out under the Community Framework Programme but this is by no means a pre-requisite. eTEN is concerned with service roll-out from any successful and relevant research and development where there is a clear commitment to deploy.

Effect of enlargement / Europe+

Enlargement of the EU to a Community of 25 Member States will take place on 1 May 2004 and the challenges of providing cross border e-services will multiply accordingly. The eTEN programme will be fully open to new Member States from 1 May 2004 and the programme is gearing up to take maximum advantage of the wider pool of resources and experience in an enlarged EU. Officials of new Member States will be consulted on priorities for inclusion in the eTEN Work Programme. The European Commission intends to launch a study whose objective will be to make recommendations on actions which can be taken to integrate new Member States in the most effective way.

eTEN will be one of the main Community instruments which provides the support needed to new Member States to meet their commitments in the eEurope¹ and eEurope² Action Plans. Success in meeting these objectives is important if entities are to achieve the full benefit of their membership in the EU.

eTEN in action

Each calendar year, the Commission publishes a Work Programme for eTEN. The Work Programme contains the areas of work to be addressed through Calls for Proposals along with rules for participation and selection of projects.

Generally, eTEN Calls for Proposals are issued at least once a year. The next Call for Proposals is foreseen to be published during the first 6 months of 2004. The feasibility of holding a limited Call early in 2004 to give entities from new Member States an early opportunity to participate in eTEN is being evaluated.

All proposals, whether for market validation or initial deployment, are evaluated by the Commission assisted by independent experts according to the criteria published in the

announcement of the Work Programme. The Commission's eTEN website³ contains further details about how to submit a proposal and how it will be evaluated.

Conclusions

The eTEN programme is now firmly established as a key instrument for implementing eEurope 2005 services in the areas of eHealth, eGovernment, eLearning, eInclusion and Trust and Security services. The European Commission is taking measures towards accelerating the take-up of e-service EU-wide. eTEN will provide important opportunities for governments and business in new member States to meet commitments made in the eEurope and eEUROPE Action Plans.

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PMQ-II Corporate Multiproject-Management System

László Békei, CIS Branch Manager, Trilobita Informatics Co., Hungary

Project-management, as a discipline on its own, has existed for several decades. Its practical application, though in various forms, work as well. In reality the emphasis is on the “how”, since even today – when project-management is trendy – lot of people plan and co-ordinate their projects using conventional methods and tools. This is not good since the available technology and the complicatedness of projects make it necessary to use as complex tools as possible, yet usable and refined. By complicatedness we mean that complicated project and process hierarchy, resource management, finance can be handled in their relationships, in a way that we can always be in a position to be able to decide.

Information technology is extremely suitable for this. Naturally, only if a project-management system is used that is amply sophisticated, furthermore, can cope with co-ordination of several projects, that is multiproject-management.

There are sectors and branches where classical project-management is greatly applied. Public administration, from the European Union to local governments, belongs to these. Here different development and investment projects are present in great number – usage of direct support provided by the Structural and Cohesion Funds, starting from tendering.

The Philosophy of PMQ-II

When we first envisioned PMQ in 1998–the acronym stands for Project-management, Management information and Quality control–rather the creation of a project-management system–primarily for our own purposes–one criterion was clear: the future system has to show such flexibility that it can be used by any organisation, regardless of the project-management methodology they apply.

The second criterion was that the system should make all project participants observe deadlines, tasks, results, but the project-manager or the project-sponsor could decide to record only the main data (start, end date, planned, actual budget), thus only to keep a record of the project, or to store and handle all data, down to the smallest detail, thus manage the project. Also the transition between the extremes has to be continuous.

The third requirement was the ability to integrate. The aspects of it range from the possibility to join the system to the existing IT infrastructure to full integration. Another aspect of it is the co-ordination of tools used by the organisation in the project.

The fourth requirement was that all users should be able to use the system easily; furthermore they should want to use it, because they find the software suitable both functionally and ergonomically.

General overview of PMQ-II

- PMQ-II supports projects in the preparation phase as well, starting as early as tendering.
- Sums and deadlines in the contracts are stored as plan data in the database and handled as such.
- PMQ-II makes it possible to plan complete projects, process structure can be created and tasks can be organized according to WBS.
- Definition of required results, records and other documents with their quantity is part of planning.
- The first phase of project-finance is the planning of costs. The expected costs to be paid can be scheduled and also the expected incomes.

- Allocation of used resources can be planned on two levels, and the system always provides information about their total and free capacities.
- All data facts, documents, information can be stored structurally connected to projects.
- Vertical and horizontal reporting is provided by PMQ-II according to unique requirements. Verification reports can be generated about individual projects, and also cumulative reports about all the projects in a region.
- The workflow embedded in the system automates the handling of tasks, documents, approvals, work-time expenditures, and project communication.
- Conventions of arbitrary quality control system can be defined in PMQ-II, based on which the system makes the project-managers and participants observe the regulations.
- Project-management can be carried out based on different methodologies, which is supported by the methodology dock and the project-template functionality.
- Order in the Babelian chaos. The core system is trilingual: English, German, and Hungarian. Everyone can use the system in their preferred language, which is typically good for a project co-ordinated, supported or controlled by the EU.

Applicability of PMQ-II in state and public administration

Since PMQ-II is flexible as regards project types, methodologies and languages, it can be used in all sectors, as supported by its references, ranging from industry (AUDI), through service providers (OTP Ingatlan) to government administration (Hungarian Ministry of Environment and Water). The following sections describe the usability of the system in this sector through examples.

Creating a tender

A regional or local government creates a tender and submits it to the Structural and Cohesion Funds. It is possible to plan the project scheduling as a separate tender project, the tasks can be issued, and the creation of the actual tender is supported by PMQ-II with the embedded workflow engine. The responsible person can watch the level of completion, and check the status of the issued tasks.

The realisation schedule, to be submitted as part of the tender, can be created with the rough planning tool of PMQ-II. In it, the project is planned with its processes, deadlines, resource types and required results. The process diagram can be a PERT or a GANNT one. The tender goes through a triple versioning and status follow up and approval process. The versions are stored and automatically archived.

Communication, event handling

The deadline for handing in the tender can be handled as a milestone or as an event in PMQ-II. External or internal conciliations, meetings or any type of communication during the evaluation of the tender can be recorded in the system. These data are stored in the database behind the system in a structured way. Events can be organised into categories, thus an event hierarchy can be created in the project.

Fine planning, project launch

If the tender wins, the project plan can be fine tuned, which might mean the immediate launch of it if the execution is carried out by a set entrepreneur. If it is not yet set, because the local government also invites tenders, it can be carried out as a subproject as described in the previous sections. Planning of the project is eased by the possibility of creating template projects, and copying of projects and processes.

If the project starts, the government can control the project with the help of the system, and can make its usage compulsory for project participants. It is possible, since PMQ-II is a fully web-based solution that can be accessed by the user securely from anywhere through SSL protocol, firewalls. Naturally, only the functionality pertaining to their rights is accessible to users.

The project owner can also decide only to "follow" the project, the standing of fulfilment points, milestones, cost, and incomes through the system as a controller.

Project-management and handling

The project methodology dock is what greatly eases the task of participants, since it is only a process diagram that they see. The functionality of PMQ-II is accessible through this process diagram. When users click on the actual box, they can execute their task immediately, or can store results, organise meetings, enter costs, run reports etc. If it becomes necessary to modify the plan of a running project, PMQ-II archives the existing plan with a version number, which makes it possible to return to the original plan any time.

Project control

PMQ-II generates fast and accurate reports for project managers about a whole project or its parts, or for regional or governmental executives about all of the projects, the composition and layout of which is determined by users.

The system is capable of sending warnings to responsible people in e-mail, SMS when certain events occur or do not occur. These warnings can be sent as early as when the estimated cost exceeds the planned cost, so that there is time for intervention.

PMQ II system – a short description

This document has been created in order to give a brief introduction to the PMQ-II system. It provides information about a few general characteristics, and lists the major functionality-groups with a brief description. This document has not been intended to be all inclusive, for further information please contact Trilobita Informatics Co. at mail@trilobita.hu.

Main characteristics of the PMQ-II system

- PMQ-II is a multi-project management system that enables to co-ordinate all the activities of an organisation connected to handling projects. It covers the events preceding the project (e.g. handling offers and contracts) and the antecedents (e.g. CRM) as well.
- The Methodology Dock embedded in the system enables us to select from the project methodologies based on the project characteristics. The menu system changes accordingly and a process specific function grouping appears.
- The system is built upon three-layered client-server technology. The users can access the system through a browser, thus they do not need installation. The system is trilingual, enabling real-time multilingual access.
- The documents connected to project are supported in a uniform way. The stored documents follow the authorisation path based on the workflow procedure with complete change management.
- PMQ-II satisfies the general security considerations. User can access information only through authentication with proper authorisation. Security can be further increased by the use of SSL and VPN.

The PMQ-II system

General characteristics

Authorisations-Rights

The authorisation system of PMQ-II consists of hierarchical and role-based rights. Access rights can be defined for user roles and functions on the one hand, and for project participants on the other. Thus it is not only based on system functions, but on project elements as well that access rights can be defined.

Distributed-resource management

The PMQ-II system can handle the distributed resource pool of different organisations. It handles the resource pool of individual organisations, and only the authorised personnel can assign resources from the different resource pools. Furthermore the database of the organisations is segmented, thus employees cannot access the database of the other organisation.

Multilinguality

The PMQ-II is a real time trilingual (English-German-Hungarian) system, which means that it does not have different language version, but the user can change language with a click. This is realised in a way, that users can access the same project and the same database in different languages at the same time. In changing the language, not only menu-items, but combo-box contents are changed as well (e.g. document status type).

Functionality

Antecedents of projects

Projects are always preceded by events, agreements, business processes. These mainly appear as tenders, proposals, contracts and meetings in this phase of the project. Thus PMQ-II records the issued and incoming offers, contracts. It supports the tendering and decision procedures, and all this is handled connected to projects.

Support of project management methodologies

The PMQ-II system offers the methodology dock for the problem of applying different project management methodologies. With its help different methodologies can be applied flexibly in a way, that selecting the methodology the menu changes, process specific function groups pertaining to the selected methodology appear. Thus user do not have to be familiar with the details of methodologies, the system can be used as a guideline.

It is also possible to define template projects for regularly repeating projects, which can be recalled and can be used after making the few necessary actualisation tasks thus shortening the project planning tasks.

Project planning

In reality project planning means the logical planning of the scheduling of processes, their prerequisites, results and financial coefficients. The projects, sub-projects, main and elementary processes are organised in a hierarchical structure.

The philosophy of PMQ-II lets the management decide into what depth and detail the processes are planned and documented. Project participants, office workflow paths necessary for document and result handling can also be defined.

Processes and their parameters can be planned on two levels. On the one hand so called rough planning can be carried out during which only superficial planning is done to a process (e.g. not to concrete resource, but a resource type). In furthering the project, however, these parameters can be detailed, thus fine-planning can be carried out.

Resource management

Sophisticated resource-management capable of planning for time intervals and projects is indispensable. The resource reservation map shows information about capacity, availability of human and material resources. The capacities can be limited, and warning messages can be sent based on these. Furthermore distribution methods (uniform, degressive, ASAP) can be used in assigning resources, as well.

By defining cost income per units, and assigning them to cost centres and cost types, PMQ-II can always provide accurate and up-to-date information about project costs and incomes, furthermore about usage and efficiency and their relation to plan-actual values.

The resource-management reports show

- in which project
- for which time
- for how many hours
- with what cost (hourly cost)
- with what income (hourly income)
- for what cost-type
- for what cost-centre
- altogether with how many percent is the given resource reserved.

Result handling

The aim of all project participants is to store all documents that have been created during the project in a secure, well archived place, inaccessible to outsiders. By using Oracle Internet technology PMQ-II provides a solution where all project related files are stored in one place, in the database of the system, where only approved users can access them. Furthermore, with version tracking, document locking, type-handling, result reports, PMQ-II satisfies all prerequisites of a document handling system.

Result handling is made complete by the workflow embedded in the system that supports the approval of documents entered into the system. The approval workflow is hierarchical, and approval cycles can be defined for projects and document types.

Documents of arbitrary type can be entered into the system, furthermore results not existing in electronic format can also be “filed” in the system with the help of a meta-datasheet. In this case the location of the object is stored in the database, the approvers have to check it where it is located.

Project control

PMQ-II can unify all those tools necessary for the co-ordination and control of a project. The project manager can get actuals as the project progresses, and can match them with data planned for the project previously. Furthermore, the system provides estimated values based on the standings. Thus project managers can make the necessary decisions, which are supported by the workflow-based task-handling.

Management information

PMQ-II provides information to project managers, middle and top executives about the standing of tasks, state of projects, efficiency of colleagues based on the data stored in the database. Statistics can be carried out based on different aspects (ie.: temporal, plan/actual, cost center).

Project afterlife, CRM

The client service support of PMQ-II is a new aspect of communication among project participants in the aftercare of projects. External participants of the project (clients, contractors) can access the CRM through the Internet. The CRM workflow forwards announcements to the person responsible for support, who can distribute the individual tasks, while the announcers can follow the arising problems through the CRM module thus they are always informed about the their progress.

Quality control

Quality control forms an integral part of the system. It consists of two sections: the static one contains the complete quality control manual, the process and role descriptions. The other, dynamic, part is the handling of forms. With its help, in creating documents, the colleagues can download forms and thus they only have to fill in the appropriate fields, or change the necessary text portions. The result is that all documents conform to the uniform document culture. The thus created documents go through the approval workflow based on the quality control system.

System structure

Owing to the triple-layered client-server architecture used in the PMQ-II system, it can be used from anywhere, only a network connection (Intranet/Internet) and a browser is needed. Installation and maintenance of the system happens in one place, on the server side. The database of the PMQ-II system is a separate Oracle 8i or 9i database. The application runs on a separate Oracle Application

Summary

PMQ-II is a multiproject-management system that can be used for planning, co-ordination, supervision, and control of regional and local projects. The system handles financial, scheduling, and resource data of projects, their documents, results, processes, tasks. It supports all known and unique project methodology as well, in all language environments. The data are always handled in triplets: plan-actual-estimated. The system is fully web-based, which makes access, usage and maintenance easy. It supports project communication in different ways, and it not only makes projects transparent, but helps the creation of project cultures.

A Charter of European eRights

Eberhard Binder, Chief Executive Officer–ICT Strategy and Management, City of Vienna, Austria

Introduction:

TeleCities is the major European network of cities committed to leadership in the Information and Knowledge Society. It provides a platform of over 100 local authorities from 20 different European countries, sharing experience and developing practical solutions achieving an Inclusive Information and Knowledge Society, both at European and local level. TeleCities aim is to promote eCitizenship at local level to ensure that all citizens can equally gain from the benefits of the Information and Knowledge Society.

Cities wish to ensure an effective recognition and protection of concrete and measurable rights of all citizens in the Information and Knowledge Society. These rights are essential to achieving a competitive and competent society in the digital age and to ensuring social and territorial cohesion. These rights include Internet accessibility and access to user-friendly and highly understandable public information and services. The right to a transparent public administration also obliges Public Administrations to provide complete and updated information in each phase of any decision making process including deliberations, consultations and citizen participation. In addition, personal data will have to be made available with appropriate and sufficient guarantees of security which will ensure the privacy and confidentiality rights of citizens. Services will rely on a secure environment in order to improve the trust of citizens and businesses and promote the development of valued content, services and applications. To reinforce the fundamental right to Education in the Knowledge Society, it will be now essential to support the development of lifelong learning to allow people of all ages and sectors to take fully part and benefit of the development of the Information and Knowledge Society. To this end, TeleCities will promote the Charter of European eRights at the local, national, European and global level.

TELECITIES

TeleCities is the major European network of cities committed to leadership in the Information and Knowledge Society. Established in 1993 in the framework of EUROCITIES, TeleCities is open to democratically elected city governments as well as to business and scientific partners. TeleCities boasts of 126 members, thereof 117 cities. President is Barcelona, Vice President Naestved/DK. The Steering Committee consists of Amaroussion/GR, Antwerp/B, Helsinki/FIN, Kingston upon Hull/GB, Cologne/D, Marseille and Nice/F, Siena/I, Stockholm/S, The Hague/NL, Vienna/A, Prague/CZ.

Other Local Authorities members are:

Aalborg, Aarhus, Amsterdam, Bari, Belfast, Berlin, Bilbao, Birmingham, Birkirkara, Bologna, Bonn, Bradford, Bremen, Bristol, Brussels Capital Region, Camden-London, Cannes, Cardiff, Copenhagen, Cuenca, Edinburgh, Eindhoven, Espoo, Frankfurt, Frederikshavn, Gdansk, Genova, Gent, Gijón, Girona, Glasgow, Göteborg, Grenoble, Grosseto, Hagen, Heraklion, Jena, Jun, Katowice, Koper, Leeds, Leeuwarden, Leipzig, Lille, Linköping, Linz, Lisbon, Liverpool, Livorno, Lodz, Lyon, Madrid, Manchester Metz, Milan, Modena, Montpellier, Munich, Münster, Nantes, Naples, Newcastle, Nottingham, Nuremberg, Oulu, Ostrava, Palermo, Porto, Reus, Rijeka, Rome Ronneby, Rotterdam, Sabadell, Salerno, St Petersburg, San Sebastian, Seville, Sheffield Siena, Southampton, Strasbourg, Tallinn, Tampere, Terrassa,

Thessaloniki, Totana, Tranås Turin, Turku, Utrecht, Valencia, Valladolid, Vantaa, Venice, Viladecans, Vilafranca del Penedès, Vilnius, Waterford, Yalova, Zaragoza. Business Members are apc Interactive, Clip Card, Fabasoft AT Software, GoPro Development, Master Metropolis, Oracle, Schweers Informationstechnologie GmbH, Sun Microsystems.

Other members are organisations such as CSP-ICT Research Centre, CIPAL (Centre of Informatics for the Provinces Antwerp and Limburg), ITOSZ (National Association of Intelligent Settlements).

A strong relationship has been established between TeleCities and the two big European ICT networks ELANET www.elanet.org and ERIS@ www.erisa.org based on a trusting cooperation between DG INFSO and the networks.

TeleCities main mission is:

- Policy development and lobbying with the European Commission and other EU institutions by establishing firm co-operation and regular dialogue, also in the framework of consultation processes on specific policies and programmes
- Information provision to the members
- Exchange of experience, transfer of know-how. Enforced co-operation and networking with South European and CEE cities will be pursued
- Development and management of projects relevant to the members and the network.

TeleCities organises Conferences and Seminars, sets up Working Groups, produces policy papers and implements cooperation projects, addressing the following key issues:

- Implementing local public online services integrated into re-engineered processes
- Promoting the right to eSecurity for all European citizens
- Implementing eDemocracy through new forms of citizens' participation and community empowerment
- Ensuring that all European citizens are digitally literate and able to profit from the benefits of the knowledge society
- Benchmarking and learning from the eStrategies of cities and their practical implementation

TeleCities actively works for its members to:

- Influence the European Agenda to ensure that the interests of cities are taken into account in policy making
- Foster exchange of experience and knowledge transfer amongst cities. Co-operation and networking with South European and CEE cities is also pursued to contribute to the enlargement goals of the European Union
- Inform members on policies, programmes and initiatives at EU and local level
- Facilitate and support the development of EU funded projects relevant to the members and the network

In particular the work in 2004 will focus on the development of The Knowledge-based City, to contribute to the Lisbon goals to make Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world.

A Charter of European eRights

Introduction

- The advent of Information Society carries new opportunities for social welfare, but also new risks of inequalities whose consequent dangers may affect the cohesion expected by European societies. The European strategy is based upon the assumption that, if it is true that only a competitive economy guaranteeing sustained growth allows redistributing policies to ensure social welfare, it is also true that only a cohesive society without social exclusion gives the best conditions to create stable growth. According to Manuel Castells, there is at the beginning of the century in every country, a will to spread ICT and especially Internet amongst the public sector. New ways will emerge to use Internet for social utility and stimulate local democracy, which should be closely accompanied and encouraged by governments, at all levels. Now, more than ever, the public sector must become the catalyst for Internet use among citizens and should aim at supporting our cities towards the eEurope 2005 strategy. To this end, there are several functions that local administrations should cover, as follows:
 - Regulatory function
 - -Adopt European and national legal guidelines while adapting them to the new environment
 - -Consider telecommunications infrastructures as a universal service adapted to the local reality and foster and facilitate a real competition of services
 - Promotional function
 - Ensure broadband infrastructures implementation within the regional territories
 - Stimulate sectoral development, identify priorities (education, health) and foster sectors of excellence
 - Own specific function
 - Stimulate general demand, which means providing essential services and information.
 - Increase efficiency and transparency
 - Foster cultural changes to successfully face up Information and Knowledge Society both inside and outside the public administration
 - Democratic function
 - Guarantee transparency of public administration all along the decision making process
 - Commit to respond to citizen participation and strengthen civil society

Guarantee the European rights of citizens

By launching the Charter of European eRights of citizens in the Information Society, TeleCities members wish to ensure the effective recognition and protection of concrete and measurable rights of all citizens in the Information and Knowledge Society. These rights will be essential to achieving a competitive and competent society in the digital age and to ensuring social and territorial cohesion.

This means committing to the idea that local public administration must progressively guarantee to all citizens the specific individual and social rights in the field of the Information and Knowledge Society in order to go beyond possible threats as well as to benefit from available resources generated by technologies and the market.

As citizens are the substantial part of Knowledge Society, defining their rights allows, first to draw up the interaction between citizen and the Information and Knowledge Society,

and then, to determine which model of Information and knowledge Society is best suited to each European city context.

Furthermore, defining these rights also allows cities to create and deliver the services, which are best likely to match the local targets.

Four groups of rights can be distinguished:

- Rights to accessibility
- Rights to education and formation
- Information rights
- Rights to participation

Rights to Accessibility

These will ensure access to technological equipment but will also identify the necessary precepts to the effective use and trust of citizens in technologies and public services based on new technologies.

- Right to access to the network
- Right to security and privacy of personal data
- Right to user and consumer protection

First, covering territory with telecommunications infrastructures is fundamental to give equal opportunities to citizens living in an area. Here, the role of the PA is necessary to guarantee access to broadband network. Where it is missing, a public policy on telecommunications will be absolutely essential to reinforce the whole territory's communications and linkage through a broadband network ensuring real competences in services and content delivery.

Given the amount of cities or districts, which do not even benefit from the high speed Internet and depend on only one company to access online services, the risk of digital divide remains obvious. And for that, a telecommunications policy should be defined and in this sense, mixed public and private financing mechanisms should be looked at. A financial investment in the creation of a broadband network of public Internet access points with personalized user support will logically accompany the policy. Such a network could then reinforce the role of public libraries, civic centres, and schools, which should also be opened as Internet access points during extra-scholar time. This investment will be necessary for citizens who don't have Internet access at home and will allow us to mitigate the effects of digital divide, which mainly hits population according to ages, salary levels or cultural habits.

On the other hand, if privacy and user protection is not ensured on the Internet, we will neither manage to involve them nor generate the necessary confidence in ICTs. To successfully increase confidence, it will be necessary to rapidly engage PAs in the definition of framework to protect user from Internet fraud as well as to develop the necessary actions to regulate and facilitate common security system and delegate responsibility and authority to independent organizations such as the Certification agencies and Domain Management companies which would be in charge of quality and transparency of markets.

Rights to education and training

To reinforce the fundamental right to Education in the Knowledge Society, the Charter considers as essential to support the development of lifelong learning to allow people of all ages and sectors to take fully part and benefit of the development of the Information and Knowledge Society.

- Right to training for an effective use of services and information through the ICT
- Right to long life learning and personalised attention

Indeed, while learning and working were two separate areas of our life, now new technologies offer the chance to learn everywhere and anytime in the life of an individual. The eEurope 2005 will be reached only developing and ensuring the necessary policies and actions that will give citizens the opportunity to update and redefine continuously their skills and competences, in order to be more mobile and well endowed in the European labour market.

Only responding to the citizens' requests for specific competences and skills, and providing each citizen with the content and knowledge he or she really needs, eLearning initiatives will reap high returns in terms of employability and human capital. This means that public institutions have to screen the occupational structure of their territory and the potential development opportunities, gathering customised information about the learning needs of their citizen. Public Administrations will also need to foster and to have recourse to all levels and types of courses, and to lay great stress on the ongoing training of teachers as promoters of change in any educative environment and all specific groups as immigrants, seniors and disabled persons.

Information rights

These rights refer to Internet accessibility to user-friendly and highly understandable public information. This information will also have to be complete, high quality, diversified and up to date, and will have to demonstrate transparency of Public administrations and governments.

- Right to access to high quality, complete, updated, diversified information owned by public administrations

In this sense, Public Administrations will have to be the content source, especially the content related to the information generated by its own organization. Here, it is not a matter of public registers but of all the studies, research reports and evaluation reports, in others terms all the information produced with public money and likely to be consulted by citizens.

In any case, we give most importance to all administration information, available personal data (with appropriate and sufficient guarantees of privacy, security and confidentiality), on everyday life, social and cultural agenda and heritage in all its expressions. This will thus reinforce another fundamental right of citizens to “participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”

Citizen will thus be able to select the set of information, which is the most useful to them, and personalize their relation with an innovative-networked public service. In addition to increasing Internet use, these measures will also promote content, services and the applications development sector.

Rights to participation

These oblige Public Administrations to guarantee to citizens the right to a transparent Public Administration in each phase of any decision making process including deliberations, consultations and citizen participation steps. They also tackle the complementary right to benefit from a Public Administration actively engaged in responding to citizen participation and strengthening Civil Society.

- Right to a transparent public administration during the decision making process
- Right to participate to the decision making process by means of adequate deliberation, consultation and participation steps opened to citizens
- Right to access to information on public administration response to public consultation processes

The increase in citizen participation to decision-making and policy-making processes as the main goal of eDemocracy, is not only a matter of services and technologies. The concept of eDemocracy meant as participation of citizens, embeds the ease with which citizens can relate to the administration and, most of all, the accessibility of its processes and procedures. In this sense, citizens should be informed on the functioning of decision processes in a highly understandable way: that means that the whole administrative flow must be clear and its outcome, whether definitive or intermediate, must be public and available, accompanied by the needed re-engineering processes. In order to participate, the citizen must be aware of who is responsible for processes and actions, who works on them, how these processes flow inside the organisation. Rationalisation, re-engineering, transparency and access are fundamental prerequisites for the development of a participative citizenship.

As an example, citizen participation for drawing up government plenary sessions agendas, and information delivery on agreements concluded and participation repercussions are certainly much more important and effective than anecdotal retransmission of plenary sessions and meetings on Internet or on television, to which only a minority of citizens would be able to follow without relevant background information on the topics concerned. To ensure this right, we need to start and launch ways of effective digital participation in decision-making processes.

Moreover we must consider all the technical options that allow us to ensure an effective response to citizen enquiries and report the results of all citizen-focused communications. By utilising multiple communication channels, we must stimulate participation and encourage citizens to express opinions, suggestions for future service improvement and complaints about current levels of service.

Actions:

- Launch of the Charter at the Porto EUROCITIES Conference December 2003, during the parallel Forum on The eCity of Tomorrow
- Set-up a Working Group on the Charter within TeleCities
- Propose the idea at the Lyon Summit and at the World Summit of Information Society, for a global target
- Cities could promote the idea within their own local context, towards the relevant stakeholders, both at the community and institutional level

Infovek–Open School

Beáta Brestenská, President of API, Deputy of the National Council of the Slovak Republic

In 2004 all schools in Slovakia will be connected to the internet and will have a multimedia classroom. This process was launched in 1999 through the Infovek project. Thus, the first Infovek pillar will be in place, i.e. building of the technical infrastructure and connecting schools to the internet. Great emphasis must be put on the preparation of the digital educational content and the preparation of people for acquiring information literacy and the ability to use information and communications technologies in both their professional and personal life.

Education has become a key factor in building up information society and knowledge-based economies in the countries of the uniting Europe.

Traditional schools have been gradually transformed into modern schools, i.e. undergoing changes are the school climate, methods and forms of pupils' work, the position and functions of teachers and, above all, the transition from encyclopaedic knowledge to development of skills and competences of both teachers and pupils is emerging, crucial for successful assertion on the labour market in EU countries.

The school possesses the potential and is also obliged not only to prepare the young, but also facilitate improvement of the information literacy of society in general. From the very beginning of Infovek, we have been greatly supported by “teachers–digital enlighteners”. Last year the project developed into the “Open School” programme.

The Open School should be the communications and educational centre of the local community where people can educate themselves in information terms, retrain, receive life-long education. The Open School of the Infovek project offers the chance within two years to advance the information literacy of public and state administration employees, as well as that of the whole society.

Internet without Barriers

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An expression “Internet without barriers” can be characterised as a number of rules which should be adhered to and measures which should be completed in order to make Internet accessible for everyone. It might be access to the Internet in a countryside, for socially poor people, seniors, users of mobile phones or other mobile *browsers*, but mainly for handicapped people. For these people means Internet a great compensation of severe barriers, which exist because of their handicap—mainly in the sense of their incorporation in the society and possibly in work process.

Barriers for an access to ICT coming from limited function because of a handicap

There are different types of barriers for an access to ICT (information and communication technology) for handicapped people. There might be technical barriers, but also barriers which can be overcomed by special software process or method. This usually depends on type of a handicap. Most of all **visually-impaired users** (VIU) who are not able to read information from the screen are meant. But it is not only reading of information, also way of this people work with a PC is different. VIU usually does not use mouse, but *keyboard commands*. Also **people with a motorical handicap of upper extremities** must work without a mouse and sometimes also without a keyboard. This group of users controls PC by a stick in their mouth or by a special kind of a joystick adapted for operation by different parts of the body or by a special keyboard, usually with big push buttons for easy manipulation.

There is also a special group of **people** which can **have troubles to understand information** and this group consist not only from mentally retarded people or people with disorder in perception or learning, but also from people deaf from their birth who can have serious troubles to understand the text.

Some barriers can be overcomed by special teaching techniques, others by special hardware components, most of them mainly through software means. We offer you short review which defines:

- groups of people with a handicap
- barriers in access to information through ICT
- outlines possible solution

Risk groups of people with a handicap

- blind, visually-impaired users (NS)
- people with serious motorical handicap of upper extremities (HK)
- mentally ill (MP)
- people deaf from their birth or handicapped people using augmentative or alternative communication (AK)

Barriers in access to information not only from the Internet

- inability or very limited ability to write information and control PC
 - risk groups: NS, HK

- inability or very limited ability to read information from the screen (perceive graphics, lay-out of information on the screen)
 - risk groups: NS
- inability or very limited ability to understand
 - risk groups: MP, AK

How to overcome barriers

Technical solution

- HK: special tool for manipulation with PC by different parts of body
- NS: the touch display which conveys the text information in Braille writing

Software solution

- NS: access to information by software means
 - tools for voice/sound outputs, voice synthesis, software magnifying glass
 - rules for making web presentations better accessible for blind and VIU by specific means - Blind Friendly Web
- HK: SW for manipulation with PC by voice (in the Czech language is for the time being in the stage of development, at a level of simple instructions for simple activities).

Solution by teaching techniques and assistance

If we help handicapped people to obtain ICT access, we have to think of effective use and care for training courses which means by risk groups special procedures or overcoming barriers.

- NS: practice in using the PC and Internet from a keyboard without a mouse and monitor – special procedures help to work without a mouse and teaches how to move in visually oriented systems
- MP, AK: special courses tailored for their handicap (we know about activities of organisations of deaf people and Centre for augmentative and alternative communication).

Groups of blind and VIU are the most at risk among handicapped people, because as the only group these people have serious problems in two defined areas of barriers.

While blind people are able to perceive only text information, from their birth deaf people prefer simple, easy-to-follow and easy to identify graphical symbols and pictures. Both these, at first sight antagonistic demands, are easy to solve for example by programming not only web sites, but also several applications.

Internet barriers

Amateurs and also whole professional teams are engaged in production of web pages. A web presentation tells a lot about its owner. A graphic of a web may mean very much at first sight, but each visitor has its own opinion, its own taste. Web pages should be harmonical for eyes but will this web also be harmonical for an ear? We speak mainly about sound outputs for visually-impaired people, we speak about people who use the Internet for the first time and also about users with lowered ability to understand a text.

How to create a web page which is easy to understand, readable and illustrative?

This task is crucial mainly for public administration because at least this organisations should have their web presentations accessible enough to be dedicated to everyone. There should be logical, not too complicated structure, easy and quick search but unobtrusive and also inventory design, which will not slow down substantially the access to information. For

making such a web presentation there is a whole range of techniques and methods and there is no problem to find these techniques in the Internet.

How a sound output makes the web accessible for blind people?

A comparison from a real life can be following situation: You go with friends and colleagues to a restaurant and a waiter gives the menu to only one of you, the other people are thrown upon a person who reads. When you hear about soups and starters and the person who reads starts with main courses, you do not know any more what he/she read at the beginning. The reading person has often to come back to the text already read and repeat some parts of the text for you. Despite this you have a feeling that you lose an overview. This type of receiving a information is much challenging for ones' attention.

And precisely like this works the sound output and makes the information in the form of a text accessible for a blind user. The blind user can read the whole web page from the "beginning" till the "end". And now you of course think where the internet presentation starts and finishes. At the time of reading is for the blind user accessible actually read item. The global overview is missing. With the help of command from a keyboard the blind user controls movement of the whole text which is read. The perception of the read text is linear. The lay-out of information in the screen is not of an importance for the handicapped people. Crucial is logical break-up of information, mainly by web with a large content.

Project Blind Friendly Web

A project Blind Friendly Web was developed by Czech Blind United (SONS) in the year 2000. It was one output of the teaching course for PC operation for blind and VIU. Just by teaching of the program Internet Explorer hit instructors a barrier which they were not able to overcome. Making the web accessible was at many cases not at all possible. And that is why the first set of seven recommendations for webmasters came into existence. In the year 2001 the Methodological guide Rules for accessibility the web pages for VIU was established and a server: www.bliendfriendly.cz was developed. Web pages which fulfilled the criteria of accessibility at least enough that the blind user found there expected information were concentrated in a so called "portal" at this web page.

Aims of the project

1. To enable the orientation for VIU easier through portal for accessible web pages
2. To show the principles of web without barriers and make all webmasters to use them (through the Methodological guide)

Our first aim is long lasting because testing of web pages is very time consuming. Because of the minimal finance resources we can't afford to pay persons for testing these pages and there is not enough volunteers. There would be of great help if each web master would perform such a test itself. Webmaster knows the web the best and that is why he/she is the person who can do the test very quickly.

Our second aim is successful mainly in the area of state organisations and self-government and penetrates also into services for public (libraries) or non-profit sector. A reward for your effort to make your web accessible can be not only the prestige mark Blind Friendly Web, but mainly enlargement of the group of your visitors by VIU and also other groups of users with specific needs.

After two years a fundamental change was made in assessment of web pages for blind users. Complicated algorithms of calculation which was dependent on an assessor and on a priority of a rule, was replaced by 3 sections:

- Section 1 – (rules with the highest priority necessary for an access) the basic accessibility level
- Section 2 – (rules improving the orientation in a web page) middle accessibility level
- Section 3 – (rules improving the accessibility of a web) the highest accessibility level

A new form is interactive and through connection with adequate part of a new methodical guide enables immediate comprehensive explanation of a given subject.

A *new test* consists of precise assessment of a given criteria, which IS or IS NOT fulfilled fully or the given subject described in a criteria, is not present in a web. A new assessment system enables to react more flexible in case of a change in a style of a web page and according to demand introduce a new criteria or leave out the criteria which are no longer of help. If you stick to Blind Friendly rules your will help not only VIU but also other handicapped users – e.g. those who are not able to use mouse for their work with PC.

The future trends in web creating will surely lead to making web pages without barriers. In the U.S. are state institutions already now obliged to create web pages without barriers. It is only a question of time when it will be compulsory also in the Czech Republic.

To conclude with, please let me tell you about three the most important NOT:

- to make barriers free web does NOT mean higher costs if you count with making barriers free web from the beginning of making the web presentation or by substantial rebuilding of your web. It is only necessary to choose the right technology.
- to fulfil the criteria for barriers free web does NOT mean to *make compromises* in a graphic of your web
- the right way it is NOT to make segregated simplified version of the text version as long as this simplified version is not actualised at the same time as the full text graphical version

At 8. 12. 2003 was the project Blind Friendly Web chosen by technical commission of the competition IT project of the year 2003 together with 7 other candidates for this title and was places in the second–final round of this competition. The competition IT project of the year is organized by Czech Association of Managers in IT Technologies (www.cacio.cz).

Norms for an access to web in the world

The most known norm for access is the norm WCAG (www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT), however some priorities in this norm comply with purely English environment and some rules are necessary to modify for European non English speaking countries. In the U.S. exists a law Section 508 which defines access to web pages financed from public funds. This law comes from the norm WCAG 1.0.

Among European activities is necessary to mention activities of consortium Euroaccessibility (www.euroaccessibility.org). Members of this consortium is e.g. European Blind Union, which also Czech Blind United is a member of.

International cooperation

In the relatively short period of time when making the ICT accessible for VIU the Czech Blind United also took part in international cooperation.

The first important step was including the CZ in the project The EENAT (Eastern European Network on Access Technology) in the years 1997–2000. This project had 2 periods and one after another also countries from the Central Europe (the Visegrad Four) and afterwards another countries from the Eastern Europe (Rumania, Yugoslavia) and Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia) were included. The aim of this project was to help these countries to put across usage of ICT for overcoming the information barrier in the life of VIU in each single country. This project offered technical support and there several international con-

ferences (Prague, Bratislava, Budapest) took part. The Open Society Institute (New York) and The Overbrook School for the Blind (Philadelphia) were organizers of this project. Thank to this cooperation several Czech national sound/voice locations were enforced. The project was for the Czech Republic of a great interest because we made us familiar with a special software which is used abroad. Some of them are already now localised for the Czech environment and are used by VIU who can, thank to this, for example study abroad.

In the year 2002 we visited within the framework of the PHARE project two European countries (Denmark and Austria) where we found out level of ICT for compensation of visual handicap in Danish Blind Union and Austrian Blind Union.

Our future aim is international cooperation in the area of overcoming Internet barriers in our Blind Friendly Web project.

Conclusions

Making the ICT accessible for people with special needs is in our country relatively young and in many ways new field of study. This field is largely developed for people with visual handicap. In this case the Czech Blind United played an important role.

Attained results:

- developed net of advisory centres for appropriate choice of special software (TyfloCentres)
- developed net of special searching centres for visually handicapped (TyfloCentres)
- developed methodology of special education in the area of ICT including work with Internet (TyfloCabinet)
- the realisation of the Blind Friendly Web project (Methodological Centre of Informatics).

What is necessary to improve:

- the quality of education and use of ICT within special schools for VIU
- to ensure a system of special education of visually-impaired children who are integrated into casual schools
- to ensure enough financial resources for ICT compensative requisites for VIU

What is necessary to improve in common:

- to support development of alternative manipulation with PC, including voice control for seriously motorically handicapped people, mainly in case of a handicap of upper extremities
- elaboration of special teaching techniques and ways of proper assistance for people with lower ability to perceive and understand
- to support implementation of procurable ICT means in all regions of our country, mainly in the countryside in order to make ICT and Internet a part of everyday life of our citizens
- to settle for the Czech environment a law for the area of creating barriers free web in a concordance with European and world wide trends which would be guide mainly for creating web presentations and information portals of public administration

Abbreviations

- ICT = information and communication technology
- VIU = visually-impaired users
- SONS = The Czech Blind United

Cooperation of V4 countries in public administration informisation from the viewpoint of the Ministry of the Interior of the CR

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Reform of public administration systems and, recently, also the accession of the Czech Republic and other candidate countries to the community of European Union states have created the possibility of discussing and implementing joint approaches in determined areas. Although in the beginning of their cooperation the Visegrad 4 (prior to the division of Czechoslovakia, Visegrad 3) countries did not primarily follow the objective of entering the EU, in recent years this fact has been significantly accented in the activity of V4 constituted bodies. One of the areas that is a subject of permanent interest of all the countries involved (Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungarian Republic and Polish Republic) is informisation of public administration. Over the past four years or so, the system of negotiation of the respective expert group has stabilised. This group not only represents an important platform for exchange of knowledge and experience, but is also a source of themes and inspirations for carrying out reform steps pertaining to public administration informisation in individual countries. In addition, knowledge exchange across the expert groups allows for acquiring a more comprehensive overview of the connections between particular issues in the entire spectrum of gradual steps and phases of implementing reform goals directed to permanent improvement of activities in all segments of public administration execution.

Cooperation of the Visegrad Four (V4) countries in public administration reform is politically completed by regular negotiations of deputy ministers of the ministries responsible for public administration issues (for the Czech Republic, the Deputy Interior Minister for public administration reform). In terms of specialist cooperation in the given area, three expert groups have been set up:

- Group 1 – for division of competences between state administration and local self-government,
- Group 2 – for informisation of public administration,
- Group 3 – for personnel management in public administration.

The content of the expert groups' discussions regularly issues from the conclusions of the negotiations of deputy ministers of the V4 countries. The political document for the subsequent period is always a declaration, together with the conclusions of deputy ministers of the V4 countries.

The first meeting of expert group 2 took place in early spring 2000 in Prague. Its objective was to provide as integrated information as possible about the state of informisation of public administration in individual V4 countries, i.e. the weight of the participation of individual countries' delegations was at virtually the same level, while the Czech Republic was in charge of organisation in addition. The negotiations of deputy ministers in April 2000 in Prague determined the venue and content of the next negotiations – the end of November and beginning of December in Budapest. An important conclusion of the mentioned April negotiations, which launched the application of systematic principles of organising expert groups' discussions, was the recommendation to all expert groups to draw up a functioning model of permanently rotating meetings of expert groups in the respective states. On the basis of this, the venue of meetings of expert group 2 rotates in the following order: Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic. Similarly rotating are the meeting places of deputy ministers. At the same time, a system of providing and exchanging written documents has been established.

The next negotiations, always preceded by a meeting of deputy ministers, took place in June 2001 in Bratislava, May 2003 (together with expert group 1) in Warsaw and last time—a common meeting of all three expert groups—in early November 2003 in Dobogókő, Hungary.

Since the negotiations of expert group 2 in Budapest in 2001, the weight of participation of individual countries in the agenda has significantly shifted in the direction of the organising country. Among other things, this undoubtedly logical principle has extended the possibilities of practical presentations and visits directly to workplaces of public administration authorities. In addition, always invited to a group's negotiations are a number of leading experts from public administration bodies operating in departments of information support for public administration execution, possibly, also from companies providing information and communications technologies services to public administration bodies or through their mediation to citizens.

Over time, a flexible structure of individual working groups was determined as an important rational attribute. In practice, this means that the composition of individual states' delegations is adapted to the set docket. From the viewpoint of the Ministry of the Interior, it represents, for example, the possibility of more intensive and detailed discussion of the agenda of personal, travel and other documents directly by specialists in the given issue.

It is necessary to openly admit that the deliberations to organise more efficient common meetings of expert groups were primarily incited by economic reasons. Although common meetings of two or all three working groups are an indisputable benefit, discussion on this issue, opened at the Warsaw negotiations of expert groups in May 2003 and concluded in November in Dobogókő, resulted in a unambiguous recommendation to retain separate meetings of individual expert groups since at common meetings there is limited scope for deeper discussion of a problem. It can be expected that the platform of common meetings of all three groups will gain significance after the accession to the European Union since it can be a suitable tool of coordinating standpoints of V4 countries within the EU.

The prefiguration of this alternative was the above-mentioned meeting in Dobogókő, summoned extraordinarily upon the proposal of Hungary, whose major topic was the preparedness of individual V4 countries for membership of the European Union. Since the programme of this initiatively summoned meeting was beyond the framework of the conclusions of negotiations of deputy ministers of V4 countries, all V4 countries were called upon to formulate topics of the meeting they consider decisive in their viewpoint. The Czech Republic, from the position of expert group 2, defined the following topics:

- the process of adapting to EU standards concerning public administration information systems,
- the common course of action in requirements for structural funds – specification of areas of their possible use,
- the manner of data provision (i.e. on invalid passports) by the V4 countries prior to the accession to the EU, in accordance with the Shengen Agreements, solution to the course of action in relation to the accession to the EU (methodology, rules...),
- some issues form the more general area of e-Government, for instance:
 - the system of issuing e-identification cards within the framework of state administration and/or the entire public administration (identification card, access systems, professional chip cards...),
 - electronic signature,
 - a standard for work with metadata (Dublin Core)—used in the V4 countries,
 - the content of public administration websites – (Web Content) – standard and implementation,
 - public administration portals,

- registers of municipalities – contacts to municipalities (in the CR the ePUSA system—the electronic portal of local self-governments),
- communication strategy of regions and municipalities,
- administration of requirements for regional and municipal information systems.

Closely linked to the programme focus of this discussion is the current meeting of expert group 2 planned and organised in connection with the date of the ISSS/LORIS 2004 conference. Delegations of the V4 countries were invited to the conference and discussions on the defined topics will start, immediately after the conference's main programme has finished, in Hradec Králové (continuation the next day in Prague). The docket includes issues of IT-related legislation, possibilities of officials and citizens' access to data (including the possibility of using the internet) and, primarily, the topical issue of changes in personal, travel and other documents in relation to EU accession, including the issue of using biometric data.

It may be stated that cooperation in the mentioned field and the selected form of cooperation serve in an appropriate manner for the set objectives pertaining to public administration reform, facilitate mutual adaptation to changes and development of public administration. The political and specialist benefit is beyond dispute. However, despite proclamations and manifest endeavours, success has not been achieved in deepening bilateral cooperation in the areas of bipartite interest and in the case of interest of one party in familiarising itself in more detail with the solution to a certain issue on the part of another country. There is no choice but to admit again that the limiting factor for the development of this form of cooperation is the economic possibilities of individual member states. Still lacking—at least on the part of the Czech Republic, the Ministry of the Interior, respectively—is the possibility of applying suitable models of economic balances assessing the potential benefits of such forms of cooperation in relation to the costs laid out. This statement should not be construed as criticism, I personally do not know of any suitable model either. Finding and applying such a model would undoubtedly shift /advance, while (at least) maintaining the present level of the political significance of cooperation between the V4 countries, the results of joint activity further in the direction of possible application of common, optimised solutions in individual specialist sections of public administration, including its informisation.

The gnu/LinEx project: Extremadura Region eSustainability Strategy

Luis Casas Luengo, Managing Director, FUNDECYT, Spain

Extremadura (Spain) launched its Regional Strategy on Information Society in 1997 setting up a series of strategic actions (business incubator, the regional plan of technological literacy, e-commerce...) complemented by the Programme of Innovative Action eExtremadura in 2001. The success of these programmes and actions raised the problem of their sustainability in the mid-term future. In 2002, Extremadura Government launched its strategy on Free/Libre Open Source Software—**gnu/LinEx**, as a key element to ensure the e-sustainability. The paper focus on the measures taken up to launch gnu/LinEx and their impact on the regional economy.

Thesis of the project.

The context:

Extremadura is an objective 1 Region, and the poorest region in Spain. Extremadura has never been an industrialised region. With just over 1 million inhabitants, the region is defined by its low density of population: only 25,7 inhabitants/km², and its economy is based on services and on agriculture. The unemployed rate is 16.5%, one of the highest rate in Europe. Extremadura is a border region with Portugal, in the middle of the two of the main development centres in the peninsula (Madrid and Lisbon), but economically Extremadura and its Portuguese borders regions has been excluded from the economic development of the peninsula.

Theses data explain the Regional Strategy on Information Society, launched in 1997, when the regional government assumed that the new economy instruments could be the way to overcome the peripheral situation of the Region, taking advantage of the new technologies.

The basic principles of the regional strategy are:

- To provide accessibility for all, Internet is considered as a public service.
- To literacy the population through general and sectoral plans of Technological Literacy.
- To promote new enterprises and new labour culture based on IT.

The regional Strategy on Information Society:

To achieve these objectives, the Extremadura Government set up to frameworks of actions:

The technological framework through the deployment of the Corporate Network that connects more than 1400 public centres (including all the school in the Region) with a broad band access. It provides the basic infrastructures that allow to have a public internet access in all the villages of the region (that is more than 380 villages, the biggest only with 140.000 inhabitants).

The Strategic Framework is composed by three actions:

- eExtremadura, an innovative action programme co-financed by the European Union, is the global project, and is focused on the mentioned strategic objectives.
- The Plan for the Technological Literacy concreted on 34 public access point with free literacy courses for the general population of the municipalities participating in the Plan.
- The Technological Education Network, that once the intranet is deployed, is focus on the generation of e-Content with the collaboration of all the educational community (teachers, students and parents).

- Vivernet, is a business incubator to promote new enterprises based on TIC and to help the traditional business going digital.

In 1997 the problem was how to implement an Information Society strategy, in 2002 the problem was how to sustain it. And gnu/LinEx is the solution, both as a technological instrument and as strategic action.

The objectives of gnu/LinEx:

The development of the Technological Educational Network, the mobilization of the regional actors through the strategic programmes and the Corporate Network, are the background of the option for FLOSS in Extremadura.

Gnu/LinEx includes an operative system and a series of most used applications in a single distribution. All the software has been translated into Spanish with icons and names that refer to the Extremadura history, present and cultural heritage. This allows that the user can recognised himself on the software that is using.

The sustainability of the Strategy is main objective of the gnu/LinEx project. One of the elements of any Strategy is the independence of the Public Administration that cannot be limited by the interests of a single provider. FLOSS allows the Regional Government to decide when and how launch new initiatives and programmes.

Gnu/LinEx is addressed to: educational system, the enterprise and the literacy programmes. The first success of gnu/LinEx has been to provide a affordable software to achieve the ratio of 1PC for tow students in all the schools of the region in September 2003.

But the success of LinEx will depend on the capacity to promote it among the regional actors, and its potentiality to create a new regional market based on this public initiative.

The sustainability of gnu/LinEx.

gnu/LinEx was the option to ensure the sustainability of the Regional Strategy on Information Society and of the Education System. Now we have a solution, and a new problem: to ensure the sustainability of LinEx itself.

The sustainability will depend on three actors, public administration, citizens and our capacity to promote a private sector able to provide FLOSS related services and products. Or in others words, in our capability to open a new innovating market based on new FLOSS products.

Gnu/LinEx strategy is based on the following actions:

- Gnu/LinEx in the Public Administration, with the objective of training the civil servants of the Regional Government in the use of gnu/LinEx.
- Gnu/LinEx in the Educational Technological Framework. The ratio of 1 PC for 2 students in 700 schools running with gnu/LinEx and connected by the Corporate Network demonstrate the viability of the option for FLOSS.
- Gnu/LinEx in the Regional Research Institutions (University of Extremadura) through project to develop new applications.
- Gnu/LinEx in the private sector through the Business Platform to help the SMEs to going digital with the support of apps specially designed to their needs.

The presentation will include details on these four areas of actions.

Summary:

Extremadura Government (Spain) launched its strategy on Free/Libre Open Source Software - **GNU/ LinEx** in 2002, as a key element to ensure the sustainability of its the Information Society strategy.

The objectives of the regional strategy on Information Society (from 1997) are:

- To provide accessibility for all, Internet as a public service. Nowadays the Corporate Network provides broadband access to all the territory.
- To ensure the Technological Literacy of population through general and sectoral plans, through the Knew Knowledge Centres and the Education Technological Network – ETN.
- To promote new enterprises and new labour culture based on IT, through the Business Incubator (Vivernet)

These programmes and actions are the background of the option for Free Software in Extremadura. In 1997 the problem was how to implement an Information Society strategy, in 2002 the problem was how to sustain it. GNU/ LinEx is not the beginning of the regional strategy, in fact is the last step taken up to the moment.

- GNU / LinEx's goal is the independence of the Public Administration from a single provider. FLOSS allows the Government to decide when and how to launch new initiatives and programmes.
- GNU / LinEx's has been distributed in 700 schools and Extremadura has completed the ratio of 1 PC per 2 students in 2003.
- GNU / LinEx's success depends on enterprises able to provide services and products based on FLOSS. FUNDECYT, through the Vivernet programme, is setting up a platform to promote the migration of SMEs to a new business model based in the development of FLOSS products and services .

The promotion of FLOSS by the Public Administration has demonstrated how a public action can promote innovation among SME, and is also addressed to a new regional market. GNU/ LinEx demonstrates that there is an alternative way of business models in IT business.

Comprehensive agency information about the EU

Přemysl Cenkl, Business Manager, ČTK

In my speech I would like to notify the audience of the possibility of obtaining information about the European Union by means of using information from a comprehensive EU database in the Czech Press Agency (ČTK) Infobank accessible via the internet.

The most important value of all ČTK documentation databases and, primarily, the EU dtb is their significantly wide range and combination of hot news with a solid factual and historical basis.

What are the benefits of the agency's EU dtb for its users?

ČTK strives to provide users of its products with the maximum benefit and comfort for their work. The major advantages of the EU dtb include:

- the possibility to use all available information in one database system in a synoptical structure and with comfortable retrieval;
- another advantage for most users is the fact that all foreign information and documents in the agency are *translated from foreign languages* and stored in Czech;
- a major benefit is *daily updating* of the given dtb provided by documentation editors and addition of topical agency news directly into the environment of the EU dtb.

Sources for creating the EU dtb

As the largest national press agency, the Czech Press Agency has all the appropriate preconditions for creating and updating the EU dtb.

When preparing the current news service and creating documentation databases, the agency draws from a wide range of its own and external information sources. They primarily include:

- a network of its own reporters in Prague, regions of the Czech Republic and abroad, including at the EU headquarters;
- news services of global agencies (Reuters, AP, AFP etc) directly in the editorial system;
- monitoring of both domestic and foreign media, including the internet;
- original sources of information sent to the agency from authorities, companies, unions, associations etc.

Encharged with the creation of individual documentation databases in ČTK is a special editors' team of the documentation editorial staff, which has all the above-mentioned sources available for its work.

The EU database is a multimedia information source

By accessing the EU dtb, users acquire the possibility of working with various types of information pertaining to EU issues:

- topical text information – from ČTK's continuous news coverage relating to EU events;
- text documents from databases – Facts on the EU, Countries of the World, Biographies and Global Events;
- photographs – from both the topical photo-service and the archive pertaining to EU events;
- infographic materials – from both the topical service and the archive pertaining to EU events.

A large amount of text information and documents are illustrated by photographs and infographics and supplemented by internet references to the given issue.

Content of the EU dtb

In the above-mentioned sources, users can primarily find the following information (live materials daily updated):

- characteristics of EU bodies and institutions, including internet addresses;
- the chronology of relations between the EU and the Czech Republic, as well as other countries;
- the chronology of major EU events;
- basic documents of the European Communities/European Union, including major documents relating to EU enlargement (accession negotiations);
- characteristics (drawn up by ČTK) of the above-mentioned documents (for easier and faster orientation);
- basic political and economic data on EU member and candidate countries;
- public opinion polls pertaining to the EU;
- biographies of key personalities of the EU, member and candidate countries (including photographs);
- EU finance (budget) and data on the European Monetary Union (including photographs and infographics);
- EU funds and programmes;
- the enlargement vocabulary;
- the latest news relating to EU events.

Manners of retrieval in the database

The new version of the ČTK Infobank, which also includes the EU dtb, allows for comfortable retrieval of the necessary information in all the parts mentioned above.

Users have the following search fields from the search form:

- retrieval in the full text of news or documents;
- retrieval in the title of news or documents;
- retrieval according to the time of documents' origination or the time of the last logon;
- retrieval in the list of categories (topics of individual pieces of news and documents) in their list with the content corresponding to the type of document.

Processing the data sought

The information sought can be read in the screen's bottom window, subsequently mark the important pieces and display them in a special window. It is fully upon users whether they save the given information file in their PCs, send it to their colleagues or print it.

Terms of access to the EU dtb

With regard to the requests of those interested in a trial period, ČTK provides 14 days' free access to all parts of the EU dtb on the basis of the assigned user name and password in order to assess the benefits of working with information from the database.

After this period has elapsed, those interested have the possibility of acquiring access to the database on the basis of a contract with a monthly lump-sum payment.

In the case of subscribing to several documentation databases, clients obtain a quantity-based discount.

Other ČTK documentation databases

For the purpose of completeness, I give a brief description of other ČTK documentation databases.

Czech Republic – daily updated data on the Czech Republic, continuously supplemented by new documents and columns. The partial database **Regions** lists the basic characteristics of 14 regions, as well as information concerning transport, culture, schools, tourism, health care etc in individual regions, baseline macroeconomic indicators giving an overview of unemployment, the level of wages and GDP in regions, information on election results and the like.

Facts on the EU – contains daily updated data on European institutions, events, summary and tabular characteristics of individual policies, programmes and treaties, the development of relations with candidate countries, the USA, Russia and some regional organisations, as well as vocabulary entries of key European terms. Most documents are completed by internet addresses and references to other related materials.

Countries of the World – a daily updated database, comprising political, macroeconomic, historical, geographical and many other data about every state. Data on individual countries are divided into tabular columns.

The World – daily updated recordings of international events with summaries of important global events.

Expected Events – daily supplemented information on expected events approximately one year in advance.

Anniversaries – important events and personalities both in the Czech Republic and abroad classed according to years, months and days, continuously updated to include new personalities and events.

Sports – summaries of the winners of the top competitions in various sports; results of top events and inquiries, records, doping, sports organisations.

Football – detailed data about Czech and foreign football.

Summary of essential information

The major benefit of the EU dtb is the combination of topical agency news with a factographic and historical basis in the form of documents in one database system with daily updating of all information ensured.

For creation of the EU dtb, ČTK uses a network of its own reporters, the services of foreign agencies and monitoring of domestic and foreign media.

By accessing the database, users acquire text information and documents illustrated by photographs and infographics and, in addition, supplemented by internet references to the given issue.

The database allows for comfortable retrieval and processing of selected information.

ČTK provides those interested with 14 days' free trial access to the EU dtb.

The role of Geographic Information within the evolving European Union

Chris Corbin, Independent Consultant and representing EUROGI, United Kingdom

Geographic Information (GI) and the associated technology is all pervasive and as such has an important role in a very wide range of disciplines. GI supports policy formation and implementation at all levels of government from the local level through to the European Union (EU) level. The European GI community has over the past decade supported a number initiatives such as GI2000, GINIE and INSPIRE that may lead to the creation of a European Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI). GI also has a fundamental role in facilitating seamless government and the development of the European Information Society and Knowledge Economy. Such developments take place within a multilingual and cultural diverse Europe, which is constantly evolving. In May 2004 the largest single expansion of the EU will take place with ten new member states joining the EU the associated European Parliamentary elections (10th to 13th June 2004) and the new European Commission that will come into effect on the 1st November 2004. This paper considers the potential areas where the GI community can focus their attention during this year of momentous change.

Introduction

Geographic Information (GI) and the associated technology is all pervasive and as such has an important role in a very wide range of disciplines. Living proof of this fact can be found in the many case studies that have been published all over Europe that depict how GI has been used to the benefit of the organisations that have exploited the potential of GI and the associated technologies as well as to society as a whole. Case studies play an import role in raising the awareness of the benefits that can be accrued from the exploitation of GI. Awareness raising is particularly important during times of change such as now when the European Union (EU) is passing through its single largest expansion since the Rome Treaty¹ was signed. Many of these case studies have been compiled by the members of each country's National GI Associations such as CAGI as well as by experts that have participated in EU initiatives and funded projects such as INSPIRE² and GINIE³. The Czech Association for Geographic Information (CAGI) has been a leader not just in the Czech Republic itself but also within Europe as a whole in encouraging people to produce and publish case studies. Initiatives such as the annual Geoapplication Awards of the year in the Czech Republic are exemplars that encourage the presentation of case studies that demonstrate the real value of GI to the community and at the same time give recognition to the many people that have brought these achievements about.

The involvement of CAGI within the GINIE project has also led to the development of what is believed to be the first GI case study locator service in the world named *WebCastle*⁴ that is freely available on the World Wide Web. The Technical University of Ostrava played a pivotal role in its development and hosting of *Webcastle* together with the support of CAGI

¹ <http://europa.eu.int/abc/obj/treaties/en/entoc05.htm>

² INSPIRE aims at making available relevant, harmonised and quality geographic information to support formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Community policies with a territorial dimension or impact. It is a legal initiative of the EU that will address technical standards and protocols, organisational and co-ordination issues, data policy issues including data access and the creation and maintenance of spatial information. <http://www.ec-gis.org/inspire>

³ GINIE is a project funded by the Information Society Technologies Programme of the European Union with the purpose of developing a cohesive Geographic Information Strategy at the European level. Its partners are EUROGI, OGCE, the Joint Research Centre, and the University of Sheffield. <http://www.ec-gis.org/ginie>

⁴ <http://gis.vsb.cz/webcastle/scripts/frames.php>

and the many GI experts all across Europe that took part in the GINIE project. As the GINIE project has now ended the European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information (EUROGI) together with its members is now considering how to take forward *WebCastle* and to encourage the European GI community to populate, support and use this valuable case study locator service in a sustainable way.

GI has the potential to support policy formation and implementation at all levels of government from the local level through to the European Union (EU) level if a number of the barriers that currently exist could be overcome. The European GI community has over the past decade supported a number initiatives and projects such as GI2000⁵, ETeMII⁶, GINIE and INSPIRE to mention but a few that have highlighted the potential of GI and the associated technologies, the issues that need to be addressed and proposed recommendations that may lead to the creation of a European Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI). The growing number of EU Directives and initiatives and the understanding that they rely on the availability of GI for their delivery was one of the reasons that led to the European Commission (EC) INSPIRE initiative.

GI also has a fundamental role in facilitating seamless government and the development of the European Information Society and Knowledge Economy. The public sector all across Europe is and continues to invest heavily in the exploitation of ICT in the implementation of cost effective delivery of services to the citizens, enterprises and the public sector itself in a sustainable way. These investments are characterised by the eGovernment initiatives within EU member states and at the pan European level. There are growing pressures as this investment grows to ensure it is cost effective, efficient and sustainable. GI and the associated technologies have much to offer in meeting these pressures and to deliver eGovernment.

GI and the associated technologies combined with the releasing of the vast quantities of data for reuse within the public sector are seen as key elements that would fuel the EU Information Society and Knowledge economy. Through the EU Lisbon Strategy which has now been underway for four years a whole range of initiatives and Directives have or are in the process of being brought forward by the EC to facilitate *"the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion"*⁷.

It is widely accepted that the issues that need to be addressed related to SDI development and implementation by and large are institutional, political and cultural rather than technical. The continued pace of development of new technology and methods related to GI and associated technologies far outpace the ability of society to adapt in order to exploit in a sustainable way these advances to the benefit of all within the European society. This would indicate that the GI community should give emphasis to areas such as capacity building and facilitating the changes that are required as Europe enters into the Information Age and Knowledge economy.

The pervasive nature of GI and the associated technology is both a strength and a weakness. A strength in that it can be used in nearly all human endeavour but a weakness as it is everywhere and all things to all people and is not seen as special. As a consequence it is not surprising therefore that the range of EU initiatives that are dependent on the use GI and the associated technologies do not mentioned GI specifically.

⁵ <http://www.ec-gis.org/copygi2000/>

⁶ European Territorial Management Information Infrastructure (ETeMII) *The Road to Europe's Future in Spatial Data Infrastructure Activities* <http://www.ec-gis.org/etemii>

⁷ http://europa.eu.int/comm/lisbon_strategy/index_en.html

The Lisbon Strategy

“At the Lisbon Summit of March 2000, the EU Heads of State and Government set a goal for the EU over the next decade to become: "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.

The strategy focuses on developing a more competitive and innovative EU economy, creating more and better jobs, giving all a greater stake in our society and protecting our environment. A new 'open method of coordination', according to which Member States define common objectives for delivery in the manner deemed most appropriate at national level, has been adopted for the implementation of the strategy and it was agreed that the European Council would meet each Spring to review and drive the process forward. The process has been reviewed at the Stockholm European Council (when objectives relating to the environment and sustainable development were added), the Barcelona European Council and most recently the Brussels European Council in March 2003. The Lisbon strategy will be a key agenda item at the Spring European Council that will be held on the 25th & 26th March 2004.”⁸

The Lisbon Strategy is of direct relevance to the GI community in that it can be viewed as a vehicle to GI capacity building within Europe through the many action lines related to education, research, innovation, stimulating Small to Medium sized enterprises (SME's), reducing the burden on enterprises and bringing down barriers within the EU through Directives such as the Public Sector Information (PSI) Directive.

The Public Sector Information Directive⁹

The Public Sector Information Directive 2003/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on the re-use of public sector information was published in the Official Journal of the EU on the 31st December 2003 (Reference EU OJ L 345 pages 90 through to 96). The Directive gives member states 18 months to transpose the Directive into their national legal and administrative frameworks such that they comply with the Directive by 1st July 2005. (Reference: Directive Article 12).

The publication of the re-use PSI Directive in the Official Journal of the EU marks the transition from an approach based on the need to comply with guidelines adopted by the EC in 1989 to that of a minimal legal harmonisation framework. The background and the intermediate steps that have been taken since 1989 have been reviewed and published by the GINIE project¹⁰ (GINIE reference D2.9.3). The GINIE review considered the role for the GI community over the next three years with respect to the need to monitor and inform on the practical experiences across Europe on the implementation of the PSI Directive. The GINIE document also proposed eleven issues that needed to be addressed if the objectives of the Directive were to be materialised.

The re-use of PSI Directive applies to over 200,000 public sector organisations within the EU25 and this hints at the magnitude of the cultural change that the public sector has to pass through in order to comply with the Directive. Much of the data held within the public sector is collected, maintained and held at the local level, as that is where the majority of government services are delivered. A substantial amount of this locally held information is considered to be GI.

⁸ <http://www.eu2004.ie>

⁹ http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/multi/psi/index_en.htm

¹⁰ *New Issues for the European GI strategy: Public Sector Information*. Reference GINIE reference D2.9.3 version 2 available from the GINIE web site <http://www.ec-gis.org/ginie>

Many of the processes that underpin the implementation of the PSI Directive are common to those related to freedom of information, freedom of access to environmental information¹¹ and human rights legislation as well as eGovernment initiatives.

Article 9 of the PSI Directive relates to the provision of asset lists preferably online, of main documents, and portal sites that are linked to decentralised asset lists. MIDAS¹² developed and operational in the Czech Republic is a good example of such an asset list.

The importance and role of the PSI Directive is set out in the EC Interchange of Data Between Administrations (IDA)¹³ and the communications on the role of eGovernment within Europe.

Role of eGovernment

The EC in September 2003 published a communication¹⁴ on *the role of eGovernment for Europe's Future*. The communication presents a set of 18 actions to speed up the development of e-government and reinforce the e-government priorities currently being addressed within the eEurope 2005 Action Plan. The key actions proposed include:

- Ensuring access to public services for all citizens, through investment in multi-platform approaches (PC, digital TV, mobile terminals, public access points etc).
- Ensuring trust and confidence in online interaction with governments, safeguard the privacy of data, and properly addressed authentication and identity management issues.
- Making electronic public procurement easier and more widely available.
- Defining, developing and implementing pan-European e-government services and promote their use, in order to facilitate people's freedom of movement in the internal market, and help to establish a true sense of European Citizenship.

Measures foreseen in the Communication to address these issues include exchange of good practices, support from EU R&D, piloting and implementation programmes, and above all increased coordination of initiatives and action plans at national, regional and local level.

The first edition of European Interoperability Framework (EIF)¹⁵ was published in January 2004 that supports the delivery of pan-European eGovernment services and sets out a set of recommendations and guidelines for eGovernment services so that public administrations, enterprises and citizens can interact across borders in a pan-European context. The Framework considers three interoperability areas:

- Organisational interoperability;
- Semantic interoperability;
- Technical interoperability.

The EIF makes 17 recommendations. The objectives of the EIF at a high level include:

- Effectiveness;
- Efficiency;
- Flexibility;
- Transparency.

The GINIE project undertook a review of the evolving strategies related to eGovernment¹⁶ over the past decade and proposed a role for the GI community over the next three

¹¹ Directive 2003/4/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2003 on public access to environmental information and repealing Council Directive 90/313/EEC, (OJ L 41 of 14.02.2003, p. 26) is the main instrument by which the Community legislation is aligned with the provisions of the Aarhus Convention on public access to environmental information.

¹² <http://gis.vsb.cz/midas/scripts/frames.php>

¹³ <http://www.europa.eu.int/ISPO/ida/jsps/index.jsp?fuseAction=home>

¹⁴ COM(2003)567, 26 Sept 2003, see <http://europa.eu.int/egovernment>

¹⁵ <http://www.europa.eu.int/ISPO/ida/jsps/index.jsp?fuseAction=showDocument&parent=news&documentID=2033>

¹⁶ New Issues for the European GI strategy: eGovernment. October 2003. GINIE D2.9.2 <http://www.ec-gis.org/ginie>

years to demonstrate that GI does enable seamless government and in particular to consider and address twelve issues that were identified. (GINIE Reference D2.9.2)

eContent Programme¹⁷

The fourth call of the European Digital Content on the Global Networks content Programme was published on the 14th February 2004. The call is open for demonstration projects and closes on the 14th May 2004. The call addresses:

- **Action Line 1:** Improving access to and use of public sector information at Sub line 1.1 Cross-border information services based on public sector information.
- **Action Line 2:** Enhancing the linguistic infrastructure.

Summary

Within the existing EU15 over 60% of all legislation within a member state originates from the EU. At any one time there are a vast range of initiatives, legal directives and EU funded projects that potentially involve GI and the associated technologies. GI and the associated technologies are no longer a special discipline but a general tool that should and can be used by society at large. Moving GI and the associated technologies into main stream society is a must and this can be facilitated through the PSI Directive and the government initiatives.

This paper focuses in on a number of interrelated initiatives and Directives that have a common theme (PSI and eGovernment) which when combined will greatly assist the potential of a European SDI becoming a reality in the future.

The opening up of the public sector data vaults for re-use will trigger growth in the GI market. This will not just have an economic benefit to the citizens of Europe but in the process will assist to build up and strengthen the GI capacity right across the EU. If this occurs this would enable GI and the associated technologies to be used as an every tool in assimilating, analysing and promulgating information for the benefit of all in Society.

The GI sector has an important role in assisting with the implementation of eGovernment and the PSI Directive and to help facilitate the cultural change that is required if these developments are to lead to a large vibrant Information Society and Knowledge economy within the EU. There is a real need for case studies that demonstrate the GI and the associated technologies do enable seamless government and that the PSI Directive is having the desired effect. There is much that can be done by the GI community to assist the delivery of the aspirations set out in the EU Lisbon strategy for Europe.

¹⁷ <http://www.cordis.lu/econtent/call4.htm>

CALIMERA: co-ordinating IST innovation in Europe's local cultural institutions.

Robert DAVIES, Masters in Information Management, Scientific Co-ordinator, CALIMERA (Partner, MDR Partners), United Kingdom

CALIMERA, a coordination action under the EU's IST programme FP6, will assist local institutions (libraries, museums, archives) to apply and develop innovative technologies and strategies for serving ordinary citizens in their everyday lives. The project will monitor and select technical developments and solutions emerging from IST, national research and industry suitable for applications responding to the needs of local cultural institutions. The CALIMERA network covers more than 40 countries.

Introduction

CALIMERA is a Coordination Action under the Sixth Framework Information Society Technologies R&D programme which began its work on 1 December 2003. It is designed to assist local institutions (libraries, museums, archives) to apply and develop innovative technologies and strategies for serving ordinary citizens in their everyday lives.

European cultural heritage is a function of the collective memory of the varied cultural traditions and communities within Europe. The increasing importance of local cultural identity, combined with the potential of technology, will be a major catalyst for the take up of the Information Society by ordinary citizens and will provide bridges for social inclusion and across the digital divide.

Local government now has the power to tackle quality of life issues through pursuing the economic, social and environmental well-being of its community. But those involved with cultural development frequently report a lack of understanding among colleagues, elected members and within other agencies, of the contribution that culture can make.

This lack of understanding is evident in:

- Terminology: people are still uncomfortable or uncertain about the word culture itself
- The narrow view of culture (seen as elitist, high arts, irrelevant)
- Disregarding its value, not taking it seriously or regarding it as a luxury

A number of barriers militate against the effective integration of cultural strategies within the overall strategic and service environment for local authorities.

- Barrier 1: Lack of understanding of culture and its potential contribution to local well-being
- Barrier 2: Lack of empirical data on cultural impacts
- Barrier 3: Dispersal and fragmentation of cultural services
- Barrier 4: Lack of effective leadership for culture
- Barrier 5: Translating strategic priorities into actions
- Barrier 6: Getting communities to express the value of culture
- Barrier 7: Making partnerships work for culture and community

There is a need for guidance for local authorities on the ways in which local cultural and leisure services may contribute to the process of developing local authority community strategies through promoting the inclusion of cultural projects and activities. Local cultural strategies can help local authorities and their partners achieve greater effectiveness in integrating cultural and community development needs for their areas and help demonstrate the benefits of integrated approaches, particularly in showing how culture can support delivery of community priorities for improved quality of life and community well-being.

‘It is joined up with our personal, community, regional and national identities. It is joined up with our diverse lifestyles and social environments. It is joined up with the way we live, work and play. It is increasingly joined up with our capacity for sustainable economic development, and attracting inward investment in a knowledge-based and creative economy. It is joined up with the ways in which we can make communities and places physically attractive, socially and economically dynamic and diverse. It is joined-up, ultimately, to our whole quality of life.’ (UK Local Government Association, October 2003)

Local institutions such as public libraries, museums and archives are essential contributors to these goals. PULMAN’s Oeiras Manifesto www.pulmanweb.org identified four key areas in which local cultural institutions can play a key role in assisting local government to achieve its objectives at the same time as moving towards the goals of the e-Europe 2005 Action Plan.

- Citizenship and democracy (e-government)
- Lifelong learning
- Social and economic development
- Cultural diversity

Critically, local cultural institutions have to be mobilised to make best use of existing technologies and to contribute to the creation, use and delivery of local cultural content to meet specific local information and learning needs. They also have an enormous need to adopt and benefit from the goals of the European research programme.

Many local cultural institutions are changing fast: but they will need to change even faster during the coming decade by re-engineering their services and institutional character.

There remains a need to ensure that governments and institutions are fully aware of the issues, to identify the guidance needed and to assess and address the skills requirement, to overcome fragmentation and support strategies of excellence which have impact at local level.

There is also a need to assist the leveraging of opportunities and increase interest in addressing cultural issues through the European structural and development funds earmarked for regional development.

Objectives of CALIMERA

CALIMERA, through its carefully focused and structured programme of work will make a cost-effective and high value contribution toward addressing these needs.

It will:

- Coordinate and mobilise local cultural institutions for their new role as key players in transforming innovative technologies into helpful services for ordinary citizens, including all types of user from children, to employees and pensioners, into the Information Society, putting European cultural heritage at the service of the citizen.
- Promote the position of local cultural institutions as intermediaries between technological modernisation and end-users, creating and delivering access to environments for intelligent heritage and cultural tourism, identifying a framework for focused research on usability and ease-of-use.
- Ensure that local cultural institutions (public libraries, museums and archives) benefit from and contribute to the goals of the EU *Information Society Technologies RTD Programme 2002–2006* by developing their capacity and competence.
- Monitor and select technical developments and solutions emerging from IST, national research and industry suitable for applications responding to the needs of local cultural institutions. The technologies selected will aim to fulfill citizen's needs through user-friendly services, facilitating preservation and access to digital cultural objects at lower

cost while promoting interactive, personalised communication and transactions, as well as multilingual and multicultural extensions.

- Encourage local cultural institutions to participate in future calls for proposals by coordinating the strategies developed by local authorities, identifying research issues, establishing joint working groups and facilitating discussion for a, bringing together stakeholders including professional networks, national and local authorities and industrial players.
- Contribute to strategies for preserving the European collective and community memory in all its variety, contributing to a knowledge-based economy in Europe
- *Increase sharing of best practice*, by local institutions, produce guidelines and benchmarking tools and prepare high-impact dissemination activities.
- Foster collaboration with Europe's research partner countries all over the world, with a specific focus on SouthEast Europe and with international and national funding agencies dealing with the local services dimension.

Workplan summary

Over its 18-month duration, starting 1 December 2003, the CALIMERA 18 month Co-ordination Action is structured as five Workpackages (WP) with a high level of integration and mutual inter-dependence. In support of this, CALIMERA will identify country co-ordination groups, national representatives and industry participants in virtually all the countries of Europe and will organize expert workshops on key topics.

WP1 Technologies and research for local services will identify technologies and relevant research and link this to the cultural community mapping exercise conducted in WP 2, to identify which areas of research hold the most promise in offering citizens new opportunities for active participation through local institutions and what research is likely to bring the most impact and benefit in application.

Through ***WP2 Local services: sharing policies and best practice*** and the involvement of national authorities, ministries and professional representative bodies throughout Europe, CALIMERA will provide the necessary forums to identify and develop tools such as guidelines to deliver these findings in a form which will make an impact on strategic thinking and real world services.

WP3 the end user experience: a usable community memory adds a key extra dimension, establishing and validating the usability research agenda for local cultural institutions and their end-users, ordinary citizens, also producing a key guideline on this topic.

WP 4 Dissemination, networking and training provides the human network development and co-ordination activities across the national and local authorities, professional bodies, individual professionals, projects and industry players who are the broad constituency coordinated by CALIMERA. This workpackage will also provide an assessment and recommend a development path to support training for the engagement with new technologies and research by local cultural services.

As CALIMERA proceeds, its website www.calimera.org will act as a multi purpose portal providing access to all the key work done by CALIMERA including:

- Guidelines and roadmaps
- Country-based benchmarking reports
- The policy toolkit and advisory channels
- Best practice forum
- Solutions Notice board

An alerting service will support interactive consultation on issues such as business models, policy questions, key technologies and usability issues.

WP 5 provides the **management, co-ordination and evaluation activities** and the leadership activities necessary in an extensive co-ordination activity of this kind.

CALIMERA, related projects, enlargement and international work

CALIMERA builds upon the achievements the PULMAN Network of Excellence which has already set the scene for promoting best practice among local institutions throughout Europe and will provide a basis for the CALIMERA agenda.

The project will also develop synergies with related activities in the area of Heritage for All and recently agreed networking ventures CHIMER, CIPHER, COINE, IST FP 5 projects and networking actions such as ACTIVATE, MUSICNETWORK, TRIS, BEASTS, SEIN, and recently agreed networking ventures under FP6 such as BRICKS, DELOS, EPOCH, and PRESTOSPACE.

CALIMERA will also benefit from the recommendations and guidelines on digitisation which MINERVA is developing to address the needs of local institutions.

Finally, it will ensure that those countries which are likely to become the next wave of applicants to join the EC can benefit from the development of local services being undertaken in CALIMERA and FP6 in general and extend joint research activity in the area of community memory and local cultural services to Europe's research partners elsewhere in the world.

Contracted partners

The partners in the consortium bring together a balance of viewpoint, expertise and input necessary to carry out the proposed workplan. They include:

- ambitious and innovative local authorities with a commitment to a cross-domain agenda and to the effective deployment of technologies and research
- national authorities with a dynamic approach to the strategic development of local cultural institutions including those from the two countries of Europe (Norway and the UK) with perhaps the strongest achievements so far in developing cross-domain mechanisms.
- organisations with strong research management and analysis capability relevant to this field of work from the public and private sectors
- one European level networking association (EBLIDA) which will co-ordinate contacts with other bodies at European level.

Three project reference groups are also being formed.

Reference Group 1 – locally-based professionals

A local professional 'reference network' is designated the Country Co-ordination **group** who are also mainly full partners in the project

Reference Group 2 – National authorities group

National authorities or agencies responsible at strategic level for public libraries, local museums and archives in each country have been invited to nominate individuals to join this group. They will be finalised in the early stages of the workplan. Their role will be to develop contacts and co-ordination with departments or agencies responsible for other domains, where necessary and to participate in or identify appropriate participants for the work on strategic co-ordination of local cultural institutions.

Reference group 3 – Industrial ‘pool’

A group of suppliers of innovative and relevant solutions and technologies with European and inter-regional delivery potential will be identified to form this group. Country co-ordinating groups will be involved in its identification. It is expected that this group will be large and will be a major contributor to the solutions noticeboard. Criteria for their inclusion in the pool will include:

- involvement or clear interest in the cultural heritage field;
- ability and willingness to deliver services across national borders;
- technical capability to deliver in appropriate technical modalities (e.g. as web services);
- engagement with or interest in national and European research programmes
- compliance with open platforms and orientation toward application of IST-oriented standards.

Summary

CALIMERA, a coordination action under the European Union’s IST programme FP6, is assisting local institutions (libraries, museums, archives) to apply and develop innovative technologies and strategies for serving ordinary citizens in their everyday lives. Its main objective is to ensure that local cultural institutions benefit from and contribute to the goals of the IST RTD Programme 2002–2006 by developing their capacity and competence and to participate actively in R&D work

The project will monitor and select technical developments and solutions emerging from IST, national research and industry suitable for applications responding to the needs of local cultural institutions. The workplan addresses identification of key research topics, forums for sharing policies and best practice, usability requirements, dissemination and training, as well as management, coordination and evaluation.

CALIMERA will participate actively in the extension of the European Research Area, especially by nurturing the involvement of the countries of South East Europe that may be the next candidates for EU membership.

Description of project MESTO.SK

Miroslav Drobný, President of the eSlovensko, Chairman of the Committee for Self-Government Informatisation of the Union of Cities of Slovakia

MESTO.SK (mesto = town/city) was founded in 1998. It has been operated since 2002 by NGO eSlovensko (www.eslovensko.sk). The main aims of this project are to support:

- Development of infrastructure of towns and cities
- Education of local officers and citizens
- eContent and eTechnologies
 - Local eGovernment
 - Tourism development

MESTO.SK is a project which integrates information and services of all 2900 Slovak local governments:

- 138 cities or towns (3 044 248 citizens)
- 39 city parts (Bratislava and Kosice)
- 2715 villages (2 335 207 citizens)
- 8 regions

More than 100.000 visitors visit website MESTO.SK per month. This project has been the most visited one among all of the public webpages in Slovakia since 1998. Project MESTO.SK had been awarded the Blue Globe–Multimedia Award 2000: the best multimedia presentation in Slovakia, SlovakPrix MultiMediaArt 2002 (category “Citizens, democracy and e-government“) and SlovakPrix MultiMediaArt 2003 (category “Citizens, democracy and e-government“ and “Tourism development“).

There are about 40 partners of project: Slovak government (eSlovakia), Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Transportation (including development of information society), UMS (Association of Towns of Slovakia), SZM (leader of Slovak internet), Press agency SITA, Mapa Slovakia, Slovak Telecom, Orange, ESET, HP, etc.

The most popular parts of project are:

- local news (SPRAVODAJSTVO): 500.000 local news since 1993 (including news from the press agencies, local government information, citizens’ opinions, etc.)
- eForms (AKOVYBAVIT.SK): 130 ways how to dispatch different kind of official documents
- tips where to go (KAMVYRAZIT.SK): 5.000 current culture, sport events and leisure activities (information from local government, institutions and companies).
- legislation (LEGISLATIVA): 1.800 current local government and state legislation
- maps (MAPY): 138 virtual maps (list of all streets in each city or town, localization of all local government offices, tourist information, etc.)
- job offers (PROFESIA): job offers and demands in towns and cities
- statistics: statistic information on, for example number of residents, the main characteristics of town or city, opening hours of local offices and institutions, names and contacts of city leaders, etc.
- accomodation (UBYTOVANIE): on-line reservation system
- local companies (FIRMY): list of local companies which intend is to support bussines of SMEs
...and the other services.

Sponsors of project MESTO.SK are: private sector, Slovak government, local government, NGO, EU, UN.

Genesys Solution for Government and Local Communities (Cost-effective multi-channel interactions with citizens)

Nicole Hill, Head of Local Communities verifical Market, Alcatel France

Public agencies (Government, local authorities and local communities) are under increased pressure to be more effective with taxpayer funds, increase operational efficiencies, and provide better service to citizens. In response to these challenges, agencies are looking for solutions that enable efficient and effective interaction with their citizens.

Genesys' Real-Time Interaction Suite helps public agencies meet the demands of today's constituents, by offering, easy-to-use access to public services. With Genesys, public bodies can now provide a consistent, high level of service around the clock, resulting in increased convenience for citizens.

Business Challenge

Serving the public has never been more difficult. Public agencies face a multitude of challenges, including shrinking budgets and increased constituent expectations. To meet these demands, government agencies and local communities are being forced to rethink how they deliver service and communicate with their citizens.

Many government and local community contact centers have been set up as efficient functions to collect money or to administer programs. Whether the operation is taxation, health, welfare, employment, or some other government program dealing with the population, in all cases, the success of the program depends upon citizen "customers" voluntarily contacting the agency contact center. Providing poor service can lead to the use of more expensive means of delivering the service or collecting the funds.

What does "good service" mean in government or local community contact centers? It is similar, but not the same, as offering good service in any business-to-consumer enterprise. Just as in the business world, wait times need to be short, identifying the citizen needs to be as painless as possible, and the contact should be routed to someone who is capable of helping the citizen without unnecessary transfers and without the caller having to repeat identifying or case information. In some cases, it is sometimes better to make a citizen wait longer for a qualified resource to handle the call, in the interest of resolving the issue without transfer. There are also legal requirements in some cities and countries that demand that only certain people handle certain calls. These both fly in the face of traditional definitions of "good service" in business operations.

What does "efficiency" mean in government or local community contact centers? As in business, it depends on the operation. Is the agency likely to have a long-term relationship with the caller, or is it likely to be an occasional instance of problem resolution? How the contact is efficiently handled depends on the answer to this question. The old answer of "the shorter the call, the more efficient the operation", does not necessarily apply in either case. If an agent can keep the caller on the phone long enough to resolve the issue, or can take another step in building the long-term relationship; that is another person who does not have to go through the expensive legal system or be sought out by people in the field. If measures of efficiency can take into account cost avoidance outside the contact center, government operations, as with their business counterparts find compelling reasons to utilize leading measurements such as "one call resolution," and "rate of voluntary return". In operations where long-term relationships must exist for the success of the agency, a focus on reducing *case* or *problem* resolution time, as opposed to call holding time, become good measures for ongoing efforts at increasing efficiency.

Genesys for Public Agencies

With Genesys' integrated, multi-channel service capabilities, public agencies (government and local communities) can now offer a personalized service around the clock, resulting in increased convenience for citizens. With Genesys, agencies can also deliver consistent service across all multi-channel touch points.

The Genesys Real-Time Interaction Suite supports all communication channels, including e-mail, web forms, chat and web collaboration while leveraging a unified management and routing strategy. Integrating Internet capabilities into the contact center creates a seamless and consistent environment for all constituent communications regardless of the communication channel. Using a combination of constituent information, caller entered data, business rules and agent skills; callers are routed to informed agents, resulting in high constituent satisfaction.

Phone-based self-service can be used to provide citizens with 24x7 access to frequently asked questions, such as program details, status and payment information. Speech-enabling the user interface allows callers to use voice commands for a more natural and pleasant experience. Speech-enabled self-service resources are deployed as virtual extensions of the contact center staff, making access easier, from anywhere at anytime. Self-service also frees agents from answering basic, repetitive questions — allowing them to focus on more complex interactions that require human involvement.

Genesys also offers outbound dialing functionality to reach citizens with minimal agent involvement. Proactive notification of emergency information or program information reduces inbound traffic requirements, increasing operational efficiency while driving down cost of operations.

Solution Map for Government & Local Communities

Public Agency Federal/ Provincial Regional/ Local Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits • Employee Travel • Employee & Dept. Locator • Internal Help Desk • Unified Communications • Voice activated Dialing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Welfare • Game & Wildlife • Health Administration • Justice & Public safety • Patent & Trademark • Postal Services • Social Services • Tax & Revenue
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits • Employee Travel • Employee & Dept. Locator • Internal Help Desk • Unified Communications • Voice activated Dialing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 311 Non-emergency services • 911 Emergency services • Parks & Recreations • Parking & Traffic enforcement • Permits & Licensing • Local Tax collection • Transportation services • Utilities, Streets & Sanitation
	Internal Pro- ductivity	Citizen Sup- port
	Application Focus	

Key Features

Multi-channel access

- Integrated phone, e-mail and Web capabilities enable citizens to easily and intuitively access services on a 24x7 basis.
- Migrate citizens to the lowest cost and/or most effective of interaction.

Segmentation and analysis

- Prioritize, segment and route interactions according to value, case or problem based strategies, desired service level, or specified need.
- Universal queuing of interactions for quick and efficient service provisioning.

Comprehensive reporting & scheduling

- Conduct sophisticated information analysis with real-time and historical reporting across live support and self-service.
- Optimize workforce scheduling by leveraging real-time and historical data.

Automated notifications & callback

- Outbound dialing enables proactive notification of new programs and automated collections of payments.
- Voice callback capabilities reduce wait times and improve agent productivity.

Benefits

Increased citizen satisfaction

- Enhance the caller's experience by reducing service times and providing 24x7 access to government programs and emergency information.
- Reduce claimant frustration by transferring them to an agent who is familiar with their case and equipped to resolve their issues.

Reduced operational expenses

- Reduce transaction costs by leveraging self-service to provide citizens with information about programs, eligibility, application procedures, status of claims or payments, and applicant updates.
- Leverage installed hardware and software with standards based software only solution.

Increased resource utilization

- Reduce service times by intelligently routing callers to agents who have the required skills or are familiar with the caller's specific case.
- Improve agent productivity and operational efficiency by integrating new media communication channels with traditional forms of communication.

Customer Success

311 Application – City of New York

New York City currently maintains over 40 help-lines, including 14 for public safety, eight for infrastructure, regulatory and community services, seven for business affairs and waste management, and 11 for health and human services. There are more than 11 pages of listings under New York City in the telephone book. Not surprisingly, finding a specific city agency or service can be frustrating and confusing for the citizens.

To alleviate this problem, New York City implemented a new 311 Citizen Service Management System, leveraging Genesys' Real-time Interaction suite. The goal of the project is to create a single, integrated communication channel through which all of the City's non-emergency service and information requests will be managed.

The 311 project is designed to help the city increase operational efficiency by using lower-cost service delivery channels, reduce the number of transferred and lost calls, and increase agency productivity and responsiveness. The new service is intended to provide users with faster problem resolution, easier access to knowledgeable help, better self-service options and more-personalized service.

Under the new one-stop-service delivery model, New York City residents will be able to dial 311 on their telephones to access a wide range of city services currently delivered through more than 50 separate agencies, similar to the way they dial 911 for emergency services. These services include:

- Directory assistance requests for local government office phone numbers, addresses and office hours.
- Requests for publications and information about specific processes.
- Requests for a broad range of services, from fixing potholes or arranging for sanitation pick-up to requesting a birth certificate.

Child Services Agency – Government of Australia

The Child Services Agency run by the Government of Australia is responsible for assisting parents who are separated to provide financially for their children. The goal in achieving their mission is to maximize citizen self-reliance in governing the agreements and the follow up execution of those agreements, in contrast to relying on the government and courts to establish and monitor agreements between divorced parents. In the large majority of cases, this means the Agency assists people for a short time, and then exits the case. The portion of the Agency handling these cases is called “Collection Support.” In a minority of cases, longer-term management is required.

In the past, the Child Services Agency simply had smaller and larger regional offices, with local phone numbers and files. If a parent moved out of the area, as was frequently the case, the Agency did not have a good methodology for coordinating across two offices to reconnect the parents in negotiations and case management. Calls would go into local hunt groups, be picked up by anyone available to answer the phone, and then the correct case worker would seldom be available and so messages were inefficiently passed back and forth, sometimes for weeks before a real connection could be made and the beginning of a resolution take place.

Leveraging Genesys Interaction suite, the Child Services Agency transformed all of its offices into a single, virtual contact center. Clients needed to be able to contact the individual caseworker, simply based on their case number, and if that caseworker was not in, then another with similar skills needed to be able to access the client file and answer questions and update the case. Virtually every caseworker is now a contact center agent. Each is assigned skills that allow them to take cases of certain characteristics. If there is no case file established, then the Interactive Voice Reponse system asks enough questions to qualify the skills needed by a caseworker taking the call. The new technology has resulted in significant improvement in customer satisfaction with improved operational efficiencies as follow:

- 26% increase in call volumes with no staff increase
- 15% increase in calls resolved in self-service (IVR)
- 9% increase in customer satisfaction over previous year

Unemployment Insurance – State of Washington

The State of Washington Unemployment Insurance department was lagging in the areas of technology and operations innovation. The agency had made the transition from forcing those out of work to stand in long lines at office locations around the state and had moved to largely call center-based operations for filing and weekly updates. However, the systems and processes being used were creating as many problems as they were solving, and complaints from Washington citizens were reaching the desk of the governor. Customers were complaining of ring-no-answers, dropping of calls after they had waited in queue a long time, and system crashes resulting in very poor customer service.

Just months after implementing Genesys technology at their three contact center locations, the Unemployment Insurance department had a clear idea of traffic levels, and was successfully dealing with her volumes with lower call holding times.

Leveraging skills based routing for (a) language and (b) type of issue being resolved, has resulted in improved service levels and citizen satisfaction – leading to less transfers of calls, and more single-call resolutions, making the operation more efficient. All of these improvements has allowed the Unemployment Insurance department to bring its agent staffing levels down from 450 agents to 250 agents, yet providing better service with lower wait times.

GIS and EU projects

Karel Charvát, Czech Centre for Strategic Studies, Czech Republic

The paper sums up practical experience with European projects of the 5th science and research framework (FP 5). Using specific examples, it demonstrates some results achieved within FP 5 by the Czech Centre for Strategic Studies (CCSS) itself and its members (primarily Lesprojekt-sluzby s.r.o, Help service – remote sensing, s. r. o, MJM Litovel, a. s.). The paper also highlights experience with project management, from preparation to completion.

The second part analyses the possibilities of applying GIS issues in FP 6 projects. It outlines their basic directions in comparison with FP 5.

FP 5

FP 5 was launched in late 1998 and lasted until the end of 2002. FP 5 represented one of the first possibilities whereby Czech organisations could directly engage and participate in these projects as equal partners. FP 5 also represented possibilities for projects that dealt with or concerned GIS issues.

- Thematic programme 1–Quality of life and management of live sources
- Thematic programme 2–User-friendly information society
- Thematic programme 3–Competitive and sustainable growth
- Thematic programme 4–Energy, the environment and sustainable development

Virtually all the priorities offered the possibility of a project with a GIS topic. My personal experience pertains to IST. Here, within FP 5 there was one challenge directly with a GIS issue, in which we failed. However, we participated in solutions to four other projects in other priorities where GIS technologies were the basis. It concerned the following projects:

- Wirelessinfo–focus on mobile GIS and location-based services
- Premathmod–web analytical services
- ReGeo–multimedia geo-applications for eco-tourism
- EMIRES–promotion of business activities in marginal regions (tourism)

Wirelessinfo

The Mobile GIS Internet conception, developed within the framework of the Wirelessinfo project, is a new solution providing mobile internet access to data and its updating. The Wirelessinfo system allows through access to data via GPRS (GSM, HSCSD) for data communication with various clients. It is possible to use notebooks or special field computers on the basis of PC technologies and PDA and/or mobile telephones. The solution supports location-based services on the GPS principle. It is applied in agriculture, forestry, rural development, environmental protection, as well as for tourism, land-use planning, rescue systems etc. The basis of the technology is MapServer, University of Minnesota. MapServer is an open-source development environment for creation of internet GIS applications.

Premathmod

The Premathmod project's objective is to improve data access and data analysis methods in precise agriculture. It was focused on new updated agricultural production systems and supporting tools. The project's main tasks were as follows:

- To implement modern information tools in practice in precise agriculture for data storage and access, based on metadata technologies, open geographical information systems and new data sources such as high resolution satellite data and related supporting tools. The system is evaluated and tested by end users.

- To implement and test data analysis methods based on multi-dimensional probability assessment, information theory and a combination of various measurement methods with variable uncertainty types, taking into consideration the effect of ground relief and methods of chemical substance and organic material movement modeling. CBA methods will be used for these needs.

The solution was based on implementation of web analytical services. MapServer and GRASS were used as the basic solution systems.

Regeo

The project's fundamental objective is to develop a regional geo-multimedia information system focused on eco-tourism. The project's major goals are as follows:

- Design and development of a virtual GEODATABASE based on distributed data sources;
- Use of this database as a platform for user-oriented applications in eco-tourism;
- Integration of new display methods;
- Use of geo-referenced information;
- Application of new and improved client presentation methods by means of off-line and on-line tools, including developed display methods;
- Building up an economic concept that will function for several user layers, system and planning administration, data for visitors, promotion of e-commerce in a region;
- Demonstration of various solutions that will reflect regional specificities of tested territories;
- Finding financial possibilities for operating such a system, preparation of a business plan, advertising materials and workshops for the system's promotion.

The project will be completed in December 2004.

EMIRES

EMIRES aims at enhancing economic growth in marginal regions and goods and population mobility. Fulfillment of its goals is divided into four basic tasks:

- Establishment of regional service centres (RSC) that will control cooperation between individual subjects (Dynamic Value Constellation).
- Practical demonstration of EMIRES RSC in a network formed by four EU regions (Spain, Finland, UK and Greece) and one region in a newly associated country—the Jeseníky region. This will ensure the transferability of results into various conditions. The selected regions have widely differing socio-economic conditions, thus the solution must cover various scenarios so that these regions can benefit from RSC functioning.
- Preparation of a business plan for individual regions that will ensure RSC functioning in the future. The plan will also comprise instructions, including technical, financial and social aspects usable in regions after RSCs have been built up.
- Use of the project's results for creation of the EMIRES Regional Innovative Programme for EU regions. This innovative plan will be submitted to DG REGIO for evaluation of innovative projects co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund for 2000–2006

Objectives in the Czech Republic

- Building up of an information server;
- Tourism promotion;
- Education and preparation for accession to the EU;
- System testing;

- Support for the origination and strengthening of business networks in the region;
- Cooperation with other projects.

The project will be completed in December 2004.

All the mentioned projects primarily supported the development of web services based on the MapServer principle.

6th framework programme

The 6th framework programme for 2002–2006 (FP 6) was adopted by the Council of Ministers on July 3, 2002. Its objective is integration of efforts and activities on a European scale. They are only implemented in a limited group of the following seven thematic circles:

- Genetic research and biotechnology for health;
- **Information society;**
- Nanotechnology, intelligent materials and new manufacturing processes;
- **Aviation and space research;**
- **Food safety and health risks;**
- **Sustainable development;**
- **Population and government in an open, knowledge-based European society.**

The potential for GIS-oriented projects is mainly in the highlighted circles.

FP 6 will primarily use two instruments:

- Networks of Excellence
- Integrated projects

Networks of Excellence

The aim is strengthening and developing the scientific community and its improvement through European integration of existing research capacities on national and regional levels. Every network's goal will be collecting the latest knowledge from individual branches in such a manner that the knowledge critical mass is connected. The networks will strengthen the uniqueness of universities, research workplaces and companies, including small and medium-sized, scientific and technological organisations.

Integrated projects

Integrated projects are proposed with the aim of increasing European competitiveness, reflecting social needs and mobilising the critical mass of sources and abilities of research and technical development. Each integrated project will clearly define scientific and technological goals and will have to show specific results that can be applied in the introduction of new products, methods and services. Above all, these goals should affect long-term research with higher risk.

What have the new instruments brought for the Czech participants?

The new instruments have significantly lowered the chances for assertion of smaller organisations, especially SME. Since the Czech GIS market is primarily formed by SME, it represents a substantial reduction of possibilities. The situation is also markedly aggravated as regards universities and academic workplaces.

Where are the possibilities of the projects?

There are two strategies in the IST area:

- Development of basic technologies (semantic GIS, GIS and GRID);
- Innovative applications above GIS (risk management, e-business, LBS).

Wide-ranging opportunities are also in other areas. Surprisingly, many possibilities are in aviation and space research, where remote Earth exploration (GMES) has been transferred, as well as sustainable development (at the present time, the Naturnet and Armonia projects are being negotiated) and applications pertaining to traceability in food safety. A relatively broad sphere of activity is also in small business promotion (CRAFT).

Statistical Glance at e-Services and e-Government Development in eEurope 2002/2003

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Introduction

This work is based on statistical data elaborated and presented [1] as SIBIS project results. SIBIS (Statistical Indicators Benchmarking the Information Society) is an IST 5FP 2000 project aiming to produce new methods and data for measure and benchmark the Information Society (IS). The survey fieldwork was carried out April–May 2002 and January 2003.

The data includes 15 EU countries and 10 EU Newly Accession States, shortly called–NAS, over main statistical indicators, grouped into the areas: *Basic Access and Usage, Information Security, e-Commerce, e-Work, e-Government, e-Health, Digital Literacy, Learning and Training, Digital Divides*.

The results of investigation made under 84 indicators are presented as data tables and charts at the “SIBIS Pocket Book 2002/03” [1]. Some of indicators contain a further differentiation by age, by gender of respondents or intensity of IT usage. It makes: (i) the achievements of NAS and EU in IS development complicate to grasp; (ii) difficult to compare them in different areas; (iii) impossible to do statistically reliable conclusions. The weighted averages of EU and NAS countries, denoted as EU-15 and NAS-10 are the only characteristics used for EU and NAS groups. From a statistical point of view, the average is rather poor characteristic of observations. The SIBIS work has been widened constructing the new handbook [2], the new indicator system consists of 133 indicators in total. They come from the SIBIS project and from large variety of sources outside (such as Eurostat the Eurobarometers, and others). Summarizing and getting a general view of wide scope of data and investigations remain open questions, that can be closed by further research. A general view of situation, more focused on EU–NAS differences is badly needed, enabling motivated statistical inferences indicating in which areas NAS are far away behind the EU level. Such data summary is also necessary for better understanding of whole situation and enhancing a policy making process in overall IS strategy.

The main goals of this study are:

- To visualize a situation in the areas defined by SIBIS in order to see a position of any separate country or countries’ groups in the context of EU and NAS results;
- To get a clear picture of eEurope at a glance in order to identify:
 - the areas where the NAS are dramatically behind the EU;
 - the topics in the enlarged EU where the IS development is not sufficient;
 - the areas where the NAS countries have a readiness and a potential to reach the EU countries level.
- To develop a simple measure, expressing EU-NAS differences numerically.

In this short paper an example of proposed statistical techniques and data visualization are demonstrated in the areas of *Basic Access and Usage*, together with *Information Security*. Special attention here is paid to the Visegrad Group (V4) and the Baltic countries (B3) - their results are given separately. Analogous study has been done in all areas where SIBIS have provided data, results of these studies at a glance can be seen in the Fig.3. The proposed approach equally can be applied to the new data sets [2] when they will be available.

About Data and Methods Used for Deriving Data Summaries

The main sources of data, described in [1], deal with a target population - resident population (aged 15 and over) in private households representing EU and NAS in 2002-2003:

(1) General Population Survey **2002** (GPS), country coverage: EU15+CH (Switzerland)+US (sample size 500-1000 per country); (2) General Population Survey **NAS10 2003** (GPS-NAS), country coverage NAS10: BG, CZ, EE, HU, LT, LV, PL, RO, SL, SK (average sample size 1000 per country).

Each data array from statistical survey is series of percentages of population, having a property investigated in a specified indicator in every of 27 countries. For example, the indicator *No. 4 – Internet User Experience*, gives the array of 27 observations – percentages of Internet users with 2 and more years experience (versus target population) in each country.

The aim of our study is to compare the results of separate countries or their groups in the context of data summary characteristics such as medians, EU-15 and NAS-10 averages, drawing the attention to the distances between them and the spread of data. For that reason the most informative statistical techniques is the Box Plot – a graphical display that simultaneously describes several important features of a data set, such as center (median), spread (IQR – Inter-Quartile Range), departure from symmetry. Box Plots are useful in graphical comparisons among data sets because they have high visual impact [3].

Median, Inter-Quartile Range, denoted respectively by *Me* and $IQR = Q3 - Q1$ (where *Q1*, *Q3* are the first and third quartile) were used in this paper to derive a numerical measure of differences. Median is a characteristic of location as well as a mean but median is more suitable for analysis of non-symmetrically distributed data. The preliminary analysis of empirical distribution of any percentage data under consideration shows that all of them are far from to be considered as symmetric. Therefore the median and *IQR* are more suitable characteristics than the mean and the variance.

Introduce a standardized difference between the averages EU-15 and NAS-10, namely, $D = (EU-15 - NAS-10)$ divided by *IQR* - the parameter of spread, and denote it $\Delta = D/IQR$. Typically, in the data sets considered, Δ is ranging from 0.1 to 1.2. Sometimes, when NAS-10 > EU-15, negative Δ values appear, seemingly indicating a difference in favor of NAS, but in reality expressing only too high expectations in NAS countries for digital technologies usage.

If $\Delta > 0$ is rather small – a little difference discovered between EU and NAS, if $\Delta > 0$ is close to 1 – there is a big difference in the indicator under consideration. In this way each indicator, determined by SIBIS, acquire a numerical value Δ , corresponding to the scaled difference in averages between the two groups of countries EU and NAS. The results are presented in the Table 1, where in the first column is the No of indicator, corresponding to that used in [1].

Area: Basic Access and Usage, the Information Security Table 1

No	Indicator title	Q1, Me, Q3	IQR	EU	NAS	D	Δ
6	Intensity of online usage>6h/week	7, 10, 13	6	13	6	7	1,16
5	Internet usage at work+home	4, 11, 17	13	16	4	12	0,92
12	Security concerns to e-shopping	6, 20, 28	22	28	6	22	1,0
11	Concerns online data security	11, 21, 28	17	26	24	2	0,12
4	Internet users 2 and more years	16, 26, 36	20	30	13	17	0,85
9	E-mail users, all intensities	16, 29, 45	29	37	14	23	0,79
8	SMS users	34, 43, 50	16	40	34	6	0,37
8a	Personal mobile phones ownership	55, 68, 76	21	69	44	25	1,19

The Box Plots of these data allows a clear graphical comparison of the achieved results seen in Fig. 1 and enables us to attain the goals (A) and (B), fixed in the previous section.

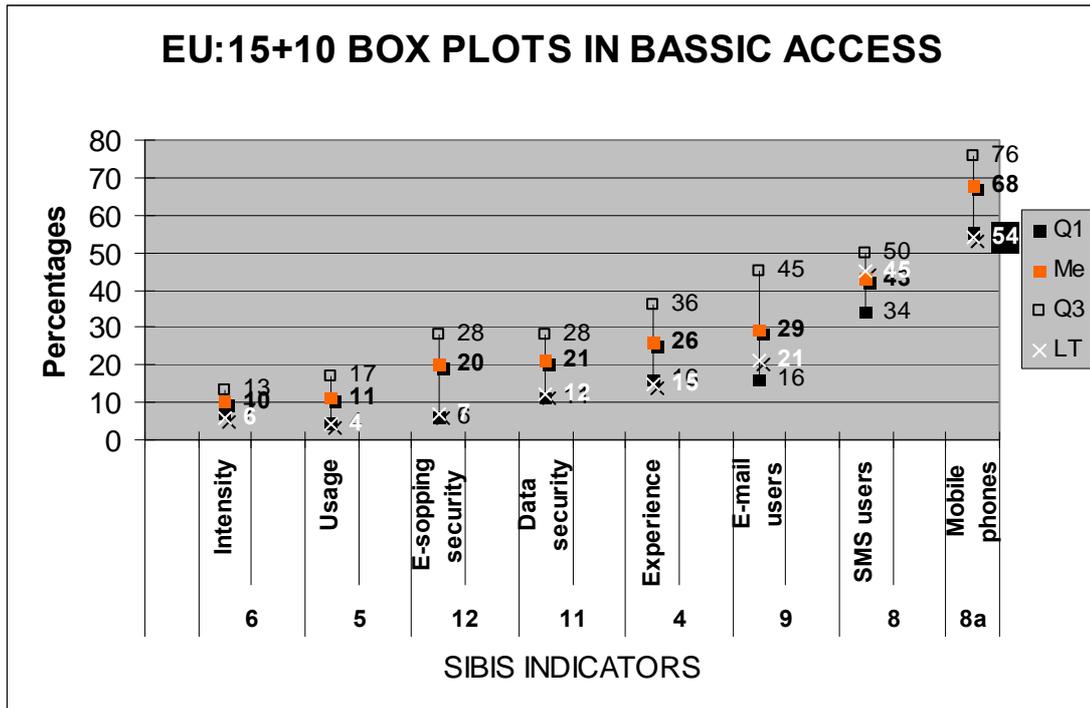


Fig 1. Visualization of EU: 15+10 data represented in the first four columns of the Table 1. The white label x – marks the location of the corresponding percentages in one country – here Lithuania as an example.

Comments of the summarized EU: 15+10 data in the Fig.1:

- Internet usage by intensity and by location are close to 10%, while the concerns on information security matters (No 11,12) are located around 20%, the middle values of e-mail and experience of Internet users are approaching 30%;
- Mobile technologies (No 8, 8a), probably due to the explosive development, have a wide spread of data and are visibly different;
- Data spread (*IQR*) is the largest in the e-mail usage and the security concerns in online shopping, while it is the smallest in the Internet usage over 6hrs/week intensity;
- All indicators, except No 5, 6 show departures from symmetry in data distributions;
- Lithuania in many indicators shows fairly good results – coinciding with the first quartile Q1 or better.

Measuring NAS Achievements in the EU15 Context

Let us develop a numerical measure of EU – NAS differences related to the area, having *k* indicators and represented by numerical values: $\Delta_1, \dots, \Delta_k$. Some of Δ_i are close to 1, some are not. To determine whether the contribution of any indicator was significant or not in the area of interest, we need to choose the *threshold value* λ . There is no hope that would be possible to derive a theoretical value of λ , based on the unknown probability distributions of statistics used. The selection of λ value can be done empirically.

The proposed procedure is as follows: if $\Delta_i < \lambda$, we conclude the contribution of that indicator is small, if $\Delta_i \geq \lambda$, the contribution is significant. Say *r* values among *k* were satisfying $\Delta_i \geq \lambda$ in the considered area, determine the measure of NAS achievements compared with EU15 as $MARK = 1 - r/k$.

It has the numerical values between 0 and 1: small MARK values means small NAS achievements, while MARK, approaching 1, indicates that NAS and EU15 have comparable

achievements; MARK close to 0.5 means that approximately a half of indicators were significant, a half – not significant in that area.

Applying the described procedure in the areas defined by SIBIS or other data sets, we obtain the numerical evaluation of a situation as a sequence of MARK values, related to the specified areas. For $\lambda = 0.9$, selected empirically, the MARK values corresponding to 8 SIBIS areas we obtain the numerical evaluation of a situation in IS development, presented in the diagram Fig.3. From that diagram we conclude that NAS are dramatically behind the EU in *Learning and Training*, *e-Health*, *Digital Literacy*, while in the *e-Government* area there is a readiness and a potential in NAS to reach the EU countries level.

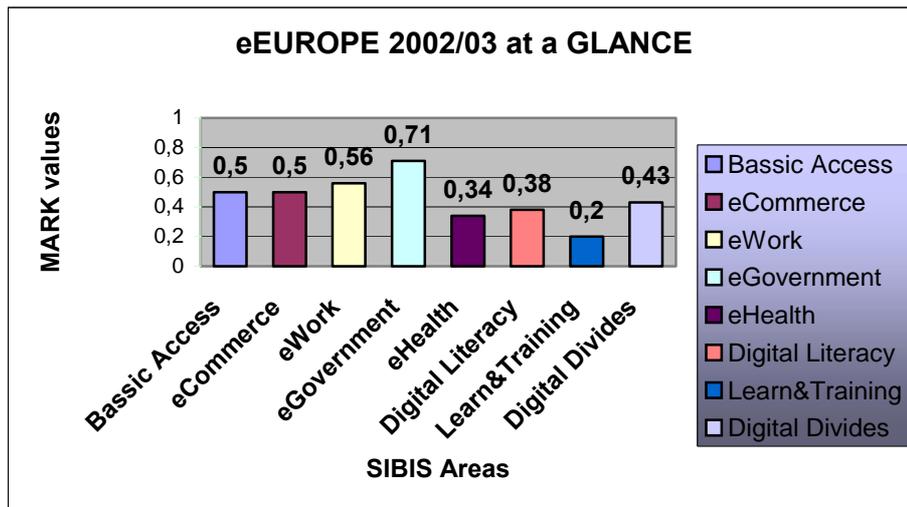


Fig.2. The MARK values for data in all SIBIS areas. The range of possible MARK values is from 0 to 1. The NAS are dramatically behind the EU in *Learning and Training*, *e-Health*, *Digital Literacy*, while in the *e-Government* area there is a readiness and a potential to reach the EU countries level.

Comparison of Baltic and Visegrad Group Countries

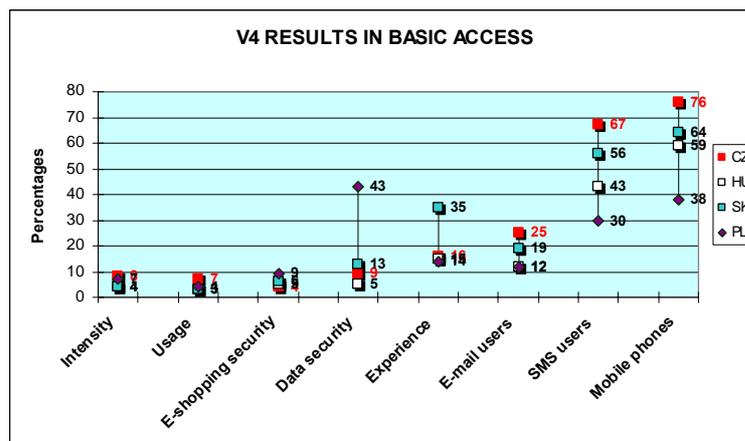


Fig 3. Visegrad countries percentages in Basic access and information security area. The results almost overlap in *Intensity*, *Usage*, *E-shopping security*. Data spread in: *Mobile telephony*, PL has a big concern on *Data security*.

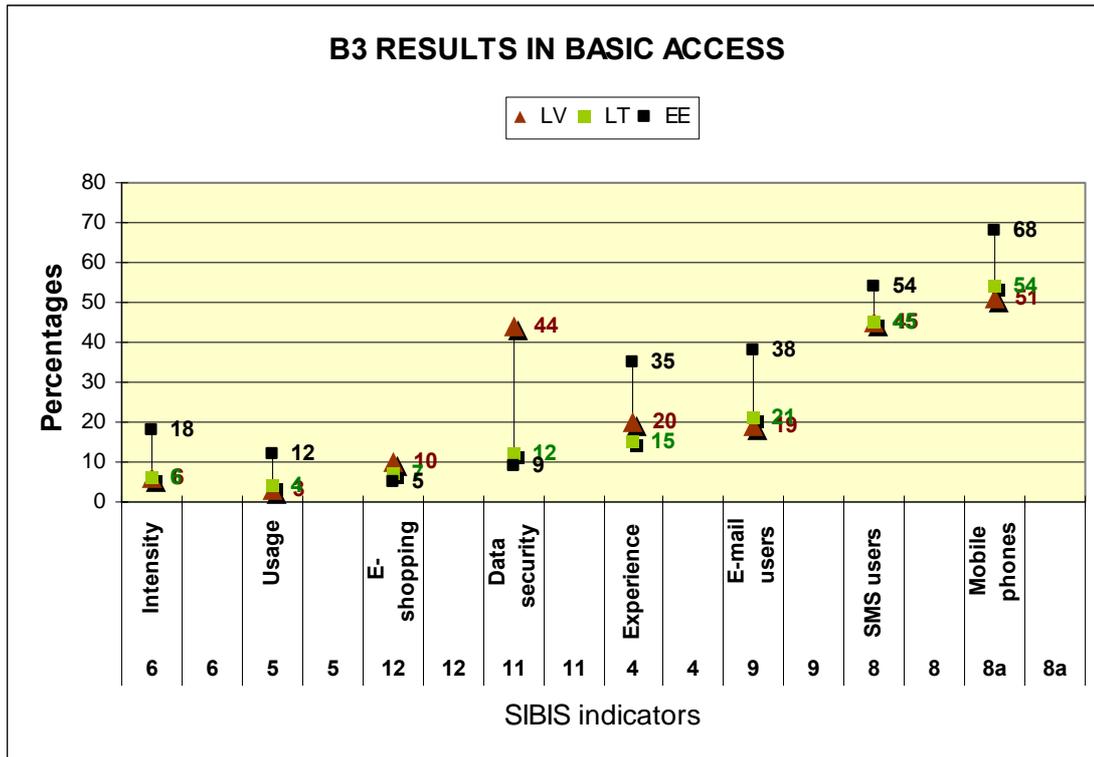


Fig 4. Baltic countries percentages: LT, LV overlapping in many indicators, EE is leading almost in all indicators.

Comments of Fig. 3 and 4:

- There is no discernible difference between V4 and Baltic countries groups in the considered indicators from the Basic access and usage/Information security areas;
- CZ is a leading country among the V4 countries (except concerns on security matters);
- LT and LV performed rather similarly in all considered indicators while EE has visibly outstanding results (except its concerns on security matters).

The proposed approach is applicable to evaluate results of one separate country or their groups marking its percentages on similar diagrams. For example, the localization of Lithuania’s results on the Fig.1 marked by white x label. If it is below Q1, the results are qualified as low (among 6 less successful countries). If mark is above Q3, that means outstanding results among 6 advanced countries and, finally, if x is located between Q1 and Q3 (as Lithuania’s example) – fairly good results. We have compared the results of two groups of countries: Baltic countries (EE, LT, LV) and V4 (CZ, HU, PL, SK) in the charts, Fig. 3 and 4, demonstrating a visual impact of method.

Conclusions

1) Box Plot – a graphical display was applied to SIBIS data in order to see a position of any separate country or group of countries in the context of the enlarged EU and to understand how the inclusion of 10 new countries affects the common results of EU.

2) Simple measure **MARK** expressing EU-NAS differences numerically has been developed and applied to get a clear picture of eEurope at a glance, enabling to identify:

- The areas where the NAS are dramatically behind the EU, namely: *Learning and Training, e-Health, Digital Literacy*;

- *E-Government* is a topic where the NAS countries have their results closest to the EU countries' level.

3) Notice that in principle the results derived here have an “optimistic” trend, because the data of EU – GPS 2002 survey has been compared with the NAS - GPS 2003 data collected by SIBIS almost one year later.

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[2] *SIBIS New eEurope Indicator Handbook*. November 2003. Available online http://www.empirica.biz/sibis/files/SIBIS_Indicator_Handbook.pdf

[3] Montgomery Douglas C., George C. Runger. *Applied Statistics and Probability for Engineers*, J. Wiley and Sons, Inc., Second edition, 1999, 817 p.

Summary

Simple and informative statistical techniques—the Box Plot graphical display that simultaneously describes several important features of a data set, such as center (median), spread (IQR - Inter-Quartile Range), departure from symmetry and allows to localize the results of any country of interest, was applied to the SIBIS data 2002/03, measuring the Information Society in the EU and the EU Accession Countries. The situation has been visualized in the areas defined by SIBIS in order to see a position of any separate country or countries' groups in the context of EU and NAS results. The measure expressing EU-NAS differences numerically, has been developed in this paper, giving a clear picture of eEurope at a glance and enabling to identify topics and areas where: the NAS are dramatically behind the EU or where the NAS countries have a readiness and a potential to reach the EU countries level. A special attention is paid to the Visegrad Group and Baltic countries.

Practical experiences with an internet-based electronic voting system

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Kosice self-governing region (KSR) since its establishment in 2001 has been putting great emphasis on development and further implementation of sophisticated Internet-based services for citizens, taking into account their real needs and democratic rights. In March 2003 self-governing region of Kosice was accepted as a user partner of European IST-2000-29518 project with an acronym "e-VOTE". The main objective of this project is to design, implement and validate an Internet-based electronic voting system that provides all required services for organizing and conducting a voting process. Kosice self-governing region's core activities within the project include testing of the system functionality and its usability under realistic scenarios. This contribution is intended to introduce mainly our practical experiences and obstacles faced during the first e-VOTE trial at KSR.

Introduction

It is indisputable that democratic societies are established on the principle of elections and referenda capabilities. In other words, voting is the primary means whereby citizens participate in the democratic governance at all levels □. The advent of information society has enabled people to perform most of their activities in a direct, electronically automated, and efficient way. This applies also to e-Government □ and e-Democracy □ in general as well as for voting process in particular □.

Within the last few years some European countries have been making great efforts in order to introduce electronic voting procedures □, □. There is a strong state-supported initiative in canton of Geneva in Switzerland towards electronic voting □. They have developed themselves (with participation of local authorities and locally installed companies) and at present is being tested an Internet-based technology. The UK has put aside a few million pounds to support trials of voting □ through various electronic voting channels (i.e. TV, Internet, SMS voting). There is an expectation in the Great Britain to perform general elections in 2006 through an Internet-based system¹⁸. Also Austria and Germany have been putting great emphasis on development of electronic voting systems¹⁹.

From those post-communist countries, Estonia seems to have launched the most fruitful electronic voting campaign and successfully facilitates electronic voting to penetrate and their own electronic voting system to implement among the public. On the other hand, most of the countries joining the EU in May 2004 haven't decided for pursuing the "e-voting direction" yet and the question is how long it will remain like this. Slovak republic, the country where this e-Vote project is just being implemented, cannot be, however, considered as one of those "e-voting countries". This local initiative of regional government of Kosice in cooperation with Technical University of Kosice still needs to be coupled by state support to get the e-voting pushed forward and to be legally implemented within electoral law of the country.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. Next section 2. provides some basic information about the e-Vote project. Section 3. introduces Kosice self-governing region and its

¹⁸ For more details see <http://www.odpm.gov.uk>

¹⁹ For more information on Austrian e-voting visit www.e-voting.at; Germany - <http://www.wahlkreis300.net/fgiw/>

position in this project. Section 4 presents the way how first larger trial with a prototype of the e-Vote system in Kosice has been organized and what are the resulted experiences. Finally, section 5 provides some conclusions.

e-VOTE project in details²⁰

Objectives

e-Vote is an IST (Information Society Technology) research and development project which is being performed by European consortium consisting of Quality and reliability International of Luxembourg (acting as project co-ordinator), University of the Aegean of Greece, Quality and Reliability of Greece, Cryptomathic of Denmark, University of Regensburg of Germany, Municipality of Amaroussion of Greece and Kosice self-governing region of Slovakia. As already mentioned above, the e-Vote project aims to design, implement and validate the Internet-based electronic voting system that provides the necessary services for organizing and conducting a voting process. This Internet-based technology supports ballot generation, specification of voting precincts, voters' registration and credential validation and calculation of the vote tally.

The system is accessible through conventional Web browsers. Furthermore, it exhibits a Voting Protocol that can prevent any opportunities for fraud or for sacrificing the voter's privacy, by implementing a wide set of security criteria and thus enjoying the trust and confidence of voters and process organizers □.

Project stages

The e-VOTE project was launched in late 2001 with its lifetime of 30 months (project will finish on March 31, 2004) and encompasses the following four stages:

- *Quality strategy*: Firstly, there were identified evaluation criteria by which the project work is being assessed as it progresses.
- *Design, implementation and validation of the e-VOTE system*: The process of major system development was successfully finished in November 2003. Yet after planned trials there still can be made necessary changes to the system, if needed. The system development consists of three consecutive phases which includes the tasks of user requirements analysis, functional specifications, technical design and implementation, and testing and validation. There were two prototypes developed within two phases already while the pilot system has just been finished in the third phase. Implementation and validation activities have been performing after each of the phases and are divided into three different sites/user partners of which Kosice self-governing region is the one.
- *Demonstration and assessment*: The validated e-VOTE system is supposed to be publicly assessed for its voting services as a working European demonstrator with the potential to support electronic voting of a kind, throughout Europe. The assessment tests will address technical functionality, service quality, user acceptance, cost efficiency, and potential users.
- *Dissemination activities and exploitation plan*: Dissemination activities will be maintained throughout the project's lifetime.

²⁰ For more detailed information please visit www.instore.gr/evote

Kosice self-governing region as a user partner

Introduction

To briefly introduce KSR, along with other seven self-governing regions it was established in 2001 after the reform of public administration in Slovak republic. Rough number of inhabitants of KSR exceeds 767 000, with its area of 6 753 km².

Start date of our participation in the e-VOTE project is dated back to 31 March 2003 when KSR joined an already-established consortium of European partners.

Role of the KSR in the e-Vote project

Acting as a user partner, KSR's accountabilities include mainly testing of the system functionality under real conditions, its usability under typical realistic scenarios and public acceptance, peculiar for Slovakia (i.e. considering different "profile" as far as the people's literacy with computers, their age, their Internet accessibility, their habits, etc. are concerned). In connection with this, we are also partly involved in performing penetration and malicious attacks tests as well as enhancing project visibility and creating awareness within administrations. In particular, KSR is expected to carry out the following tasks:

- Prototype II testing (both internally, as well as a real trial);
- Pilot system installation at KSR site and its testing (both internally, as well as a real trial);
- Dissemination activities (i.e. interaction with administrations, citizens, professional community and other potential users); and
- Exploitation and use plan.

KSR and its performance

Our activities so far

After several rounds of internal system testing, aiming both at testing the current version of the e-Vote system and providing feedback to developer partners as well as in order to obtain hands-on experience with the system, we carried out a middle-range test - a real pilot test.

The pilot test was performed between October 6 – 10, 2003 with a participation of 1671 eligible voters. The trial focused on high-school students. The focus group was offered an opportunity to take part in a poll by completing the voting procedure through a conventional web browser. In general, almost 90% of the voters expressed a positive feedback on the system (which was rated as "easy, user-friendly and comfortable").

We have learnt a lot from the test. Lessons learnt from the poll address several different aspects playing a role in the test, which we faced while testing the e-Vote system. In particular, our experiences address operational and technical aspects, legal constraints, and social aspects, as presented in the following section 4.

KSR's future tasks

We plan to continue to perform testing of the e-Vote system in real conditions – in larger extent than in first trial. This time the IT community in the Slovakia will be targeted. We have scheduled to carry out a state-wide trial of the e-Vote system in February this year. The trial is expected to simulate conditions of a real referendum with the targeted participation of 2000+ voters.

Practical experiences

Trial design

User groups

Within the pilot test we considered ideal students as a focus group to be addressed taking into account their profile in sense of Internet use, age, computer literacy, desire for innovations, etc. There were some high-schools in Kosice region selected as the user groups. In some way, controlled environment, we were able to achieve set turnout objective. The targeted turnout was defined at 1500+ voters with the aim to load servers running the e-Vote application as much as possible and thus verify software and hardware capabilities. As mentioned already, the turnout of the trial exceeded 1600 eligible voters.

To have more comparable results, it was necessary to choose schools of the same type and from two different towns (Kosice and Michalovce) so we could not only test the system functionality but also measure differences in opinion on the e-Vote system and finally to have students' expressions on given questions.

Publicity and promotion

As we had decided for "controlled" user group, the turnout objective seemed to be more feasible so that it was less needed to launch great and expensive promotion canvass. Even though the students were introduced the internet poll through emails, e-Vote posters, leaflets, pens, T-shirts and also e-Vote web site. Also, school directors communicated the event objectives (i.e. both the aim of the e-Vote project and goals of the poll itself) to teachers who finally delivered them to students. To encourage voters, they were given pens for free and also there was a drawing with e-Vote T-shirts as prize.

Trial organization

The electronic ballot box was open for seven consecutive days and students were given a chance to cast a ballot through the Internet for the first time ever in Slovakia. Some measures were needed to take to facilitate and enhance trial performance. To point out the pivotal matter which must have been solved, e-Vote system runs only with pre-installed JAVA plug-in application on user's computers. Therefore, we had to make sure to have the JAVA downloaded on all the school PCs so that the voting procedure could be completed properly.

The students from selected schools were duly pre-registered in the application's database as eligible voters and afterwards, sent an introductory electronic letter with login/authentication passwords (i.e. user credentials). During the noticed voting period they were able to cast the ballot through school PCs. Except for completing the voting procedure, they were also prompted to fill in evaluation forms in order to assess the Internet voting system just used.

e-Vote quality evaluation

There were quality components identified as well as methods monitoring them. Given consortium partners assess quality standards definitions at each trial performed. At the end of the project lifetime there will be a quality handbook for all system services and products available.

Based on that, the filled electronic evaluation forms were further processed by standardized quality methodology which means we thoroughly assessed extracts from both the filled forms and our own experience accordingly. Basically, we use an electronic quality tool to make it available to all of the consortium partners.

Official dissemination of trial results

After the trial had been finished, KSR's president held a press conference where officially released the results to the public. In so doing, Kosice region was introduced information on both how its high-school students understand enlargement of the EU in sense of its impact on their next future, and electronic voting technology as a convenient and cost-effective way of elections.

Technical aspects

While performing our tests, we have been forced to deal with different technical problems. To address the most fundamental one – there is a very low Internet penetration rate in Slovakia which meant that we had to focus only on user groups with Internet access. In order to perform the test in some middle-ranged extent, some user groups were implicitly excluded from our focus because of this requirement.

As far as technical requirements of the system are concerned, the use of e-Vote system required to have JAVA plug-in (ver. 1.4) pre-installed on users PCs. Since only MS Windows 98 or higher versions (we did not focus on other operating systems because of selected target user groups) support JAVA application, some available PCs were useless for the voting purposes.

There were periods of time when voters were unable to access an election web site. Most of these problems seem to have been caused by too many voters trying to access the election servers at once. Also, voters might encounter problems of power outages, Internet connectivity outages or voting site denial caused by hackers. These problems may be partly solved by keeping the election open over more than one day.

It should be ensured, while the voting procedure, to have “print screen” button on the user's keyboard deactivated. Also printing out the voting ballot should be disabled as well as the PC buffer memory shall be emptied upon leaving the voting application. This is expected to be improved in the e-Vote system yet. There also can be raised concerns about using employer's computers or those infected by viruses.

Legal aspects

At present, Slovak electoral law doesn't constitute absentee voting at all. There is an amendment to the electoral law to be enacted including remote mail voting. However, the lawmakers obviously omitted to define the status of remote Internet voting. It needs to be improved when considering EU policy towards the electronic voting. If we want to simulate real elections there is a need of having an access to real voter's credentials from central registry that would be regularly updated and would be accessible to the public in an interactive way. This turned out to be impossible as taking into account what was stated above.

To conclude, our government along with other acceding countries must join the trend of electronic voting implementation in order to participate in the process of developing such systems to make sure it is in compliance with basic rules of privacy and security.

Social aspects

There is a disbelief in electronic voting seen not only in Slovakia. The elderly citizens prefer a conventional paper-based ballot and will never consider any electronic system as secure and privacy preserving as the present way of voting through voting urns. Therefore, the electronic voting must be considered as an alternative way of voting and will probably hardly fully replace the paper-based voting. Moreover, many of those unemployed, elderly or from rural areas would expect online voting to be more accessible in sense of higher connectivity rate or being very user-friendly.

To address the disbelief issue there should be taken measures to enable voters to understand and have confidence in voting process. This can be done by providing to the voters as much information as possible with regard to the technique which is being used for evoting. Also it should be considered to give voters the possibility of practicing new technique of remote voting before casting a real vote. This would, for sure, increase the transparency and trust of voters in evoting.

However, it seems very likely that citizens will not support any major investment in e-voting implementation if it cannot deliver substantial benefits in the short run.

Conclusion

Implementation of Information technologies (IT) have already demonstrated its contribution to a private sector in terms of quicker and more effective business processes, more efficient management and higher standard of customer service. Also, public administration is today facing IT introduction what will undoubtedly contribute to enhanced services for citizens soon, at least in Slovakia.

Internet penetration among households, however, is still quite low in comparison to the fact that almost all private companies possess Internet connection. Despite Slovak republic as well as other countries of Europe can expect increased Internet use in next few years, this issue must be addressed to have substantial results of the e-voting introduction.

In addition, a multidisciplinary ad-hoc group of specialists on legal, operation and technical aspects of electronic voting, established by Council of Europe (IP1-S-EE)²¹ identified conditions favoring the introduction of e-voting. Following them it can be generally agreed that countries should make sure to have an active and positive attitude of their voters towards e-voting, strong political will, existence of legal provisions allowing voting electronically and other. The group is also working on a recommendation on e-voting that is expected to be adopted to member states of the Council of Europe soon.

As far as evoting technologies are concerned, at present, there are a number of different evoting actors providing various types of online voting solutions. The e-vote system is just one from among those currently being developed evoting systems in Europe. Even though, the e-Vote's multilayer technology supports voting at from local to European level, it needs to be improved in a co-ordinative way so that it will be a part of unified multichannel voting (i.e. enabling voter to choose a voting channel either through mail or internet).

To contribute to the EU society as much as possible, each EU member state shall jointly follow consistent and co-operative strategy of evoting implementation which is just being created. Otherwise, we may experience redundant efforts for evoting technology development, seeing a little even today, which can be considered worthless in the sense of general benefits for the EU as a whole. Jointly designed internet-based technology shall incorporate all the operational standards stated above and also should consider peculiarities of the states to be applicable.

Moreover, any implementation of e-voting, must meet the criteria of preserving and enhancing the operational standards of electoral processes while, at the same time, demonstrating real benefits to citizens. These benefits may be variable, from simple efficiency savings in the cost of elections through to enhanced voter convenience.

²¹ IP1 – Intergrated projects, Council of Europe – www.coe.int

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CD Guide to Rychnov nad Kněžnou

PhDr. Josef Krám, Emeritus Professor, Secondary Engineering School and Art School in Rychnov nad Kněžnou, Czech Republic

A guide of this type, scope and quality concerning a Czech town of this size (Rychnov nad Kněžnou has less than 11 thousand inhabitants) is apparently unique; it is by no means pedantic, but created with a bird's-eye view and written in an individual, readable style.

The author of its texts, photographs and processing is PhDr. Josef Krám, the design of the title page has been created by Václav Zatloukal, a 16-year-old student. It activates itself automatically, or by using the icon *index.html*. Its basic menu contains a guide in SPRING, SUMMER, AUTUMN, WINTER variants, each with the respective extensive image attendance and a number of references. Everything is divided in compliance with wandering through the town from the summer resort Studánka to the railway station. After clicking, it is possible to browse individual parts, *From Studánka to Ivanská skála–From the swimming pool to Mařenka–Habrová–From the brewery to the stop–From Kocourkovští učitelé to the Jewish cemetery–View of the town–To Rychnov Venice–Chaloupky–To the Chapel of Christ's Transfiguration–To the synagogue–Old Square–Through Panská Street–From the grammar school to the industrial school–To the castle part–From the bell-tower to the Trinity–From Kaloň to the station.*

Near encyclopaedic is the 38-piece part of the guide with more than 1,500 old photographs and images of the town: Havlíčkova street–Surroundings of Palacký street–Palacký street–Soukenická and Provazníková streets–Školní square and Bezručova street–Trávník–Surroundings of Labuť–General views of the town without the castle motif–General views of the town with the castle motif–General views of the town, multi-piece–Dubinka–Chaloupky–Other houses and cottages–Pubs, inns and hotels–Cemetery next to the Chapel of Christ's Transfiguration–Ivanské lake–Ivanská rock–Včelný and the swimming pool–Churches, chapels and shrines–May 1945–Kryštof–Aerial photographs of Rychnov–T.G. Masaryk's visit to Rychnov in 1926–Virgin on a deer–Other houses–Other events–Panská street–Piarist grammar school–Old square, paving 1957 to 1958–Old square with the town hall motif–Old square without the town hall motif–Spring–Schools–Events–Streets, squares and parks–Other public buildings–On Karel Poláček–Castle. More out of playfulness than not, the author also included the section The wedding of Jan Kolowrat.

German, English and Polish versions form independent chapters. Linked to them is *Reading about Rychnov*, based on the study of historic sources: *Virgin on a deer* (about the town's coat of arms)–*Rychnov is not in Russia or the Chronicle did not lie* (about the old determination of the town's position according to meridians)–*When Kryštof rotated and was weighed* (about the third-largest bell in Bohemia)–*Pensive in front in a memorial plate* (about Balbín, Pelc, Czech brothers, rebels and Komenský)–*Yeti in Rychnov* (about the famous daughter of M. D. Rettigová)–*In Rychnov spa* (about the old spa in the town)–*Drašar in Rychnov* (about old Rychnov schools)–*Scary one* (about Rychnov executioners). Part of the guide is also a list of more than 100 titles of literature studied.

The guide originated at the beginning of the 1980s through studying Rychnov life and institutions upon the order of the former District People's Library to mark the 725th anniversary of the first mention of Rychnov. It underwent a review procedure. However, it was finally not issued and only some chapters were published in the Rychnov Newsletter.

Only in 1989 was there hope for publication–the author had the manuscript read to the new municipal (Mayor František Bartoš) and district (Petr Narwa) representatives, and both welcomed it and recommended publication. Thus, since the early 1990s the guide with illustrations by Josef Martinec has been published–1st edition 2,000 copies, 2nd edition also 2,000

copies, 3rd edition 5,000 copies (2,500 of which the author donated to the town free of charge). On its fourth printing, it was issued as part of the History of the Town of Rychnov nad Kněžnou and the Ancestry of the Masters of Kolovraty. The printed editions have already sold out. The following editions are on CD—the 5th with photographs by Jaroslav Kos is on the town's website www.rychnov-city.cz, the 6th (the author's complete work) is on www.e-rychnovsko.cz, while the 7th was released in 2002 on CD; 21 of which the author gave as a present to all municipal representatives.

The 8th edition of the guide was appraised by the Benefaction Fund of František Martin Pelcl.

eCulture Principles

Romana Křížová, Company Manager, Cross Czech

The digital age is affecting all the areas of our life and the field of culture makes no exception. As much as we nowadays speak about eGovernment, eHealth, eLearning, we are also starting to use a term of eCulture. Cutting-edge technologies enable us to preserve cultural legacy by digitising it and create new representations of reality and make it accessible for large audience on digital networks in Internet and mobile environment. This is especially relevant for fragile objects such as old prints, photographs, textiles when digitised copies enable both academic and large audience to study it on distance without disturbing the original. But thanks to eCulture we can develop new services based on digital content such as 3D models of archaeological sites, digital representations of different historical stages of a particular object, new archiving systems based on ontology principles, networking of cultural organisations, educational services, etc. All these initiatives are of a high importance and are being financially supported by different European programmes.

Programmes supporting eCulture

The field of eCulture can be financed from following EU programmes:

- the 6th Framework Programme
- eContent
- Culture 2000
- Structural Funds

The 6th Framework Programme (FP6)

The Sixth Framework programme supports European Science and Research. The programme consists of 7 thematic programmes and several horizontal programmes. The programme IST belongs to the most important 6FP thematic programmes and the biggest portion of a 6FP total budget is allocated to it. IST is managed by DG INFSO. One of strategic objectives is also Technology enhanced learning and access to cultural heritage. This strategic objective aims at improving accessibility, visibility and recognition of the commercial value of Europe's cultural and scientific resources, by developing: advanced *digital libraries services*, providing high-bandwidth access to distributed and highly interactive repositories of European culture, history and science; *environments for intelligent heritage and tourism*, re-creating and visualising cultural and scientific objects and sites for enhancing user experience in cultural tourism; advanced tools, platforms and services in support of highly automated *digitisation* processes and workflows, digital *restoration and preservation* of film and video material, and digital memory management and exploitation.

The IST mainly supports large projects with a high impact on European deployment and standardization. Project consortia shall consist of a high number of partners and their budget can reach several tens of M€ and requires partners' co-financing of about 50% for commercial organizations and up to 100% for academic and public organizations.

Another program within 6FP which gives support to eCulture is the horizontal programme Science and Society which aims at bringing Science close to large public and at raising interest of young people in scientific disciplines. Projects developed under this programme are smaller in scale and usually last for 12-24 months with a budget up to 500 k€. The EC contribution is 100% of a total project budget.

eContent

This programme supports the increased availability, use and distribution of European digital content. It aims at improving access for all to high-quality digital content on the global networks, in a multiplicity of languages.

The programme consists of two main action lines:

- improving access to and expanding use of public sector information;
- enhancing content production in a multilingual and multicultural environment;

The first action line aims at increasing the information supply by encouraging the cross border-use of information held by the public sector. The second action line addresses the multilingual dimension of content creation and use in Europe.

Projects have to be based on existing state-of-the-art technical solutions, and must be geared towards business and socio-economic – as opposed to purely technological – innovation. Projects innovation is judged on their ability to bundle, repurpose and use digital content.

Projects typically last for 24 months and the consortium consists ideally of 5 partners. The EC contribution is about 50% for commercial organizations and up to 100% for academic and public organizations and can reach 2,5 M€.

At the moment there is the 4th call for proposals which is open till 17.5.2004. This call is the last of the programme but the European Commission has already been working on a preparation of eContent Plus programme which will be open in years 2005–2008 and will mainly focus on enhancing content production in a multilingual and multicultural environment.

Culture 2000

Culture 2000 is a Community programme originally established for five years (2000–2004) with a total budget of 167 million euro. The programme was now extended for 2 more years till 2006. In contrast to the financial instruments that preceded it, Culture 2000 provides grants to cultural cooperation projects in all artistic and cultural fields (performing arts, plastic and visual arts, literature, heritage, cultural history, etc.).

The objective of Culture 2000 is to promote a common cultural area characterised by its cultural diversity and shared cultural heritage.

It seeks to encourage cultural creation and mobility, access to culture for all, the dissemination of art and culture, intercultural dialogue and knowledge of the history of the European people. It also accords culture a social integration and socio-economic development role.

Culture 2000 programme supports

- Artistic and cultural projects with a European dimension, at the level of their creation, their organisation and their implementation.
- Activities supported by this programme include festivals, master classes, exhibitions, new productions, tours, translations and conferences. They are intended for artists and cultural operators, as well as for a broader audience, in particular young people and those who are socially or economically disadvantaged.
- Most of the projects include a multimedia dimension, in particular via the creation of Internet sites and discussion forums.

The instruments for programme implementation are *Annual or Multiannual projects*. In case of Annual projects the consortium shall consist of partners from 3 countries and the Community support may not exceed 50 % of the budget for a specific action. In most cases, it may not be less than 50 000 euro or more than 150 000 euro a year. In case of Annual projects

the consortium shall consist of partners from 3 countries and the Community support may not exceed 60 % of the cultural cooperation agreement's eligible budget. It may not be more than 300 000 euro a year.

Structural Funds

Currently organisations from new Accession Countries can start getting funds from so called Structural Funds of the EU. Structural funds consist of:

- THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND
- THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
- THE EUROPEAN AGRICULTURAL GUIDANCE AND GUARANTEE FUND
- FINANCIAL INSTRUMENT FOR FISHERIES GUIDANCE

Structural Fund assistance takes various forms: Community Support Frameworks (CSFs), Operational programmes (OPs), Single Programming Documents (SPDs), and the Programme Complements containing the measures. CSFs feature a number of priorities that are implemented via Operational programmes. Each OP in turn comprises a consistent set of priorities composed of multi-annual measures.

The Czech Republic has defined following Operational programmes:

- OP Infrastructure
- OP Industry and Enterprise
- OP Rural Development and Multifunctional Agriculture
- OP Development of Human Resources
- Common Regional Operational Programme
 - Single Programming Document for Objective 2 region NUTS 2 Prague
 - Single Programming Document for Objective 3 region NUTS 2 Prague

The opportunities for Culture and eCulture in general are mainly open in the Common Regional Operational Programme and its Priority 4, measure 4.1–Development of services for tourism. These projects should bring to co-operation partners from both public and private sector and the grant can reach up to 11 MKc.

Summary

eCulture is the area which in many cases might seem at the border of main European interest stream but as described above it is always possible to find support opportunities even in programmes which might not seem relevant at first glance. It is though necessary to bear in mind that all the projects which are requesting EU funding must bring the European Added Value; it means they must bring solutions not only for local users but should be based on shared international know-how and should reinforce European socio-economic development. 

The E-PRIDE project—An Electronic Platform for Regional Information Dissemination in Europe

Manon van Leeuwen, Director of Information Society, FUNDECYT, Spain

The problem is that regional observatories exist in widely different forms in Europe, addressing the needs of different user groups in different cultural, operating and policy contexts. At present there is no cohesiveness between different observatory models and there is no means of identifying which model is best within a certain context and function. Regional Public Administrations, European Regional Development Agencies and other economic development organisations at present have no means on their observatories to share ideas, to identify and exchange best practice, or to ascertain which observatory model is best for their particular user need in terms of functionality, flexibility and crucially, sustainability. They also have no means to measure the effectiveness of their observatory compared with those in other regions.

The objectives of E-PRIDE

The objective is to create in every European region a web application maintained by the key actors in the region in the field of social, economic and environmental development. Each web will collect, analyse and disseminate key regional information in order to present an accurate and continuously updated picture of each region.

The E-PRIDE platform will allow:

- To collect, analyze and disseminate key regional information in order to present an accurate and continuously updated picture of each region.
- To search not only the own regional observatory but also the other observatories of those regions that use the E-PRIDE standard (by using web based services to guarantee large scale interoperability).
- To make comparisons between the different regions, based on a common representation standard of information.
- The free exchange of information and sharing of good practice between the different socio-economic actors and researchers through the basic project management tools integrated into the platform.

A platform based on Linux and using the Dublin core metadata standard as developed by the UK government, will allow regions to search not only their own regional web but also the other regions webs. This will enable comparisons to be made, the free exchange of information and sharing of good practice.

The E-PRIDE core framework

Essential to the project is interoperability of technical standards and the exchange of data. The project is motivated by the rationale that there is much commonality throughout regions in respect of socio-economic data and there is a requirement for an organisational model and set of web tools that will greatly simplify this process of collecting and disseminating such data. The project will bring about the creation of this network of observatories and will allow the exchange of good practice and data and intelligence.

The work entails the definition of the relevant information needs of key user groups in support of regional policy development and evaluation. The objective of the methodology used is to define the information needs of key stakeholders to support regional and sectoral policy development and evaluation. The methodology is based on holding workshops in the

region and sectors to define user needs, the exercise has gathered relevant information, and were supplemented by a survey of the broader user community needs in each region. A set of common information needs were identified which were integrated with the Dublin Core Metadata standard as adopted by the UK Government, so as to create a standard information classification scheme for all regional observatories.

Another part of the work has been to identify tools to facilitate data collection, collation and analysis, the components of which have been adapted to meet the needs of participants in the project. The result is a prototype of a regional observatory, which is common to all regional observatories.

The technological solution proposed for the observatory framework:

- Operating System : Linux.
- Web Server : Apache.
- Database Management System: MySQL.
- Programming language: PHP. The project is expected to show that the concept has validity and will allow the quick implementation of regional observatories throughout Europe. An association that can provide technical and organisational assistance will back up these observatories. A European Network of web based regional socio-economic observatories will be the result.

The E-PRIDE services

There are many organisations operating in regions that require regional socio-economic and environmental data for processing into intelligence. These organisations can be public sector or private sector but in either case information is required to support decision-making. Our presumption is that the needs of any region in Europe are likely to be broadly similar and this project will pilot a suit of web-based applications and a business model for co-operative working in the field of activity of socio-economic and environmental research that can be replicated in any region.

All of the actors, both public and private, in the economy share a requirement for good information about the economic, social and environmental aspects of the region. Many are involved in accessing the same datasets and the same reports; they need to know the latest developments socially, economically and environmentally in their region.

The Regional and European Network

A European Association of Regional Observatories (EARO) will be formed and will coordinate the further development of the project and the development of the standards that will allow the flow of information and data. The Association is set up by the partners of the project, under guidance of the coordinator.

The support of the Regional and Local Public Administration is essential to the success of the EARO, and of the Regional Observatories, as they are the main target public, i.e. those organisations that wish to set up a Regional Observatory (RO) and thus become members of the EARO. At this moment, the legal status foreseen for EARO is a non-profit association. This is seen as a kind of organisation better able to manage an association whose main incomes come from the member initial and annual fees, service provisions and other possible sponsors. It will be a Pan European Regional Observatories Association with the same Regional Observatory model for every region across Europe.

The players in the market providing information for the Regional Observatory are the government statistical organisations the public sector bodies and private sector organisations

that provide analysis and forecasting about the regional economy, and the holders of administrative and market data who are government agencies and large private companies. Within the public sector itself we can find governmental/Public Administration bodies at local, regional or national level through their departments in charge of employment, training and socio-economic development: Local Government Authorities; Regional arm of Government of member state; Local/regional Assembly; Local/regional Development Agency.

These bodies, are the most likely to become collaborators or even sponsors of the observatories. Thus creating a regional network that will support the exploitation, maintenance and up-dating of the Regional Observatory.

Supporting regional policy

The project will provide consistency and will become a gateway to a vast catalogue of web content as well as facilitating and making much more efficient and speedy further regional research and analysis.

The EARO and Regional Observatories will allow Public Administration and Public Sector organisations to:

- Provide regional information throughout Europe, and offer any type of user the ability to obtain information on the region and its policies, as well as to benchmark the information to the information of the other EARO Regional Observatories,
- Exchange good practices and experiences in relation to Regional Policies in the main fields identified as the core framework of each of the Regional Observatories, as well as to use the EARO as a platform and starting point for advanced collaboration,
- Improve regional policies, by gaining access to updated information on the region provided by the different actors that are collaborating in the maintenance and up-dating of the Regional Observatory, thus establishing a regional network that support policy development and creation, based on the day-to-day reality of the region.

Project web site: www.epride.org

Eurovoc thesaurus–information retrieval language of EU documents and its use in the Czech Republic

Anna Lhotská and PhDr. Kvetoslava Žigmundová, Office of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the CR–Parliament Library

The paper briefly presents the Eurovoc thesaurus as a tool of factual description of documents in databases. Described in more detail is the thesaurus' multilingual function and its use within the framework of EU institutions. The paper also outlines the creation of Eurovoc's Czech-language version for its implementation within the framework of the information system of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and in other Czech institutions.

Brief introductory explanation: By the term factual document processing, used hereinafter, the authors mean the process whose purpose is to determine the content of a document and express it by means of the information retrieval language. Thesaurus means a controlled vocabulary of lexical units of the descriptor information retrieval language, which is characterised by a structure of hierarchical, associative and equivalent constructions defined in advance. Thus, it does not concern a translation dictionary. The thesaurus' lexical units are descriptors and non-descriptors.

What is Eurovoc?

The Eurovoc thesaurus is the multilingual polythematic thesaurus of the European Union, which originated out of the necessity to factually process the large amount of documents produced by European Union institutions and from the endeavour to enable users of these documents retrieval in various languages.

The first edition of the thesaurus was published in 1984 as a result of the joint project of the European Parliament and the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. It concerned a seven-language thesaurus that began to be used in European institutions and was also recommended to national parliaments of the then member states. The second edition of the Eurovoc thesaurus was published in 1987 in nine languages, while the third version from 1995 already contained all 11 official languages of EU member states. Since 1995 the Eurovoc thesaurus has been distributed in both printed and electronic form, allowing for its easier implementation into various information systems. At the present time, the fourth Eurovoc edition, which originated in 2002, is used. This edition can be browsed in 11 EU languages on the official Eurovoc website (<http://europa.eu.int/celex/eurovoc/>).

Administration of the Eurovoc thesaurus at the international level is within the competence of the Eurovoc Maintenance Committee and the Eurovoc Steering Committee, made up of representatives of the European Parliament and the Office for Official Publications. The task of these bodies is to propose changes to the thesaurus' structure and lexicum and to insert them into new versions. Authorised users from national parliaments also have the possibility to contribute through their proposals to the updating of the thesaurus. The task of the above-mentioned bodies is to ensure that all Eurovoc's language variations are fully compatible in both structural and lexical terms.

The fourth version of the thesaurus contains in all languages approximately 6,500 descriptors, hierarchically arranged into 127 micro-thesauruses and 21 subject fields. Some descriptors are furnished with notes about the scope or indexing notes, thus it can be safely assumed that every descriptor has precisely one equivalent in each of the languages. In individual languages, it is possible to assign descriptors with various numbers of non-

descriptors, synonym or hyponym expressions assisting the indexor or database user in retrieving and using the appropriate term.

Within the framework of European Union institutions, the Eurovoc thesaurus is applied for factual document processing in the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, in the JUSTIS CELEX database, in the European Parliament for factual description of the library database, in the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation for cataloguing of European Parliament studies, as well as in some libraries and other European Union bodies. Moreover, Eurovoc is used in some national parliaments of EU member states (Spain, Portugal, Belgium etc.). In some acceding countries there are also national language versions of Eurovoc and these are used for indexing of national parliament documents (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia etc).

The Czech version of Eurovoc

The first Czech working translation of the Eurovoc thesaurus was created at the Parliament Library in 1992 and was used for factual description of documents in the automated library system. Immediately after the publication of the third version in 1995, the "Project of translating the Eurovoc thesaurus" was commenced at the Parliament Library. Thus, in 1998 a full-scope Czech version, fully compatible in structural and lexical terms with the other official language versions, originated. In the same year, the Parliament Library was granted a non-exclusive licence for distribution of the Czech and English version and became the guarantor of the Czech translation. In line with the maximum endeavour for observing the uniform Czech terminology and its compatibility with European terminology, we also cooperate with the Coordination and Revision Centre at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, which provides translations of European legal regulations.

In relation to the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, the policy pertaining to administration of the Czech national version will probably change. At the present time, the Czech party and the Eurovoc Maintenance Committee are negotiating on inserting the Czech version into the official Eurovoc and on the further development direction.

Eurovoc is currently used within the framework of the information system of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the CR in the following applications:

- Since 1993 in the Parliament Library for factual document processing in the automated library system, in which Eurovoc is implemented in four language versions (Czech, English, French, German). Merely Czech descriptors are used for document indexing, retrieval in the catalogue is possible in all the mentioned languages.
- Since 1999 in the Independent Public Relations Department for factual processing of petitions sent by citizens to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament.
- Since 1998 in full-text retrieval in parliament documents, whereby Eurovoc serves as a support for linkage of foreign-language queries (10 language variations).
- Since 2000 in the database of chamber prints and stenographic records of the third and fourth electoral period, whereby it is possible to use the Eurovoc thesaurus for factual retrieval (10 language variations implemented). Furthermore, retrospective factual processing of all parliament documents has been carried out since 1993.

The Eurovoc thesaurus is used by some European documentation and information centres for factual processing of their funds (for example, the Charles University European Information Centre, ICEU etc). At the present time, several other information workplaces are testing the possibilities of introducing the thesaurus as an auxiliary information source. The thesaurus' Czech version has also become part of the international ELVIL2000 project, with

the thesaurus' multilingual character serving as an interface information retrieval language between individual parliamentary databases.

Possibilities of further use of the Eurovoc thesaurus in the Czech Republic

The Eurovoc thesaurus' multilingual nature predetermines its use as an interface information retrieval language in various national databases and information systems. Together with the Czech Republic's accession to the EU, it is also expected that Eurovoc will be extended to include the languages of the acceding countries and these languages will be used in European Union information systems, for instance, in the official legal database of the European Communities (JUSTIS CELEX).

An example of possible use of the Eurovoc thesaurus in national conditions is the Metainformation Retrieval System for Public Information Systems project under the management of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic. The solution is based on the creation of a metadata profile for every electronic source made public, which will contain its formal and factual characteristics. The Eurovoc thesaurus' Czech version is expected to be used for fulfilment of factual metadata elements.

However, for the possible use of Eurovoc in similar national projects, it is necessary to completely tackle the problems relating to the provision of the Czech version to other national users. As was mentioned above, the respective negotiations with the competent bodies in the European Parliament are still under way. The paper's authors believe that by the time of the next ISSS conference they will be able to provide those interested with more detailed information.

Role of libraries in the information society

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Their function as the information and communication centres in local communities

Information functions have “always” been a very important aspect of the libraries’ activities since the very beginning of their existence. Libraries equipped in modern communication technologies are indispensable part of the information society. They collect, catalogue and store information resources, serve demands for equal access to information and educational needs of a wide range of users. New tasks for libraries include digitisation of analogue material, archiving of electronic resources and preventing social exclusion. The role of public libraries is particular due to their functions in local communities. Thanks to the knowledge of their users’ information needs, they can flexibly adjust their services to social demands.

Libraries as co-creators of the information society

Various definitions describe “information society” as the society in which there exist rich knowledge resources, easy access to this knowledge, technologies allowing for a rapid flow of information and a chance for a user to receive relevant information. One of the most important factors enabling the development of the information technologies are new communication technologies. And the condition of participating in the information society is information competence, i.e. knowledge of the information retrieval tools, measures of its assessment as well as knowledge how to use the information properly.

Conceptions of the information-based society are not only the description of another step in the civilization development. They also emphasize its meaning for the development of a man—as the citizen of a democratic community, a community of equal educational, political and economic chances. Foundations of such a society comprise the right to inform and the right to be informed. This very principle—the unlimited access to information and the requirement for every man to acquire suitable skills enabling the use of gathered through the ages collection of human thought—naturally indicates the libraries as institutions which are indispensable in this role.

It is worth to note that considerations about the information society contain a few default circumstances. They include: collection and classification of the information resources, cataloguing, storing, circulating and information training, all of which being the main functions of libraries. Knowledge of user’s information needs and ability to monitor them currently make additional advantage enabling libraries to react rapidly towards changing social demands.

New electronic technologies provide extremely powerful tools. Global real-time communication, possibilities to remotely create common, central bases, ability of indexing and information retrieval, generating reference lists, all created for the libraries new opportunities to realize their functions in a more complex way.

What makes the behavior of the information users peculiar is pragmatics of their expectancies. Adequacy of the information becomes a crucial problem, particularly in case of the Internet resources. This is because the Internet resources cannot be treated as a classified collection of documents and (as such) a source of valuable information. Another difficulty makes the lack of homogeneity of the Internet (and widely—of the electronic resources), which results in variety of methods of search and access. In this context it is often said about “the sur-

face of the Internet” and “the deep Internet”. The Internet contains the areas of information which can be valuable provided that the user knows how to use suitable tools properly and is aware of appropriate “access points” to the resources. In this case education and training of the users is essential and this is what the libraries do.

So how specifically do the contemporary libraries perform their functions in reply to the constantly growing information demand?

They implement modern information technologies, provide their own websites with an access to the electronic online catalogues, create systems of electronic document delivery, educate and train the users in Internet use for information-seeking, offer subject databases, gateways and online bibliographies. Within the interlibrary co-operation they standardize cataloguing rules (and lower its costs) by creating central databases of name and subject headings or bibliographic descriptions. They work in the field of standardization of description formats, for example those of electronic documents. Apart from this they also operate as an access point to electronic information resources. It is worth to note that all the new functions are performed parallelly to the traditional library activities concerning analogue resources.

New library functions in the information area—examples

Creation of the digital information resources

The enterprise that can be described as a new adventure of the libraries in the field of the information flow enhancement is conversion of their analogue resources into digital format, i.e. creation of digital libraries. This should result not only in creating a specific digital collection, but also a new technology for mass digitisation of analogue resources—a new tool for the information acquisition and retrieval, which can be exploited by other institutions, dealing with similar activities.

Building up a digital collection requires use of a librarian’s skills in a new form: edition of branch publications, management of projects involving new technologies and creation of new standards for description and presentation of digital resources. Libraries and librarians do not only benefit from advantages of progress in IT, but also co-create electronic resources that constitute valuable “islands” within the Internet area.

Archivisation of the Internet contents

Because Internet resources are constantly growing, selection of the information and the length of its living appear to be essential problems. Electronic publications (including the Internet) are extremely dynamic due to their short length of living, easiness of modification and actualization. The question is if the contents of the Internet should be archived and, if so, how it should be done. It is essential to examine the information resources not only from the point of view of its rapid flow and easy access, but also to consider it as a collection documenting history, culture and changes in the information society.

To keep a traditional role of the library as “the memory of a society” preserving the history of human thought in new conditions may be for libraries a real challenge. The problem is not as futuristic as it may seem. Before long there will be a time when a library will receive as a gift a collection of magnetic and optic disks or perhaps already forgotten CD-ROMs containing works of an eminent scientist.

Inclusion of the excluded

Theories of the information society often indicate a potential threat of an inevitable divide in a society—a threat of social exclusion. This may be considered from democratic or economic point of view but its result will be a divide of a society into two main groups. One of them

will consist of people fluent at information technologies and the other one—people without an access to IT, not able to use it, uninformed, poorly educated, underpaid or unemployed.

Here the libraries, particularly public libraries may play their “ancient” role as public institution, offering access for all the citizens, including those potentially excluded. This way they realize the important requirement of the information society—open access to information.

Public library and its functions in a local community

As a conclusion of the above considerations, it is possible to indicate several models of a local library and its functions performed in a community.

A library may operate as:

- an information centre—general and specialized, for example in public, business, cultural or tourist information,
- an information training centre, particularly for users without other opportunities to obtain information-seeking knowledge,
- a centre of regional information, that promotes a region and preserves its heritage,
- a local cultural centre,
- a public access point to the Internet resources.

The above models of a public library are not separate. Their potential is flexibility and ability to adapt to information demands but also to educational and cultural needs of the environment they operate in. Depending on those needs and functions within a strategy of a region development, it is possible to create a model uniting different functions and describing a path of a local library development. So public library may be a perfect tool of communication between various social groups, also between the citizens and the authorities. Public library ensures two-way information flow—presents regional information worldwide and offers local communities an open access to global information resources.

Summary

The above overview of the libraries functions and possibilities allows for a conclusion that thanks to their experience in acquisition, cataloguing and making human thought available, the libraries are and always will be the indispensable part of the information society. And, what is more, if the recorded collections of human knowledge stored in libraries are to be treated as information resources, it may be stated that the libraries have co-created the information society even before the term was used as a specific conception of a society.

Can people with disabilities face additional difficulties?

Branislav Mamojka, Chairman, Slovak National Council of People with Disabilities, Slovakia

Yes, they can and they do!

But they should not have and we hope they will not have!

The importance and benefits of access to information and qualities of information society for people with disabilities. Possibilities to overcome and prevent information barriers. The main problems to be solved. Special problems of new member countries. Participation of people with disabilities themselves in the process of accessibility implementation.

Access to information for all citizens, including people with disabilities, is a necessary condition for their capability of free and qualified decisions, equal participation and full inclusion in the society, and equal treatment by society. The risk of critical exclusion of people with disabilities becomes still higher and higher by ever growing utilization, importance and prevalence of electronic information and services in all areas of every day life, due technical barriers against their use. Building of inclusive society ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens is impossible without making it accessible also to those people as information society in the same time.

At present, there are already available access technologies enabling people with disabilities to use computers and through them standard information systems including Internet. Today Internet, and for nearest future digital TV and third generation mobile communications seem to be the most important technical means of information society. All those digital communication platforms will be able to deliver electronic and Information Society services. Open platforms for digital television and 3G mobile will contribute to user choice. Level of their accessibility will promote or harm access of disabled people to information society. It is not technical problem to make them accessible as demonstrated by existing internet accessibility and just starting mobile telephone accessibility, it is political and economical problem, problem of awareness and recognition of equal rights.

Information society affects diversity of impairment groups. It highlights different barriers to access to the information society faced in particular by blind and partially sighted persons, deaf persons, persons with learning disabilities and persons with severe physical disabilities and dexterity problems. Those different groups need different methods to achieve accessibility like synthetic speech and enlarged display, audio description, subtitling, sign language, adapted controls etc. On the other hand information society offers powerful technical means meeting those diverse requirements and enabling access to the same information as available to people without disabilities, if appropriately used.

Information access technology brings also additional benefits to people with disabilities compared to people without disabilities. Let me to demonstrate it on people with visual impairment. It is a revolutionary tool in particular for them. First time in the history of mankind it provides their independent access to information without human mediators, without limitation only on that information transcribed to Braille or narrated as audio recordings, at any time, without long waiting until somebody translates needed information to a format accessible to them. Thus IT if accessible has an additional and substantial value for people with disabilities. If not accessible it even creates new and much higher barriers to those people.

To get access to information it is not enough to know how to use computers equipped by access technology or how to use directly accessible IT devices. It is also necessary to pro-

vide information in formats accessible directly or by use of access technology which is possible and can be demonstrated on web accessibility.

Web pages serves as the most important information channels, channels for communication, education, employment, purchase of goods and services. However, they are often designed as inaccessible to people with disabilities and elderly. For visually impaired people problems are caused by graphics without alternative text, frames without name, choice based on colour; for people with hearing impairment sounds without text descriptions; for elderly complex control and structure of text; for people with learning disabilities texts difficult to understand.

Information barriers against accessibility of web pages could be already avoided during their creation by respecting simple rules concerning their structure, content, and coding without decreasing their attractiveness. This recommendations worked out by the Web Access Initiative of the World Wide Web Consortium (www.w3c/wai) thanks to support of EU have become gradually an international standards and even obligatory rules in many countries. Level of acceptance and obligation of those recommendations is important measure of difference between social exclusion and social inclusion of disabled people.

It is frustrating when already accessible web site is changed to an nonaccessible only by incorrect implementation of some graphical features and we have to start fight for making it again accessible by application of already existing recommendations not harming new graphical outlook of that site. Many public web pages have title page including only graphical links without alternative texts. Those links are pointing to already readable pages. Thus a blind visitor can open the wanted page only by several random choices. Why to prepare such a hindering and slowing down puzzle when the alternative text does not corrupt and limit graphical outlook of the page?

Thus education of information providers and information technology producers is absolutely necessary. But experience shows that this education is not enough and it needs to be accompanied by obligatory and enforceable measures. Besides guidelines and criteria of accessibility those measures should be included in regulations for public procurement and appropriate standards should be agreed to create conditions ensuring accessibility of information services and technology from very beginning or at least by available solution when needed.

As to the accessibility of information presentations in publications or on web sites let me to recommend you a nice introductory brochure entitled “Guidelines to access information” published by European Blind Union (www.euroblind.org). These guidelines were produced to help organisations make their information accessible to all their customers. This booklet shows that making information accessible is not complicated and that it can make a real difference for any organisation or business in reaching out to a wide customer base. Useful information about accessibility of document and much more can be found in proceedings of the conference “Accessibility of electronic Information to People with Disabilities” (www.unss.sk).

European organizations of disabled people like European disability Forum (www.edf-feph.org), European Blind Union (www.euroblind.org), European Union of Deaf and European Union of Hard Hearing as well as corresponding national organizations are systematically working for accessibility of information. European Union has already approved important recommendations and regulations supporting that objective and requires their implementation on European and national levels. In spite of that achievements, we do not recognize them enough enforceable and we are not satisfied by different level and delays of their implementation. As stated in European disability forum response Europe 2005 mid term review “EDF is disappointed that despite the important achievements made by the Europe 2002 Action Plan, the draft eEurope 2005 Action Plan does not to any comparable degree

reflect the same concern for the specific actions necessary to secure the continued inclusion of disabled people in the Information Society. There are only a few references to disabled people, mostly from a retrospective position with no targets for the future regarding eInclusion.”

Anyway, we have to be optimists and we are optimists. Activities towards full accessibility continue and it is also our responsibility to work for speeding up this process. E.g. The European Commission has been persuaded, not least by EDF and EBU, to set up a working group to look at the barriers to telecommunications and broadcasting faced by disabled people. Its remit explicitly covers terminal equipment as well as networks and services. This group, known by the acronym INCOM (Inclusive Communications) is a sub-group of COCOM (Communications Committee), the EU Commission body which oversees the implementation of the new package of electronic communications directives. Topics already under consideration include text terminals for deaf blind people and access to digital television. When speaking about digital television, the key problems are the absence of assistive services such as audio description and audio and text subtitling on digital TV; the lack of television equipment to enable reception of these digital services where they exist and the inaccessibility of electric programme guides, remote controls and other aspects of the television equipment that is available in the market. The demand of extraordinary importance is accessibility of interactive services which will be provided through digital TV. This channel will be at least of the same importance as PC and probably preferable used and perhaps easier available for general public.

Very hopeful and interesting is new concept of the Universal Communication Identifier UCI presented in the report (TR 103 073) of The European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI). UCI is a concept for tomorrow's advanced communication networks which has specific features that offer particular advantages for people with functional impairments or with special requirements, such as the elderly and disabled. UCI systems offer huge potential because the system “knows” the identity of both the originator and the recipient of a communication. The system can therefore take account of any special requirements, for example, that an incoming voice call for an elderly user with a hearing defect is redirected via a service that applies pre-defined frequency-based amplification, or that e-mails read at a public terminal by a UCI user with a sight defect are displayed with enlarged text.

Achieving widespread access by all citizens to new services and applications of the

Information Society is one of the goals of the EU for the coming decade. This is objective also for new member countries. They would perhaps have to do more than present member countries because of less developed information infrastructure and less powerful economy. On the other hand it need not be against accessibility because the new generation of IT will be implemented and when accessibility is taken in account from very beginning, it should be cheaper than later adaptations.

Let me to mention two other aspects which are perhaps more significant for new member countries.

The first aspect is financial accessibility. It is matter of fact that the adapted IT for people with disabilities is more expensive than standard IT. From country to country there are no or some different conditions to receive any subsidy to purchase it. If the disabled person finally has it, he or she has to pay for internet. Of course, it is normal and paid also by people without disability. But the communication using a special man-machine interface corresponding to respective impairment, is much slower, needs much more time and therefore much more money to be paid by person with disability. Moreover, that person can arrange many things through internet which otherwise would need personal assistance or other more expensive service. Again, from country to country there are no or some different possibilities to

obtain some financial compensation for those extra costs, but obviously they are far below the real additional costs.

The second aspect is language accessibility. The most of national languages of new member countries are languages of relatively small nations. Much less documents and software are available in national languages, in particular national localizations of adaptive software needed for adaptation IT for needs of disabled people or application software already including accessibility features. Because of very small market localization is expensive and localized software is available with great time delay. Also support of these activities would improve accessibility. Language localization is a great problem of whole software market in many countries. Some recommendations or even standards for software design simplifying the process of language localization would be of great help for all.

In conclusion I would like to emphasise well-known but rarely accepted and applied fact that also people without disabilities and society as a whole can benefit from accessibility of information for people with disabilities. Accessible e-government, e-learning and public information will decrease cost of state and municipal administration because request for special transcribing, interpreting, reading and similar services will be decreased and need for some services could even disappear. In some situations, like bad lightening or noisy environment, people without disability can also benefit from implemented accessibility features. Accessible information services and devices will offer more flexible choice to all according to personal preferences and needs. They can also offer solutions in not expected standard situations not related to disability.

As you could see, people with disabilities can really face additional difficulties. But information society has enough powerful tools to avoid and prevent those difficulties. There is enough evidence that awareness, good will and knowledge are indispensable precondition for implementation of accessibility, but it is not enough to solve actual problems and to prevent creation of new barriers for people with disabilities in the field of information. As I know the only means able to convince producers and providers to ensure accessibility of their goods and services are appropriate obligatory and enforceable standards and measures included in public procurement. If those conditions are known enough in advance, producers and providers will stop production of goods and provision of services which will not be accepted due those measures. It will be also not possible to argue against accessibility that it slows down development. After some time those standards might become natural part of thinking of designers and other responsible persons and bodies. It is normal to use stairs, lifts, and ramps to connect floors instead of climbing rope; no concerned action is needed to convince architects about it. We would like believe that we will still less need “climbing ropes” to clamber for information.

Actual development confirms that there are tools and will to ensure accessibility of information and you have power and, as we believe, also will to use it in favour of whole society. Please, speed up this process especially on national level in particular in new member countries and support it on European level. To make that process more effective and measures more appropriate it is necessary to hear voice of consumers. This requirement is much more important in the present case of consumers with disabilities since their special needs are not enough known and still not accepted as standard needs of main stream society. Organizations of people with disabilities are here, they are willing to cooperate and they have already cooperated. Please, include them in the process more intensively for favour of whole society.

Adobe Intelligent Document Platform

Michal Metlička, Adobe Systems Europe, Czech Republic

Presentation highlights

The business problem: Large organizations, such as financial institutions, manufacturers, and government agencies, have invested heavily in automating structured, back-end enterprise systems and core business functions. But because document processing is still unstructured—largely manual and disconnected from enterprise operations—businesses suffer from inefficiencies they haven't even diagnosed, such as the inability to accurately forecast business because data is stored in disconnected data systems.

Even with electronic forms, e-mail, and other technologies, unstructured document-based processes slow down the pace of business. ERP systems are still generating documents like invoices and credit card statements that recipients cannot act on. Invoices are still being retyped and routed for manual processing. When business information needs to be retained as a document of record, people revert to printed documents for archiving. Companies are now starting to focus on these kinds of problems in the systematic way that they've addressed their other core business processes.

Systems are driving behavior when behavior should be driving systems. This reality results in critical business problems that today's technology fails to address.

The Adobe Intelligent Document Platform enables enterprises to securely extend the power and reach of existing enterprise applications by leveraging the universal nature of Adobe Reader and Web browsers. Using the platform, a company can improve customer satisfaction, speed time to market, and extend the value of investments in enterprise applications to gain competitive advantage. The solutions in the platform are built on a secure and flexible architecture that extends the power and reach of enterprise applications within and outside the firewall. The platform leverages Adobe document services to create intelligent documents and integrate them into business processes.

The Adobe Intelligent Document Platform consists of three components: Intelligent document Universal client Document services

What it does

Enables organizations to

Create high-quality, ad hoc documents from the desktop or dynamically from enterprise applications. Collaborate with internal and external people while maintaining the visual fidelity and integrity of the original source documents. Capture data more securely through electronic forms, even when working offline. Automate and manage processes that are not managed by core systems.

What are its benefits?

Enterprises can better leverage their investments in core applications. Improved communications speed time to market and sharpen competitive advantage. People are better integrated into collaborative business processes. Integration of people into processes reduces or eliminates reliance on inefficient manual workarounds and increase user adoption. The platform provides tighter security and greater document integrity and supports compliance.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) In Education in Latvia

Juris Mikelsons, University of Latvia

Information and knowledge, life-long education and training are substantial topics for the development of Information Society (IS).

IT&T council was established at the Ministry of Education and Science in March of 1996, it was the first IT&T council at the government level in Latvia.

We tried to explain that education at schools is impossible without implementation of computers and Internet.

We succeeded and a year later on June 13, 1997, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia and the University of Latvia signed an agreement on the “Latvian Education Informatization System”.

The agenda of the presentation includes the following topics: experience in informatization of education in Latvia during the previous 7 years, accomplishments and best experiences, problems and future targets taking into account potential international cooperation and options provided by the membership of the EU.

The role of libraries as a municipal info-centres with regard to a region's ethnic structure

Halina Molinová, Library Manager, Regional Library Karviná

Abstract

The structure of resident population in Karviná.

City's information centre in library – centre of society, contact and community in the city and region.

It's contribute toward formalisation of knowledge base and infrastructure in local region.

The library as a information background for support and development of small and medium business.

Free services offer complete internet hosting:

- provide web and email, the administration domens
- creation and service of www presentation (expert advise, processing sample pages, actualisation www pages)
- direct information dissemination

Library and unemployed.

- the percentage of unemployment in district (21,35%) and in the city Karviná (23,32%)
- possibility to use internet for looking job free of charge
- train staff–how to work with PC and internet
- possibilities of other services of library

Library–educational institution

- information literacy

The Self-governing Bodies Need Proper Strategic Tools in the Communication Field

*Chris Ormalm, Swedish leader project MI CZ PHARE 200, SALA IDA, Sweden,
Jaroslav Svoboda, Czech leader project MI CZ PHARE 2001,
Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic*

There is plenty of professional competence in the communication field within the new self-governing bodies, and the staff seems to know their respective roles and duties pretty well.

But how is the situation regarding the overwhelming objectives, visions and strategies within the offices? And how do these relate to communication persons and other staff facing the citizen? Do they strive for the same goal and present the same picture of the office even if their competencies are scattered to different departments? And how is the ICT sector to treat the human factor, now when the machinery slowly is increasing?

These are some of the issues brought up and discussed within the framework of the EU PHARE 2001 project with Ministry of Interior CZ “*Co-ordination of the activity of the territorial self-government on the regional and local level*”. One of the components have dealt with the Communication within the new self-governing bodies also including their communication with the citizens. The project involves seven regions and the communication work has been run by the Ministry of Interior, supported by Communication experts from Swedish Association of Local Authorities (SALA). A network of 100 persons – (various professionals in the communication field, decision makers and others) – from central, regional and local level have been established and approximately sixty persons have been actively involved in elaborating and testing the output.

Apart from a small e-government sub-component (that was shortly presented by Mr Johansson at the ICT Conference the preceding year [1]) the two major sub components have dealt with the development of a Communication Strategy for the new self governing bodies and training regional managers in Communicative Leadership. The latter is currently in its final phase.

The project has been focusing mainly on the strategic level, not on the technical competences nor infrastructure issues.

The Communication Strategy

The project started in September 2002 and the first part of the project was spent on analysing the situation regarding Communication within and in between the state and self-governing bodies, but also the communication between the public administration and the citizen.

The conclusions from this analysis and thoughts were tested at several occasions with the network participants/expertise in order to avoid errors and to ensure that things were not omitted.

The results from the analysis and the discussions with the Czech experts led to the production of a Communication Strategy Document to be used by the self-governing bodies [2]. The document does not only include the strategic goals and how to reach them, but also had to define a global vision for the public administration – since this was something that few offices could present. Without a vision where you want to go, it is hard to derive any strategic goals...

The document also comments on the importance of training people in the strategic and communication fields but also a bit on target groups and communication channels.

The Situation Analysis

The overall picture in the analysis is that the technical communication skills are quite good in the self-governing bodies. Besides a large variety of communication tools are used and tested.

One good example is a small municipality in Jihocesky Region where almost half of the adult citizens are linked to an SMS-network run by the municipal office. At the same time loudspeakers in the corners are used regularly. A clear picture of when the 1800s meet the new millennium)

Most communication staff know quite well what they shall do related to their own job description. However, there are often deficiencies regarding the overall views, the long-term planning and the cohesion **between** different departments and actors, which might hamper common ambitions, give a disparate picture of the office and probably also cause double work. Persons with Communicative tasks are scattered in different departments.

One problem raised by the interviewees almost everywhere were some bad attitudes shown related to service delivery. The conclusion was that part of this had its ground in improper communication mainly from the Managerial field. We therefore stress the importance of Human Resource training. This is also one reason why we have been involved in making a Model for Training managers in Communicative Leadership together with a training department at the Ministry of Interior and FALA [4].

This need does not only trigger off discussions on priorities for the Human Resources Departments and the number of training days that could be used; it also caters for even more cohesion and co-operation.

A Press Officer in one of the regions stated it; “So far we (The Communication/Press Dept) have been fighting to walk in pace and synchronize our actions with the technical people in the ICT department – a thing that might be hard since both the language and the priorities are different. Now, when we see the need of training we also have to liase with the Human Resource/Training staff and make them prioritise training in the communication field. Three parallel races should be made cohesive – that is quite a task!!!”

Some other general problems identified:

- The internal communication flow is vague and mostly hierarchical.
- Front line staff are seldom fully informed about all the issues they are expected to respond to.
- As for service delivery there are several problems.
- The word “Communication” is used mainly to describe one-way information. For some persons it is automatically linked to ICT issues.
- In some places there is an added problem separating the political interest and the interest of Public Administration as such.

In addition there were many problems defined relating to the on-going Public Administration Reform and the sometimes unclear responsibility between Regions and the different levels of municipalities.

Observations directly relating to ICT issues

Regarding the ICT sector part of our observations were made during the situation analysis and part in the work carried out under the e-government sub-component (described here last year).

One common problem in all European countries is that the ICT discussion tends to focus on the machinery and infrastructure more than the use, the strategies nor the people. Still, the risks, and the factors that hamper the process of change into a more ICT based society - in the long run - is often related to human resources.

We are not only talking about the need for training in computer skills, but most of all a need for a changed approach and acceptance from the public in order to enter this new world. A new technique is always scaring. As for the new possibilities of Internet and e-government this is not only a technical nor communicative revolution, it implies in the long run a more horizontal approach leading to organisational changes- thus being a matter of social change.

Consequently, the doubts, resistance and scepticism are even worse when it might be both a technical, communicative and social change. We would like to stress the importance to focus more on the strategic and human side of the ICT coin.

One issue that was often heard from persons we interviewed was that the access to common data bases sometimes failed – not due to legal nor technical reasons, but simply because persons handling the information were insecure whether they could submit the information to the citizen or not. Thus the human factor again.

Some of the problems identified have been related to the Internet access. One of the obstacles being the comparatively high Internet costs. Many persons relate this to the role of Cesky Telecom. In our report we do recommend the government to deal with this issue and also with the question of introducing incentives in order to promote Internet access. In Sweden – which has got one of the highest access rates in the world - part of the success came thanks to possibility for companies to deduct home computers for their employees in their houses.

Another observation made concerns the lack of co-ordination of different initiatives on e-government on the central level. We hope that the new State Information and Communication Policy being in the pipeline will be a reason to improve the co-operation between different actors, but also that new policy itself will be made more visible to relevant actors than the old one. Many of the ICT staff interviewed did not know there was a policy in existence.

Our hopes

The Communication Strategy has now been launched to the regions and the network. It is on the Ministry of Interior web site (www.mvcr.cz/reforma/phare/komstrat.html) and in the Verejna Sprava magazine (No.45/2003). It has also been presented in the Senate.

The idea is that communication and strategic staff in the self-governing bodies can adapt it and adopt it fully or they can cut and paste whatever they need into their own documents. Most of all we hope that it will trigger off a discussion on the needs for strategic tools in general and that our common work has contributed to a good dialog between citizens and public administration.

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Public electronic registry

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Introduction

In recent times, electronic registries have been on the rise in the Czech Republic. This paper deals with the public electronic registry (VEPO) allowing for:

- delivery and taking over of “**recommended**” electronic documents with a “**delivery receipt**”; and
- **equalisation** of a legal operation in electronic form with the written form of such an operation.

Why “public”?

Ordinary electronic registries mostly serve for **one organisation** for collection of presentments, provision of answers to presentments and/or other operations related to document sharing and management by the organisation’s employees.

As regards the **public** electronic registry, the deliverer and, primarily, the addressee can be **anyone who agrees with the VEPO terms**, has a sufficient number of credits and has a valid public key certificate issued by a certification authority recognised by VEPO.

The deliverer selects the addresses of the presentment on the basis of its certificate. The deliverer needs a **partner certificate** only for the first presentment. After a successful presentment, the addressee is included among so-called **private addressees** of the deliverer. So-called **public addressees** also exist in the registry. They are more important clients of VEPO, with whom the VEPO operator has concluded a contract in writing. Public clients can have several boxes in VEPO, they can also use other above-standard services (the possibility of electronic updating of the boxes of the client and eligible users of individual boxes, the possibility of defining the client’s terms—the type and issuer of recognised partner certificates, time stamps, antivirus control, acceptable document formats etc). It concerns trustworthy VEPO clients since VEPO guaranteed definite connection of a VEPO public client with the organisation stated with this client. In the case of other VEPO clients, this definiteness is connected with the certification policy of the respective certification authority which issued certificates for individual users of the client’s respective box.

Major VEPO pillars

Confidentiality

- *Measure 1:* The delivered document can be taken over by VEPO **only on the basis of a private key** of one of the addressee box’s users.
- *Measure 2:* Communication of both the deliverer and the addressee with VEPO takes place through an **encrypted channel** (bilateral SSL).

Under the presumption that the addressee box’s users have their private keys under their sole control, owing to measures 1 and 2 delivered documents cannot get into the hands of a third party outside the registry.

- *Measure 3:* **The technology and security policy** of VEPO prevents the actual VEPO operators getting to the content of documents.

- *Measure 4:* In the case of personal or especially confidential data contained in an electronic document, the deliverer has the possibility of inserting the document into a so-called **digital envelope** (i.e. to encrypt the document) he creates by means of his and selected certificates of the addressee box's users. The envelope can only be opened (the document deciphered) by the owner of one of the private keys corresponding to the certificates used for the creation of the digital envelope.

Provability

High-quality information systems allow for the keeping of so-called **audit records**. However, they are not accessible to the system's ordinary users and are merely usable with the content of the system's operator, for example, when settling disputable cases.

In addition, **VEPO** provides to its clients so-called **electronic receipts** confirming important moments—**delivery and completion** of a document's life cycle in VEPO (taking over, cancellation of presentment by the deliverer, the addressee's rejection of the document and/or deletion of a non-taken-over document after the elapse of the archiving period). The electronic receipt is definitely connected with the delivered electronic document and its appurtenances, with the certifier and the time of the occurrence of the given moment of the document's life cycle. It is made out and becomes accessible immediately for both involved (the deliverer and the addressee). VEPO differentiates between four types of receipts:

- *the electronic presentment receipt*—VEPO makes it out and confirms it by its digital signature at the moment of successful delivery of a document to VEPO,
- *the summary electronic receipt*—VEPO makes it out and confirms it by its digital signature at the moment of a document's end of life cycle in VEPO.

Of importance are also the following two receipts:

- *the electronic delivery receipt*—it is made out by the **receiver** and confirmed by the receiver's digital signature prior to the taking over of a document in the respective VEPO box,
- *electronic receipt of cancellation* of a document—it is made out by the **deliverer** and confirmed by the digital signature of the deliverer who decided to cancel his own presentment not taken over by the addressee.

Electronic receipts serve for any of the parties involved as definite **proof in the case of disputes**.

The issue of time and the possibility of its recording with documents delivered through VEPO

Since the public key certificate has unlimited validity, or its validity can be prematurely cancelled, the time of the creation of a signature in the electronic world has a significantly greater importance than in the case of the traditional "paper" world, primarily in terms of the long-term validity of the electronic signature, possibly of its special type – the electronic receipt.

UNISign tools for creating and verifying electronic signatures and other elements available for VEPO and its clients are able to work with time:

- in VEPO electronic receipts,
- at the "time of signing" (another signed attribute of the actual signature—for more details, see ETSI TS 101 733),
- in the time stamp to the respective signature,
- current time.

It is beyond the framework of this paper to compare the four mentioned types of recording the time of creation of the electronic signature. Nevertheless, it is possible to devote to it in more detail at the ISSS 2004 conference in the discussion about the actual lecture.

In terms of the validity of the signature and the respective certificates, decisive in VEPO is the **time of presentment** of documents (this time is stated in the electronic presentment receipt), or the **time of the end of life cycle** of documents in VEPO (it is stated in the summary electronic receipt).

Equalisation of the electronic legal operation with its written form

VEPO allows for equalisation of the deliverer's legal e-operation inherent in the presented electronic document with its written form on the basis of a **contractual relation** in compliance with Article 40 paragraph 4 of the Civil Code and in accordance with VEPO terms:

- by presenting a document to VEPO to the addressee's benefit the deliverer shows interest in concluding such a contractual relation with the addressee,
- by taking over a document by one of the addressee box's users (the so-called receiver), the mentioned contractual relation is established.

The basic VEPO terms stipulate that:

- the deliverer, receiver, respectively, trusts the certificate (-s) of the user (-s) of the partner's box he can examine and verify prior to expressing his own will to establish a contractual relation,
- the holder of the respective certificate has a corresponding private key under his sole control and is liable for possible damage caused by breach of this obligation,
- both parties respect VEPO electronic receipts and the time recorded in them:
 - the time of presenting a document to VEPO—as the time of carrying out the legal e-operation by the deliverer,
 - the time of taking over a document in VEPO—as the time of accepting the electronic form of the deliverer's legal operation by the receiver.

VEPO ensures fundamental inspections concerning the validity of the respective electronic signatures and the respective certificates of the deliverer, receiver, respectively.

In the case of a client requiring the so-called administrative regime (contact with a public authority etc), VEPO also carries out other checks and provides the respective time stamps so as to meet the preconditions for equalisation of the electronic legal operation with its paper form **pursuant to Act No. 215/2002 Coll.** and related implementing regulations.

Reliability of VEPO

VEPO receipts are made out by the so-called “VEPO **electronic agent**”. It is formed by a secure crypto-core meeting the requirements of FIPS 140-2 security level 3, storing the VEPO signing key and ensuring the signing of the respective VEPO electronic receipts in an automated secure regime.

The time recorded on VEPO receipts and the respective audit records is derived from the **precise VEPO clock** synchronised with exact Central European Time and is guaranteed with the maximum deviation of up to 0.1 s. Both parties, the deliverer and the addressee, have the possibility of verifying the current VEPO time by means of a time component, which is displayed after a successful enrolment in VEPO and is synchronised with the VEPO clock with the precision at the level of second units.

VEPO's reliability is further guaranteed by the actual VEPO **technology** tested over several years of operation in electronic banking when confirming hundreds of thousands of

bank transactions for several millions of crown a day, as well as by the consistent **security policy** of VEPO.

Conclusion

It is useful to weigh up at what beer consumption it is still advantageous to pay for beer supply and at what beer consumption it is more beneficial to invest in one's own brewery. A similar deliberation is to the fore when investing in an electronic registry which, unlike the traditional "paper" one, need not be located in a building of the respective organisation, with its accessibility through the internet, possibly, another electronic medium, being the only relevant factor.

Literature

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e-Government and Structural Funds

Marc Ribes, Consultant in e-Government/Board's Director of the e-Forum Association and President of CTM, France

A real strategy must be prepared before applying to structural funds. e-Government provides a great opportunity and the structural funds provide the regions of the accessing countries with a valuable support. But methodology is a key in order to fully reap the benefits of ICT.

Introduction on e-Government

The implementation of an e-Government project has multi-dimensional aspects.

First of all, an e-Government project is always a project in interface with various stakeholders. Any administration works at 4 main levels:

- It has sites distributed over a certain geographical area, requiring communications for sharing information or conducting internal procedures.
- It must interact with other administrations at its level or with the central administration.
- It must offer new services to the citizens.
- It must offer new services to the businesses.

The services provided to the administration's staff, to the citizens and to the businesses must be:

- **Expected** – New services must be of interest for the administration but they must represent an added value for the users as well. The success of an e-Government service can be measured through its effective take-up. It is therefore very important to assess first the public's expectations and also to communicate about the advantages of these new services.
- **Accessible** – The new services must be available through different channels, in order to offer the better accessibility: the Web, fixed telephones, any mobile device, and tomorrow the interactive digital TV will allow delivering universal services. Accessibility for disabled people, based on the W3C recommendations, must be taken into account in the very early stage of the programme's definition.

These kinds of projects must not be considered only as technological projects. They interfere deeply with people, both internally and externally. There are additional components such as the day-to-day operation of the service, its promotion to ensure effective take-up marketing or the adaptation of the legal environment that must be taken into account when building such a project. The appropriate overall management of this set of components can determine the success or the failure of the project.

Key aspects for the development of an e-Government programme

An e-Government project must be considered at the human level. It will have an impact on 4 different populations:

The internal users. Once implemented, the project will modify the way people works on a daily basis. Are they intellectually and emotionally prepared for such a move? They can be afraid: modification or lost of job, ability to use new tools...

The citizens. The interaction with them will change. New services, new tools, new services but also transformation of habits. The majority of the individuals will not subscribe spontaneously to such new tools. A marketing approach must be considered for promoting the advantages of the new solutions.

- The businesses. Again, the human aspect is very important as the systems are proposed to companies but is used by people inside the organisations. As an example, taxation on-line systems are provided to companies' accountants, who may not be the most IT-literate people and can be in trouble when using digital certificates.
- Externally with other administrations. A public institution works in an ecosystem. It must interact with others, inside the regions, in other regions or with different administrative levels. Therefore, the boundaries of a project must take into account the human and technical impacts on the other players involved.

A project must achieve a strategic vision with measurable results. But it must be doable as it relies on local players and partners. They must be able to propose, manage and implement new subjects, based on technologies that could be not yet present, usually requiring the participation of several complementary parties. Are these public institutions aware of the possibilities offered by e-Government and are they able to develop them? The first necessity is to assess the *e-Readiness* of the public players for such a challenge. The second question concerns the resources for such projects: availability, IT literacy, experience of people, but also tools and funding are some of the subjects to be identified.

The second step is to define priorities based on the overall strategic vision and on the identified resources. For example, a subject can be considered as highly strategic but requires some kinds of competencies that could be developed only in the next 2 years. In this case, it is better to put a higher priority on other subjects more easily reachable and to prepare the resources for the other one. The questions to be answered are: what must be done, when, who can do it and with which measurable results. This step must lead to a wide communication towards the regional public institutions in order to motivate them and define with them what kind of support they need for developing their own valuable projects.

The third step consists for the Regional Authorities in paving the way for using the structural funds. Based on the other 2 steps, there will be a learning process over the years of the programme for requesting and using properly the funds. By submitting the first propositions of projects as soon as possible, the Regional Authorities would have the opportunity of pushing forward some of the highest priorities and of showing to the other public institutions how to do it.

Using this strategy will allow to build effective and efficient projects. That requires taking into account all the aspects of ICT projects and mainly keeping in mind that a project has a lot of non-technical characteristics.

As a conclusion, it is interesting to remind a recommendation issued by Vivienne Jupp, Director of Global eGovernment Services at Accenture during the 2001 European Commission's eGovernment Conference – From Policy to Practice:

“Think Big, Start Small, Scale Fast ... have a vision, identify the right customers and services, start small and be prepared to learn and adjust as you go, then roll further services out to ever larger user groups”

Elements of methodology

Application for structural funds can be done at various levels, central, regional or local. The Regional Authorities must play a key role not only in applying but also in supporting the other regional stakeholders (counties, city councils, education centres, health centres...) in their own applications.

Proposition of projects can result from individual initiatives or be part of a regional strategy. The latter will bring a considerable organisation for getting as much funding as pos-

sible and as many concrete and valuable results as possible. But this action should follow an overall methodology with 5 steps.

Step 1: Definition of the regional strategy

The local strategy describes the Administration's objectives in the development of e-Government. It aims at defining targets and priorities: life services, taxation, education, employment, pensions, on-line procedures, health...

It is a 10-year vision that must be sponsored politically at the regional level. It is very useful to identify an e-champion that will make communication of the perspectives, expected benefits and effective results of the e-Government programme, someone who will represent the Administration's political life and who will demonstrate his/her commitment in the development of e-Government, addressing both the public and the Administration's staff. This person will have to present and defend his/her vision for the Region, explaining why the development of e-Government projects is important, how they will be implemented and what the expected results are.

Step 2: Communication plan

One of the major problems, for the development of e-Government in any country, concerns the take-up of the new services offered. The success of an e-Government programme depends on the effective usage of the services developed. For internal as well as for external users, e-Government is often considered as a revolution: modification of habits, new tools, misunderstanding of threats and benefits...

Spontaneously, only "aware people" will use e-Government services. It means those who already know about new technologies and computers, and who know what the expected benefits are for them. But for the majority of the targeted users, it will be necessary to communicate at 2 very important stages: before the development of new services (what the strategy is, what the benefits are for the user and for the community, why taxpayers' money is spent that way) and each time a new service is launched, through a true marketing campaign that will demonstrate the value of this service and will help in recruiting users. The message must be carried out by the regional e-champion

Step 3: Assessment of the current situation

As mentioned before, the rollout of an e-Government strategy requires an adhesion of all the players. Their effective participation is linked also to their level of equipment, their education in new technologies and project management

The first objective is to have an exhaustive list of the existing and possible stakeholders of e-Government in the public environment of the Region.

The general target of this step is consequently the evaluation of the *e-readiness* of the public institutions in the Region. It will be analysed according to 3 factors:

- *Leadership*. It has already been mentioned that the political commitment at the regional level is important. It must be relayed by stakeholders at the local level who will demonstrate their own involvement and commitment and will impulse a shared vision for e-Government and more generally for the Information Society. The objective is the identification of such local players and their evaluation before such a challenge.
- *Equipments and connectivity*. The development of e-Government means developing the telecommunications in the region, in order to empower the user, to facilitate exchange of information, to develop the regional competitiveness, to spread knowledge region-wide.
- *Human capital*. The success of the Information Society is two-folds.

- It requires skilled people for the development, the implementation and the operation of the systems. It is necessary to evaluate the level of literacy of the different public entities because it will identify which of them can lead such a development and what is the effort for upgrading those with lower skills.
- It requires also a population that is interested in the new technologies and their perspectives. The future of a country through the Information Society is in the youngsters. It is necessary to evaluate the level of awareness of the young population: penetration of ICT in schools and universities and the ability of the educators to use and teach in accordance.

Step 4: Roadmap definition

This phase aims at defining how the strategic objectives, as defined in the Regional Strategy, can be reached, from the current situation. The main output should be the identification of 3 fast track projects that the Regional Authority will present for funding as early as possible in 2004.

The Regional Strategy defines the objectives to be achieved with the structural funds. The roadmap will define how these overall objectives will be met, what the priorities are and how these priorities must be organised taking into account the situation. The purpose of this document is to define very concretely the way of delivering e-Government.

Consequently, the roadmap is the starting point for the management of any initiatives and each initiative needs to be considered as a project on its own with the consequent project controls.

The 3 fast-track projects will target:

- The priorities.
- Regional services that could be used as a basis for further projects.
- The demonstration of the approach to the other public entities.

Step 5: Proposition of the 3 fast-track projects

This step consists in doing a feasibility study together with the development of a business case for each of the 3 selected projects. This last one will take into account the estimated cost of the project's development, the different sources of funding (structural funds as an external source, internal, public-private partnership) and will define how the return on investment, quantitative or qualitative, will be measured. All this information must go through a formal acceptance by a steering committee at the regional level that will involve the political representative for a better appropriation.

Each fast-track projects must be described as follows:

- An overall description of the project: what it consists in and what is the goal.
- A justification of the interest of the project: why this project is compliant with the regional development and with the Regional Operational Plan.
- A technical description: what are the different parts of the project.
- An organisational description: which entities will take part and for what and what will be the procedure for selecting the private partners.
- A planning.
- A financial presentation detailing the budget of the project, the part to be funded by the structural funds and the remaining source of budget.
- A programme management plan: how it will be ensured that the objectives of the project will be reached.
- A control plan: what the indicators are.

Each project's description will have to present how it will be introduced in the day-to-day life, inside the administration (change management) and outside towards the citizens and the businesses (communication).

Once awarded, the project is launched and the programme management team must be built. Besides the technical aspects, a programme manager should be appointed to take into account the organisational and contractual aspects of the projects, the planning, the cost statement, the quality assurance and the risk analysis. Periodic meetings with the regional e-champion will allow him/her to be permanently updated on the evolution of the situation and will give him/her the material for adapting his/her communication.

The chance of the countryside is in IT (and a proactive approach)

Vít Skála, PTL Ltd., Czech Republic

Most smaller municipalities throughout Europe face identical problems. Lack of jobs, young people moving to the cities, small budgets making larger investment operations impossible, an ageing population, population decrease. On the other hand, many young people prefer living in a clean rural environment than in congested cities.

The paper outlines a possible direction for further rural development, whereby active use of up-to-date information technologies can reverse the currently unfavourable trend. It mentions specific practical experience from projects already implemented in a small municipality, including the results achieved. While the presentation will motivate mayors and representatives of small municipalities for proactive conduct, it will not overcome specific problems that must be tackled when implementing these plans. However, it will highlight the results that can be feasibly attained thanks to a proactive approach.

In Senožaty (a village with approximately 700 inhabitants), broadband connection to the internet has been installed, the municipality operates its own GIS, the municipal authority is equipped with modern computer technology and possesses its own multilingual website with a comprehensive publication system. Regional, national and international grants, thanks to which everything could be implemented, have been used on a large scale. Under preparation is wireless coverage of the entire village by a WiFi network, creation of a local broadband network with a data server at the municipal authority, installation of a new information system in the local library, as well as conversion of dilapidated buildings into flats for young families that will be able to work at home via the internet. The groundwork for transferring some activities of IT companies to this locality is also being prepared. The paper will also mention the strategic long-term objectives of a specific municipality, outlining possible examples to be pondered over by of mayors and representatives of other municipalities.

The paper combines the musings of a visionary with the altogether more sober reflections of a member of a municipal board of representatives.

e-Strategy and cooperation among towns

Jaroslav Šolc, Head of the Policy Division, Prague City Council – Informatics Department, Czech Republic

The paper deals with the importance of cooperation between self-governments, primarily those of towns, in enhancing information society development. It presents the experience of the Informatics Department of Prague City Council gained in this issue both at the national and international level. It also pays attention to the terms e-Strategy and benchmarking and highlights topics for strengthening of cooperation in the future.

Introduction–Why cooperate?

There are numerous reasons. Specialist, economic, prestige, as well as application of joint procedures and interests towards the surroundings. Functioning with similar goals are associations of various subjects in various thematic areas. Hence, it is essential that towns also cooperate in modernising public administration, especially in a period bearing witness to the rapid development of information and communications technologies (ICT), their penetration into all spheres of life, and the increasingly frequent use of such terms as information society and e-government. Under economic pressure, the private sector has been adapting to the challenges of the times, including changes in labour style and organisation and improvement of qualification. Similar principles have been seeping into public administration too.

Cooperation of towns and locals governments in the EU

Towns play a major role in information society development owing to their specific conditions, such as large population, concentration of economic and creative potential. They are important partners, representatives of the interests of self-governments on both the local and regional level towards the state and the EU.

An especially relevant role is played by big cities, which as a result of their position and ambitions in the national and international arena must be bearers of ideas and solutions complying with the current level of information and communications technologies' development and their application in an advanced Europe. On the eve of EU enlargement, cooperation between towns of the acceding countries and towns of the EU15 is a real challenge. Approximately ten years ago, European cities began associating themselves in such organisations as TeleCities and Global Cities Dialogue (GCD), presented at ISSS/LORIS on several occasions, and Major Cities of Europe – IT Users Group, an organisation due to introduce itself for the first time. Also common are smaller groupings of towns that are partners within the framework of a particular time-limited project.

Similarly developed in the EU is ICT cooperation between associations of local governments – ELANET - or associations of regions - ERISA. The two organisations have also been presented at ISSS/LORIS and they closely collaborate with TeleCities, including on solutions to specific projects, for example, the Three Roses project pertaining to the use of Open Source SW. The benefits of cooperation with organisations of towns and self-governments are very well perceived by the private and research sectors since it allows for joint discussion of experience, trends, needs and possibilities of their solution.

Prague has been a member of the TeleCities network since 2001 (since 2002 a member of the Management Committee), and this organisation's objectives show the fruitfulness of cooperation. TeleCities (www.telecities.org) is a network associating more than 100 European cities, it is a platform for sharing and exchange of experience, development of practical solu-

tions directed towards an open information and knowledge-based society at both the European and local level. The main goal of TeleCities is formulated as support for e-Citizenship for All, whereby in comparison with e-Government an active approach from below is emphasised. To attain this goal:

- it strives to influence European policy in the interest of cities;
- it enhances exchange of experience and knowledge between cities of member states and acceding countries;
- it informs its members of policies, programmes and initiatives of the EU and local governments;
- it facilitates and supports the origination and solution of projects assisted by the EU for its members and their associations.

Representatives of the organisations TeleCities, Global Cities Dialogue, Major Cities of Europe and capitals of V4+ countries have been invited to take part in ISSS/LORIS 2004 and appear in a special programme block devoted to cities.

How we cooperate in the Czech Republic

In the 1990s self-governments in the Czech Republic underwent a substantial development, from overcoming habits from centralised management to full awareness of the necessity and advantages of an active approach “from below”. By the dawn of the millennium, the situation had become complicated as a result of public administration reform, the origination of fourteen new regions, the gradual demise of old districts and the transfer of competences to delegated municipalities. Effective use and development of ICT in such an environment was a tough nut to crack for both self-governments and the Ministry of the Interior of the CR.

The willingness to associate self-governments manifested itself immediately after 1989 in the establishment of the Union of Towns and Communities of the Czech Republic (SMO ČR). The necessity of tackling ICT issues resulted in the setting up of the Information Systems of Towns and Municipalities Committee (ISMO Committee) a few years later. At the present time, evenly represented on this committee are municipalities, small towns and large so-called statutory towns. Following the mentioned reform, when regions originated as new higher territorial self-governing units, the Association of Regions of the Czech Republic (AK ČR) was founded too. The Informatics Committee is one of its committees. The two organisations have a rather political nature, with political representatives of self-governments working in their bodies and on most committees. A certain exception is the mentioned Informatics Committees, on which mainly employees of IT departments of the respective authorities are delegated. Both committees have been cooperating to an increasing extent.

For the sake of completeness, it is also necessary to mention other platforms, for example, specialist working groups which were consulting bodies for the Ministry of the Interior, mainly in the period of reform. Working on a regular basis are a number of professionally oriented associations in which specialists from self-governments, the private and academic sphere and NGOs are represented. Examples are the Czech Association for Geoinformation (CAGI), the Association for Information Society (SPIS) and the Czech Society for System Integration (ČSSI). There is no organisation in the Czech Republic analogous to Britain’s SOCITM, an association of IT employees of self-governments, which presented itself at ISSS 2003.

Little by little, closer cooperation of IT employees of big cities in the Czech Republic, for instance, statutory towns within the framework of the ISMO Committee, is starting. Prague and Ostrava have been intensively gathering experience from cooperation in TeleCities.

These cities, together with others - Hradec Králové, Liberec, Jihlava – have prepared their presentations in the block of cities of the CR at this conference.

Declaration

The common endeavour of local and regional self-governments and their associations and calls for both mutual and “vertical” cooperation addressed to national governments and EU structures are the topic of a number of pronouncements and declarations bearing many identical ideas. For this year’s ISSS/LORIS conference, the Declaration on Local and Regional Information Society Development (LORIS Declaration) has been prepared too. It links up to last year’s analogous Prague Declaration of Capital Cities of the Candidate Countries and the Memorandum of Understanding adopted by associations of self-governments two years ago. The text of the Declaration issues from similar documents initiated and adopted by TeleCities (eRights Charter), GCD (Helsinki Declaration) and at the recent conference of cities in Lyon (Lyon Declaration).

A clear willingness to cooperate on the path to common goals is the first step that should be followed by other specific activities. The action plan of this year’s LORIS Declaration contains the terms e-Strategy, benchmarking and best practices, to which I shall devote more attention.

e-Strategy and benchmarking

The right way to start fulfilling objectives pertaining to information society in public administration is to clearly set them out. Hence, various policy documents determining further city development should contain one setting objectives pertaining to information society, i.e. Information Strategy, or e-Strategy. In major traits, objectives for most cities are similar, only differing in terms of starting conditions, financial, technological and organisational possibilities and, last but not least, the structure of priorities a city has determined for the near future.

From experience, I know that most IT staff are under pressure to implement specific technical solutions and distrust the creation of strategic documents, or simply do not have time to draw them up. Nevertheless, the pressure resulting from limited finance, striving for effective, transparent and high-quality municipal administration and provision of services requires strategic decisions being taken by top management on the basis of high-quality basic documents. In the Czech Republic the pressure to create policies even exists in the form of requirements for attestations of information systems by law.

When facing the task of preparing such a policy, or participating in it, we undoubtedly look at the situation of other cities. Do they have such a document, how did they prepare it, on their own or with whom, what is its structure, how detailed is it, how do they apply it in practice? We certainly raise such similar questions. For instance, how are they doing today, how have they organised the city IT development management, what political support do they obtain, do they have IT in one or in several sections, how many and what kind of employees, what type of services do they purchase, what systems do they use, what data do they exchange, how do they resolve security, what information and services do they offer on websites, what projects do they implement or prepare, with whom, how do they finance the projects and how do they cooperate with each other or with ministries...?

If we begin to convert answers to the questions into clear facts and figures, we implement in practice what is usually termed “benchmarking”, or comparing on the basis of defined indicators. We can mutually benchmark ourselves with other cities, as well as benchmark and

evaluate our own development over a certain period, for example, using indicators determined in advance.

At this year's conference, the results of various projects and activities on the theme of benchmarking should be presented. The results of international projects comparing the situation in various states (the SIBIS project), or the TeleCities project, interesting from the viewpoint of cities, launched last year in cooperation with Deloitte & Touche and bearing the title "eCitizenship for All – Survey and Award". This project, which is planned to continue this year with the aim to achieve higher participation of cities from newly acceding countries, has also served as inspiration for activities started in the Czech Republic and V4+ within the framework of the conference's preparations. Structured information about the respective city and association focused on information society issues has been processed. As a model, documents containing information from the Capital City of Prague and the Union of Towns and Communities of the Czech Republic have been drawn up.

Prague—an active partner

Prague has a special position in the public administration of the CR. It is not only the capital city of the Czech Republic with the corresponding ambitions in the international arena but, by operation of law, also a municipality and region at the same time. Commensurate with this are the activities and cooperation concerning ICT issues.

Since 2001 it has been a member of the international organisation TeleCities, and since 2002 the author of this paper has been an active member of the Management Committee of this organisation. Prague is also a member of Global Cities Dialogue (2000). Since the end of the 1990s it has gathered experience from cooperation on international projects and at present is carefully monitoring the possibilities of using EU funds, including structural funds, for the development of informatics in the city.

Prague is also represented on the Informatics Committees of the Union of Towns and Communities of the CR (since 2003) and the Association of Regions of the CR (in working terms since its establishment, since 2004 officially). This double role, supplemented by the international dimension in the activities of the Informatics Department of Prague City Council, brings valuable knowledge and possibilities of an interesting view of the issue in self-governments of the CR. It has already been applied, for instance, when the draft State Information and Communication Policy of the Ministry of Informatics of the Czech Republic was drawn up. It comes as no surprise that Prague participated in several activities of the ISSS/LORIS 2004 conference – preparation of the Declaration and assurance of the mentioned programme blocks pertaining to e-Strategy, cooperation and benchmarking of cities: European cities (V4+ capitals and city networks) and, one day later, cities of the Czech Republic (selected statutory towns).

What next?

The fundamental topics what and what next are inherent in the mentioned LORIS Declaration. The first step also concerns extension of this Declaration and gaining it supporters both at home and abroad, together with widening contacts between active partners from the ranks of cities and associations of self-governments. At home, we would like to facilitate the development of cooperation between cities (statutory and others). As a substantial challenge, we perceive development of cooperation between these towns and established European organisations, as well as the possibility of forging closer partnership alliances within the framework of joint projects after the Czech Republic's accession to the EU. We are fully aware of the

key role played by cooperation for correct setting out of strategies, as well as the role played by information exchange, benchmarking and promotion of best practices supplemented by the element of competing and awarding. These are activities that have on many an occasion been well launched in the Czech Republic, however, they deserve even more attention on the part of self-governments, as well as state support. Jointly, we want to assert the interests of self-governments within the framework of a constructive debate with national governments and EU bodies.

Undoubtedly, these objectives are brave and long-term. Willingness to effectively “co-operate” is a good “strategy“ in itself. I believe that when we carry out the next benchmarking of what has been achieved over the year, the results will be encouraging.

Cultural Heritage for All

Michal Stehlík, Deputy General Director of the National, Museum for central collection-creating and exhibition activity, National Museum, Prague, Czech Republic

The project's substance is the integrated system supporting operation, research-based use and presentation of collections. The system's basis will be a multilingual, open on-line catalogue of cultural heritage, interdisciplinary, containing textual and audiovisual recordings of individual items.

- **Multilingual:** Czech and English versions are presumed;
- **Open on-line:** an open internet system with the possibility of access by anyone is presumed, access will be divided into a number of levels;
- **Catalogue:** a subject catalogue with the possibility of creating mutual links and connections;
- **Cultural heritage:** processing of collection items is presumed, as well as their present and future documentation, including maintaining all knowledge and relations, both movable and immovables;
- **Interdisciplinary:** classification of all cultural heritage categories is presumed, both movable and immovable objects, as well as artefacts and natural items.

Project authors:

Association of Museums and Galleries, National Museum, Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic

With regard to the fact that the project would be too general or would place demands too great on preparation if it were conceived on such a wide-ranging level, the National Museum decided to implement it by means of a pilot project that would serve for testing methods of work and further use of an open on-line catalogue of cultural heritage.

Project

Routes of European culture

Intention

By means of cultural heritage artefacts, unique manuscript sets, incunabula, archive documents, by means of period texts, period music, using architecture and museum and gallery collections, we would like to recount the stories of specific historical personalities, to examine their thinking, tastes, hobbies, and to place into historic connections their endeavours in deeds of an intellectual nature of European dimensions. In parallel with the project of mapping the context of European culture in the Central European space, we presume meetings of today's leading personalities of the Central European intellectual context, who will bring the topical dimension into the project.

Outputs

The project's outputs can be divided into two interlinked parts. The first part will consist of approximately 20-minute **audiovisual stories** of about 100 European personalities that will be placed on electronic DVD carriers (five stories on one disk in multilingual versions). In thematic terms, they will be divided according to the chronology of the European cultural tradition's development. Each disk's heading will contain characteristics of the breakthrough events in European history. The second part will be a **virtual project catalogue in the form**

of an internet portal. The basic approach in this output will be digitalisation of two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects, as well as documentation of architectonic monuments. Another use of the acquired data can be provided in the form of CD-ROMs.

Especially when it comes to the second point of the objectives, the project fulfils the general conception of Cultural Heritage for All, thus becoming a pilot project of its implementation.

Partners

With regard to the project's nature, partners from Central Europe, namely, Germany, Slovakia and Hungary, were addressed. From the Visegrad viewpoint, it concerns the Slovak National Museum and the Jewish Museum in Budapest.

Portal of EU Administration–Your Europe

*Ondřej Větrovský, Board of the Life Situations Project Department,
Ministry of Informatics, Czech Republic*

The Your Europe project aims to provide information and services pertaining to the movement of citizens and entrepreneurs within the European Union. The portal will assist users in tackling real problems in the case that they want to study or work in other members states, open new subsidiaries etc. Through the “One Stop Shop” structure, the portal will make information accessible both at the EU supranational level and the level of individual member states and acceding countries.

The creation of the EU legislative framework does not in itself guarantee that people will make full use of the rights and opportunities offered by the internal market. However, citizens’ access to free guidance and specific information about their rights or legal regulations will significantly contribute to improving the internal market’s functionality.

Integration

The current, ongoing “Dialogue with Citizens and Business” projects will be integrated into the “Public-services.eu” pilot project. Also dealt with will be information sharing and service use with other projects, such as the “Citizens Signpost Service”, “Solvit”, “Eures”, “Coweb” and “Ploteus”. This integration of horizontal projects means more effective use of current resources and, at the same time, reducing the risk of possible duplication of other projects focused on a specific user (DG EMPL, RESEARCH...).

The portal’s content will initially be provided from the “Dialogue with Citizens and Business” projects, focused on information and consultancy about the internal market, rights, job opportunities and the principles of freedom of movement. Subsequently, solution-providers will concentrate on improving the content quality, completing relevant information from individual member states, primarily from the acceding countries. Furthermore, the portal will profit from close cooperation between related projects:

- The Citizens Signpost Service provides citizens free specific and individual information or advice concerning their rights. Queries may pertain to, for example, recognition of qualification certificates, residence permits or vehicle registrations. As a rule, answers are provided within 3 – 8 days, by telephone or email, in the user’s mother tongue.
- Cowebs (Co-ordination of Social Security Websites) is a multilingual project associating information concerning social insurance and pensions. It provides the terminologies of various member states.
- Europe Direct – a service of the European Commission intended for citizens and entrepreneurs, answering general questions about the European Union, referring to relevant information sources or advisory services (e.g. Signpost/Solvit).
- Ploteus, Eures – projects focused on job opportunities, education and mediation of information.

Available languages

The portal’s introductory page will be fully multilingual. The main page, navigation, FAQ and interactive pages (retrieval, contacts etc) will be drawn up in all 11 official EU languages (following EU enlargement, in 20 languages). The portal’s entire content will be available in English, French, German and the official language of the state the information concerns.

All references that can be included in the Your Europe portal must be available in the language of the given state and at least one of the three major European languages.

Organisation

The project is managed and strategic decisions are taken by the TAC Steering Committee. The Editorial Board, consisting of representatives of individual states, presents its statements on the given issue, adopts recommendations (rules, communication, content processing procedures, the portal's structure etc) and communicates with representatives of member states from individual departmental committees and national portals. The editorial team ensures translation and publication of the content, technical development and informs the Editorial Board about its activity.

Schedule of the first phase

- Completion of rules, requirements and analysis of the content – end of March 2004
- Completion of the portal's structure, technical analysis and design – end of May 2004
- Implementation of software, content consolidation – end of June 2004
- Impact Assessment Report – end of July 2004
- Launch of the Your Europe portal – end of August 2004

The project's second phase will take place from the middle of 2005 and will entail the portal's further development, including the integration of some electronic services.

The Public Administration Portal and the Your Europe portal

Alongside the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union, the interest in relevant information will undoubtedly increase not only on the part of the Czech Republic's citizens but also on the part of citizens of other EU countries. Hence, within the framework of the second phase of the Public Administration Portal, the Ministry of Informatics of the CR decided to extend the portal to include the target group "Alien" with a special emphasis on the EU citizen. Clearly offering itself here is the possibility to deal with the content side in parallel with the Your Europe portal and effectively set up the processes of using information and its updating. The major provider of this data will be the editorial team of the Public Administration Portal, who will also ensure the administration of the content within the framework of the Your Europe portal.

Conclusion

Thus, it is necessary to primarily focus on processing the relevant elements of life situations and information understandable for EU citizens. In their analysis, the editorial team of the Public Administration Portal revealed that this topic is not sufficiently covered and that it is necessary to commence intensive interdepartmental cooperation.

e-Riga: restructuring the city

Ēriks Zēgelis, Director of Riga City Council IT Centre, Latvia

Riga – the city of inspiration... This slogan was adopted to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the Republic of Latvia capital and also the largest and the most active city of the three Baltic countries. Today I will reassure once again that it is also true for the development of information technologies (IT) and e-government.

What is e-Riga?

In the year 2002, the Chairman of the Riga City Council Gundars Bojārs announced the beginning of the e-city project *e-Riga* and the councillors approved the vision of this project.

For ourselves, we defined *e-Riga* as *a complex modernisation and restructurisation project that covers all fields of municipal operations*. Despite such a short definition this project is a long-term (5 years for the completion of the first phase) solution that requires a lot of financial (approximately € 21.2 million over the first phase) and human (employees and outsourced consultants) resources.

The implementation of this project is aimed at building mutually beneficial relationship between the city residents, businessmen, tourists, foreign investors on one hand and the municipality on the other. These relationship are built on the fundamental business principles – services are subordinated to the needs of clients and they are provided in the most effective and efficient way in relation to municipality's budget.

How did we advance?

There is no doubt that people visit conferences not just to meet old friends and make contacts, but also to find new ideas, learn from others' experience and probably copy the best practices. In order to contribute, I will briefly outline our main steps in building *e-Riga*.

To avoid the mistakes that somebody else had done and to learn from the best experience instead, Riga decided to choose a strategic partner, which would consult the municipality and provide all the necessary knowledge. And this allows us to refer to our project as the most up-to-date e-government project in Europe.

According to the tender results, the strategic partner of Riga City Council in preparing the e-city project is the consortium made of *Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard* and *Ernst&Young*. Also, professional consultants for public relations (agency *Mediju tilts*) and marketing communications (agency *CMS*) have been selected.

The next step was to create a project strategy, so that everybody would have the same vision of the final goal and would know exactly when and what he/she is supposed to do. Now, after almost two years of project's life, I am confident that this approach was right and saved a lot of time and other resources for the city.

To achieve the possibility of speaking directly to the decision makers and to get the support of the politicians, the project management was initially built of two levels – operative (municipal employees and consultants) and strategic (major decision makers). It always helps when you must not wait a couple of weeks before your issue is considered...

Fast planning model

Alongside the work on the basic documentation, the demand from both the public and the councillors increased to see the first benefits of the project. In order to fulfil these expecta-

tions, we have chosen the so called *fast planning model*, which allows us to work in two parallel directions – strategic planning and modernisation of particular services.

At the strategic level, the work on several concepts – service defining, provision and modernisation, introduction of client-oriented approach and one stop agency principle, describing multi-channel access strategy, IT architecture, infrastructure and network improvement, security policy – was done, whereas at the operative level the work on three pilot services was started.

When the modernised services were finally announced to the general public, we received good remarks and it appeared that people (and ultimately also the politicians) were quite happy and further new services were demanded.

The first achievements

The most difficult thing so far was to explain to the general public and politicians that the small letter *e* before the word *city* does not ultimately mean that this is purely an IT project. I am pretty sure that this is a common mistake and is not just a characteristic of Latvia and Riga.

The major lesson that we drew out of this work and showed the public was that there are no difficulties with providing the necessary IT support, but there are substantial problems with changing the existing way of thinking about the relationship between the municipality and its clients and it requires a lot of administrative paper work to make some improvements to the previously functioning system.

On overall, three out of the three hundred municipal services were modernised, each aimed at a different target audience – new mothers, private property owners and entrepreneurs interested in construction. The first service - *child birth benefit* - required major administrative work and practically no IT. However, it appeared that previously two different municipal institutions had been driving people between themselves to pay them a single allowance.

The information on real estate tax was previously sent to people via mail, which was now added by the possibility to receive it on e-mail or to overview via the internet banking system. This required less IT and administrative work than begging the Department of Finance to open a new bank account. The issuing of a land zoning certificate is a municipal paid service that, however, is necessary if one wants to build something in the city. This was facilitated by the fact that everyone can order and receive this certificate without leaving the office. Just make request, pay the fee in your internet bank and receive the certificate via mail service.

The last but not the least important of the jobs was the creation of the new municipal Internet portal that replaced the previous home page. It offers the latest municipal news and cultural events, detailed and classified information on all 300 services, contact information and links, as well as the most useful things for tourists and investors.

Welcome to Riga

Currently we are working on several new services (mainly in the area of construction permits) as well as dealing with some strategic questions, like trying to get some EU funding. ☺

I am always looking forward to meeting You in person in Riga or virtually at www.riga.lv to share some thoughts or exchange some experience! I will finish with the e-Riga slogan – always welcome...

TeleCities-Deloitte eCitizenship for All Initiative

*Peter Zimmermann, Richard Drewea, Deloitte, Netherlands,
Stéphanie Mittelham, TeleCities Co-ordination Office, Brussels, Belgium*

TeleCities

Is the major European network of cities committed to leadership in the Information and Knowledge Society. Established in 1993 in the framework of EUROCITIES, TeleCities is open to democratically elected city governments as well as to business and scientific partners. TeleCities provides a platform of over 100 local authorities from 20 European countries, sharing experience and developing practical solutions to achieve an Inclusive Information Society, both at European and local level. TeleCities promotes eGovernment and eCitizenship amongst European local administrations in support of the development of policies and delivery of services that will enable all European citizens to equally benefit from the gains of the Information and Knowledge Society. These gains include the right of all citizens to access public services in the most effective way, to actively participate in local public decision-making processes, which affect their quality of life, in a secure environment. By fostering the role of local authorities in achieving these aims, TeleCities supports the European Commission in a fuller implementation of the eEurope 2005 Action Plan to become the most competitive and inclusive knowledge-based economy in the world, including the challenges of the EU enlargement. Under the motto *eCitizenship for All*, TeleCities promotes an inclusive Information Society at city level, and focuses on the implementation of the Challenges eLearning and Inclusion, eDemocracy and Community Building, Re-engineering of Local Public Administration and eSecurity.

To make the next step in promoting a more inclusive Information Society, TeleCities launches in 2004 its new strategic framework “**The knowledge based city**” that seeks to include all the topics that have been addressed in the past years, but will also address new challenges. The generation and exploitation of knowledge is now the predominant factor in the increase of quality of life and the creation of wealth. The shift to a knowledge-based society, prompted by new goods and services, is a powerful engine for growth, competitiveness and job creation.

Deloitte

is an organization of member firms devoted to excellence in providing professional services and advice. Deloitte is focused on client service through a global strategy executed locally in nearly 150 countries. With access to the deep intellectual capital of 120,000 people worldwide, Deloitte's member firms (including their affiliates) deliver services in four professional areas: audit, tax, consulting, and financial advisory services. Deloitte serves over one-half of the world's largest companies, as well as large national enterprises, public institutions, and successful, fast-growing global growth companies. Within the EMEA region, Deloitte's national establishments participate in the Public Sector Group Europe MiddleEast Africa.

eCitizenship for All Initiative

TeleCities and **Deloitte** have launched the *eCitizenship for All* initiative, the aim of which is to undertake an annual pan-European benchmark survey into the state-of-the-art of eGovernment in TeleCities' Member Cities. Using the latest web-technology, Deloitte is annually collecting and assessing the relevant information at city level, relating to each of TeleCities' four

challenges. The survey findings are captured in TeleCities' European knowledge base to which the Members of TeleCities participating in the survey have exclusive and free access. The knowledge base represents a valuable tool for European cities to benchmark themselves against each other and provide scope for learning and knowledge sharing. In the context of this initiative, cities participating in the survey are also granted the opportunity to nominate themselves for the annual *eCitizenship For All* awards by submitting their local best practices relating to one or more of TeleCities' four Challenges. The projects are being evaluated and nominated for the awards by an independent jury, with representation of eGovernment specialists from the European academic world and business. The award winning projects distinguish themselves in terms of their contribution to innovation, fulfilment of user needs, sustainability and transferability and hence the implementation of *eCitizenship for All*.

Highlights of the survey and awards

- Re-engineering
- eDemocracy
- eLearning
- security

Participants to the eCitizenship for All Survey 2003

<i>Austria</i>	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Netherlands</i> Amsterda	<i>Sweden</i>
Linz	Espoo	m	Gothenburg
Vienna	Helsinki	Eindhoven	Hudiksvall
	Oulu	The Hague	Linköping
<i>Belgium</i>	Tampere	Rotterdam	Ronneby
Antwerp	Turku	Utrecht	Tranås
Brussels Capital Region	Vantaa		Stockholm
	GermanyBonnB	<i>Poland</i>	Uppsala
	remen	Gdansk	
<i>Croatia</i>	Cologne	Katowice	<i>Portugal</i>
Rijeka	Hagen	Porto	<i>Turkey</i>
	Leipzig	<i>Slovenia</i>	Yalova
	Munich	Koper	
<i>Czech Republic</i>	<i>Greece</i>		<i>United</i>
Hradec Kralové	Amaroussion	<i>Hungary</i>	<i>Kingdom</i> Birmingham
Ostrava	Budapest	<i>Spain</i>	Camden-London
Prague		Barcelona	Edinburgh
	<i>Italy</i> Bari	Bilbao	Glasgow
<i>Denmark</i>	Bologna	Gijón	Kingston upon Hull
Aalborg	Grosseto	Madrid	Leeds
Frederikshavn	Livorno	Reus	Liverpool
	Rome	San Sebastian	Manchester
<i>Estland</i>	Siena	Terrassa	Newcastle
Vilnius	Turin	Totana	
		Valencia	
		Viladecans	
<i>France</i>			
Cannes			
Lyon			
Metz			
Nice			

Results of the *eCitizenship for All Awards 2003*

WINNERS

eLearning and Inclusion

- City of Helsinki – Nettimanula Project

eDemocracy and Community Building

- City of Tampere – Participation Palette Project

Re-engineering of Local Public Administration

- The London Borough of Camden - Home Connections Choice-Based Lettings Project

eSecurity

- City of Bremen – Bremen Online Project

HONOURABLE MENTIONS

eLearning and Inclusion

- City of Edinburgh – MyEdinburgh.org Project

eDemocracy and Community Building

- City of Turin – Torino Facile Project

Re-engineering of Local Public Administration

- City of Glasgow – Sign Language Interpreting Service Project

FINALISTS

eLearning and Inclusion

- City of Glasgow – I:XSEED Project
- City of Metz – MEDIANET Project

eDemocracy and Community Building

- City of Espoo – Open Espoo Project
- City of Turin – Toweb Project

Re-engineering of Local Public Administration

- City of Aalborg – Digitalising the Home Care Project
- City of Stockholm – Stockholm Housing Mediation Project



For more information: <http://www.telecities.org> and <http://www.deloitte.com>

Declaration on Local and Regional Information Society Development (eV4+/LORIS Declaration)

We, representatives of local and regional governments and their associations of V4 countries and other Acceding countries and the current Member States of the EU,

gathered together on the eve of the European Union enlargement – one of the most important opportunities for the European Union at the beginning of the 21st century – in the cities of Prague and Hradec Kralove, on the occasion of the ISSS/LORIS 2004 (Internet in Public Administration/Local and Regional Information Society) and DIS-V4 (Developing Information Society in V4 Countries) conferences held between March 28 and 30, 2004,

AWARE that

the potentials of information and communication technologies (ICTs) should be further exploited in order to achieve the goals of the Lisbon strategy to make the European Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy with improved employment and social cohesion by 2010.

CONVINCED that

It is at the local level that the impact of ICT on government and citizens relationships, community building and social and economic development and inclusion, can be the most effective. Local and regional governments play the irreplaceable role in the modernisation of public administration and in the provision of services for business and their citizens.

The precondition for this is an active approach, dialogue and cooperation between all levels of public administration – local and regional governments, national governments and EU institutions. We place special emphasis on collaboration between European networks and self-government associations, and mutual cooperation between towns and regions, especially in countries with geographic, historical and cultural proximity, as well as on a wider international scale.

RECOGNISING

The principles for an approach to the Information Society adopted by the international community, in particular:

- eEurope 2005 Action Plan – Information Society for All
- Declaration of the World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities on Information Society (Lyon, December 2003)
- Conclusions of the European Ministerial Conference on the Information Society “New Opportunities for Growth in an Enlarged Europe” (Budapest, February 2004)
- Helsinki Declaration – the base for Global Cities Dialogue (Helsinki, 1999)
- A Charter of European eRights – Public Administration on the Information and Knowledge Society (TeleCities/Eurocities, Porto, November 2003)
- Memorandum of Understanding adopted at the ISSS/LORIS 2002 Conference (Hradec Kralove, March 2002)

- Prague Declaration on Information Society Development (ISSS/LORIS 2003, Prague, March 2003).

COMMIT OURSELVES to

- **Support information society development** in close collaboration between local and regional authorities and cooperation with national governments and EU institutions.
- **Improve the quality and availability of services through modernising self-governments** and using the e-Government principles, enhance the effectiveness and transparency of public administration, as well as foster the development of democratic processes and active civic society. Our objective is to further develop the conditions for economic and knowledge growth.
- **Strive for more comprehensive involvement of citizens** in co-decision-making on communal policy and in municipal life. One of the ways of attaining these goals is to use new technologies and working methods that will best contribute to improving the overall quality of life in a community.
- **Monitor actively the objectives and practices of EU and national strategies** for information society development and public administration modernisation, with the use of ICTs. **To take part in the discussion during their preparation** so that the role of local and regional governments, their goals and needs are sufficiently taken into consideration.
- **State the objectives and priorities of EU and national strategies into our own policies** and plans (e-Strategy) based on the analysis of the actual situation and possibilities.
- **Ensure effective methods for the preparation, financing and management of projects**, to secure feedback and to set indicators for monitoring and evaluation of the results.
- **Provide more and better training opportunities** for the upgrading of the e-skills of the public administration' workforce.
- **Provide available on-line services** for all citizens and businesses, **address the development of people's basic skills to use and benefit from ICTs** and play an active role in the knowledge-based economy;
- **Contribute to avoiding digital divide** in the society and ensure accessibility to electronic services for handicapped citizens;
- **Ensure to increase broadband coverage** in under-served areas and ensure a **safer on-line world**.
- **Use, where appropriate, combination of financial resources**, including instruments of the EU, such as Structural Funds and other programmes;
- **Create conditions for effective cooperation** with other public administration bodies, scientific and educational institutions and the private sector. To strengthen cooperation between public administration subjects, primarily towns, municipalities, regions and national associations and international networks for exchange of experience, preparation and implementation of joint projects, evaluation and benchmarking, as well as for promotion of best practices.

CONCLUDE that

To fulfil the above mentioned goals and commitments, it is necessary within a short-term perspective **to carry out the following activities:**

- **To draw up and update information strategies and the respective implementation plans** of local and regional governments and their associations taking into account the objectives of the EU and national governments for information society development. Pursuant to specific conditions and priorities, to implement programmes and projects in practice, to monitor the fulfilling of targets and give publicity to the results.
- **To analyse the development** of the information society in towns, municipalities and regions, placing emphasis on **dissemination of best experience and best practice**, to take an active part in **benchmarking activities and sharing the results** attained with other subjects.
- **To enhance mutual communication and exchange of experience** by using different tools, e.g. conferences, seminars and websites, lists of contacts, events, projects and other mutually shared information.
- **To identify common goals and priorities**, to seek solutions in the form of joint projects and provision of the necessary resources with the use of EU funds.
- **To be actively involved in the operation of national associations and international organisations of municipalities and regions** focused on information society development issues. **To collaborate** in a similar manner **with professionally oriented associations**, primarily the IT associations of public administration employees.
- **To be actively engaged in discussion on strategies and programmes of the EU and national governments**, namely, in the preparation and implementation phases, to ensure participation in selected structures, to ensure linkage to the needs of information society development on the local and regional level.

CALL UPON

National governments and the European Commission to:

- Observe and take into account the needs of information society development on the local and regional level in the EU and national governments strategies and develop partnership with self-governments and their associations;
- Create the necessary legislative environment, methodologies, standards, support for information exchange and best practices' promotion and award;
- Support the proactive approach of local and regional governments in form of programmes and financial incentives.

Local and regional self-governments and their associations of Acceding and Candidate countries and the current Member States of the European Union to come into line and sign this declaration.

Hradec Kralove, 28.3.2004

Vysočina Regional Authority

Well placed in the center of the Czech Republic, the predominantly rural Vysočina Region sprawls along the Czech – Moravian Highlands, from which it takes its name (Vysočina means “highland” in Czech). The Vysočina Region, one of the fourteen regions of the Czech Republic, has been known historically as a land of very poor and very tough people. The region gained this reputation thanks to its picturesque but rough countryside, which tested the capabilities and inventiveness of the people in fighting their destiny.

The Vysočina Region is a part of the EU microregion NUTS 2 Southeast, and two of its districts – Jihlava and Třebíč – are part of the Euroregion Pomoraví.



The Vysočina Region covers an area of 6924.8 square kilometers, accounting for 8,78% of the territory of the whole Czech Republic, which makes it the country's fifth largest region. The region's population is about 522,000 inhabitants.

The main centre of business, cultural and social life in the Vysočina Region is Jihlava. Thanks to its location, Jihlava acts as a gateway to the region. The other important centers of the region

include the towns of Havlíčkův Brod, Třebíč, Pelhřimov and Žďár nad Sázavou.

The Vysočina Region has the well-deserved reputation of being one of the cleanest and most picturesque parts of the Czech Republic. The Vysočina Region is characterized by small villages, which are scattered all over the rolling countryside. Even the important urban centers in Vysočina are miles away from the overcrowded agglomerations like Prague in terms of their cleanness and quiet lifestyle. The Vysočina Region offers a lot of cultural, sport and social activities. Vysočina boasts a number of cultural sights, some of which are in the UNESCO list of the world cultural heritage.

Regional Authority IT Department

IT department of Vysočina regional authority consists of four divisions – Network Administration Div. (4 pers.), Databases and Applications Div (3 pers.), GIS Administration (2 pers.) and Conceptual Div (1 pers.). Main objectives of IT department are administration of network and Vysočina regional authority internal and external information systems, development of internal and regional geographical information system and building and supporting ideas of e-society and e-government in regional context all based on Regional IT Policy.

Vysočina Region Selected Parts of Regional IT Policy

Health Services

- Starting of basic data collection systems for monitoring and analysis of regional health and social trends. According to these basic data collection systems and according to the advanced health documentation systems there will be started a deeper knowledge analysis (statistics and data mining).

- Development of IT support for emergency systems – rescue actions navigation (real-time GIS data in combination with GPS), integrated emergency call system (callcenters, back-office applications, GIS integration)

Social Basic Services

- Basic IT infrastructure development in combination with public sector IS integration.
- Improvement of communication between public and non profit sector
- Technological and information support for disadvantage and endangered groups

Transport and Urban Mobility Basic Services

- Integrated transport system preparation and development
- Implementation of public transport optimization projects (models)
- Support of public transport information systems with emphasis on usage of GIS

Basic Service Delivery

- IT support for running public sector reengineering
- Communication infrastructure improvement
- Basic service optimal navigation for public using web applications
- E-Forms systems implementation and improvement, its back-office integration
- Data reengineering of public sector IS data architecture based on basic registry maximal usage
- Front and back-office systems improvement and its integration
- Support for public usage of electronic signature by maximizing supply of e-signature integrated services
- Implementation of CRM techniques and technologies

Some activities of IT department are involved in European programs, for example Prelude and TownTwinning (project LORIS).

Selected IT Projects of Vysočina Regional Authority



Prelude – project identifies the best practices and activities in IT over all Europe based on regional aspects. Vysočina in association with BMI are involved in work packages Basic service delivery Transport, Social and Health services.

Loris – international ICT conference arranged as project of EU TownTwinning program

ePUSA – project supporting basic service delivery on regional level. The data sources are “centralized database of Czech regions and municipalities, directory services, GIS integration as one of information sources of national public service portal – www.epusa.cz “



Kevis – regional system serving for basic record-keeping typically of TOA services and simple accounting tasks – www.kevis.cz



The Union of Towns and Communities of the Czech Republic

The Union of Towns and Communities of the Czech Republic is a voluntary non-political, non-governmental organization whose regular members are communities in accordance with the law on communities. The Union's basic aim is to defend the common interests and rights of the communities that make it up. At present, the Union comprises approximately 2,200 communities, that is, about 34%, in which around 7 million people live, representing more than 70% of the citizens of the Czech Republic. The Union is a constructive partner of government and parliamentary political representatives. It contributes to proposed legislative measures by commenting on legal norms in areas concerning local administration. The concept of the "Union" refers first and foremost to village and town mayors who, beyond the concerns of their own community, also devote their time to the problems of local administration in general.

Foreign Cooperation and International Relations

The Union of Towns and Communities of the Czech Republic is creating conditions for integrating Czech municipal offices into various forms of cooperation in the area of activities by local administration and local government bodies in Europe and other countries of the world. The Union works together with similar partner associations in other countries and also oversees cooperation between individual communities in this country and abroad. The Union is a member of the worldwide organizations IULA (International Union of Local Administrations) and CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions). Thanks to its membership in CEMR, Union representatives have succeeded in gaining access to the Board of Regions, an EU advisory body and thus they have gradually been able to get acquainted with EU mechanisms and programs in practice. Members of the Union are also represented in the Congress of European Local and Regional Authorities. Furthermore, the Union coordinates a program of partnership cooperation for towns and communities.

The Union's priorities in field of international activities are as follows:

- to provide exact information about European Union, functioning of EU institutions and EU funding to Czech towns and municipalities and equipped them with knowledge in field of municipal administration and management capacities;
- to defend rights and to lobby for interests of Czech municipalities on national and European level;
- to promote twinning cooperation among Czech municipalities and municipalities abroad and assist with creation of new twinning arrangements;
- to promote mutual co-operation with European local government associations from European Union as well from candidate and East European countries;

The Union and its members continuously participate in international projects, which aim at experience and information exchange on EU issues and preparation of local governments for accession. For example our association is actively involved in the international network LOGON–Local Governments Network of Central and Eastern European Countries and in project Local Government Support Programme (LGSP-CE).

Committee for information systems of towns and communities (ISMO)

The Union of Czech Towns and Communities (www.smocr.cz) is an open interest, non-party and non-governmental organisation asserting the common interests and rights of municipalities.

It proceeds in the spirit of principles from which the European Charter of Local Self-government issues. At the present time, the Union associates more than 2,300 towns and communities inhabited by a total of seven million people, i.e. more than 70% of the citizens of the CR.

Within the Union of Czech Towns and Communities, a number of specialist committees work as special advisory bodies to the Presidium of the Union. One of the most active is the **Committee for Information Systems of Towns and Communities (ISTC – www.munet.cz/ismo)**, focused on information systems for self-government. It engages in promoting use of the Internet in the work of town and municipal authorities. It cooperates with ministries in preparing standards for public administration and self-government information systems, participates in organising specialist conferences and, naturally, expresses its opinions on proposed legal rules pertaining to informatics and concerning towns and communities. An integral part of the Committee's activity is cooperation foreign partners.

Priorities for the next period

For its activities in the near future, the Committee set a number of priority problem areas. We list some selected topics:

The communication infrastructure of public administration information systems, together with the security policy, is based on a general and implementing agreement. The **National Geographic Information Infrastructure** is among the other topics chosen. The expert group for geographic information will focus on the objective that within the revision of the State Information Policy the GI item be taken into consideration so that state map works are provided to and used on the basis of defined terms by the general public. Alongside a number of other goals, it will concern the creation of preconditions for transforming information for the citizen into graphic form.

The ISTC Committee wants to continue paying permanent **attention to Internetisation** of municipalities according to the projects of the Ministry of the Interior, promote the development of public information services, the public administration portal, and improve the creation of towns and communities' websites. It will endeavour to contribute to information systems allowing for provision of information prescribed by law. It will also support the extension of electronic registries and completion of the Public Administration Information Systems Standard for hardware and software requisites of electronic registries.

In terms of informatics, the Committee will monitor the **manner of registration and circulation of documents** between public administration bodies and express its opinions on solutions proposed in this area. It will also comment on the legislative assurance of basic registers of public administration information systems – the basic register of the population, the basic register of land identification and immovable assets, the basic register of economic subjects etc. The agenda of the Committee also includes issues pertaining to the Real Estate Register. The ISTC Committee has cooperated in the preparation of the ISSS conference in Hradec Králové, it will further develop collaboration with the PSP subcommittee and the Ministry of Informatics, all with respect to **the reform's impacts on public administration information systems**. It will also continue cooperation with foreign subjects in the development of information society – GCD, Telecities, Elanet, the European Commission and associations of municipalities, primarily from the candidate countries.

The mentioned priorities are not a dogma for the work of the Committee for Information Systems of Towns and Communities, but merely an orientation aid, fine-tuned during the course of the year according to the specific needs of public administration of the Czech Republic.

e-Strategy and Profile of the Association of Towns and Communities of the Czech Republic

(in view of information society development)

Identification and contact

Name of the association (union)	Association of Towns and Communities of the Czech Republic (SMO ČR)
State	Czech Republic (CR)
Website	www.smocr.cz
Contact person for e-Strategy and IT benchmarking	Tomáš Renčín, Chairman of the ISMO Committee, rencin@issss.cz, +420 284001284 Jaroslav Šolc, member of the ISMO Committee jaroslav.solc@cityofprague.cz, +420 236002682
Date of drawing up	17. 2. 2004

Basic profile of the association and country

Population of the country	10.219 million
Structure of regional administration division	Basic unit – municipality: 6249 municipalities Structure according to population: 1,294 municipalities with over 1 thousand, 131 over 10 thousand, 22 over 50 thousand, 5 over 100 thousand inhabitants Higher territorial self-governing units – regions: 14 regions <i>Note: The Capital City of Prague is both a region and a municipality</i>
Membership base of the association	2,457 towns and municipalities (73 % of the CR's population)
Origination, fundamental goals	The organisation's roots reach back to 1907, afterwards the development was interrupted on several occasions. Renewed in 1989. The Union's goals: To support and develop democracy in the self-government system. To be a constructive partner to the Government and/or Ministries and Parliament of the CR, to defend and assert the interests of self-governments. To strengthen municipalities' influence in the legislative sphere. To contribute to the creation of conditions for preparation and increased professionalism of elected members of local governments, as well as specialisation of local governments' employees. To enhance the economic independence of municipalities. To contribute to the creation of conditions for provision of basic and specific services for towns and municipalities. To assist in establishing partnerships and other forms of international cooperation.
Bodies and structure of the association	Assembly – the supreme body of the Union (within 6 months following municipal elections, possibly also extraordinarily). Council – manages the Union's activity between assemblies, 93 members. Board – coordination of activity between boards, 11 members, Chairman - Oldřich Vlasák, Hradec Králové Lord Mayor. Work committees – housing, tourism, transport, energy, financial, for information systems (ISMO), property, for the disabled, social, regional, education, legislative, foreign, security and environment. Office of the Union – at present, 15 employees, departments: legal, foreign, press and administrative.
Resources for securing activity	Membership fees (89 %), state assistance – subsidies (6.4 %), own resources (4.2%)
Cooperation with other groupings, primarily international (IULA, CEMR etc) and membership of them	Membership in the Delegation of Observers of the CR to the Committee of Regions of the EU (the Union has 5 observers + 5 surrogates), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the EU (CLRAE, 4 + 3), the CEMR Political Committee (4 + 3) and through CEMR also IULA.

Data on information society development (LORIS topics)

The association's body responsible for ICT and e-Government issues	Committee for Information Systems (ISMO, www.munet.cz). It develops activities pertaining to information systems for self-government. It promotes use of the internet for the work of town and municipal authorities, cooperates with ministries in the preparation of standards for self-government, organises specialist conferences, expresses its opinions on proposed legal rules from the respective area. The Committee has 18 members, of which 10 members have a decision-making vote (representatives of Union members) and 8 members have an advisory vote. The Committee Chairman is RNDr. Tomáš Renčín.
Governmental body responsible for ICT and e-Government, cooperation with the association	Ministry of Informatics of the CR (MI ČR, www.micr.cz). It was constituted on 1. 1. 2003 as the central state administration body for information and communications technologies, telecommunications and postal services. MI ČR has assumed to the full extent the competences of the Office for Public Information Systems, the communications section of the Ministry of Transport and Communications, as well as competences concerning electronic signatures of the Office for Personal Data Protection. Self-government issues are also in the competence of the Ministry of the Interior of the ČR – Department of Public Administration Informisation (MV ČR – OIVS, www.mvcr.cz). Both ministries collaborate with the ISMO Committee (comments, conference activities, projects).
Other national organisations and associations with relation to information society and self-government (LORIS) issues	Association of Regions of the CR (AK ČR, www.kr-urady.cz). Informatics Committee of the Council of AK ČR. A number of professionally oriented associations and societies, e.g.. Czech Association for Geoinformation (CAGI, www.cagi.cz), Czech Association for System Integration (ČSSI, www.cssi.cz), Association for Information Society (SPIS, www.spis.cz), BMI Association (www.brezen.cz) and others (telecommunications, trade, education).
Existence of a national e-strategy or action plan (name, when it was drawn up, by whom), its relation to LORIS topics	State Information and Communications Policy (MI ČR, at the end of 2003, version for comments, making public expected in the first quarter of 2004).
Creation of e-strategies of regions, towns and municipalities	Information strategies of municipalities are also created according to the requirements for test certificates of public administration information systems in compliance with Act No. 365/2000 Coll.
Number of regions, towns and municipalities having their own websites, the type of information they make public (e.g. according to the requirements of law, standards, methodologies)	The requirements for making information public also arise from Act No. 106/1999 Coll., on free access to information, draft according to the ÚVIS standard. Almost all towns and big municipalities have websites. There are no official statistics. There are portals with references to websites of territorial self-governments in the CR (ePUSA, www.epusa.cz or MOOL, http://mesta.obce.cz)
Degree of provision of on-line information services (according to e-Government categories: information, one-way interaction, two-way interaction, transaction) and building up multi-platform on-line services (web, call centres, one stop)	Mostly services of the information provision category, possibly, supply of forms. Development of two-way interaction services has been launched, mainly in bigger towns. Multi-platform solutions are just starting to be developed, sporadic.
Conference activities, benchmarking and best practices	Internet in Public Administration and Self-Government (ISSS/LORIS, www.issc.cz) conference, regularly since 1998. Furthermore, professionally oriented conferences (GIS, system integration etc) and special projects (e.g.. March: Internet Month). Best practice – Golden Crest, a competition for best websites of towns and

	municipalities of the CR (http://zlatyerb.obce.cz), received the Stockholm Challenge Award.
Existence of national government support for e-Government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)	Specific projects supported by the Ministry of the Interior of the CR, especially in relation to public administration reform.
Experience and involvement in joint projects, including international, and projects drawing support from EU funds	To date, sporadic activities. Participation in TeleCities, Global Cities Dialogue and Elanet networks. Participation in international projects (e.g. Prague, Vysočina region). Preparation for use of EU Structural Funds for IT projects (seminars, publications, the Phare project for absorption capacity development etc) has started.
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Re-engineering, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc	So far, sporadic and under preparation. Mainly at the level of regions and bigger towns.
Experience and lessons learned, plans	Strengthening cooperation with the Informatics Committee of the Association of Regions of the CR. Joint operation of self-government in the dialogue with state administration. Creation of a platform for collaboration between cities. Development of international cooperation – exchange of experience, projects. Development of benchmarking-type activities.

primarily international and membership of them	PASARP, “Hanns Seidel“, Foundation, “Friedrich Erbert“ Foundation. Membership of: ENTO,NALAs,CLRAE.
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Data on information society development

Conference activities benchmarking and best practice	On September 2003 AAM in collaboration with Council of Europe organized a two days meeting about benchmarking and best practice. On December 2003 AAM supported by Council of Europe started the one-year program on the use of best practices programs and benchmarks in the LGU-s in Albania.
Existence of national government support for e-government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)	AAM collaborate in continuously with MLG&D especially in development and decentralization of LG in Albania.
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Reengineering, e-Health, e-Learning , e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc.	AAM is preparing materials concerning the solutions on Health and Education matters.

Information Systems Development and Training Center (Republic of Armenia)

Identification and contact

Name of the association (union)	Information Systems Development and Training Center (ISDTC)
State	Republic of Armenia
Website	In construction
Contact person <i>for e-Strategy and IT benchmarking</i>	Grisha Khachatryan, Chairman of the ISDTC, Head of Department of Programming and Forecasts of the Municipality of Charentsavan (Armenia) intellect@infocom.am, +37426 43745, +3749 481159
Date of drawing up	10. 3. 2004

Basic profile of the association and country

Population of the country	3.2 million
Structure of regional administration division	Basic unit – municipality: 930 municipalities Structure according to population: 552 municipalities with less 1 thousand, 333 municipalities with over 1 thousand, 32 over 10 thousand, 4 over 50 thousand, 9 over 100 thousand inhabitants. Higher territorial governing units –districts (Marzes): 11 Marzes <i>Note: The Capital City of Yerevan is a districts (Marz) with 12 municipalities.</i>
Membership base of the association	52 municipalities (70 % of the Armenia’s population)
Origination, fundamental goals	The organisation was founded in 2000. The association’s goals: To support and develop democracy in the self-government system. To strengthen municipalities' influence in the legislative sphere. To contribute to the creation of conditions for preparation and increased professionalism of elected members of local governments, as well as specialisation of local governments' employees. To contribute to the creation of conditions for provision of basic and specific services for municipalities. To develop Information Systems for Municipalities (software like "Population Register", "Office work", "Budgeting", " Voters lists", etc. To create and develop technology for preparing Intranets for Communities and Municipalities. To arrange computer networks for municipalities. To train ICT specialists for

	municipalities. To develop E-Local Government Systems.
Bodies and structure of the association	<p>Assembly – the supreme body of the Union.</p> <p>Board – manages the Union’s activity between assemblies, 7 members.</p> <p>Chairman – Grisha Khachatryan, vice-chairman – Hakob Tovmasyan (Mayor of the city of Ararat).</p> <p>Auditing commission – 3 members.</p> <p>Work committees – financial, for information systems, regional, education, legislative.</p> <p>Office of the Union – at present, 6 employees.</p>
Resources for securing activity	Membership fees (10 %), own resources (6 %), international organizations’s assistance (grants) (84 %)
Cooperation with other groupings, primarily international (IULA, CEMR etc) and membership of them	GTZ, Urban Institute (US)

Data on information society development (LORIS topics)

The association’s body responsible for ICT and e-Government issues	<p>The organization is a professionally oriented association.</p> <p>It develops activities pertaining to information systems for self-government. It promotes use of the internet (intranet) for the work of municipal authorities, cooperates with ministries in the preparation of standards for self-government, organises specialized conferences, expresses its opinions on proposed legal rules from the respective area.</p>
Governmental body responsible for ICT and e-Government, cooperation with the association	Ministry of Territorial Administration.
Other national organisations and associations with relation to information society and self-government (LORIS) issues	Association of Armenian Communities (www.acc.am)
Existence of a national e-strategy or action plan (name, when it was drawn up, by whom), its relation to LORIS topics	State Regional Information and Communications Policy (2003)
Creation of e-strategies of regions, towns and municipalities	ISDTC creates Strategy of promotion of information systems for local self-governmental bodies’ and organization of local informational society.
Number of regions, towns and municipalities having their own websites, the type of information they make public (e.g. according to the requirements of law, standards, methodologies)	Only some big municipalities have websites. There are no official statistics. There are sites working in intranet .
Degree of provision of on-line information services (according to e-Government categories: information, one-way interaction, two-way interaction, transaction) and building up multi-platform on-line services (web, call centres, one stop)	Mostly services of the information provision category, possibly, supply of forms. Development of two-way interaction services has been launched, mainly in pilot municipalities. Creation of more advanced systems - work of the future.
Conference activities, benchmarking and best practices	<p>Professionally oriented conferences (Municipal Information Systems, Systems for preparation Voters lists) and special projects.</p> <p>Best practice - model of Municipal Information System (e-Local Government System) in the municipality of Charentsavan and in the some pilot municipalities.</p>

Existence of national government support for e-Government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)	Specific projects supported by the Ministry of the Territorial Administration, especially in relation to public administration reform.
Experience and involvement in joint projects, including international, and projects drawing support from EU funds	Developing a national training strategy for local government in Armenia (support from Council of Europe, European Commission)
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Re-engineering, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc	So far, sporadic and under preparation.
Experience and lessons learned, plans	Joint operation of self-government in the dialogue with state administration. Creation of a platform for collaboration between cities. Development of international cooperation – exchange of experience, projects.

Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of BiH

Name in original: Savez opcina i gradova Federacije BiH – SOG FBiH

Identification and contact

Name of the association (union)	Association of Municipalities and Cities of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SOG FBiH)
Region	Entity with separate law - Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH)
State	Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)
Website	www.sogfbih.ba
Contact person <i>for e-Strategy and IT benchmarking</i>	Camil Osmanagic, Executive Director + 387 33 260 030 camilo@vng-international.org.ba
Date of drawing up	25. 2. 2004

Basic profile of the association and country

Population of the country	approximately 4 million in the state; ??? in the Federation of BiH
Structure of regional administration division	Basic units in the state of BiH – municipality (145) and city (4), district (1) According to Dayton Peace Agreement from 1995, 2 entities and 1 district together comprise the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. <i>Note: 2 entity Capitals, district with special status and 1 of entity Capitals is the state capital in the same time</i> Basic local government units in the Federation of BiH – municipality (84) and city (2)
Membership base of the association	Currently 62 from 84 existing local units in the Federation BiH are members (66 %) N1
Origination, fundamental goals	Association of Municipalities and Cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina was established on 1973 having goal to improve and develop local autonomy system and to protect local communities interest. Now, from the international aspect, there are 3 key events that made new perspectives of the Association and they are as follows: Ratification of Local Autonomy European Chart, on October 1994 (Government of the RBiH) Joining the Community of Municipalities and Cities of the BiH to the Congress of Local and Regional Autonomy of Europe (CLRAE) as a special guest status (November 1994)

	Joining the Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Council of Eurooe (April 2002)
Bodies and structure of the association	Association Assembly is the highest body - all memberships Presidency of the Assembly is the Assembly execution body that harmonizes all bodies work - 23 members (President, 2 deputies and 20 others Supervisory Board – 2 members (President and 2 others) Secretariat – 3 employees (General Secretary, Executive Director, Assistant)
Resources for securing activity	Membership fees (??%), donation through the Projects (??%)
Cooperation with other groupings, primarily international (IULA, CEMR etc) and membership of them	Member of NALAS

Data on information society development (LORIS topics)

The association's body responsible for ICT and e-Government issues	Association web page established throughout 2 years <i>VNG International</i> Project in 2002. Otherwise on very low level in the Association as in the whole Entity Very few of municipal authorities works on this issue development No cooperation with relevant state ministry on this issue
Governmental body responsible for ICT and e-Government, cooperation with the association	Occasional participation in the international conferences or round tables
Other national organisations and associations with relation to information society and self-government (LORIS) issues	A number of professionally oriented business companies promote the idea IT Association through involvement in different donated projects, mostly on donor initiatives.
Existence of a national e-strategy or action plan (name, when it was drawn up, by whom), its relation to LORIS topics	No
Creation of e-strategies of regions, towns and municipalities	Municipalities acting independently according to its own interest or financial possibilities
Number of regions, towns and municipalities having their own websites, the type of information they make public (e.g. according to the requirements of law, standards, methodologies)	17 municipalities/cities of 84 existing in the Federation of BiH having their own website giving general information on the municipality (geographical, social) and some of them giving mostly administration and law regulations information or having mail address open for various questions. None of them offering services.
Degree of provision of on-line information services (according to e-Government categories: information, one-way interaction, two-way interaction, transaction) and building up multi-platform on-line services (web, call centres, one stop)	one-way interaction, two-way interaction Mostly offering general overview of municipal current geographical, social, economic situation. A very few giving information services provision, supply of forms for application, etc.
Conference activities, benchmarking and best practices	
Existence of national government support for e-Government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)	No
Experience and involvement in joint projects, including international,	USAID and Dutch Government very small scale projects

and projects drawing support from EU funds	
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Re-engineering, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc	No Some very web sites organised by some University Department themselves e-Learning by domestic citizens but not in the country

Union of the Association of Towns and the Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Croatia

Identification and contact

Name of the association (union)	Union of the Association of Towns and the Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Croatia
State	Croatia
Website	www.savez-gradova-opcina-rh.hr
Contact person <i>for e-Strategy and IT benchmarking</i>	
Date of drawing up	February 27, 2004

Basic profile of the association and country

Population of the country	4.494.000
Structure of regional administration division	Basic units are towns and municipalities. In Croatia there are 124 towns and 426 municipalities. Higher territorial self-governing units are counties (20 counties + City of Zagreb) <i>Note: The Capital City of Zagreb has the status of town and of a county.</i>
Membership base of the association	Members of the Union are two Associations, Association of Towns and Association of Municipalities, so the Union is basically the “umbrella” organization. Members of the Association of Towns are 69 towns (out of a total number of 124) and members of the Association of Municipalities are 303 municipalities (out of a total number of 426). Because more than 50% of all towns/municipalities are members of these two Associations, the Union has the status of the national Union.
Origination, fundamental goals	The Union was founded in 1971. The goal of establishing the Union is harmonizing of efforts of associations in promotion and representation of joint interests of units of local self-government of the Republic of Croatia. To achieve its goals, activities of the Union are as follows: to implement and execute conclusions and decisions of bodies of Association of Towns, Association of Municipalities and bodies of the Union, to promote specific interests of the member associations – towns and municipalities, to promote and represent interests of members before key governmental bodies, to organize discussions and participate at discussions, to provide opinion and suggestions on laws which determine affairs of local self-government, to organize conferences for professional improvements of the representatives of Association of municipalities, to organize conferences and meetings in order to discuss and seek solutions to joint problems of the members of associations, to encourage and participate in researching and publish professional papers on local self-government, to collect publications and other documentation related to local self-

	<p>government, to assist in establishment and implementation of direct cooperation with towns and municipalities outside the country, to perform other tasks beneficial to Association of Towns and Association of Municipalities</p>
Bodies and structure of the association	<p>Union of the Association of Towns and the Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Croatia is “umbrella” organization comprised of the Association of Towns and Association of Municipalities. Bodies of the Union are: Assembly (consists of authorized representatives of members of the Association of Towns and Association of Municipalities) Presidency (consists of 21 members. 11 members of the Presidency are elected among the members of the Presidency of the Association of Towns and 10 members are elected among the members of the Presidency of the Association of Municipalities) Supervisory Board (consists of President and four members. The member of the Supervisory Board can not be, at the same time, the member of the Presidency of the Union), President (President of the Union’s Assembly is the President of the Union and President of the Presidency), Boards or Committees, Secretariat (performs professional, financial, administrative and other tasks for the Association of Towns, the Association of Municipalities and the Union). At present, Secretariat has 4 employees. Association of Towns and the Association of Municipalities have the same structure. Both Associations have Assembly, Presidency, President, Supervisory Board, Boards and Committees.</p>
Resources for securing activity	<p>The Union of the Association of Towns and Association of Municipalities is financed exclusively from membership fees. Some activities (seminars, workshops) are financed by foreign foundations and organizations.</p>
Cooperation with other groupings, primarily international (IULA, CEMR etc) and membership of them	<p>Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE) – Croatia has 5 representatives and 5 substitutes.</p>

Data on information society development (LORIS topics)

The association’s body responsible for ICT and e-Government issues	The Presidency of the Union is responsible for ICT and e-Government issues.
Governmental body responsible for ICT and e-Government, cooperation with the association	<p>Central State Office for e-Croatia. The Office was constituted on December 22, 2004. This Office co-ordinates tasks in the sphere of administration and connection with private sector in implementation of the project e-Croatia. Project e-Croatia envisages that there will be a system established which will enable citizens to communicate with public administration. Ministry for Science, Education and Sports.</p>
Other national organisations and associations with relation to information society and self-government (LORIS) issues	
Existence of a national e-strategy or action plan (name, when it was drawn up, by whom), its relation to LORIS topics	<p>Strategy “Information and Communication Technology – Croatia in 21. Century”. The Strategy was brought by Croatian Government on May 16, 2002. One of the recommendations of the Strategy aims at creation of conceptual model of the state information system and basic presumptions for development of electronic administration; networking of state and local self-government bodies, system of electronic mail, system of sharing information electronically, system of state records and</p>

	files, system of data bases with free access and creation and exchange of digital documents.
Creation of e-strategies of regions, towns and municipalities	
Number of regions, towns and municipalities having their own websites, the type of information they make public (e.g. according to the requirements of law, standards, methodologies)	All counties in Croatia have their websites. Most of towns and big municipalities have their websites too. The information given over the websites varies. Bigger towns give a lot of information, from decisions that were made to all kinds of announcements and surveys.
Degree of provision of on-line information services (according to e-Government categories: information, one-way interaction, two-way interaction, transaction) and building up multi-platform on-line services (web, call centres, one stop)	Availability of services dealing with information provision, one way interaction. Development of two-way interaction services has been launched, mainly in bigger towns.
Conference activities, benchmarking and best practices	Currently, the Union is implementing the Council of Europe "Best practice" project and it is likely that one of the fields in which best practices will be identified would be Information and Communication Technology in local self-government units.
Existence of national government support for e-Government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)	
Experience and involvement in joint projects, including international, and projects drawing support from EU funds	Croatia has access only to CARDS programme. Other EU funds are not yet approachable to Croatia.
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Re-engineering, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc	Projects in these fields are in preparation. Some of these solutions exist in bigger towns and more developed counties.
Experience and lessons learned, plans	Strengthen cooperation with central government bodies responsible for developing ICT and bigger involvement in international cooperation (exchange of experience, projects and best practices).

Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities

Identification and contact

Name of the association (union)	Hungarian National Association of Local Authorities (TÖOSZ)
State	Hungary (HU)
Website	www.toosz.hu
Contact person <i>for e-Strategy and IT benchmarking</i>	Peter Feher, Expert in Informatics Veronika Krausz, Secretary of International Affairs Address: Eötvös utca 10, Budapest, 1067, Hungary Postal Address: Pf. 908, Budapest 1368 T: +36-1321-24-96 Fax: +36-1-322-74-07 E-mail: krausz@toosz.hu , feher@toosz.hu
Date of drawing up	3. 3. 2004

Basic profile of the association and country

Population of the country	9.8 million
Structure of regional administration division	<p>Basic unit – municipality: 3158 municipalities</p> <p>Structure according to population: 53 % of local authorities under a 1000 people</p> <p>21 local authorities on county level</p> <p>19 towns with county rank</p> <p>Capital</p>
Membership base of the association	1703 municipalities
Origination, fundamental goals	<p>The National Association of Local Authorities considers its objectives and main tasks, set at the time of its establishment, still valid. It wishes to contribute to the development of the self-governing quality of settlements, to the maintenance of previous achievements and to the development of self governance.</p> <p>The Association is the voluntary social organisation of local authorities which the Association consists of, and have joined it. Its desire is to support its members in their role of social representation, in safeguarding life standards and practising public administrative functions. By these means the Association helps its members to exploit the chances that history offers for establishing real local power.</p> <p>The Association considers social consensus and its continuous renewal to be important. In its interests representing and safeguarding activity it starts from the point that, at the present stage of social development there is necessity of expressing common local self-government interests in all issues that affects legal status, future role and opportunities of local authorities.</p> <p>The Association promotes co-operation among its members as well as creation of their mutual interests with the condition that they keep their independence. Failing these, the Association supports the exploration of real interest differences between members and the manifestation of the interest-arrangement within institutional frameworks. The Association forwards the opinion of the members to the representative, political and governmental bodies as well as to the public.</p> <p>The Association is an independent self-supporting organisation. All those local authorities may become members which wish to co-operate democratically for achieving the goals laid down in Statute based on the respect for the voluntary principle, legal equality, solidarity, effort to consensus, common bearing of burdens, orientation on future, positive pragmatism, associative activity and party neutrality.</p> <p>The Association expects support and co-operation from all those organisations and individuals who are interested in the establishment and successful operation of local authorities. The Association, in co-operation with other organisations, undertakes to represent and assert the interests of local authorities in the course of legislation and in the process of state decision making. It makes its wishes known to remain a participant of the national interest co-ordinating activity and organisation.</p>
Bodies and structure of the association	<p>Assembly of Delegates: main decision body of the Association</p> <p>Supervisory Committee</p> <p>Secretariat: 11 persons</p> <p>Councillors</p>
Resources for securing activity	Membership fees, state assistance – subsidies, fundings
Cooperation with other groupings, primarily international (IULA, CEMR etc) and membership of them	<p>Committee of Regions of the EU (the Union has 2 observers + 2 surrogates), the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the EU (CLRAE), the CEMR and through CEMR also IULA.</p>

Data on information society development (LORIS topics)

<p>The association's body responsible for ICT and e-Government issues</p>	<p>The Association has just started a programme under the name "e-go", consisting of several pilot-projects in the field of digital signature, wireless network, electronic treatment of documentation. A national conference takes place on 9 March, 2004 presenting these projects. A team has been created within the organization of the Association to conduct the program. Program manager: Peter Feher, expert in informatics</p>
<p>Governmental body responsible for ICT and e-Government, cooperation with the association</p>	<p>Ministry of Communication and Informatics. The Ministry was founded in 2002, since its creation it has actively supported actions concerning Information Society. A great number of funding opportunities were opened to local governments. A Strategy on Information Society in Hungary has been drawn up in Hungary. One of its aim is to create E-centers all over the country to facilitate the spread of information while keeping in mind the EU directives in this field. This Ministry actively support activities in the field of informatics through the Associations, which it provided with state funding in the view of supporting their programmes.</p>
<p>Other national organisations and associations with relation to information society and self-government (LORIS) issues</p>	<p>Association of Local Governments of Small Municipalities (KÖSZ) Association of Hungarian Self-Governments and Representatives (MÖSZ) National Association of Intelligent Municipalities (ITOSZ)</p>
<p>Existence of a national e-strategy or action plan (name, when it was drawn up, by whom), its relation to LORIS topics</p>	<p>Strategy of Information Society in Hungary (November, 2003), one of its aim is to create E-centers all over the country to facilitate the spread of information while keeping in mind the EU directives in this field.</p>
<p>Creation of e-strategies of regions, towns and municipalities</p>	<p>In the future municipalities might be required to prepare their e-strategies, for the moment such arrangements are under discussion, this responsibility will probably come into effect after the accession to the EU on 1 May, 2004.</p>
<p>Number of regions, towns and municipalities having their own websites, the type of information they make public (e.g. according to the requirements of law, standards, methodologies)</p>	<p>We have assessed the number of municipalities with their own website, and we found that 1255 local authorities with website. A great number of information maybe reached through the websites on public instutions, public services provided by the single municipalities. In the long run, local authorities will adjust the EU directives on E-Europe.</p>
<p>Degree of provision of on-line information services (according to e-Government categories: information, one-way interaction, two-way interaction, transaction) and building up multi-platform on-line services (web, call centres, one stop)</p>	<p>Websites of local governments vary according to the degrees of on-line information services provision, generally the first three degrees of on-line information services provision are fulfilled, for the moment the fourth degree is not met by any local authorities in Hungary .</p>
<p>Conference activities, benchmarking and best practices</p>	<p>E-go conference: 9 March, 2004 As part of the E-go programme we have set up a benchmarking, qualifying system on the basis of which we wish to assess the services of companies functioning in the field of e-government.</p>
<p>Existence of national government support for e-Government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)</p>	<p>Ministry of Communication and Informatics. The Ministry was founded in 2002, since its creation it has actively supported actions concerning Information Society. A great number of funding opportunities were opened to local governments This Ministry actively support activities in the field of informatics through the Associations, which it provided with state funding in the view of supporting their programmes.</p>
<p>Experience and involvement in joint projects, including international, and projects drawing support from</p>	

EU funds	
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Re-engineering, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc	
Experience and lessons learned, plans	

Union of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia

Identification and contact

Name of the association (union)	Union of Local and Regional Governments of Latvia (ULRGL)
State	Latvia (LV)
Website	www.lps.lv
Contact person <i>for e-Strategy and IT benchmarking</i>	Guntars Krasovskis, Adviser on IT, guntars@lps.lv, +371 7508560, fax: +371 7212241
Date of drawing up	03.03. 2004

Basic profile of the association and country

Population of the country	2,5 million
Structure of regional administration division	Latvia is parliamentary republic with three territorial levels of public government - national, regional (26 districts + 7 major cities), and local (536). Major cities have competencies of local and regional level. Local and national levels are directly elected. Local and regional levels are not mutually subordinated. Local and regional governments have limited legislative powers only in cases, determined by law. Self-governments have rights of voluntary initiative.
Membership base of the association	The members of the ULRGL can be districts, rural and amalgamated municipalities, town and city local governments. Members: 498 self-governments out of a total number 562
Origination, fundamental goals	The ULRGL is a public organisation associating local and regional governments of the Republic of Latvia on voluntary basis. It was founded on 15 December 1991. There are 25 persons employed at the administration of ULRGL. Main objectives: development of municipal policy in Latvia; municipal problem solving; protection of local government interests. Tasks: to represent interests of the ULRGL and its members in state authorities and administrative institutions; to develop opinion of the ULRGL in the policy of Latvian local governments according to proposals of local/ regional governments, their associations and unions; to secure local governments with information and required services; to organise training for local government deputies and employees; to facilitate social protection of local government employees; to facilitate co-operation among Latvian local/ regional governments, their associations and unions; to facilitate co-operation with local governments and their organisations abroad; to facilitate establishment of enterprises for solving issues of common local government interest; to organise establishment of local government information processing system based on unified principles.
Bodies and structure of the association	The highest decision making body of the ULRGL is the Congress which is convened at least once a year. The Council conducts the activities of the ULRGL between the Congresses. Not more than 118 representatives of local and regional governments are to be elected to the Council. Council consists of the Chairman and the representatives from the local/ regional governments: 7 representatives from Riga City Council; 6

	<p>representatives from the Councils of republican cities (major cities); 26 representatives from the Councils of regional (district) towns; 26 representatives from district Councils; 26 representatives from rural municipality Councils; 26 representatives from amalgamated municipality Councils. Council meetings take place at least once in a quarter. The Council has an authority to adopt resolutions if more than a half of the Council members participate in the meeting. The resolutions are adopted by the majority of votes of participants. The Board of the ULRGL administrates the work of the ULRGL between the Congresses. Not more than 15 members are to be elected to the Board, usually it is the Chairman of the ULRGL, its 5 Deputy-Chairmen, all Committee Chairmen and some other members of the Council. The Board authorises separate Board members, managers of standing committees, as well as developers of separate draft laws and normative acts to represent the ULRGL and to inform about its opinion on a particular issue in the Saeima (Parliament) of the Republic of Latvia, in the Cabinet of Ministers and other institutions of state administration, as well as in international organisations. There are 5 committees working in the ULRGL</p>
Resources for securing activity	Membership fees (96,30% %), other resources (3,70%)
Cooperation with other groupings, primarily international (IULA, CEMR etc) and membership of them	<p>- Since 1995 ULRGL nominates delegates to the Council of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe of the Council of Europe and coordinates the work of the delegation (delegates actively participate in committees and chamber of CLRAE).</p> <p>- ULRGL is a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) since 1999.</p> <p>- ULRGL has recently nominated 7 observers and their alternates at the Committee of the Regions.</p> <p>ULRGL actively participates in the Twinning Officers' Network of CEMR.</p>

Data on information society development (LORIS topics). Information on Riga city municipality.

The association's body responsible for ICT and e-Government issues	Under the Committee of Technical issues there is a IT working group consisting of representatives of 7 big cities and all 26 districts.
Governmental body responsible for ICT and e-Government, cooperation with the association	The WG is actively participating with the Information Society Office of the Republic of Latvia – structure under subordination of the Prime Minister that s responsible for e-government project development.
Other national organisations and associations with relation to information society and self-government (LORIS) issues	Latvian Information Technology and Telecommunication Association (www.litta.lv) , Internet Service Provider Association, representative office of ISACA
Existence of a national e-strategy or action plan (name, when it was drawn up, by whom), its relation to LORIS topics	National programme “Informatics” adopted on 1999 determines development of information society in state level. Riga city e-government project strategy were adopted by Riga City Council on 2002..
Creation of e-strategies of regions, towns and municipalities	Republic cities has developed (or started to develop) their e-strategies. For instance, Riga e-government strategy was adopted in 2003, Ventspils City council – in 2001, Liepaja city (www.liepaja.lv) and Valmiera town (www.valmiera.lv) also have their e-government strategies
Number of regions, towns and municipalities having their own websites, the type of information they make public (e.g. according to	According investigation performed by Information Society office 60% of municipalities have their own website. Content of those websites are quite different – starting with general information and until electronic services. There are no common regulations for municipalities on

the requirements of law, standards, methodologies)	information in their websites.
Degree of provision of on-line information services (according to e-Government categories: information, one-way interaction, two-way interaction, transaction) and building up multi-platform on-line services (web, call centres, one stop)	Mostly services of the information provision category, possibly, supply of forms. Development of two-way interaction services has been developed just in Riga and Ventspils.. Multi-platform solutions are just starting to be developed, sporadic.
Conference activities, benchmarking and best practices	International conference and exhibition Baltic IT&T is held each year.
Existence of national government support for e-Government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)	Only e-government activities in smallest cities and behindhand regions are supported by National government. Big cities, particularly Riga develops e-government activities independently, just following governmental conceptions, existing regulations and best practice.
Experience and involvement in joint projects, including international, and projects drawing support from EU funds	Municipalities are preparation projects for the EU Structural Funds (including such components as seminars, publications etc). The ULRGL takes active part in the project “Unified Municipal Information System”, which is run by the Ministry of Regional Development and Local Government Affairs. Republic cities have implemented their own activities.
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Re-engineering, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc	Redesign of some workflows concerning providing of the municipal services in the Riga city is under preparation. E-learning, e-Health solutions are planned un the future, but at the moment just few project proposals are developed.
Experience and lessons learned, plans	Strengthening cooperation with the Informatics Committee of the Association of Regions of the CoR. Joint operation of self-government in the dialogue with state administration. Creation of a platform for collaboration between cities. Development of international cooperation – exchange of experience, projects. Development of benchmarking-type activities.

Romanian Association of Municipalities

Identification and contact

Name of the association (union)	Romanian Association of Municipalities – AMR
State	Romania (RO)
Website	www.amr.ro
Contact person <i>for e-Strategy and IT benchmarking</i>	Emilia CRISTACHE – President IT Experts Body (proffesional body created within AMR); cemilia@ps3.rdsnet.ro Calin CHIRA - Programs Coordinator calin.chira@amr.ro ; 0040 21 3113491;
Date of drawing up	24.02. 2004

Basic profile of the association and country

Population of the country	21,680 million inhabitants
Structure of regional administration division	Territorial units: Villages, Communes (2700), Towns (175), Cities (103), Counties (41); Development regions - Eight development agencies: North-East; South-East; South; South-West; West; North-West; Center; Bucuresti-Ilfov.
Membership base of the association	102 Members (96 municipalities and the 6 sectors of the Capital Bucharest) out of 103 Cities declared by Romanian Law 351 as

	<p>Municipalities. Rate of membership form the total number of municipalities is 93%.</p>
<p>Origination, fundamental goals</p>	<p>The Romanian Federation of Municipalities (FMR), set up in 1991, worked from the beginning as an association dedicated to local authorities, including 82 municipalities and the six sectors of Bucharest municipality. According to the provisions of Ordinance no.26/2000 regarding associations and foundations, FMR became the Romanian Association of Municipalities (AMR), the name being adopted at the General Assembly held on May 11, 2001. According to the Statute, the aim of AMR consists in promoting and protecting the mutual interests of local public authorities, in order to solve and manage the public needs to the benefit of their local communities.</p> <p>Mission, vision</p> <p>The Association of Municipalities in Romania contributes to the achievement of real local self-governement, according to the principles stipulated in the Constitution of Romania and in the European Charter of Local Self Government in view of solving the public needs for the citizens' benefit and also for ensuring their participation in the decision process regarding the local communities., as well as the legal environment process improvement.</p> <p>Values, goals & objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To represent the interests of our members, both locally and internationally; - To stimulate and support the initiatives and activities of our member municipalities; - To provide professional services to the association's members; - To sustain the efforts of our members in view of Romania's accession to European Union <p>Values & Believes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and professionalism - Communication - Team spirit - Creativity - Realism
<p>Bodies and structure of the association</p>	<p>The General Assembly</p> <p>It gathers twice a year, in ordinary sessions, as called by the Steering Committee.</p> <p>The Steering Committee gathers at least once every three months and whenever necessary, as convened by the President or Vice President nominated by the former. The Auditors Commission audits the means of administration and management of Association's patrimony.</p> <p>The Technical Secretariat responsible with the implementation of AMR policy and the management of the association's current activities.</p> <p>Commissions - organized by activity fields: Standing Commission, Institutional Commission, The Culture and Education Commission, The Sustainable Development Commission, the Social Cohesions Commission, the Public Services Commission.</p> <p>Professional Bodies - Secretaries' Body, Financial Managers' Body, Technical Managers' Body, Chief Architects' Body, IT Experts' Body, Communicators Specialists Body and European Integration Experts Body. The professional bodies functioning within the Romanian Association of Municipalities have their leading and/or executive bodies: The General Assembly and the Steering Committee or Management Council. The seven professional structures dispose of their proper programs of activity. The mission of these professional bodies is to elaborate specific activities in order to achieve the economical, financial, legislative development to provide information and communication policies for the local public administrations, complying with the local autonomy principles and according to the</p>

	European values.
Resources for securing activity	Membership fees (45 %), grants (33 %), sponsorships (15%), other sources (7%) (according to the balance sheet form 2002)
Cooperation with other groupings, primarily international (IULA, CEMR etc) and membership of them	Membership: Romanian Federation of Local Authorities; ELANET Eco Maires Citizens' Pact
The association's body responsible for ICT and e-Government issues	IT experts professional body in AMR
Governmental body responsible for ICT and e-Government, cooperation with the association	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology created in December 2000, lead by Mr. Dan Nica. The mission of the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology is to create solid premises that will ensure the transition to the Information Society in Romania. This is a strategic objective for the Romanian Government for 2001 - 2004 and one of the conditions for the Romania's accession to the European Union. Contacts: www.mcti.ro
Other national organisations and associations with relation to information society and self-government (LORIS) issues	The Public Administration Information Systems Professionals Association lead by Mrs. Sevil Sumanariu – President; Contact: www.aniap.ro ;
Existence of a national e-strategy or action plan (name, when it was drawn up, by whom), its relation to LORIS topics	In December 2002 the Romanian Government approved the National Strategy for the promotion of the new economy and the Development of the Information Society
Creation of e-strategies of regions, towns and municipalities	Some municipalities have their own strategies published on their web sites.
Number of regions, towns and municipalities having their own websites, the type of information they make public (e.g. according to the requirements of law, standards, methodologies)	There are 73 municipalities having their own web sites. The requirements for making information public arise from law No. 544/2001. Information needed to be published on municipal web sites: 1. Information about the city: population, density of inhabitant/sq.m., geographic coordinates 2. Information about city hall: desk program, audience program, area map, how to get there, various locations of services, financial resources, budget, balance sheet, own programs and strategies, leadership, list of public interest documents, public information application and complaint forms : 3. Information about transport: access roads in the city, main roads, public means of transport, stations; 4. Tourist information: museums and their visiting programs, other tourist objectives, transport means to reach them; 5. Local Council Decisions, Mayor's Decisions and others; 6. Local Taxes – information and payment (O.G.24/2002)
Degree of provision of on-line information services (according to e-Government categories: information, one-way interaction, two-way interaction, transaction) and building up multi-platform on-line services (web, call centres, one stop)	By the Law no.161/2003 the National Electronic System was set up as an information system of public utility aiming to provide access to public information and supply of public services towards physical and legal persons within e-government strategy. Types of services offered : Unidirectional – information Bidirectional – download of 172 electronic forms and 5 on-line services (collecting of statistical data e-statistics, budget payment declarations, customs declarations, VAT settlement , balance sheet submitting)
Conference activities, benchmarking and best practices	AMR signed in 2003 a protocol with ANIAP (The Public Administration Information Systems Professionals Association) in order to promote activities of a mutual interests. The provisions of this

	protocol encourage representatives of the IT department of our members to participate to conferences and training activities organized by ANIAP and the development of comparative studies on subjects like e-government.
Existence of national government support for e-Government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)	HG 1007/2001 –“e-Administratie “ Strategy for IT application in public administration
Experience and involvement in joint projects, including international, and projects drawing support from EU funds	Romania participates or will participate in the following communitarian programs: eContent dealing with digital documents processing, libraries, theatres, museums internet connecting Information Society Technologies (IST) – development of technologies from information society, development of communication infrastructure by ensuring networks and transactions security, introduction of crypting and security technologies in public administration
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Re-engineering, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc	The second step of the National Electronic System will provide portals for health services, culture, tourism, and on-line libraries. Another important priority of the e-government strategy is to secure the Internet usage.
Experience and lessons learned, plans	Creation of a platform for collaboration between cities.

Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM)

Identification and contact

Name of the association (union)	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM)
State	Serbia and Montenegro
Website	www.skgoj.org
Contact person <i>for e-Strategy and IT benchmarking</i>	Marko Moracic, Coordinator for Project development, Marko.moracic@skgoj.org, + 381 11 3223 446
Date of drawing up	15.03.2004

Basic profile of the association and country

Population of the country	10,500,000
Structure of regional administration division	Basic unit – municipality: 163 municipalities in Serbia Structure according to population: 8 municipalities with over 1 thousand, 102 over 10 thousand, 40 over 50 thousand, 13 over 100 thousand inhabitants Higher territorial self-governing units – regions: 29 regions <i>Note: The Capital City of Belgrade is both a region and a municipality</i>
Membership base of the association	163 Towns and municipalities – 100% of Serbia. Note: the towns and municipalities from Montenegro are not members of the Standing conference. They are represented by a separate association of Montenegrin municipalities
Origination, fundamental goals	Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities (SCTM), the national association of local authorities in Serbia was founded in 1953, following the traditions of international associations of local authorities throughout the world. The SCTM is an organization dedicated to the promotion and development of local self-government, standing for their interests and of the co-operation among local authorities. The substantial changes that have happened in the year 2000 at the overall political scene of Serbia and the Federal Republic of Serbia have

	<p>brought democratically oriented people to all relevant posts in the republic and federal level of government, as well as to the local level. Consequently, important changes have occurred concerning the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities: the Association for Development of Local Self-Government, which previously functioned as the Association of Free Towns of Serbia, has become the part of the SCTM.</p> <p>The duty of the SCTM, as the national association of local authorities, in new, favorable political climate is to support local governments in their efforts to rebuild their legal and financial capacity, as well as to cope with the severe problems they are currently facing.</p> <p>SCTM is dedicated to fostering co-operation and dialogue among local authorities, supporting their initiatives before central government and is a key spot of information flow on important issues for towns and municipalities.</p> <p>Aims and principles: Based upon the principle of the free will of membership, the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities is open to all Serbian local communities, the interests of its members defining the main guidelines of its work.</p> <p>The ways of fulfilling the role of the SCTM in Serbian society comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supporting development of local government as an essential part of democratic processes in Serbia - promoting close co-operation among Serbian towns and municipalities and helping them to establish links with local authorities from other countries - representing the interests of its members at the national and the international level - encouraging the use of theoretical and practical know-how in managing municipal functions and promoting specialized education for local employees. In this the Conference is relying on its co-operation with a large number of its foreign and local partners, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and institutions, associations of local authorities from other countries and other international organizations - various technical services to its members, as well as providing help and support of international donor institutions for the realization of projects
<p>Bodies and structure of the association</p>	<p>Assembly – the supreme body of the Association (Has sittings at least once in two years).</p> <p>Presidency – Is an executive organ of the Conference. It manages the association between Assemblies. The members of the Presidency are elected by the Assembly and they have equal rights, duties and responsibilities, it has 21 members.</p> <p>Supervisory Board – as an special body of the Assembly, is formed in order to execute control and supervision over the work of bodies and organs of the SCTM. It executes the financial control function over the Secretariat of the SCTM. The Board has five members, mandate of two years and meets at least twice every year.</p> <p>Policy Committees – Local self-governments and local finance, international cooperation, communal and housing affairs, environment, urban issues, energy efficiency, social policy, economic development, culture youth and sports, services to the members.</p> <p>Secretariat – at present 24 employees, five departments: Administrative and legal, international cooperation, projects, services to the members and advocacy and representation.</p>
<p>Resources for securing activity</p>	<p>Membership fees (40 %), Project based funding (55 %), own resources – services to municipalities (5%)</p>
<p>Cooperation with other groupings, primarily international (IULA,</p>	<p>We are members of the following international organizations or institutions:</p>

CEMR etc) and membership of them	CEMR – Associate member (Though CEMR also IULA) NALAS and, ICLEI (International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives)
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Data on information society development (LORIS topics)

The association's body responsible for ICT and e-Government issues	We have just recently formed a committee for Information technology. It is a sub committee of the policy committee for local self-government and local finances, with a tendency to be transformed into a separate policy committee in the near future. The main task of the committee in the following period is the formulation of the local government ICT strategy and development of the description of the centralized ICT system for all municipalities. It will promote the use of ICT in providing services to citizens as well as strengthening local administration. Moreover it comments and proposes changes in the laws on regarding ICT in Serbia The committee has 15 members, the committee chairman is the mayor of Zrenjanin, mr. Čežek
Governmental body responsible for ICT and e-Government, cooperation with the association	Ministry of science and technology as well as the governmental agency for information and information society. The Agency was constituted during the year 2000, and it took some of the responsibilities specifically related to ICT from the jurisdiction of the Ministry. Unfortunately, the Agency is not working at the moment, since it is in the process of restructuring and reorganization. These two bodies are the only governing authority regarding ICT issues in Serbia. Self-government issues are also in the competence of the Ministry for Local self-government and public administration, but ICT related activities in this Ministry are rather scarce.
Other national organisations and associations with relation to information society and self-government (LORIS) issues	A number of professionally oriented associations and societies, e.g.. The association of Information officers and programmers of Serbia The association for Information of Serbia (DIS, http://www.dis.org.yu) Union of ICT Associates (JISA, www.jisa.org.yu)
Existence of a national e-strategy or action plan (name, when it was drawn up, by whom), its relation to LORIS topics	So far there is no e-strategy or an action plan developed on the level of Serbia. There were various initiatives; however, none of them reached the necessary legislative level to become national initiatives.
Creation of e-strategies of regions, towns and municipalities	Some of the towns have their own e-strategies; however, these are sporadic and not inter-coordinated. An example of a fine working e-strategy is in the municipality of Indjia, which has a complete set of e-services to the citizens, as well as some of the Belgrade city-municipalities. First centralized action towards this is to be made by the SCTM policy committee for ICT, during summer of this year.
Number of regions, towns and municipalities having their own websites, the type of information they make public (e.g. according to the requirements of law, standards, methodologies)	Although no official or legislative requirements are imposed on municipalities on this topic, almost all of the municipalities have their web sites. Unfortunately, many of those are not updated frequently or maintained by skilled staff.
Degree of provision of on-line information services (according to e-Government categories: information, one-way interaction, two-way interaction, transaction) and building up multi-platform on-line services (web, call centres, one stop)	Mostly services of the information provision category, possibly, supply of forms. Development of two-way interaction services has been launched, mainly in bigger towns. Multi-platform solutions are just starting to be developed, sporadic. The municipality of Indjija is one of the rare municipalities which has already implemented most of the multi-platform online services (they have a web portal, call centre, one stop room etc).
Conference activities, benchmarking and best practices	So far the conferences and other similar activities have been quite scarce. The Standing Conference will organize 5 policy committee meetings this

	year in order to initiate such actions. No official benchmarking is performed so far best practices database is being developed within the SCTM and will be operational and on-line on our web site in two months.
Existence of national government support for e-Government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)	Besides some sporadic investment component based projects (providing software and sometimes hardware to municipalities), there is not national government support for e-government yet.
Experience and involvement in joint projects, including international, and projects drawing support from EU funds	There are no specific experiences so far. In the current year the SCTM is going to initiate the Exchange program with the support of the European Commission, which will have an investment component providing equipment and expertise needed for the development of information centres, one stops etc.
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Re-engineering, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc	So far, sporadic and under preparation. A certain percentage of the municipalities host their web sites and sporadic e-solutions for citizen's services, however this percentage is very low at the moment.
Experience and lessons learned, plans	Our policy committee for the ICT issues plans to intensify the activities of the Standing conference in the area of e-government and e-services to citizens. We also plan the creation of a platform for collaboration between cities, development of benchmarking-type activities, and further support in ICT related projects. Detailed activities will be planned during the five meetings we are organizing this year.

Centre of Community Networking and Information Policy Studies (CCNS)

Identification and contact

Name of the association (union)	Centre of Community Networking and Information Policy Studies (CCNS)
State	Russia
Website	www.communities.org.ru
Contact person <i>for e-Strategy and IT benchmarking</i>	Sergei Stafeev, Director 27, Mayakovskogo str., St. Petersburg, Russia Tel/Fax +7 /812/ 2698270 E-mail gard@gard.spb.org
Date of drawing up	11. 3. 2004

Basic profile of the association and country

Population of the country	175,6 million
Structure of regional administration division	Higher territorial self-governing units – regions: 87 regions Basic unit – municipality (MSU – municipal self-government unit)
Membership base of the association	Not applicable
Origination, fundamental goals	CCNS is an NGO based in St. Petersburg, Russia with a mission to help people in the CIS countries use information and communication technology (ICT) to improve their lives. Its main focus is to enable informed policy decisions, which affect people's access to and use of ICT. CCNS also gets involved in on-the-ground projects to study the effects of policy decisions and relay lessons learned to the international development community. In 2000-2004 CCNS focuses on: analysis of ICT use in the Russian and CIS non-profit sector analysis of ICT influence on local community development independent research and expertise on local and regional

	<p>information policy in the Russian Federation development of the CIS community networkers society. More information at: www.communities.org.ru</p>
Bodies and structure of the association	<p>Board of Directors is a highest decision-making organ of the CCNS (8 members, Chairperson – Sue Webb, director of the UK Communities Online. (for more information see www.communities.org.ru/contacts.htm) Staff of the Centre – 6 full-paid employees</p>
Resources for securing activity	<p>Grants - ~65%, work on contracts - ~30%, other profit - %%</p>
Cooperation with other groupings, primarily international	<p>CCNS is a regional focal point for some global projects and movements: among them: Community Informatics Research Network (CIRN); Global Community Networking Partnership (GCNP) Communication Rights in the Inf. Society (CRIS) Also CCN is a corporative member of many international networks, e.g. ISTR, GlobalLibrary etc</p>

Data on information society development (LORIS topics)

The association's body responsible for ICT and e-Government issues	Not applicable
Governmental body responsible for ICT and e-Government, cooperation with the association	Ministry of Communication of Russian Federation (MinSvyaz)
Other national organisations and associations with relation to information society and self-government (LORIS) issues	<p>Presidential Council on Informatization State Institute of Informatization Institute of System Analyse of Russian Academy of Sciences etc etc</p>
Existence of a national e-strategy or action plan (name, when it was drawn up, by whom), its relation to LORIS topics	Federal Program e-Russia (2002-2010) www.e-rus.ru
Creation of e-strategies of regions, towns and municipalities	<p>During the years 2001-2003 several Russian "regions" (regions, big cities, autonomous republics) have accepted the regional programs of informatization. Among these the following are worth mentioning: The city target program "Electronic Moscow" http://www.el-mos.ru/ The regional target program "Electronic Saint Petersburg" http://www.e-spb.org/ Program of high technologies of telecommunications development of Republic Sakha (Yakutia) for the period of 2000 to 2005 http://www.rikasakha.ru/inform_other_pr_hitechYak2000-05.htm Formation of the informational society in the city of Ekaterinburg http://strategy.burg.ru/res8_p2.htm</p>
Number of regions, towns and municipalities having their own websites, the type of information they make public (e.g. according to the requirements of law, standards, methodologies)	Some statistics (2003) can be taken from www.e-l.ru ("IT map of Russia")
Degree of provision of on-line information services (according to e-Government categories: information, one-way interaction, two-way interaction, transaction) and building up multi-platform on-line services (web, call centres, one stop)	<p>Development of two-way interaction services has been launched, mainly in bigger towns. Multi-platform solutions are just starting to be developed, sporadic. According to UN e-Readiness table (that was presented at the recent WSIS) Russia has 89 position by e-government readiness (from 102 countries).</p>

Conference activities, benchmarking and best practices	Building the Information Commonwealth Int. Conference (www.communities.org.ru/conference) Internet and Society int. Conference iol.spb.osi.ru WISTCIS int. Conference www.ednes.org/wistcis etc Best practices at www.osn.ru
Existence of national government support for e-Government development activities at the local and regional level (programmes, grants, projects)	Basicly through the Federal Program e-Russia (2002-2010) www.e-rus.ru
Experience and involvement in joint projects, including international, and projects drawing support from EU funds	Sporadic activities. Participation in various TACIS projects, WISTCIS, GDG of Worldbank etc
Further experience with solutions pertaining to: Re-engineering, e-Health, e-Learning, e-Security, e-Democracy, CRM etc	A lo of sporadic, uncoordinated activities. Mainly at the level of regions and bigger towns. For some numbers and examples see www.isn.ru
Experience and lessons learned, plans	Development of international cooperation with relevant institutions–exchange of experience, projects. Development of benchmarking-type activities.

EuroCrest Contest 2004

Best of the web site European competition of towns and communities

Organizers of the Conference Internet in Public Administration (ISSS), the biggest event of this kind in Central and Eastern Europe, launch annual competition EuroCrest. This competition is based on experience gained from the Czech contest Golden Crest during last five years and on consultation with European Union experts.

The aims is to reward excellence and promote the exchange of best practice, to highlight the efforts made by European local administrations in using Information Society Technologies to improve the quality and accessibility of their public services and to speed up the development of on-line administrative services in Europe.

Winners of the EuroCrest Contest 2003

1.	Praha	Czech Republic
2.	Vranov nad Toplou	Slovakia
3.	Tartu	Estonia
4.	Jurbarkas	Lithuania
5.	Ventspils	Latvia
6.	Sopoty	Poland
7.	Rousse	Bulgaria

History

First winners—towns Jihlava (Czechia), Bernolakovo (Slovakia) and Lodz (Poland)—were awarded during Conference Internet in Public Administration ISSS 2001 held in Hradec Králové 26th–27th March 2001.

Official declaration of results of the EuroCrest 2002 Competition for the best web presentation of European towns and communities was a part of the Conference ISSS 2002 (25th–26th March 2002). European Commission representatives Gerald Santucci and Giangaleazzo Cairoli gave the prizes at a ceremony to 6 winners: towns Stara Zagora (Bulgaria), Most (Czechia), Tapa (Estonia), Vilnius (Lithuania), Szczecin (Poland) and Nove Zamky (Slovakia). A special prize was given to the city of Vienna (Austria), whose web pages can be used as a reference as far as quality is concerned.

Subject of the contest

The focus of the contest EuroCrest is on

- Exploitation of information and communication technologies as a tool of intensification of democratic mechanism especially in these areas:
 - Transparency in decision making by elected authorities
 - Degree of opening to the public
 - Extent of public participation in preparation of decision making influencing everyday life of the municipality
- Level of the delivery of information and services to citizens and businesses (the four-stage model adopted for eEurope's benchmarking of eGovernment services to citizens and enterprises: Information–Interaction–Transaction–Integration).

Participants of the contest

The contest is open to all European towns and communities; it is under consideration to create two categories according to population there.

Organizers of the contest

Announcer of the contest is the Golden Crest Association in the cooperation with the European Commission and with European IT networks, e. g. TeleCities. The same team preparing the ISSS Conference arranges the contest. Results and winners will be published during the Conference ISSS (March, Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic).

Nomination

Based on the call for proposals associations of towns and communities of the candidates countries will nominate competitors–winners of national contest, if this national contest is held, or if not, than on the bases of their own evaluation.

It is in the competence of jury to nominate web sites of the towns and communities from non-candidates countries.

Jury

The members of the special jury are:

- Representatives of the associations of towns and communities of the candidates countries (approx. 1/3)
- Prominent publicists in the field of the public administration and internet (approx. 1/3)
- Experts in related fields in the public administration (approx. 1/3)

Evaluation

The evaluation takes into consideration three criteria:

Contents

What is to be evaluated are the contribution of the web site in terms of the scope of the information and services provided, the level of the detail and practical usefulness with regard to the needs of the users. Information of the execution of the public administration will be the key factor. The evaluators may take into consideration the care after the attractiveness of the pages by including other subjects such as information on the life of the municipality and good ideas.

Topical relevance

The key emphasis will be placed on the contribution of the point of view the scope and topical relevance of the information published. Another criterion of the evaluation will be the planning and consistent and timely publication. What can be a success are in particular those pages showing a commitment and adequate, day-to-day work with the page and its incorporation to the communication infrastructure of the authority.

Availability of the information and its graphic design

Emphasis will be placed on a synoptic and logical layout of the information and the outfit of the pages with searching tools. At the same time, another evaluation criterion is the adequacy

of the graphic design and the contents and the possibility to optimise graphic elements from the point of view of the rate of the loading of the information providing for the professional presentation function of the pages. Another criterion taken into account will be a barrier free access for those handicapped users.

The jury will select three finalists and one winner in both categories. The main prize will be awarded to the competitor whose web site got the highest number of points for the three criteria. Individual criteria will have the same weight for the final evaluation. The specialist jury may award an additional Special Award of the Specialist Jury of the award called the Most Popular Pages.

PRELUDE European Clusters for innovation

PRELUDE is an IST accompanying measure funded by the European Commission to boost regional and local innovation supported by the information and communication technologies and, in particular, the building of ERA (European Research Area) with a large participation of researcher, high-tech SME's and the public administration, as enabler and user in the European territory of ICT applications addressing needs of citizens and local economies.

The main drivers of PRELUDE are a capillary promotion of the eEurope 2005 Action Plan and the new instruments of the IST programme, on one hand, and the creation of European Clusters for Innovation through inter-regional co-operation and synergic action among European networks, on the other.

Thanks to a close collaboration between the digital European Regions (included new EU member States) participating in the initiative and ELANET (CEMR), eris@ and TeleCities (that have signed a memorandum for understanding), the PRELUDE consortium has launched nine European Clusters for Innovation reflecting regional and local priorities.

These public-private partnerships are now being built through a constituency process aiming at mainstream initiatives that make use of all existing funding schemes to support research, technology and innovation, especially the VI Framework Programme of RTD, eTEN, eContent, Interreg and structural funds in Regions objective 1 and 2.

Local and Regional actors from all Europe are invited to participate in the following 9 European clusters:

- e-Government (Gaudi)
- e-Transport (European Transport Telematics Cluster)
- e-Learning (LEARN)
- e-Communities (GUARANTEE)
- Job Mobility (MOBICITI)
- Enterprises in the Digital Economy (EDEn)
- Bench-learning for improved local e-government (BASIC)
- Free-libre Open Source Solutions (THREE ROSES)
- Knowledge Management (KM)

Interested parties should register in the web portal (www.prelude-portal.org) to learn on the cluster's objectives and action plans, as well as about their actual members. By joining PRELUDE, you will become part of a large European web community joining efforts to bring forward the local and regional dimension of research, technology and innovation in the European scenario.

The European Local Authorities' Telematic Network

ELANET is an initiative of the Associations of local and regional governments and their daughter companies operating in the field of the Information Society. ELANET was launched in 1996 and it became part of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in 1997, by acting as its Information Society Committee. At present, the network consists of representatives from 20 countries, including all the EU Member States. The peculiarity of ELANET (CEMR) is to bring together the public sector through the participation of national associations of local/regional authorities and private organised bodies represented by their telematic daughter companies.

This has proven in time the strength of the network. The difference of point of views and contributions from all ELANET members paths the way to more articulated strategies, which are refined and implemented through promotional and mainstream activities, meant to take into account and reconcile a wide range of needs, and, not least, reduce the existing gap between the most and least developed regional and local authorities with regard to information society.

Italy

National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI)
Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AICCRE)
ANCITEL S.p.A.

Luxembourg

Association of Luxembourg
Towns and Municipalities

the Netherlands

National Association of Municipalities of the Netherlands (VNG)

Norway

Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities

Poland

Federation of Polish Municipalities and Counties (FZGiP RP)
Association Cities on Internet

Portugal

National Association of Portuguese Municipalities (ANMP)
Institute of System and Computing Engineering of Porto (INESC Porto)
MEDIDATA

Romania

Romanian Association of Municipalities (AMR)

Spain

Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)
LOCALRET

Sweden

Swedish Association of Local Authorities

United Kingdom

UK Local Government Association
Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA)

The ELANET Members

CEMR

Austria

Association of Austrian Cities and Towns KDZ - Centre for Public Administration Research

Belgium

Union of Belgian Cities and Municipalities Holding Communal

Czech Republic

Union of Towns and Communities of the Czech Republic

Denmark

National Association of Danish Local Authorities Kommunedata

Estonia

The Association of Estonian Cities

Finland

Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities EFEKTIA

France

French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (AFCCRE)
Urba 2000

Germany

German Association of Cities and Towns KGSt

Greece

Central Union of Municipalities and Communities Hellenic Agency for Regional Development and Local Governments S.A.(EETAA)

Ireland

Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB)

The Mission

ELANET was created to support its members and the European local and regional authorities in their efforts to reengineer their organisations through an important use of the modern information and communication technologies, most notably:

- to inform and support European local governments on ICT innovation, in particular the emerging local and regional digital networks;

- to assist local and regional authorities, their associations and the CEMR in addressing their strategies in the field of the Information Society to EU institutions and related European organisations;
- to stimulate and increase the number of local authorities willing to participate in European projects by launching mainstream initiatives and European partnerships between ELANET members and prime movers of innovation at local and regional level.

European Partnership

ELANET works in tight co-operation with two other networks eris@ (the European Regional Information Society Association) and TeleCities (the major European network of cities committed to leadership in the Information and Knowledge Society). This partnership is designed to launch European Projects within the VI Framework Programme on Research and Technology Development.

The initiatives

In these recent years, ELANET has launched three most significant initiatives, supported by the European Commission:

- PRELUDE (Promoting European Local and Regional Sustainability in the Digital Economy) is a “prelude” to the FP6 (2002–2006). The project is implemented by ELANET, in close cooperation with eris@ and 9 digital European Regions. The main aim is to prepare the ground for thematic networks able to plan integrated projects that bring forward the regional dimension of European research (www.prelude-portal.org).
- KEeLAN (Key Elements for electronic Local Authorities’ Networks) is a comprehensive study involving all European Union Countries to create models and relevant roadmaps that help Local and Regional Governments to plan their digital investments, initiatives and strategies in the field of e-government (www.keelan.elanet.org).
- THREE ROSES, which has been formed through a consortium of the three networks (ELANET, eris@ and TeleCities), will evaluate the current position with regard to development and take up of Open Source Software (OSS) solutions for applications in local and regional government. Potential benefits and disadvantages of the adoption of OSS in the public administration will be taken into account. The final output of the project is a roadmap for OSS-based applications for the use of local and regional governments (www.prelude-portal.org/3roses).

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The Structure

ELANET is coordinated by a Steering Committee elected by its members in the annual General Meeting. President and Vice-President are the top executive officers of ELANET. The network desk located in Brussels is responsible for the network web site and supports the different working groups:

- the Policy Group, that meets regularly to discuss the different papers and documents on the Information Society introduced by different European institutions, namely the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Committee of Regions. The group also produces position papers on key policy aspects, such as the electronic use of public sector information, policies on European research and deployment of eEurope;
- the Project Groups, that are continuously formed by different European Consortia created by ELANET members to participate in calls for proposals under the different programmes of the European Commission;
- the EISCO team, that is responsible for the preparatory activities and realisation of the European Information Society Conference organised by ELANET and CEMR every 18 months. The EISCO Conferences gather local and regional decision-makers, civil servants and ICT experts from more than 25 countries of the European Union, CEECs (Central and Eastern Countries) and the Mediterranean.

European Local and Regional Sustainability PRELUDE

The financing of PRELUDE

Within each Digital Area, PRELUDE shall:

- identify relevant regional profiles and benchmarking studies;
- organise a gallery of good practices and appropriate models;
- foster concertation and clustering among regional primer movers for pilot development projects and/or research work in ICT;
- implement common actions and events with local, regional and European Information Society networks;
- launch a European portal on the web for permanent dissemination and promotion of Information Society initiatives supported by Local and Regional governments.

Expected results

The main aim at the end of the project is to have clusters for innovation steadily working in each of the project digital areas. These clusters will consist in public-private partnerships that have developed common grounds and a sound methodology to carry out large integrated projects in well-defined territories at regional and sub-regional level. Special attention will be given to the planning of initiatives in objective 1 and 2 Regions, under the structural funds programme, as well as to the CEEC countries and the newly associated states of the European Union.

Participants

PRELUDE is coordinated by ELANET (through ENAIP Sardegna) in close cooperation with eris@ and nine digital regions (Lombardy in Italy; Mid- West in Ireland; Berlin in Germany; Yorkshire and the Humber in UK; PACA in France; Kymenlaakso in Finland; Catalonia in Spain; Silesia in Poland; Vysocina in the Czech Republic). TeleCities is part of the Advisory Committee.

www.prelude-portal.org

The Major Cities of Europe IT User's Group

(an independent group of representatives from cities all over Europe)

The objectives of the group are:

To effect a voluntary exchange of ideas, visions and experience between members of the Group for the purpose of improving the performance of local government by using information technology.

To represent the collective interests of members of the Group in discussions with public authorities, suppliers of information technology and other relevant organizations at an European level.

The Group was founded in 1982 under an initiative of the Greater London Council. The membership covers almost every country in Scandinavia and the Western and Southern parts of Europe. Since the end of the Cold War cities from the eastern part of Europe also find their way to join the Group. Recently some cities which are not in Europe, but want to work together with European cities, joined the group, too (Tel Aviv, Tbilisi).

Although the exact position and tasks of local authorities in the different countries may vary, the main responsibilities are the same. The value of the Group lies in the benefit of its members by the exchange of problems and solutions, that they have to cope with.

The Groups Annual Conference, usually held in June, is hosted by one of the member cities.

Applications for membership are submitted at the Annual Meeting. The collective interests of the Group are in the hands of an Organizing Committee, elected at the annual meeting. The chairman, secretary and treasurer take care of daily affairs.

Membership of the MAJOR CITIES OF EUROPE is open for every city in the European hemisphere, that values the experience of colleagues from all over Europe.

eContent–European Digital Content on the Global Networks

eContent is a market oriented European Community programme which aims to support the production, use and distribution of European digital content and to promote linguistic and cultural diversity on the global networks.

eContent was adopted as part of the eEurope 2002 action plan, designed to accelerate the development of the information society in Europe. eContent also makes a significant contribution to the objectives of the updated eEurope 2005 action plan: to provide a favourable environment for private investment and for the creation of new jobs, to boost productivity, to modernise public services and to give everyone the opportunity to participate in the information society, including citizens with special needs such as disabled individuals.

The main objective of the eContent programme is improve access for all to high-quality digital content on the global networks in a multiplicity of languages, catering for different cultures supporting the increased availability, use and distribution of European digital content.

This presentation will provide a detailed overview on how the eContent programme will reach these ambitions, highlighting the priorities during 2004. This includes a detailed description of the three Action Lines of the eContent programme:

- AL1: Improving access to and expanding the use of public sector information
- AL2: Enhancing content production in a multilingual and multicultural environment
- AL3: Increasing dynamism of the digital content market

In accordance with the new work programme adopted for the years 2003–2004 a last eContent Call for Proposals was launched in February 2004, also being open for potential proposers located in those Candidate Countries for which the European Commission has signed a respective memorandum of understanding by this time.

Content Village–Integrating the eContent Community

Results dissemination is an integral part of the European Community's eContent programme. In this context the Content Village is funded as an awareness raising measure which aims to make existing best practice, as well as the results of the eContent programme, known to all interested parties in the digital content and language industries, and the public sector. Content Village addresses all relevant eContent actors including public authorities and public sector institutions, appropriate industries, associations, venture capitalists, business angels, and the European Commission itself. A major objective is to support programme participants across the EU Member States and the Candidate Countries, and to stimulate the European e-content industry through dissemination of key information.

The presentation will feature content and services provided on Content Village web site, illustrating its role as a major information, communication, knowledge-sharing and collaboration platform customized to the needs of the eContent community. The audience will learn about the vital role of eContent project participants and target-group user communities in developing the potential of Content Village further through their (inter)active involvement. Major emphasis will be placed on discussing the potential of Content Village in supporting the rapid and smooth integration of digital content players from the Candidate Countries into eContent programme activities.

State Information and Communication Policy of the Czech Republic

Contrary to the primary approach of two separate policies in the fields of information technologies and telecommunications (“State information policy: the road to information society” and “National telecommunication policy”), this new document reflects convergence of these areas. Therefore it forms a joint strategic and conceptual framework.

State Information and Communication Policy expands on the content and priorities of the eEurope 2005 Action Plan to the following four priority areas that fully cover actions of eEurope 2005 and simultaneously reflect specific position of the CR as an acceding country in the areas not fully completed under the previous eEurope+ Action Plan.

The four priority areas are lined up according to their importance:

- **Accessible and secure communication services:** includes electronic communications market regulation and strengthening market competition, adoption of the new European electronic communications regulatory framework and solution of remaining tasks of accessibility of basic (narrowband) and broadband internet services from the eEurope+.
- **Information knowledge base:** includes particularly the fields of “informatization of schools”, information literacy, e-learning and other instruments for bridging digital divide.
- **Modern online public services:** includes public online services, namely e-government, e-procurement and e-health services.
- **Dynamic e-business environment:** covers mainly government measures in the field of legislation. It matches the relevant section of eEurope 2005.

State Information and Communication Policy emphasizes rules and principles that the Government envisages to pursue in further development of the information society in the Czech Republic.

Financing

The Government generally regards funding of the information and communication technologies (ICT's) and infrastructure development as the responsibility of the private sector. As its main role the Government considers stimulation of these investments and creation of a stable environment for investors. The Government will preferably support projects that will use the EU's financing or co-financing.

The Government put great importance to the concrete programmes of public and private sector cooperation (Public–Private Partnership, PPP) that it intends to actively trace and support.

Relationship to Pan-European activities

The Government does not tackle its activities in the field of information society in isolation but as a part of broad spectrum of Pan-European activities concentrated around the eEurope 2005 Action Plan.

The Government will coordinate its activities with the European activities and actively participate in them also in the future. It simultaneously intends to continue in active participation in international structures and organisations such as Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), International Telecommunication Union (ITU) etc.

Benchmarking

Regular measuring of the achievement of the State Information and Communication Policy goals will be based on the EU methodology for the eEurope 2005 Action Plan or eventually on other documents. It ensures objectivity of measurement and reduction of costs for measurement. It also enables comparison of results between EU member states.

Measurability of targets helps to choose programmes and projects to be realized and to refuse projects that are less effective. It contributes to the concentration of resources on those activities that will lead best to the reaching the highest results in measurable criteria.

Strategy for Building an Information Society in the Slovak Republic

Introduction

Building information society is a **process**—usually conceptually managed—directed towards a maximal utilisation of the potential of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) in all segments of social, political and economic life. The main objective of information society is to bring a new quality to social, political and economic activities, higher quality of life in general and to generate favorable conditions for the development of a knowledge based economy.

The strategy proposes the realization of the following tasks:

- Setting the **base line**—the analysis of the initial conditions in the area of information society in Slovakia,
- Identify the **main pillars** of information society on which the strategy is built,
- Determine the direction of the process through a **causal relation** between dependent and independent variables and the significant areas,
- Create an **institutional and legal** enabling framework for a dynamic development of information society,
- Set up and periodically update an **action plan** corresponding with the strategy.

The basic principles of strategy are the following:

- **Client centrality**, information society is designed to bring a new quality of life to citizens,
- Character of an **open, living document**, enabling its adaptability to dynamically changing conditions,
- Respect for the laws of the **free market** (supply and demand, competition, etc.), close cooperation of the state and commercial sector,
- **Program (project) financing**, enabling to secure public financing of projects with a duration period longer than one year,
- **Conceptual and gradual** development.

Initial Conditions

Problems hampering the development of information society in Slovakia could be summarized in the following points:

- inadequate political support for information society coupled with an inadequate institutional framework of the process,
- a great need for a strategic vision of information society development
- blurred jurisdictions, absence of coordination between state and public organizations in the area of information society,
- absence of and adequate legislative framework for an effective deployment of information society,
- spontaneous, fragmented and ineffective utilisation of public finances.

Therefore, it seems that an effective solution for these problems has to engage in the following tasks:

- create an effective institutional support on legislative, administrative and professional levels, which would divide and coordinate jurisdictions in the field,

- expenditure of public finances has to focus on key programs–pillars–identified in the strategy and in the action plan,
- create a feasible legislative environment enabling a dynamic and sustainable development of information society in Slovakia.

The Main Objectives of the Strategy

The main objectives of the strategy are to create favorable conditions for:

- coordinated, conceptual and effective expenditure of public finances appropriated for the development of information society,
- sustained development of the knowledge base, skills and competitiveness of population,
- sustained development of administrative capacities in the public sector,
- implementation of transparent and corruption free public administration.

Formation of Feasible Social, Political and Economic Condition for the Development of an Information Society

Formation of feasible social, political and economic condition for the development of an information society has to be understood on the following levels:

- Development of the main pillars of information society
- Management of the development process
- Financing of the process
- Legislative environment required for the process

Development of the Main Pillars of Information Society

Attainment of the main objectives of information society is synonymous with the development of its basic pillars. These are designed to create favorable conditions for the deployment of new ICTs into all relevant aspects of social, political and economic life of the country.

These pillars are the following:

- Content–information and services
- Human capacities–development of relevant skills
- Infrastructure for access and connectivity

Content–Information and Services

Information society content should be understood as all meaningful, accessible electronic information and services the client can use to satisfy his or her needs. Stimulation of the development of such a content is the catalyst of the process of information society development and hence the causal, or independent variable creating an increased demand for human capacities (whether to use or create content) and infrastructure. The role of the state in this process appears irreplaceable.

The segment of the content created by the public sector is described in detail in most materials derived from the eEurope and eEurope+ initiatives of the EU. Services provided in an information society therefore have the following characteristics. They are considered to be:

- open–accessible to all users
- fast–eliminating waiting while using an adequate infrastructure and info-structure
- trust worthy - providing guarantees for quality, relevance, timeliness, privacy and security
- simple–standardized and interoperable

- always available—multiplatform access and high level of integration
- natural—access to content is adapted to the needs of the client and not the other way around
- intelligent—with a transparent workflow and no redundancies

A standard solution for the described provision of services today presumes the development a central access portal.

Human Capacities—Development of Relevant Skills

People use, as well as create content. For both categories of people a certain level of knowledge and skill—capacity—is required. With a growing capacity to use information society services grows the demand for these, and so does the demand for a greater capacity to create them.

A systematic development of human capacities with a special focus on knowledge and skills of an information society appears inevitable should the EU be in a position to achieve the ambitious objectives set forth in the Lisbon Strategy. A basic level of digital literacy should therefore be considered as the basic skill of each and every member of an information society.

Infrastructure for Access and Connectivity

Infrastructure should be understood as an enabling environment required for the fulfillment of the objectives of an information society. Demand for infrastructure is stimulated by the provision of useful, digital information and services. The basic components of such an infrastructure are the following:

- hardware and software, including applications and solutions. These are designed to provide easy, multiple and a broadly based access to content,
- environment for communication with a basic task to provide connectivity,
- security on all levels in order to prevent possible abuse

Such an infrastructure has to be accessible to all, interoperable and safe, so it can secure an equal opportunity to access for all segments of the information society.

Management of the Development Process

From the outline of the three pillars of information society is clear that its development cuts across the entire spectrum of the state administrative apparatus. Coordination and central management of the process therefore appears logical and useful. The role of the state here is the following:

- coordinate activities of the central state apparatus and local governments on local, national and international levels,
- facilitate the active participation of industry and of the non governmental sector in the process

Taking into account the broad based and cross cutting objectives of building the main pillars of information society, parts of jurisdictions of specific ministries and departments are naturally shifting to a new central, state entity. This entity then shall coordinate effectively the development process of an information society.

Under the current conditions in Slovakia the most feasible appears the creation of an office of Government Commissioner responsible for information society at the Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecom. This ministry has today the jurisdiction over the process of information society development. The office of the government commissioner should then be gradually transformed into a central state institution with a jurisdiction and powers compara-

ble to those of state ministries. Otherwise it would lack essential capacities necessary to coordinate the development of an information society.

Financing of the Process

Currently, the development of information society is financed on the level of state ministries enabling only implementation of programs and projects falling under their jurisdiction. Such an approach to financing has its limits and therefore it needs to be expanded to the following levels:

- ministerial, taking care of projects within the jurisdictions of specific ministries,
- cross sectoral, taking care of projects reaching beyond the jurisdictions of specific ministries. In the beginning such projects can be financed from the budget of the host ministry, but gradually the office of the Government Commissioner should have its own budget which is independent from the influence and jurisdictions of other ministries,
- EU funding, mainly structural funds of the European Union. Funds for the development of information society are earmarked in the NDP and should be prioritized also in the 6th Frame Program,
- other sources of funding, for instance EBRD or the World Bank.

In the final analysis, in an information society governments save time, people and money through better organization, increased administrative capacities and transparent processes. Resources saved through reduction of redundancies and increased efficiency then could be used for a sustained development of an information society which is going to be able to achieve the Lisbon objectives in 2010.

The Legislative Environment

Legislation has to adapt to new conditions brought by the dynamically expanding utilization of new ICTs in processing and transmitting general, confidential and personal data. The existing legislation has to be adjusted in two, closely related areas. First, one needs to adjust legislation supporting the new process of information society development. Under this area should be considered the regulation of standardization, certification and testing authorities, rules for operation of information systems, security, etc... Second, it is necessary to transform existing processes mainly related to the legal acceptability of electronic documents. These involve a modification of the existing laws dealing with acquisition, safe keeping, processing, transfer, provision and destruction of information.

Changes in legislation have to be transposed into generally accepted directives, norms and standards.

It is therefore a priority to create a new Law on the Information Systems of Public Affairs which would replace the old law on State Information System, No. 261/1995. This law should correspond with EU standards and create a legal space for incorporation of new legal norms required in the process of development of an information society.

Significant Areas of Development

While the three pillars described above are considered as fundamental, cross cutting as well as integrating elements of the strategy, the significant areas should be understood as the building blocs of these pillars. Content, therefore is being built from areas such as *informatization of public affairs, education, research and development, eCommerce and enterprise and security*. The pillar human capacities incorporate *education, informatization of public affairs and security*. Finally, the pillar infrastructure is built from the areas of *information and communication infrastructure, research and development and security*.

The relationship between the three pillars and significant areas consequently creates a simple framework for systematic and conceptually transparent development of an information society. Such a framework is designed to:

- Limit splintering of resources.
- Meaningfully integrate specific programs and projects so they can support and complement one another and this way create the highest possible results.
- Guarantee the most effective utilization of public resources and at the same time facilitate a fair competition between competing projects.
- Create conditions for a transparent development of an information society without duplicities and corruption.

Conclusion

The first *Progress Report* of the eEurope+ Action Plan from July 2002 which was presented at the European Ministerial Conference in Ljubljana placed Slovakia at the tail end of candidate countries in most relevant indicators used to measure the current state of information society. The *Final Report* presented at the European Ministerial Conference in Budapest in February 2004 was not much favorable for Slovakia.

We have to point out, however, that progress was made. The Slovak Government approved the document *Strategy for Building an Information Society* and it earmarked 100 million Slovak Crowns for the development of information society and for the implementation of the Action Plan in 2004. In the course of the following months, the office of the Government Commissioner for Information Society has to be created. In 2005, this office is designed to have 25 employees. Last, but not least, the representative of Slovakia in the European Commission was appointed to serve at the Commissariat for Enterprise and Information Society.

Consequently, as it was proposed in the *Strategy for Building an Information Society* we are starting with:

- a gradual centralization of jurisdictions in the area of information society on one coordinating institution—the office of the government commissioner for information society—with an intention to transform it on an independent, central state agency responsible for development of information society,
- writing the proposal of a law for Information Systems of Public Affairs which is designed to replace the law on State Information System, No 261/1995. The new law will correspond with EU standards and will create a space for implementation of necessary legislations for the dynamic and sustainable development of an information society,
- development of the main pillars of an information society as it is proposed in the Action Plan.

Year 2004, therefore appears to be a breakthrough year for Slovakia also in the area of the development of an information society. Whether or not 2004 is going to be a breakthrough year, however, is in the hands of all of us. It has to be clear, that at the end citizens create every society and information society is not an exception.

Triada Ltd.

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The Company

Triada Ltd. holds conferences for local and state government and administration, develops and promotes software for state and local government and company issues municipal magazine called “Obec & finance” (Municipality & Finance). Triada Ltd. engage 25 employees and 38 external collaborators.

Major Activities

Conferences for state and local government

International conference called “The Internet in Public Administration”

Annual conference since 1998, last year it was visited by over 1700 participants from the 18 European countries.

Main topics: Legislative Process and the Internet, EU Programmes-support of information technologies, Launched projects of digital cities and e-areas in Europe, Discussion: E-government–state administration in the Internet era, e-Europe initiative of the European Union but also the e-Europe+ initiative–a EU-candidate support of the “European 15” intentions, The Internet and Education, Round table with the most important personalities

Activities of the European Forum for information society, Activity of Telecities, Elanet and ERIS@ association, The development of information society and employment, E-commerce.

For more information: www.issc.cz, comparison of experience of the representatives of the countries-candidates, with the opinions of their colleagues from the European Union countries.

Conference called “**The Day of Small Villages**” is visited by mayors of small villages and they discuss *their* own specific problems.

Magazines

Municipality & Finance (Obec & finance)

Since 1996, 5× a year, for every municipality in the Czech Republic, *number of copies: 8000*, average number of pages 125.

Magazine for economical issues of towns and villages, regional politics, local development, appropriation programmes for local government. Independent part of magazine is “Public Administration On-Line”, 16–24 pages devoted to use of recent technologies including the Internet in public administration. For more information: www.triada.cz/oaf

Daily News for Public Administration

It is the Internet magazine for public *administration*, it provides daily news, links to other public *administration* servers, in part called “Towns and Villages” there is statistics of all towns and villages in the Czech Republic (over 6000 municipalities), it provides outline of the main events (for example conferences, fairs, meetings, deadlines etc.)

For more information: www.obce.cz

Software for Public Administration

Since 1991, the company Triada provides and develops software and all relevant services. This software solves municipality finance, property evidence, local tax, wages, office system, evidence of inhabitants and lands, elections and over 20 other agends. This information system is used by over 1500 municipalities in the Czech Republic.

For more information: www.triada.cz

