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4TH MINISTERIAL eGOVERNMENT CONFERENCE

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

approved unanimously in Lisbon, Portugal

on 19 September 2007

Meeting in Lisbon on the occasion of the Ministerial eGovernment Conference "*Reaping the Benefits of eGovernment*" of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Council and of the European Commission, Ministers of European Union (EU) Member States, Accession States, Candidate Countries and Ministers of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) Countries, responsible for eGovernment policy, under the chairmanship of Minister Pedro Silva Pereira, representing the Presidency of the European Council, and in the presence of European Commission's Vice President Mr Siim Kallas.

MINISTERS RECALL THAT:

1. The European Council of March 2005 called upon the Commission, the Council and the Member States to re-launch the Lisbon Strategy by refocusing on growth and employment in Europe. The Lisbon Partnership for Growth and Jobs is being pursued across the EU and shall remain the central policy focus in the transformation of public services, contributing decisively to the delivery of better and innovative services to citizens and businesses.

2. The i2010 initiative "A European Information Society for growth and employment" is a key element of the renewed Lisbon Partnership for Growth and Jobs. It was adopted by the European Commission in June 2005.

3. The eGovernment Ministerial Declaration was issued in Manchester in November 2005 under the UK Presidency of the Council of the European Union, setting ambitious targets for 2010 and creating vigorous momentum in Europe.

4. The i2010 eGovernment Action Plan was adopted by the Council in June 2006 aligning its objectives with the Manchester Declaration and supporting the achievement of its targets. The Manchester Declaration and the Action Plan play an instrumental role in building synergies between Member States.

5. The implementation of European Directives, such as the Services Directive, increasingly relies on Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) as an enabler in transforming administrative processes for citizens and businesses, across Europe.

MINISTERS RECOGNISE THAT:

6. The ways in which citizens interact with government services continue to evolve. Technology and society continue to change the way citizens and businesses interact with government, and increasingly what they expect from these services. Across Europe, large investments are being made in ICT-enabled government services. It is imperative for governments to ensure citizens and businesses benefit from these investments. Understanding and recognising the importance of citizen-focused services and the reduction of administrative burden is therefore crucial to success.

7. Good progress has been made towards the aims of the Manchester Ministerial Declaration and the objectives of the eGovernment Action Plan. European countries are well advanced in their eGovernment initiatives, making a significant contribution to the Lisbon Agenda for Growth and Jobs. A large majority of countries have developed national policies aligned with the Manchester Declaration and the Action Plan aiming at reaching the targets set for 2010. Common roadmaps have been developed and agreed among Member States for electronic identification (eID), eProcurement and inclusive eGovernment.

8. eGovernment is becoming mainstream as most policies at EU or national level require an ICT solution in their implementation. For example, the Services Directive whose article 8 calls for the use of electronic means and generally requires broad cross-border interoperable ICT solutions.

9. In order to meet the need to exchange information across borders, such as those arising from the obligations of the Services Directive, Member States shall intensify efforts to achieve cross-border interoperability, the importance of which has already been highlighted in the electronic Identity and eProcurement areas. The objective of achieving interoperability applies equally to the implementation of Article 8 of the Services Directive which will generally requires interoperable and mutually authenticated electronic identities and electronic documents. An intelligent use of ICT will contribute strongly to the reinforcement of the Internal Market, which generally requires broad interoperability between and within national systems to ensure an Internal Market without electronic barriers.

10. To achieve the ambitious i2010 Manchester targets and Action Plan objectives, Member States shall also keep-up the momentum in the following policy priorities:

    10.1. The common EU policy objective to reinforce cross-border interoperability and reduce administrative burdens requires Member States to identify services and actions which can transform and simplify the way citizens access public services.

    10.2. To ensure that all citizens can benefit from ICT-enabled administrations, inclusive eGovernment policies shall address how best to combine online services together with other channels, such as human intermediaries who need to be equipped with state-of-the-art ICT tools.

    10.3. The use of ICT tools as part of transparency and democratic engagement policies have been successful in many national, regional and local initiatives. Sharing these experiences and those of the eParticipation actions initiated by the European Parliament and launched by the Commission in 2006, shall contribute to gaining valuable experience.

11. Continued cooperation is needed to build on the successful work of the i2010 eGovernment Subgroup which has pursued the 2010 Manchester targets and Action Plan objectives. It is also clear that the new ICT Policy Support Programme (ICT PSP) of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP), along with complementary programmes and policies, play an important catalytic role that leverages eGovernment related investments made by individual Member States.

12. Transforming Europe into an environment-sensitive, energy-efficient and low greenhouse-gas-emitting economy is a political priority and the potential contribution of eGovernment to this transformation should be further explored.

13. There are many areas of public service where transformational change, enabled by technology, can dramatically improve outcomes and impacts by redesigning processes around service delivery, policy formulation and administration, along with the organisations that support or operate these processes. Transformational change requires strong leadership to harness the value of modern technologies and to link that value to the management of change.

MINISTERS AGREE ON THE FOLLOWING PRIORITY POLICY ACTIONS:

1. **Cross-border Interoperability**

Reinforce the cooperation among Member States, notably through the high-impact large-scale ICT PSP Pilots on cross-border eProcurement and mutual recognition of national eIDs. Continuous attention shall be given to the definition and openness of technical standards and publicly available specifications.

Identify the areas in which Member States would cooperate and determine, with the European Commission, the appropriate *modus operandi* to define, develop, implement and monitor broad cross-border interoperability generally required for the implementation of the Services Directive.

In support of these goals, the eID for citizen and business and eProcurement activities should be accelerated as building blocks contributing to the implementation of high impact services.

By the end of 2008 Members States shall establish a list of new priority areas for high impact services, which can be further developed at the pan-European level with the support of EU programmes.

2. **Reduction of administrative burdens**

Use eGovernment as a lever to contribute to the achievement of the objective of reducing administrative burdens for citizen and business in Europe. Use internationally recognised methodologies (e.g. Standard Cost Model) to measure eGovernment services, focusing on the realisation of ICT enabled benefits and impact of public services. Make use of the possibilities for re-use of information with due respect to the legal frameworks, in particular data protection legislation. Moreover, pay special attention to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as priority beneficiaries of burden reduction and streamlined public services.

Deliver eGovernment services that are easier to use and of benefit to all citizens by increasing user centricity, improving accessibility, convenience and user experience.

By the end of 2008 Member States shall report on the achievements of their flagship eGovernment services which have delivered significant contribution to reduction of administrative burden. They shall endeavour to identify and prioritise for future development, eGovernment projects which, over the following years will contribute most to the reduction of administrative burdens, especially for SMEs.

By 2010 Member States shall use a common knowledge framework aiming at learning from each others experiences. They shall also share good practices on measuring ICT-enabled benefits and the resulting impact on public services.

3. **Inclusive eGovernment**

Increase social impact by ensuring that all citizens benefit from eGovernment services. Contribute to the achievement of a better social environment; higher cohesion, greater effectiveness and impact of Government services targeted towards groups in need of social support and those who do not themselves directly use ICT. Make available targeted, combined, flexible and accessible multi-channel services, including face-to-face delivery support and advanced ICT tools, whilst preserving and assuring traditional channels. Facilitate combined delivery of services and better coordination between the different stakeholders engaged in service delivery at all levels, with special focus given to intermediaries who need to be trained and be legally enabled to act, if required, on behalf of the citizen.

By the end of 2008 Member States shall identify and exchange information on their flagship eGovernment initiatives addressing the needs of disadvantaged and potentially excluded.

4. **Transparency and democratic engagement**

Explore new ways of public participation and increased transparency enabled by innovative ICT technologies for democratic engagement and transparency.

Share and organise the exchange of experiences on fostering democratic engagement, participation and transparency enabled by ICT, taking advantage of the work undertaken by the Council of Europe and other European bodies.

By the end of 2008 each Member State shall identify and exchange information on their national initiatives that aims to make intensive use of electronic means to increase participation and public debate.

Implementing the above policies will engage Member States in a process of Transformational Change enabled by technology. The transformations will impact and cut across all areas of government and lead to a greater use of shared services. Member states will need to encourage, and manage, process innovation and process re-engineering.

Member States shall continue to promote privacy and protection of identity as well as enhancing trust and security by means such as the comprehensive use of electronic identity and authentication.

Member States shall explore the potential of eGovernment actions to make significant contributions concerning climate protection and energy savings, namely on the effort to reduce consumption and pollution.

MINISTERS INVITE THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:

1. Support cooperation among Member States when implementing the Services Directive and establish synergies among relevant EU programmes and mechanisms to facilitate the achievement by Member States of the targets set in the Directive.

2. Facilitate cooperation among Member States and the European Commission to define, develop, implement and monitor cross-border, cross-sectoral interoperability.

3. Finalise by mid-2008 the related work under the programme on the Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens (IDABC) and propose a revised version of the European Interoperability Framework to foster the development of interoperable European eGovernment services, in close cooperation with Member States.

4. Continue using relevant instruments to further drive forward the eGovernment agenda in Europe. In particular, the successful cooperation in the i2010 eGovernment subgroup, the IDABC programme, and further develop pilots and thematic networks in the ICT PSP programme to support eGovernment policy implementation.

5. Facilitate cooperation among Member States in their efforts to reduce administrative burdens supported by relevant programmes. Pursue burden reduction by streamlining and simplifying existing Directives and apply these principles to the preparation of future legislation. Future legislation should in particular, anticipate and assess its impact on ICT infrastructures and service transformation.

6. Facilitate the implementation of the Inclusive eGovernment roadmap agreed by Member States, support Inclusive eGovernment pilots under the ICT Policy Support Programme and the exchange of good practices among Member States.

7. Build on the ongoing eParticipation exploratory action and define future support mechanisms to explore and exploit the benefits of eParticipation, identify good practice cases and stimulate the exchange of experiences gained by Member States.

8. Continue efforts to ensure effective exposure and exchange of eGovernment good practices and their subsequent take-up on a wider European scale by fully exploiting the potential of the eGovernment good practice exchange service (ePractice).

9. Continue to evolve sophisticated measurement practices; in cooperation with Member States and international organisations (e.g. OECD). Focus on the realisation of ICT enabled transformation and resulting impact on electronic public services (in both, front and back-offices). Regularly monitor and report progress in Member States on the implementation of the i2010 eGovernment Action Plan.

10. Define and support research activities in eGovernment to support the identified policy actions.

Ministers endorse the priorities and actions set out above, will consider how best to integrate them into national strategies and by the end of 2008, will report on the progress made and activities planned in support of meeting these targets and objectives.

Ministers agree that national reform programmes required by the Lisbon strategy, shall specifically identify the contribution of relevant eGovernment initiatives to growth and jobs; particularly those contributions stimulated by the four policy actions of this Declaration, by the Manchester Declaration and the Action Plan.

Recognising that eGovernment is increasingly playing a key role in the international context, Ministers agree to benchmark, exchange good practices and develop cooperation with third countries and with interest take note of the Portuguese initiative to deepen the cooperation with African countries, profiting from the additional advantage of the Euro-African Summit that will take place during the Portuguese Presidency.

Ministers agree to submit this Declaration to the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council and welcome the intention of the European Commission to drive forward progress on the actions set out in this Declaration.

In conclusion, Ministers thank the Portuguese Presidency and the European Commission for organising the fourth Ministerial eGovernment Conference and Ministerial meeting and look forward to the Ministerial eGovernment Conference of the Swedish Presidency in 2009.