



EISCO 2005

*(EUROPEAN INFORMATION SOCIETY CONFERENCE
OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS)*

THE CRACOW DECLARATION

*ON LOCAL AGENDA i2010 IN EUROPE AND THE PROMOTION OF
DIGITAL SOLIDARITY AMONG THE CITIES OF THE WORLD*

We, representatives of Local and Regional governments, Universities, ICT companies and experts working in eGovernment and in digital local services delivery, have met in Cracow (Poland) from the 2nd to the 4th of June 2005, hosted by the Malopolska Region, to discuss the new scenario and tasks that European local and regional governments must implement to make a significant step forward in the Information Society and to address the challenges of i2010 (eEurope). The meeting was especially significant because this fifth edition of our European Information Society Conference has taken place in a new Member State of the European Union, bringing together mayors, experts and representatives of the local and regional authorities as well as private companies and institutions working with the public sector from all over Europe.

We have analysed the digital divide within our own regions and between developed and less-developed countries and discussed the solidarity agenda of the II World Summit of Cities and Local governments that will take place next November in Bilbao, prior to the United Nations Summit on the Information Society in Tunisia.

The main concern of our local and regional governments is how to ensure that the use of information and communication technologies brings practical benefits to all the people living in our territories. Economic growth without social inclusion does not signify prosperity for all sectors of society and may even radically increase social differences by creating a digital divide. Inclusiveness and cooperation is what makes Europe unique and significantly different from other areas in the world competing in the global market.

It is clear to us that Europe, except for some countries, still lags behind in the use of information and communication technologies at public and private level. Regions, in other countries, not only from the USA and Japan, have made rapid and significant advances into the digital economy arena that are changing their way to compete and attract investment.

In this context, the i2010 initiative launched by the European Commission, to reduce the competitive gap and consolidate a leading position by the end of the present decade, is most timely. It is a goal for everyone that requires a special and close co-operation between the different levels of the public and private sectors to meet this strategic challenge for our future.

It will not be an easy task to increase in 5 years the investment in research and innovation to 3% of the European Union GDP as this is almost double the current rate.. Neither will it be easy for the private sector to increase their investment by at least 30%. If such investment is achieved the impact on our territories will be enormous. To get the maximum return from such investment it will be an absolute priority to find the best ways to transform first results quickly into specific new products and services. From our local and regional perspective, this European effort will succeed only if it results in empowering European citizenship and further developing our local economies, to enhance the identity of the different territories and in strengthening political and social cohesion in our continent. It will require careful planning and accountable policies at local, regional and national level.

The Conference considers that the first task for local and regional governments in Europe is to be fully aware of the challenges facing them and to take strong political and operational measures to implement i2010. Municipalities, counties, provinces and regions can do a lot to create the best possible conditions for such a process. We believe that the adoption of the *i2010 local agenda* is the way forward.

We have agreed that the *i2010 local agenda* should:

- a) reaffirm the subsidiarity principle as the main guideline to implement the agenda, as well as the need to reinforce strong partnerships among the different levels of government for this purpose;
- b) indicate as a clear priority the need for specific planning of the local agenda in every territory;
- c) emphasise networked services at local, national and European level as the key element for rapid development of eGovernment in Europe as well as to make local economies more dynamic and create new jobs;
- d) promote long-lasting public-private partnerships with a clear roadmap and a strong coordination between the different levels of the public administrations that are present in the territories;
- e) describe the tasks and the targets to be reached by 2010, as well as relevant indicators to measure performance and impact, that take fully into account the identities and peculiarities of each local area.

To this end, the Conference participants stressed the importance of:

- a) ensuring broadband access, whatever technological solution is chosen, in all territorial areas, especially in schools, health institutions, local and regional government premises as well as in public spaces open to citizens and enterprises;
- b) strengthening the enabling role of local and regional administrations in guaranteeing adequate and secure technological infra-structure and in promoting ICT-based inclusive services and applications, by actively supporting regional clusters for innovation in our territory to modernise public administrations, generate new investment, and stimulate local development. The cooperation model developed by the PRELUDE initiative has been a most successful exercise in the said direction and its replication in other regions could be beneficial.

An urgent problem is how to overcome the actual trend in Europe where best practices in core digital areas (like eGovernment, eBusiness and eCommerce, eHealth, eSecurity and eTransport) exist almost everywhere but where the implementation of their results or its replication by other actors remains weak.

The Conference debated the problem and raised some preliminary conclusions:

- a) coordinated regional planning is insufficient and the roles of the different actors, especially in the public sector, not always properly established through a concertation process. The aim should be to deliver joined-up on-line services across organisational

- and geographical borders based on a good integration of the back and front office and long-lasting partnerships involving public and private operators.
- b) the reengineering of the administrations and of the administrative procedures using ICT is also insufficient, except for some specific regions and countries. The tendency just to reproduce what is already being done by physical and paper means prevails, with little real innovation or systems reengineering and therefore minimal added-value for citizens. Creating incentives that produce real savings and that stimulate people interacting with public administrations to use electronic services is a most urgent task.
 - c) there is a consistent lack of knowledge and experience in the use of ICT by civil servants and public managers. There is an urgent need for younger staff who have good ICT skills and training to participate more in decisions on what is to be done;
 - d) combining fast changes in technology with organisational change and content updating of databases has proven to be a hard task not sufficiently addressed through good feasibility studies, monitoring tools and cost-benefit analysis;
 - e) although some good first results are now being obtained to allow more secure transactions in the net and to authenticate users, short-term policies to protect the private data of citizens in public databases are not always there. This is surely a strong decision-making barrier for public managers to allow interoperability between different systems and databases.

To tackle these difficulties and the challenges lying ahead, the conference participants agreed on suggesting the following goals as part of the *i2010 Local Agenda*, to be implemented in all European countries .

i2010 Local Agenda

Goal 1 – Full access to on-line services

Each Local and Regional Authority will make their best efforts to support and implement policies in regions and local areas ensuring broadband access to on-line services for all citizens in Europe by 2010. In every European city and local government public access points to on-line services will be established. , Inter-operability of systems and among data-bases as well as the integration between the electronic back-office of the administrations and their front-office on the web shall be a priority . The financial and human resources to implement this objective will be planned and budgeted as from 2006.

Goal 2 – Awareness and Inclusion

Each Local and Regional Authority shall mount a _communications campaign to involve citizens, SMEs and community organisations in this common effort, to listen to their demands and to help them understand the public value of the information and communication technologies.

The importance of receiving appropriate training to make use of on-line services shall be underlined.

In particular, training programmes for economically and socially excluded groups will be encouraged and financially supported.

Goal 3 – Security and privacy

Each Local and Regional Authority, will implement specific measures to improve the personal security of their citizens and to protect their personal data in public data bases and service delivery avoiding any use for non authorised or private purposes and ensuring the right of every citizen to know what personal information is being stored and for what purposes.

Goal 4 – eParticipation

Each Local and Regional Authority shall implement digital communication systems to allow individual citizens and relevant stakeholders in their territories to actively participate in decision-making processes on local matters directly affecting their living and working conditions.

Goal 5 – eGovernment

Each Local and Regional Authority will take concrete steps by 2006 to work together with other administrations in its territory to deliver together and integrate on-line services through the Internet web, as well as by mobile phones and digital TV, making maximum use of the prevailing infrastructural conditions. These plans, articulated with the national eGovernment, will respond to the i2010 objectives by establishing concrete and measurable objectives to be reached before the end of the decade. Secure electronic transactions between the citizen and the administration, proper user authentication and digital signature, and protection of citizens' data shall be a priority.

Goal 6 – Digital ecosystems and training centres

Each Local and Regional Authority will promote the creation of digital ecosystems within their territory to stimulate innovation and the participation of local entrepreneurs in the global market, as well as support the use of electronic commerce and other digital business tools by micro and small enterprises through adequate regional centres of competence and training.

Goal 7 – Competitiveness and Public-private partnerships

Each Local and Regional Authority will promote the competitiveness and sustainable economic development of their territory. To this end, they shall foster and enable the establishment of regional clusters for innovation formed by local innovators, Universities, research and technology institutes, enterprises and administrations to boost research, technology and innovation.

These clusters will address the needs of their territories in those areas that are considered a priority for the modernisation of the public sector, for the delivery of new public services to citizens, and for local development. Clusters should not only be organised to deal with specific applications but to understand better the socio-economic conditions in which they are being deployed through studies and support actions.

Goal 8 – Open source

Each Local and Regional Authority will consider the use of ICT systems and applications developed with an open source license. Other than the concrete savings that might be made, the main aims of this concerted policy shall be to expand the use of open source software and open standards in the public sector to increase eGovernment interoperability nationally and within Europe.

Goal 9 – Training of civil servants, employment and gender

Each Local and Regional Authority will ensure adequate training of its personnel in the appropriate use of information and communication technologies as well as offer employment opportunities to suitably skilled people in its area.

Goal 10 – Digital solidarity

Each Local and Regional Administration will make its best efforts to participate in the digital solidarity initiative supported by the United Nations to fight the digital divide on the planet and to ensure the full access of all countries and regions to the benefits of the Information Society.

In relation to this last point the conference warmly acknowledged the objectives of the II World Summit of Cities and Local governments on the Information Society presented by the Regional government of Bilbao and agreed to formulate the following recommendations:

- a) that the summit discusses and adopt the principles and action lines expressed in our *i2010 Local Agenda*;
- b) that the emphasis is put on establishing a digital solidarity agenda with concrete initiatives, such as:
 - ensuring multi-channelling (web, mobile, digital TV) and broadband access in every local community within the next 15 years;
 - promoting free access to internet through kiosks in public spaces managed by administrations;
 - creating a world directory with the electronic mail addresses of all public administrations;
 - developing ICT and information society training and good practice exchange centres in regional areas for staff of the public administrations from different countries ;;
 - discussing a world-wide exchange programme between Local governments involving young civil servants working for administrations in digital delivery to citizens, both from the technological and content side;
 - discussing forms of digital tutoring of cities and local governments from less developed countries by cities and local governments with consolidated experience in the use of the information and communication technologies;
 - discussing the wider support of the European Union to world-wide thematic networks of local experts working together on common problems such as pollution, transport, drug-abuse, elderly, gender etc.
 - promoting the use of ICT for new forms of citizen to citizen exchange and dialogue in favour of people and trans-cultural understanding, drawing on the experience of twinning and sister cities actions.
- c) that the global digital solidarity fund and the world digital solidarity agency created in the context of the roadmap approved by the United Nation's first summit on the Information Society, and in preparation of the Bilbao gathering, be implemented with full acknowledgment of the role of Cities and Local governments.

We recommend an initial commitment of two years to the administrations that decide to join it, an intensive awareness campaign to launch the initiative and the creation of information and assessment instruments to ensure constant accountability on the investment that is made of the resources provided by the Cities and Local governments.

The conference expressed its compliments to the Region of Malopolska and the "Cities on Internet" Association of Poland for the work they have done to make EISCO 2005 a most successful and prominent event. The conference asked the Council of European Municipalities and Regions and the ELANET network to promote the outcomes of EISCO 2005 and to take the present declaration to the Cities' World Summit. It was decided to meet again in EISCO 2007 at Haemeenlinna, Finland, from the 16 to the 18th of April .