

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions



International Workshop

“Towards a European Approach for Monitoring eInclusion”

- one day workshop organised by the *eInclusion@EU* project
supported by the European Commission -

21 June 2006
Brussels

Committee of the Regions (CoR)
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<i>General Information</i>	
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Website	http://www.einclusion-eu.org/
Language	English
Registration	Online registration at http://www.einclusion-eu.org/UserEventRegistration.asp?Action=Register&CaseID=3154&LevelCodeID=74 or via fax +49 (0) 228 98530-12

The eInclusion@EU project in a nutshell

The eInclusion@EU project is a so called co-ordination action with the objective of contributing to the development of “evidence-based” eInclusion and eAccessibility policies at EU and Member State levels. It is funded under the European Union’s Information Society Programme and administered by the eInclusion unit of DG Information Society and Media.

The primary approach involves:

- collation and analysis of policy-relevant information and data from across the EU and internationally,
- identification of key topics of relevance for policy development,
- preparation of syntheses of the state-of-the-art on these topics,
- convening and facilitation of workshops to support informed dialogue amongst all key stakeholders, and
- on the basis of all this, preparation of evidence-based policy roadmaps of the key topics to inform future EU and Member State policy.

The field of enquiry covering eInclusion and eAccessibility issues is a very broad one and, of necessity, the project is adopting a pragmatic approach. In particular, the project is working closely with the European Commission services to ensure that the priority topics which are selected are aligned with the Commission’s own priorities. In relation to this, three core areas have been identified – eAccessibility, access to employment and access to online services – as being the core concerns of the project. The selection of sub-themes is oriented towards the identification of areas where the project can be expected to make the most useful contribution to policy development. This means that the focus is on themes where there is already a clear political will, but not yet any widely accepted consensus on good practice or on how policy and policy measures across the EU Member States can be harmonised.

Policy background and rationale

Today, growing parts of the population live and work in digitally ‘networked’ environments and engage in new forms of ICT-mediated communication, collaboration, production and consumption. Doing things with the help of ICT is no longer limited to specialists, and many day to day activities are undergoing quite fundamental changes. A wide range of ICT-based applications, services and activities are now emerging, and provision of commercial and public services via the Internet is gaining momentum: eGovernment, eHealth, eLearning and eCommerce applications are showing increasing maturity and acceptance by a growing proportion of the population. In the working sphere, computers and new ICT-based tools are becoming widespread, and they increasingly impact on the way people make their living. In the public sphere, touch screen information and self-service kiosks are becoming ubiquitous. Also, for an ever increasing part of the population, mobile telephony is becoming fully integrated in all aspects of daily life while enhanced capabilities such as localisation and multi-media features are beginning to transform the mobile phone from a mere communication tool into a multifunction device.

At the onset of the trends sketched above the European Union embarked on the so-called Lisbon strategy, with the goal of becoming “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 relatively new field of eInclusion policy is fundamentally concerned with ensuring that development towards the Lisbon objectives really achieves a knowledge-based society which is cohesive and socially sustainable. More specifically, it is concerned with ensuring that everyone is included in and gains from developments enabled by ICT.

Perhaps most recently, the European Commission's i2010 strategy has put a clear emphasis on eInclusion as a core target for policy-making in the domain of the knowledge society:

As the use of ICT grows, so does its impact on society. i2010 recognises this in three ways: making sure that ICT benefit all citizens; making public services better, more cost effective and more accessible; and improving quality of life.

ICT are becoming more widely used and are benefiting more people. But today over half of the EU population either does not reap these benefits in full or is effectively cut off from them. Reinforcing social, economic and territorial cohesion by making ICT products and services more accessible, including in regions lagging behind, is an economic, social, ethical and political imperative. In i2010, strong emphasis is given to full participation and to providing people with basic digital competence.¹

When it comes to concrete policy action, up to now fairly limited attention has been given to monitoring and evaluation. At the EU-level, benchmarking activities that have been pursued throughout the various stages of the eEurope initiative would seem of potential interest here. However, they are mainly concerned with access to the internet and with the roll-out of online public services. Some analysts argue that – as the Information Society further develops – it would be no longer sufficient to merely measure who is online and who is not. Beyond mere ICT access, actual usage as well as social and economic impacts of ICT usage and non-usage would need to be monitored as well. Perhaps not surprisingly, a recently published benchmarking report highlights the need for an extended Europe-wide benchmarking framework.²

Against this background, there is a pressing need to consolidate experiences gained so far in the field of eInclusion monitoring and to develop a common view on requirements for further improvements in this field. This is the policy background against which this workshop aims at contributing to the development of a coherent approach towards eInclusion monitoring at a European scale.

Expected outcomes of this workshop

The event will bring together key stakeholders from the policy arena, the scientific community and other groupings that have an interest in the eInclusion theme. The workshop programme will focus on the following core themes:

- What is the European policy context of eInclusion-related monitoring efforts?
- What knowledge and experiences are available from monitoring initiatives pursued on the EU-level and in the Member States?
- In view of these experiences, what requirements on a coherent EU-level monitoring approach in the field of eInclusion can be identified?

These questions will be addressed throughout three subsequent thematic sessions followed by a round table discussion. Each thematic session will feature a number of short presentations and provide the opportunity for an interactive debate.

The outcomes of the workshop will be synthesised by the eInclusion@EU project in a dedicated report. Beyond this, it is hoped that the event will facilitate an intensive stakeholder dialogue - spanning across all levels of policy development and implementation - on how best to monitor progress towards an equitable and inclusive Information Society.

¹ Commission of the European Communities (CEC)(2005) "i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment", COM(2005) 229 final, Brussels.

² Commission of the European Communities (2005): Information Society Benchmarking Report. Online available at: http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/i2010/docs/benchmarking/051222%20Final%20Benchmarking%20Report.pdf

Preliminary Programme

09:30 - 10:00	Registration
10:00 - 10:10	Welcome and Opening Remarks <i>Ima Placencia-Porrero</i> , European Commission, DG Information Society&Media
10:10 - 10:45	Opening Session Chaired by <i>Lutz Kubitschke</i> , eInclusion@EU project
10:45 - 12:00	Thematic Session I: The European Policy Context for Monitoring of eInclusion Chaired by <i>Ima Placencia-Porrero</i> , European Commission, DG Information Society&Media
12:00 - 13:15	Thematic Session II: Lessons to be learned from innovative EU-level approaches Chaired by <i>Werner B. Korte</i> , Managing Directory of empirica, Bonn
13:15 - 14:15	Lunch
14:15 - 16:00	Thematic Session III: Lessons to be learned from national and regional approaches Chaired by <i>representative of the Committee of the Regions (NN)</i>
16:00 – 17:00	Round Table Discussion: What are the requirements for a coherent EU-level monitoring approach ? Chaired by <i>Ima Placencia-Porrero</i> , European Commission, DG Information Society&Media
17:00 - 17:15	Round-up and Closing <i>Lutz Kubitschke</i> , eInclusion@EU project

Registration form

Workshop “Towards a European Approach for Monitoring eInclusion”

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Please use capital letters

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