

## **AGEING WELL IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY - Council conclusions**

[Council of the European Union 13891/07 \(Presse 274\)](#), Provisional Version, Press Release, 2835th Council meeting, Transport, Telecommunications and Energy, Brussels, 29-30 November 2007, 03 December 2007

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. WELCOMES:

- the Communication from the Commission on "Ageing Well in the Information Society";
- the preparation of the i2010 European initiative on Ambient Assisted Living (AAL) under Article 169 of the EU Treaty.

2. RECALLS

- the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of March 2000 and the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy;
- the Riga Ministerial Conference on ICT for an Inclusive Society and the Riga Ministerial Declaration of June 2006;
- the Communication from the Commission on "The demographic future of Europe – from challenge to opportunity" of October 2006;
- the Council Conclusions of 7 June 2007 on the i2010 - Annual Information Society Report 2007.

3. RECOGNISES THAT:

- ageing of the population is one of Europe's most pressing challenges, and that this challenge is also becoming a global phenomenon;
- the quality of life of ageing citizens can be substantially improved with appropriate developments of ICT to ageing well in the community, at work and at home, for example through increased social networking, easier access to public and commercial services, enhanced work and daily living environments, and extended productive, independent and autonomous lives;
- the isolation and loneliness experienced by many elderly citizens can be mitigated by the facilitation of social interaction provided by electronic communications;
- the use of ICT-based products and services will allow ageing citizens to live longer independently, and will provide opportunities for enhancing their safety, security and healthcare,

thus reducing the dependence on institutional care and providing improved human dignity to the elderly;

- the increasing older population, having grown more accustomed to the use of ICTs and becoming more demanding, is likely to create pressure for the development of a new and enlarged market for innovation, creation and exportation of new products and services within the Community as well as globally;
- ICT has significant potential to create a triple-win by improving the quality of life of citizens, containing the rising costs of care, and enabling new and growing business opportunities for Europe's companies including SMEs ;
- market barriers and fragmentation, insufficient market development and awareness, high diversity of rules and regulations, limited adoption of inclusive design, insufficient research and innovation, lack of affordable solutions, digital illiteracy and insufficient understanding of users must be overcome for Europe to fully reap the benefits of ICT for ageing well;
- a comprehensive cross-policy approach both at national and at EU levels, including electronic communications and information society, social, employment, public procurement, health and urban policies, is relevant to address the issue effectively.

#### 4. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO:

- actively contribute to the Action Plan for Ageing Well in the Information Society through appropriate initiatives including the development of national action plans;
- report progress, including on relevant targets of the Riga declaration (notably halving by 2010 internet usage and digital literacy gaps of elderly people and realising web accessibility of public websites), as part of the envisaged reporting on e-Inclusion, as part of the envisaged i2010 European e-Inclusion Initiative, at the end of 2008;
- clarify rules and regulations affecting ageing well solutions and cooperate with the Commission in analysing market barriers;
- take into account the needs of the older age-group population as well as the potential it creates for new markets and services when establishing their national research policies and programmes, in particular with a view to the e-inclusion of the elderly;
- stimulate cooperation of all stakeholders at the national and European levels, visibility of existing solutions and exchange of good practices, including demonstrations of the available services and actions in Europe;
- mobilise and support local and regional authorities, given their important role in the delivery of social and health solutions for elderly people and encourage cooperation and interoperability to increase economies of scale;
- mobilise financial incentives for research, innovation and market uptake.

#### 5. INVITES THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION TO:

- make proposals in 2009 to overcome legal and technical barriers to ICT for ageing well;
- contribute to mechanisms for the exchange of experiences and good practices;
- support Member States in giving visibility to existing and available services and actions in this field within the Community;
- improve e-accessibility for elderly persons and disabled persons, including through European standards and legislative action as appropriate;
- sustain research, innovation and deployment support in European programmes.

#### 6. INVITES INDUSTRY TO:

- establish in 2008 an innovation platform with users on joint research, innovation, and deployment agendas, linking to relevant European Technology Platforms to enable European leadership, in particular by collaborating and developing joint research activities with European research and academic institutions for the development of inclusive ICT products and services;
- deepen understanding of user requirements, and contribute to a European curriculum on inclusive design by 2008;
- step up efforts, with authorities, on digital literacy training for elderly people;
- enable older employees to remain active with ICT.

#### 7. INVITES OTHER AUTHORITIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY TO:

- closely cooperate with industry and academic and research institutions on joint research, innovation and deployment agendas;
- make available information that will increase the understanding of market barriers and improve market transparency;
- for regional authorities, actively incorporate ICT for ageing well in regional development agendas and participate in relevant Regions for Economic Change networks."