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eGovernment: Commission calls for ambitious objectives in the EU for 2010

Hundreds of billions of euros could be saved for European taxpayers every year as a result of administrative modernisation in the 25 EU Member States, outlined today in the European Commission's eGovernment Action Plan. Information and communication technology is the key to modernising government services: making them more efficient and more responsive. 100% take-up of electronic invoicing and electronic public procurement is predicted to save 300 billion euros every year. All Member States already signed up to an ambitious agenda to achieve these goals in Manchester last year (see [MEMO/05/446](#)). Today's action plan proposes concrete steps towards achieving these goals,

"We are starting to see benefits from Europe's investments in 'eGovernment' over the last few years, but we need to be more active in learning lessons from each other and getting the benefits of scale from adopting common approaches across borders," declared Viviane Reding, Information Society and Media Commissioner. "eGovernment is no longer just a political toy, it is the essential tool of government, for modernising Europe's public administrations".

eGovernment initiatives in Europe have already resulted in significant saving of time and money in some Member States. Public service eProcurement in Italy resulted in savings of €3.2 billion by 2003 (for example an average saving of 34% on PCs). Portugal has reported savings of 30% through electronic public procurement. Full deployment of e-Procurement across the EU could reduce this bill by up to €80 billion a year.

The new eGovernment action plan adopted today by the European Commission addresses five priority areas for 2010 and underlines the commitment of the European Commission to delivering tangible benefits to all Europeans, in cooperation with the Member States:

- **No citizen left behind:** eGovernment will only really make a difference if everyone can use it. The Commission will work with Member States to make sure that by 2010 all citizens, regardless of gender, age, nationality, income, or disability will have access to a wide range of technologies such as Digital TV, PCs and mobile phones.

- **Raising efficiency:** Public services concern everybody - all 470 million citizens in the EU, 20 million firms and tens of thousands of administrations. Governments account for 45% of EU GDP, which has to be paid from taxes. Transformation of the UK pension programme has freed up 50% of clerical staff to provide face to face support to customers, or to carry out other tasks. All Member States have undertaken to use ICTs to achieve “considerable gains in efficiency” and “significant reductions in administrative burdens” by 2010. Under the Action Plan, the Commission and the Member States will put in place a framework for benchmarking the impact of e-government in order get this process on track.
- **Implementing e-Procurement:** Government procurement represents 15% of GDP or about €1.500 billion a year. The Member States have committed to achieving 100% availability and at least 50% take-up of procurement online by 2010, with an estimated annual saving of €40billion. The action plan will lay out a road map for achieving these goals as well as the practical steps required for such large-scale cross-border procurement pilots and full electronic handling of company documents (the “Electronic Company Dossier”).
- **Safe access to services EU wide:** When citizens travel or when they move they want easy access to services. EU governments have agreed to facilitate this process by establishing secure systems for mutual recognition of national electronic identities for public administration web-sites and services. The Action Plan foresees a full implementation by 2010. The Commission will help make this happen by supporting wide-scale cross-border demonstrators, identifying common specifications for electronic ID management during 2007 and by reviewing the rules of electronic signatures in 2009.
- **Strengthening participation and democratic decision-making:** 65% of respondents to the Commission’s public consultation on eGovernment said that eDemocracy can help reduce Europe’s democratic deficit. The Action Plan proposes to support experiments in the use of ICT for more effective public participation in policy making.

Further information:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/egovernment_research/index_en.htm

See also [MEMO/06/171](#)