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FROM THE SWEDISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

# Information and Communication Technologies Policy

8 June 2009

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Two issues will shape Sweden's approach to ICT policy during its presidency of the EU. Climate change is the most important challenge of our time, and the EU has a pivotal role to play in the global response. That is why the Swedish Presidency 2009 is dedicated to reaching a global agreement on climate change in December 2009 in Copenhagen.

At the same time, the current economic downturn highlights the need to strengthen the European economy in line with the Lisbon Strategy. In the decade to come Europe needs a revitalised strategy for sustainable growth and prosperity responding to the main challenges:

- transforming Europe towards an eco-efficient economy
- reaping the benefits of globalisation
- restoring public finances and tackling the effects of an ageing population.

For the development of the European Information Society the main goal will be to pursue ICT policy that helps the EU move from a position of enabling an information society to facilitating the greatest possible impact from it. Information and communication technologies have already made significant contributions to economic growth but have potential to bring renewed growth, create more jobs and improve energy efficiency throughout Europe. Overall, ICT will drive the development of Europe into a leading knowledge economy.

## Swedish priorities

In order to respond to the challenges for the ICT sector outlined above, Sweden will primarily seek to contribute to the dialogue of a renewed European policy agenda for ICT. Consequently Sweden will give priority to two issues during its presidency:

- ICT policy in support of Europe's developing Information Society, addressed through a high-level conference "Visby Agenda: Creating impact for an eUnion 2015".
- Reforming management of the radio spectrum, an issue that forms part of the broader Baltic Sea Strategy.

The EU's current ICT initiative "i2010" is approaching its target date. The Swedish presidency would therefore like to foster the debate on the development of a European information society, and on prioritizing policy issues needed for such a development. The Visby conference aims to highlight the priorities for a progressive and responsible ICT policy program for the period 2011-2015. Preparing for this high-level conference, Sweden is completing a report to serve as a stepping stone for the discussions. The report will be subject to open consultation upon publication in September.

The use of the radio spectrum is of tremendous importance for the development of the information society. Efficient use and easier access to radio spectrum is a key issue to give citizens the opportunity to participate in the information society allowing electronic communications to remain an engine for growth. The main challenge is to increase

international co-operation in order to improve spectrum management.

Furthermore Sweden hopes to be able to discuss Council Conclusions on the digital dividend arising from analogue TV switchover, and on network and information security. The digital dividend is also a priority issue in the Baltic Sea Strategy.

Finally, we note that, as a result of the European Parliament vote on the telecoms package, the Council of Ministers will have to decide whether to accept the amendments proposed by the Parliament. If not, a conciliation process will begin during the Swedish Presidency, and Sweden will commit itself to work efficiently and impartially in order to reach an agreement.

#### **Meetings**

The Swedish Presidency is planning one TTE-council meeting regarding ICT issues in Brussels on 17-18 December.

Sweden will host a high-level conference on future ICT policy on 9-10 November in Visby.

#### **Other important issues and events**

The Baltic Sea Strategy, which should be adopted at the European Council in late 2009.

Resilience in electronic communications. Conference to be held in Stockholm on 5 November organised by PTS, the Swedish agency monitoring electronic communications and postal sectors in Sweden.

Sweden will host an informal meeting of ministers and a conference on the topic of eGovernment in the same time-period. The Ministry of Finance is hosting this meeting and conference, which takes place in Malmö, 18-20 November.

A conference, "The Future Internet Assembly", will be held in Stockholm, 23-24 November. The conference is hosted by KTH, the Royal Institute of Technology.



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Printed by Grafisk Service, June 2009. Produced by the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, Sweden.  
Artikelnr. N9020/OF