Council of the EU: The Granada Ministerial Declaration on the European Digital Agenda

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On 19 April 2010 the Ministers responsible for the Telecommunications and Information Society of the EU member states and the European Economic Area adopted, under the Spanish Presidency, the Granada Declaration on the Digital Agenda.

The Declaration notes that the EU2020 Strategy calls for the EU to find a fast and effective road to recovery following the recent economic downturn. Given that the ICT sector is a crucial driver of growth and jobs in the EU economy, Europe could put itself back on the fast track to growth by raising its global competitiveness in the digital economy. To this end, the Declaration suggested the following eight actions for consideration:

1. The creation of the necessary infrastructures, such as 100% coverage of basic broadband to all citizens, the roll out of competitive next generation high speed networks or the development of innovative digital wireless services. The importance of the adoption of the future EU radio spectrum policy programme and of efficient radio spectrum use is also underlined.

2. The promotion of the advanced use of the open internet, security and trust. This can be attained, inter alia, through the implementation of the new EU electronic communications rules on network provision, through the support of e-authentication systems for consumers and businesses or through raising public awareness and empowering citizens in the digital environment.

3. The reinforcement and promotion of the rights of users of electronic communications and online services, as well as, in certain key fields, of social networking services. The Declaration suggests the drafting of a “Code of Digital Rights of e-Communications and Online Services”.

4. The fostering of a single European digital market. Regulatory obstacles should be eliminated, European digital content markets should be promoted and access to digital content enabled and European cultural heritage should be digitised and disseminated. The Declaration also supports the solution of multi-territorial licensing to overcome the fragmentation of content markets along borders.

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5. The development of effective and efficient public digital services. The Declaration specifically mentions the importance of the ability to reuse public sector information and the introduction of e-IDs and e-signatures and digital administrative services. The goal should be the reinforcement of an open and transparent government and active citizen participation.

6. Strengthening the competitiveness of Europe's ICT sector. This can be achieved through better support for Europe's ECT R&D and Innovation efforts, as well as of high-tech SMEs and other European ICT firms, particularly in areas where Europe has a lead market potential.

7. The promotion of Europe's positions on issues relevant to the Digital Agenda in international fora.

8. Benchmarking the Information Society. Policy implementation should be tracked on a regular basis and key targets set.

The Declaration also emphasises the importance of a truly inclusive digital society. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of citizens with disabilities.

Appropriately, the meeting of the Ministers in Andalucía was made possible thanks to ISDN videoconferencing, as a number of delegations were unable to attend in person due to the air traffic disruptions caused by the volcanic eruption in Iceland.

Granada Ministerial Declaration on the European Digital Agenda

http://www.mityc.es/es-es/gabineteprensa/notasprensa/documents/declaration.pdf

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