European Commission: New Digital Agenda Unveiled

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On 19 May 2010, the European Commission presented its Communication on a Digital Agenda for Europe, the first of seven flagship initiatives under the "Europe 2020" strategy for reviving the European economy. The Communication asserts that, in the face of the current downturn in the economy, demographic ageing and global competition, Europeans will have to work harder, work longer and work smarter if they are to achieve sustainable economic and social benefits. The Digital Agenda is focused on the last of these three approaches.

The Agenda outlines seven priority areas of action:

1. Creating a new Single Market to deliver the benefits of the digital era

2. Improving ICT standard-setting and interoperability

3. Increasing Europeans' access to fast and ultra-fast internet

4. Boosting cutting-edge research and innovation in ICT

5. Empowering all Europeans with digital skills and accessible online services

6. Unleashing the potential of ICT to benefit society

7. Delivering the Digital Strategy for Europe.

The final goal is the creation of a well-functioning virtuous cycle of growth. This can happen when attractive content and services are made available in an interoperable and borderless internet environment, thereby stimulating demand for higher speeds and capacity, which then in turn gives impetus for investment in faster networks, thus finally leading right back to the creation and implementation of new innovative services and content. The final result is self-reinforcing flow of activity, which however is only possible in a business environment that fosters investments and entrepreneurship.

The aforementioned measures will be put into place or proposed over the next 2-3 years and will be succeeded by follow-up actions. The initiative will evolve and develop over the next 10 years. To implement the objectives of the Digital Agenda, the European Commission will sustain regular dialogue with the European Parliament and establish a High Level Group of Member State

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representatives, while all interested stakeholders are also invited to participate in action-oriented stakeholder platforms, as well as the annual Digital Assemblies, which will be assessing progress and emerging challenges. The first Digital Assembly is scheduled to be held in the first half of 2011.

European Digital Agenda Website

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/index_en.htm

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on "A Digital Agenda for Europe", COM (2010) 245, Brussels 19 May 2010

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/documents/digital-agenda-communication-en.pdf

Communication from the Commission on "Europe 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth", COM (2010) 2020, Brussels 3 March 2010

http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm

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