

Brussels, 26 November 2003

OPINION

of the
Committee of the Regions
of
20 November 2003

on the

**Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on
Interoperable Delivery of pan-European eGovernment Services to
Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens
(IDABC)**

COM(2003) 406 final – COD 2003/0147

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,

Having regard to the Communication from the Commission on *Interoperable Delivery of Pan-European eGovernment Services to Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens (IDABC)* COM(2003) 406 final – 2003/0147 (COD);

Having regard to the decision of the European Council of 17 July 2003 to consult it on this subject, under Article 156 of the Treaty establishing the European Community;

Having regard to the decision of its President of 19 June 2003 to instruct its Commission for Culture and Education to draw up an Opinion on this subject;

Having regard to its Opinion on the *Evaluation of the IDA programme and a second phase of the IDA programme* CdR 44/98 fin¹;

Having regard to its Opinion on the *Trans-European data communications networks between*

administrations CdR 48/94²;

Having regard to its draft opinion CdR 247/2003 rev. 1 adopted on 2 October 2003 by the Commission for Culture and Education (Rapporteur: **Mr Risto Koivisto**, Mayor of Pirkkala (FI/PES));

unanimously adopted the following opinion at its 52nd plenary session, held on 19-20 November 2003 (meeting of 20 November)

1. **The Committee of the Regions' views**

The Committee of the Regions

1. **considers** the Commission proposal for a new IDABC programme to be of the utmost importance and a key instrument for, inter alia, implementing the objectives of the Lisbon strategy;
2. **is pleased** that the Committee's earlier views on the important role of local and regional government in building the European information society have been taken into account in the proposed new programme and notes that Europe's local and regional authorities are prepared to participate in wide-ranging cooperation to improve interoperability in public administration and effectiveness in the delivery of public services;
3. **points out** that the good and practical achievements of previous IDA programmes have made a significant contribution to promoting interoperability in public administration in Europe and agrees with the Commission that a key element of the programme must be the further development of existing products and services;
4. **stresses** that local and regional government should not be regarded primarily as users of pan-European eServices but as a major provider of such services;
5. **requests** the Commission to take all necessary steps to further the coordination of IDABC objectives with other similar objectives across current Community programmes;
6. **feels** that, in view of the important and special role played by local and regional government, they must be allowed a say in the political and strategic guidance of the programme by, for example, ensuring that there is adequate expertise on the management committee or the advisory board that might be established by the Commission;
7. **notes** that the programme must not increase the isolation of public administrations in Europe from the world around them and believes that the

development of standards for interoperability requires extensive international cooperation;

8. **underlines** the key role played by local and regional government in the provision of public services that facilitate the everyday life of citizens and businesses, making an important contribution to, for example, the implementation of objectives relating to free movement;
9. **draws** particular attention to the need to ensure that the more widespread application of information and communication technology in public administration and fast, economic, efficient and safe trans-European information exchange involving the various regional levels not only leads to improved services but also better productivity in public administration; this aspect of improved interinstitutional administrative cooperation must also be a key consideration in deciding on projects to be launched within the framework of the programme;
10. **considers it important** for ensuring the effectiveness of the programme that adequate resources be provided at all levels of government for activities that are consistent with the objectives of the programme and calls on the Commission to see to it that an appropriate share of available Community resources is used for the projects to improve productivity mentioned in the proposal.

2. The Committee of the Regions' recommendations

Recommendation 1

Article 3

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
e) encourage interinstitutional cooperation between the Community institutions as well as between the latter and national, regional and local public administrations, including national and regional parliaments;	e) encourage interinstitutional cooperation between the Community institutions as well as between the latter and national, regional and local public administrations, including national and regional parliaments, <u>and national cooperation covering all public administrations;</u>

Reason

IDA projects have been primarily projects between Member States. Although cooperation between the Community and local and regional government is important, good cooperation nationally between all levels of government is also a critical factor for the successful implementation of the objectives.

Recommendation 2

Article 11

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
1. The Commission shall be assisted by a committee called the Telematics between Administrations Committee (TAC), composed of representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission.	1. The Commission shall be assisted by a committee called the Telematics between Administrations Committee (TAC), composed of representatives of the Member States, <u>one representative of regional government and one representative of local government</u> and chaired by the representative of the Commission.

Reason

The presence on the committee of representatives from the Member States guarantees an adequate level of expertise in so far as developing information transfer between the Commission and the Member States is concerned. However, a key goal of the IDABC programme is to develop pan-European services. Public services in Europe are provided mainly by local and regional authorities and it is these services which are important for the daily life and free movement of businesses and citizens. The expertise of local and regional government on the committee would have a positive impact on the implementation of the objectives mentioned in Article 1(2)(a)(b) and (d) and would promote the spread of good practice in accordance with objective (h).

Recommendation 3

Article 12

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
2. The evaluation shall establish the progress and current status of the projects of common interest and horizontal measures identified in Annexes I and II respectively.	2. The evaluation shall establish the progress and current status of the projects of common interest and horizontal measures identified in Annexes I and II respectively.
The evaluation shall also examine, in the light of the expenditure incurred by the Community, the benefits yielded by the pan-European eGovernment and infrastructure services to the Community for the advancement of common policies and institutional cooperation as far as public administrations, businesses and citizens are concerned and identify areas for potential improvement and verify synergies with other Community activities in the area of pan-European eGovernment and infrastructure services.	The evaluation shall also examine, in the light of the expenditure incurred by the Community, the benefits yielded by the pan-European eGovernment and infrastructure services to the Community, <u>Member States and regional and local government</u> for the advancement of common policies and institutional cooperation as far as public administrations, businesses and citizens are concerned and identify areas for potential improvement and verify synergies with other Community activities in the area of pan-European eGovernment and infrastructure services.

Reason

The evaluation must cover the impact of the programme on productivity and the development of services in all areas of public administration and also describe the results attained at local and regional level.

Recommendation 4

Article 15

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
2. Subject to compatibility with the future financial perspectives, the financial reference amount for the implementation of the Community action under this Decision for the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2009 shall be 89.6 million euro, out of which: i) €44.2 million for projects of common interest; ii) €45.4 million for horizontal measures	2. Subject to compatibility with the future financial perspectives, the financial reference amount for the implementation of the Community action under this Decision for the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2009 shall be € <u>109.6</u> million, out of which: i) € <u>54.2</u> million for projects of common interest; ii) € <u>55.4</u> million for horizontal measures

Reason

The proposed programme could have a significant impact on improving productivity in public administration and the development of pan-European eGovernment services. The effectiveness of the programme must be ensured through adequate funding by transferring resources from less important objectives.

Recommendation 5

ANNEX I

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
B. COMMUNITY POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES ...	B. COMMUNITY POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES ...
17. Information systems allowing the participation of national parliaments and civil society in the legislative process.	17. Information systems allowing the participation of national <u>and regional</u> parliaments and civil society in the legislative process.

Reason

The role of regional parliaments with legislative powers must be taken into account in developing information systems.

Recommendation 6

ANNEX II

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
B. STRATEGIC AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES	B. STRATEGIC AND SUPPORT ACTIVITIES
...	...
3. Support activities undertaken in support of spread of good practice in the application of information technologies to public administrations, such as:	3. Support activities undertaken in support of spread of good practice in the application of information technologies to public administrations, such as:
(a) Reports, web sites, conferences and, in general, initiatives addressed to the public	(a) Reports, web sites, conferences and, in general, initiatives addressed to the public
(b) Monitoring, analysis and web site dissemination of initiatives and best practice related to eGovernment actions at Member State, Community and international level	(b) Monitoring, analysis and web site dissemination of initiatives and best practice related to eGovernment actions at Member State, <u>regional and local government</u> , Community and international level
(c) Promotion of the spread of best practice in the use of e.g. open source software by public administrations	(c) Promotion of the spread of best practice in the use of e.g. open source software by public administrations

Reason

The role played by public administrations in the provision of eServices is crucial and important from the point of view of the programme's objectives.

Brussels, 20 November 2003.

The President

The Acting Secretary-General

of the
Committee of the Regions

of the
Committee of the Regions

Albert Bore

Gerhard Stahl

¹ OJ C 251, 10.8.1998, p. 1

² OJ C 217, 6.8.1994, p. 32

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CdR 247/2003 fin EN/o .../...

CdR 247/2003 fin EN/o