

The European Parliament's readiness for the Year 2000

Introduction

Mindful of the problems associated with the transition to the year 2000 and the possible disruption to its activities, in 1997 the European Parliament set up the *YEAR 2000* project covering all areas likely to be affected by the change of the millennium. The aim of the project is to ensure that all departments are able to function correctly, efficiently and without interruption both before and after 1 January 2000 and that the date change does not disrupt Parliament's work in any way.

Activities

Since 1997 work within the European Parliament has focused on three main areas:

- the technical modifications necessary for the computer systems and their components to continue to function normally, coordinated by the Information Technology and Telecommunications Directorate (DIT).
- the modifications necessary for those systems which are not themselves IT-based but which contain intelligent electronics, such as centralised building management, fire detection and access control systems.
- the necessary organisational modifications, such as the numbering systems for documents and inventories.

A year 2000 working group composed of representatives of each directorate-general and of the political group secretariats was created to coordinate the tasks to be carried out. Its role is to:

- ensure that the entire problem is addressed, including the risks relating to embedded systems and other, non-computer systems;
- supervise the progress towards year 2000 compliance, particularly for the local systems in the directorates-general;
- assess the impact on inter-departmental systems and those linked to other institutions and outside organisations, such as banks;
- propose the changes necessary to non-electronic systems which use a two-digit year code, such as filing systems and document numbering systems.

Technical modifications

In accordance with the division of IT responsibilities within the EP, the DIT and the local information technology teams in the directorates-general and the political group secretariats have implemented the following measures:

- M** Centralised systems, for which teams under the direct supervision of the DIT have operational and developmental responsibility:
1. An audit of the following equipment has been carried out:
 - Basic infrastructure
 - office systems, including individual work stations and distributed servers, operating systems and basic software and database management systems (DBMS)

- communication resources, including e-mail and the local and inter-site network infrastructure (LAN and WAN);
 - Centrally-managed applications and equipment
 - central database servers, including operating systems and DBMS;
 - applications specific to each DG and shared applications.
2. The year 2000 compliance of each component has been systematically examined and actual or potential problems noted.
 3. Wherever possible year 2000 compliance guarantees have been obtained from suppliers of hardware, software and communications equipment.
 4. Non-year 2000 compliant hardware, software and communications equipment has been replaced or upgraded, for example year 2000 compliant work stations were installed in the Word/NT migration.
 5. The necessary modifications have been made to systems developed within Parliament which are currently managed by the DIT. All computer programmes concerned have been updated.
 6. Module and integration tests were carried out in a year 2000 environment (with the system date set at 2000) during August and September 1999 on all systems managed by the DIT. An additional series of logical workflow tests is planned for November 1999.

M Decentralised systems, for which teams under the direct control of the LSA (local support administrators) in individual directorates-general have operational and developmental responsibility, particularly the development, maintenance and support of applications specific to each DG.

For these systems, (as for non-computer equipment), the year 2000 working group has carried out a general survey of the potential risks with a questionnaire enabling managers to identify potential problems and to decide, if necessary, on the action to be taken, including the implementation of possible alternative procedures connected with the functions of the systems and equipment concerned.

Interinstitutional relations

The European Parliament is also actively participating in the work of the interinstitutional year 2000 group.

Management of the transition to the year 2000

A detailed plan has been drawn up to cover the critical period of the first few days of the year 2000, detailing the sequence of actions to be carried out by the IT teams and certain representative users.
