

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2278/09
by Urszula Gacek (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: Free Internet-access system in Małopolska

The EU is promoting the information society under the i2010 strategy and eEurope action plans. Under the motto 'better online than in line', more than 90% of all providers of public services across the EU are to provide such services online.

The country of Cracow has one of Poland's largest free Internet-access systems. The *Podkrakowski System Teleinformatyczny* (PSTI) is a joint initiative of the Cracow county authorities and 17 municipalities (Krzeszowice, Czernichów, Liszki, Zabierzów, Skawina, Mogilany, Skąta, Iwanowice, Słominki, Zielonki, Michałowice, Wielka Wieś, Sułoszowa, Jerzmanowice-Przeginia, Kocmyrzów-Luborzyce, Igołomia-Wawrzeńczyce and Świątniki Górne). Seventy-five per cent of the funding for the project was provided from the European Regional Development Fund, under the Integrated Regional Operational Programme. Although the project has already been fully implemented, there are now plans for it to be extended. Can the Commission provide further financing for the project from the funds at its disposal?

The Commission has also stated that it will be making further efforts to ensure that schools and universities (inter alia under the eLearning programme), as well as libraries, museums and similar institutions, are connected to broadband networks. Local communities are keen for such institutions to be brought online. Can the Commission say what funding such institutions might apply for under educational and research programmes connected with the information society?

The county of Tarnów is also very keen to introduce a free Internet network along the lines of the PSTI in local municipalities (Lisia Góra, Skrzyszów, Żabno, Wierzchosławice, Wojnicz and Pleśna). Would the Commission outline the procedures those municipalities would need to follow in order to apply for funding and EU-funded programmes with a view to setting up such a system?

Furthermore, the PSTI has received a large number of enquiries from pro-active municipalities in the Małopolska and Świętokrzyska regions in which the authorities are in the process of drawing up municipal IT projects but do not have large enough budgets or are obliged to cooperate with a number of neighbouring municipalities.

In the interests of the local communities in small municipalities (with, for example, 15 000 inhabitants) and the 'Internet obywatelski' (community Internet) project, can the Commission say what scope there is for funding or implementing micro-projects of this kind (involving, for example, a single municipality)?