OPINION

of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on Defining a New Digital Agenda for Europe: from i2010 to digital.eu (2009-/2225(INI))

Rapporteur: Róża Thun Und Hohenstein
SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to its resolution of 21 June 2007 on consumer confidence in the digital environment¹,

1. Notes that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) must be made available to all sectors of our society, while also recognising that ICT will be a key driver of productivity and economic competitiveness in the future and will be an important element in consolidating further an Online Single Market; considers that, in order to ensure its success, consumers and citizens must be at the core of the development of a Digital Agenda that must aim to make Europe a leading global player in the field of ICT;

2. Stresses the importance of the creative content industries to the Information Society as a fast-growing and dynamic sector contributing to growth and employment;

3. Calls on the Commission to publish an annual review of progress in the implementation of specific policy tools, such as broadband, eInclusion, eHealth, eLearning and eBusiness, in the individual Member States, showing how these tools have been innovatively modified to provide consumers with a service reflecting the state of the art in the ICT sector, and to work towards making as many government services as possible available to the consumer online, while also recognising the need to educate citizens across the EU in order fully to exploit the benefits of ICT;

4. Welcomes the position stated by Commissioner Kroes that the Digital Agenda is only legitimate if full access is guaranteed both for private individuals and for small businesses, and calls on the Commission to make specific proposals for combating the digital divide;

5. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with Member States, to expand its policy on promoting digital literacy so that all citizens are able to use online technologies in their daily lives with the objective of developing new social, economic and entrepreneurial opportunities;

6. Welcomes the rapid implementation of the legislation on roaming; underlines the further need for constant monitoring of EU mobile roaming prices, including those for data roaming, in order to ensure a properly functioning, consumer-oriented and competitive internal market;

7. Stresses that the Commission and Member States should continue to take action to improve digital security with the aim of informing citizens about ways of preventing digital hazards and boosting their confidence about the new technological resources;

8. Underlines the need to overcome barriers to cross-border e-commerce and boost consumer confidence through the development of an effective policy for a Digital Single Market for Europe by making online services in Europe (such as, amongst other online services, books, audiovisual and music content services) more competitive, accessible, transnational and transparent, in compliance with copyright rules, while providing the highest possible level of consumer protection and putting an end to geographical discrimination (e.g. based on a person's country of residence or where a credit card has been issued);

9. Stresses the need for initiatives in the Member States to improve e-skills among the general public; notes the importance of equipping EU citizens with digital skills in order to help them fully exploit the benefits of being online and participating in the digital society; emphasises the potential this will have for cross-border shopping and accessing digital services;

10. Recognises the importance of a European charter of users' rights that would clarify the rights and obligations of information society consumers; considers that this should include in particular users' rights relating to digital content and should guarantee basic interoperability performance (particularly among public administrations) and standards, especially regarding the protection of privacy and the rights of vulnerable users (such as improving the accessibility of internet pages for disabled persons); emphasises that a European charter of users' rights should also cover the intellectual property of authors, publishers and content providers; emphasises that a European charter of users' rights should also incorporate the current copyright framework and achieve a fair balance between rightsholders' rights and public access to content (in particular creative content) and knowledge; notes that sanctions, as one of the possible tools in the field of copyright, should be targeted at commercial exploiters before individual citizens, as a point of principle;

11. Underlines that a global approach is essential when addressing challenges such as data protection and piracy; encourages in this regard close cooperation between the EU and the Internet Governance Forum;

12. Underlines the importance of a strong digital agenda in connection with the completion of the internal market, both in removing administrative and regulatory barriers to cross-border trade and also in improving confidence and trust in online services; notes the fragmentation in the single market for digital services and products; therefore calls on the Commission to address this digital gap, including by increasing the effectiveness of cross-border enforcement and redress;

13. Notes that the legal framework under which Member States can subsidise a universal service is now completely out of date; calls on the Commission to produce its long awaited review of universal service without delay, so that new initiatives to stimulate broadband and mobile access at high data speed are not held back;

14. Notes that there are some ambiguities in the State aid rules that may affect Community-supported broadband services, particularly as regards the ability of public authorities to consolidate their own network requirements as the basis for new investment; asks the Commission to deal with these problems urgently;
15. Highlights the importance of guaranteeing disabled end-users access at a level equivalent to that available to other end-users, as urged by the European Parliament in its review of the Universal Service and Users' Rights Directive; asks the Commission to take the utmost account of disabled users' needs in the '2015.eu agenda';

16. Stresses the need fully to implement the new electronic communications regulatory framework in order to achieve competitive markets for electronic communications networks, products and services, a sound environment for investments in new technologies and an enhanced single market for the information society; points out that pro-competitive economic regulation can only be removed once fully competitive markets are achieved.
RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

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<th>Date adopted</th>
<th>23.2.2010</th>
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| Result of final vote | +: 32  
                           –: 1  
                           0: 4 |
| Substitute(s) present for the final vote | Cornelis De Jong, Frank Engel, Anna Hedh, Morten Løkkegaard, Antonyia Parvanova, Konstantinos Poupakis, Oreste Rossi, Kerstin Westphal |