Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1191 (1999)[1]

Information society and a digital world

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly draws attention to the growing importance of the information society and digital world that are being created by the rapidly developing information and communication technologies.

2. The establishment of a proper balance between the various components of the digital world is the main challenge to be met for the democratic development of the information society.

3. Given the complex relationships between the expanding digital world and the emerging information society, it is important to ensure improvement in the quality of the information and communication technologies, while pursuing the aim of increased well-being for citizens.

4. Consequently, the Assembly, recalling its Recommendation 1332 (1997) on the scientific and technical aspects of the new information and communication technologies, calls on member governments and the European Union to:

4.1. establish European education networks using the existing Web infrastructure and, where feasible, the method of virtual classes to educate people quickly on the most recent developments in the digital world;

4.2. make sure that access to such networks will be open to all, if necessary by the introduction of fiscal or other relevant measures;

4.3. assess, in close co-operation with industry, professional associations and cultural organisations, the feasibility of promoting, through appropriate measures, systems of networking between simple individual terminals and shared, reliable computers with a powerful processing capacity;

4.4. facilitate technological developments favourable to the expansion of electronic commerce;

4.5. support the development and the deployment of broad-band communication channels (including wire-less communication);

4.6. ensure the interoperability of digital libraries, in order to maintain diversity and unconstrained access to the cultural and scientific heritage of nations across borders, and across linguistic or cultural barriers;

4.7. improve continuously the legal and organisational framework of virtual enterprises and define procedures for managing and operating them, thus fostering the creation of new opportunities for economic growth and employment;

4.8. give support to interdisciplinary teams of specialists, working to improve intelligent data handling systems (recommended systems);

4.9. study the use of new information and communication technologies as part of the promotion of electronic democracy through improved direct contacts between voters and their elected representatives;

1. SeeDoc. 8400, report of the Committee on Science and Technology, rapporteur: Mr Cherribi. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 26 May 1999.

4.10. pass laws and make intensive studies on reforming law enforcement agencies, in order to check the inevitable flood of information technology crimes, while, at the same time, encouraging the use of the new information and communication technologies, and promote ethics and codes of good conduct;

4.11. support, in co-operation with industry, research on such issues as data security, digital signatures, "watermarking" of digital information to trace copyright violations and coding to protect against obscene and offensive materials;

4.12. encourage data retrieval and storage ("warehousing") to gather information present in the digital world, and needed for the identification of various complex multi-dimensional relationships (natural disasters, social transformations, etc.);

4.13. encourage research and development of strategies for preventing, locating, eliminating and/or tolerating possible faults occurring in various components of the digital world;

4.14. work out scenarios and procedures for coping with crises resulting from impending faults, of which the most imminent manifestation is the millennium bug;

4.15. review the status of preparations for the millennium bug, and in particular, consider individual responsibilities at various levels and create crisis units to handle emergencies should they appear;

4.16. support research and development in non-technical disciplines concerning the digital world and the information society such as new economics resulting from the changed nature of work, new paradigms of educational, ethical, sociological and philosophical issues resulting from the changing style of human life;

4.17. promote the establishment of standards for collaborative computing, with particular emphasis on those standards related to the end-user interface, administrative procedures, communication media and protocols.