



Doc. 12985

27 June 2012

The right to Internet access

Motion for a recommendation

tabled by Ms Jaana PELKONEN and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights ensures freedom of speech and information. In recent years the Internet has become an increasingly important tool for exercising these rights. Internet access facilitates the realisation of an individual's economic, social, civil and political rights. In other words, it plays a pivotal role in education by bringing information and scientific research into people's homes. Basic public services, such as banking, social services and health care have also gradually moved online.

As a result, Internet access has become a necessity and should be available to all regardless of age, place of residence and income. Introducing the right to Internet access as a fundamental right would help in guaranteeing basic services for residents in remote areas but also for disabled and elderly persons.

Being online promotes personal independence, supports the social ability to function and facilitates daily tasks. A well-functioning and diverse Europe-wide Internet network supports information sharing and mobile working possibilities. This promotes trade and offers opportunities to take part in working life and use services regardless of where one lives. Stronger action is needed at a regional, national and European level to ensure equal access for all.

Ensuring Internet access is not a question of broadband or wireless, it is about guaranteeing the legal right to equal public services as well as basic human rights. However, the legal context is currently unclear and the European Court of Human Rights has failed to take a clear stance on Internet access as a human right or under which Convention article it belongs. Nonetheless, Internet-related court cases are on the rise.

The Parliamentary Assembly should investigate the issue of Internet access as a human right and make a recommendation to the Committee of Ministers on how to ensure this right in member States.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group