

LIVING AND WORKING IN AN INFORMATION SOCIETY KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Austria, welcome to Salzburg one of the most beautiful places in Austria - besides Vienna! Yes, I am happy that you are here and thank you very much for the invitation to give you an impression of what has happened in Austria, what has happened in the European Union and what are the main points about living in the information society – and I call this living in an information society.

The use of information and communication technologies are allowing us to be at one and the same time both local and global. Local in the sense that people are rooted in their communities and in their identities, but then they act globally. They are located in our municipalities. We should think locally. We should be linked by our interests and environment, and then we should act globally. Austria fully supports the idea of a truly global information society in the context of the Information Society Congress. So that means a society where all persons - without any distinction - are empowered freely to create, receive, share and utilise quality information and knowledge for their social, cultural, economic and political development. We are already living and working in such an information society, as you already know.

If you look back in history, and I think that is necessary in order to understand why a lot of citizens have not realised what has happened in the last – let's say- ten years. There is no doubt that technology has always been a part of human life. There is a nice statement I found in a book: 'New technologies are changing our lives so quickly that we have no time to think'. That is not a quotation from Bill Gates; it was one from Lord Melville in 1860. It concerned the first letter transported by a British train.

So that means that we are always changing our lives by building new technologies but there were many hundreds of thousands of years in between if you are looking to paper, parchment and papyrus. Tools have elevated mankind above all animals and they have enabled us to create civilisations thousands of years ago. It is nearly 600 years since Gutenberg invented the technology which pressed individual sheets of paper into wooden blocks with text and illustrations carved in them. It is 150 years since telephones started to create the pre-conditions for humans to live in big cities and to work in high-rise buildings called skyscrapers. But up until now, people have had to pay for telecommunications on the basis of how much time they used and over what distance they made their call. It is only a few years ago that Austria was the first country in Europe starting with GPIS and later with UMPS on the mobile market. Today with a voice-over Internet telephone it is possible and, more importantly, it is affordable, for billions of people around the world to talk without any such economic constraint.

It is only around 80 years ago that radio - and later television - comes into our lives. In 1943, Thomas J Watson the Chief Executive Officer of IBM said: 'I think the world has only space for 5 computers, not more'. We know that there are a few more than 5 computers now all over the world.

In 1958 an Austrian professor, Professor Timnech, was building the first electronic machine, an electronic computer. The storage capacity was 2400 bits, around 50 words. Not much. In 1975 the first mass computer, the MITS ENIAC, came on the market and the storage capacity was 256 bytes. So we are talking from ICT in our modern times only a very short period. In 1990 Tim Berners-Lee started the World Wide Web. Without the World Wide Web we would have nothing today except the Internet technology. And in 1994 and 1997 the first Homepages started in Austria in a Government field, in the economic field. Then in 2000-2005 the European Commission started the first programme, which was called e-Europe, and is now changing in the programme by 2010, information space, innovation and investment in research and development, and inclusion. We will come to this programme a little bit later.

As the world is turning to the Internet, mankind is shaping an entirely new future. I came here today, with no notebook; I brought my presentation on my watch. This watch is something special - it has a double value - it tells me how much time I have in my keynote speech and this watch has also storage of 1 gigabyte included in my watch so it has a double worth. And I think that is necessary also for e-Government – we have to produce a high quality content with a double worth. With the Internet and new ICT's in general, mankind has conquered space and is set to eliminate time from human communication in information exchange. Today we are nearly all books and all information in the world are linked into one big global information space which continues to expand at exponential rates and where the amount of information doubles in less than 10 years. If you look in there on the Internet in Austria, in the last, let's say 5 years, nearly 60% of the Austrian population have an Internet access. So that is also a political power for communication and information.

The Internet and ICT are arguably the most powerful means ever invented by mankind to produce, preserve and communicate the fruits of human creativity including information, know-how, knowledge and works-of-art. ICT's are powerful tools: they enable us to build better communities and shape our cultures, producing and sharing work, education and leisure activities. But they have also the power to exclude. And I think that we should be aware that here in Austria, if you are looking to the plus-50 generation only 50% have access to the Internet, and if you are looking to the plus-60 generation only 30% have access to the Internet. In the emerging knowledge based economy and the global society what counts is not so much physical strength but mental power. The intellect – the product of human creativity. The Internet and communication technologies are meeting all aspects of social, economic and cultural life in modern societies. They are the scientifically developed technology means, for the generation, rapid processing, global transmission and nearly unlimited storage of information. The power lies in their continuously increasing speed and decreasing costs for manufacturing and access. ICT's enable us as humans to be more creative by setting us free from many constraints and all the technologies. They allow the creation of augmented and even virtual spaces in which we can dream of and shape a better world. Nature can be simulated and ideas visualised without the efforts

and expense of building something in the real space and if you are looking to these access networks we are talking about all these multiple devices they are coming together now. This is the market and technology conveyance we are talking about and this strength will be much more faster in the future. We will have access on multiple places with multiple services.

As I said the Internet can also exclude, if you are looking at the European map and also in comparison with the United States, Austria is aware of the existing digital gap between those who are connected and those who are excluded. We are of the opinion that emphasis should be given on cultural diversity and identity, on the creation of varied information content and digitalisation of the educational, scientific and cultural heritage. Messaging strategies fostering the creative use of inter active digital media for producing new, exciting and useful content and innovative content rich applications are important elements in avoiding the so called content gap. For this reason Austria has started for example, the world summit award on e-content in the area of the world summit information society congress which happened in Geneva 2003 and which will continue in Tunis in November 2005.

If you are looking also on the Internet users, the adult population in millions were using the Internet, in the present Internet technologies are the tools that determine whether societies can move to the next level of human civilisation, they enable us to participate in entirely new types of activities and to achieve previously unthinkable results. Access to information technology and to content networks is essential for reaping the benefits from today's technologies. That is why it should be universal, equitable and affordable. The human mind can be set free from menial labour to reach its maximum potential only if it has access to Internet, IT and to content networks.

ICT has triggered the digital revolution dissolving the boundaries of material media and setting free human inspirations from most restrictions and content and the ability to record information and to share it through space and time has revolutionised its reproduction and distribution, this is a challenge but then may be also a threat for some people round the world. What has really changed and what we have seen, let's say yesterday, I have a little film with me, which shows what happened yesterday and what can happen today and what can happen tomorrow.

FILM

So let's see what happens in the future

FILM

The interesting thing about this film is it is six years old and some of us are already using this technology but what we are missing is high quality content that makes it possible that this technology we can use every day and find this information we need on the place we are and for this reason the information society, the European Commission are starting this I- 2010 Programme which will start next year with the beginning of the Austrian presidency of the European Union and this I-2010 Programme has three Is.

The first is *Information Space* so delivering services anywhere, anytime over high-speed seamless networks. Promoting the availability of content and increasing the security of networks.

The second one is *Innovation, Investment and Research*, identifying emerging trends, promoting research in a development and deployment of ICT's through partnerships and encouraging wider adoption of ICT and development of e-skills.

And the third one is *Inclusion*, better public services and a better quality of life widening ICT accessibility and digital literacy, reinforcing trust and support of ICT use, improving the quality, efficiency and availability of public services including Pan-European dimension, Pan-European services and improving the quality of life to ICT.

This is the programme of the European Commission for the next five years.

The key technology to stimulate growth which is important in Europe to fulfil the targets is ICT and it is now widely acknowledged that e-Government is the key tool for public sector reform power to better government and this was the reason why Austria started the initiative for e-Government for digital Austria and the first thing we said, okay, what can Government learn from the experience of the business community in terms of implementing a successful e-strategy. Governments can learn that the business community, that e-Government has to be a top management decision so that is very important, a political decision, which has to be a strong political leadership and commitment, a structured interaction between national, regional and local governments as well as community institution and economy. A long term vision of the public sector's contribution to the knowledge society as well as improving the productivity of public administration and this was the reason why in Austria all municipalities, provinces, district administration, the federal economic chamber, social security, insurance companies, federal ICT ports and local ICT ports and ministries are working together in one digital Austria co-operation port for information, co-ordination, co-operation assemble and action of an Austrian road map. And the head of this digital Austrian platform where the Austrian Chancellor himself is heading the strategy, making policy decisions and monitoring this process and this fulfils the idea of Austria, that the Government place an important role for various reasons.

At the one hand the deployment of ICT within public administrations and at the other hand as a potential stimulator of e-commerce making digital signatures and high security standards a common understanding. Politically across border e-Government contributes to the strengthening of the internal market and the confidence of citizens also in the European Union, also in a nation like Austria.

What we had already also done in 1997 was to build a service platform for offering information communication and transactions. This virtual guide on Austrian authorities are organised in life situations, they are strictly focused on the citizen needs the services across all levels of government, with a broad corporation through all ministries and provinces and district administration and municipalities. More than 200 live situations and over 1000 official procedures for citizens and entrepreneurs are within this platform. The integration of electronic signatures and e-payments are

interfaced to the Government back office, especially areas for disabled people, for people with special needs, help for foreign citizens in other languages for example English, Czech, Hungarian, Slovakian and Slovenian – important countries for Austria. This is an interactive dictionary for governmental terms and high service quality for individual requests. This portable source was the winner of the e-Europe award of European Commission in 2003 for the best platform in e-Government.

Austria has also said that we need the current legal framework for electronic services we have to complete this by our own law by our own e-Government law. It is now into force since 1 March, and it is designed especially for the electronic communication between citizens and the business world and public administrations. So this law is important for everybody. But what we understand by electronic citizen card function? What do we understand for electronic identification? What is electronic document? How we can exchange to see electronic documents? How can we make it possible to have electronic delivery of official notices of the Government?

We have a lot of best practices in Austria, and I think there are many speakers in the next days which explain a lot about Austria, and especially Mr Hollosi, a colleague of mine and the ICT strategy unit of the federal chancellery. Austria has best practices for example in the electronic file system so in e-Government project that technology is not the problem, instead of organisation or legal aspects, this electronic file system makes it possible that by the end of 2004 all Austrian ministries are now paperless.

So businesses are achieving huge cost savings by e-enabling their operations. Therefore we were implementing only one electronic file system for all ministries. So designed to enable internal Government communications to be carried out electronically. This helps us for much more simple working process. The electronic file almost replaces paper documents. The electronic file will despatch and things will be invoiced, it would reduce the time for transport, research and storage by about 15% in only in the janitor office. Additionally, citizens requests will be handled faster, and official documents can be delivered by electronic means. All the best practice example is to central register of residents in Austria. It started in operation in March 2002 and from this date onwards all communities of Austria have been recording their residents data of persons living in Austria in one central electronic register of residence. So it is stored centrally but is administered and updated de-centrally. This makes it possible by one mouse click including contact addresses in cases of prisoner and homeless people. This makes it not the transparency of the citizen, this makes the transparency of the Government: what happened with my data, what happened with my enquiries? And this makes it possible that we have all the electronic delivery. The central register of residents is a basis for many tasks of the public administration, electronic registers, inter-Government equalisation for poll census and last, but not least electronic citizen cards. Since the beginning of 1998 we have also tax on line service, makes it possible that auditors of various employers and lawyers and also today individuals and enterprises have access to their tax account, so it means corporate tax, value added tax, declaration income tax can be filled electronically. The simplification and speeding up of processes between the citizen and the public administration but also the internal process of public administration and business sectors are the core tasks of e-Government. In many fields electronic tendering, electronic voting, very good examples of e-Learning portal in the back office, student services, public libraries. Every official procedure can happen in

Austria in a full way electronically. Wherever you are, whenever you want, so that means you can fill out an electronic form, you have to identify and identification via your electronic citizen card, like a passport you are using in a normal office and then in the case of delivery and it contains also fundamental elements for safe electronic transactions and it is possible that you can pay by electronic payment systems like electronic cash cards, like electronic banking credit cards and then it comes in the same electronic back office and at the end it is possible to have an electronic delivery. The electronic delivery substantial elements of the modern service automated administration for citizens: it means time saving and increase of comfort; fetching registered letters from post offices can be completely omitted. Beyond that the proof of delivery guarantees both sides: receivers and senders, that the delivery actually took place. The delivery itself is conducted by an electronic delivery server which makes document of public administrations available for the registers receptions and informs them electronically of new incoming documents, for example, by SMS or mobile phones. Also the business world can use this delivery service for their own now in Austria. Also the electronic law system happens in Austria since the end of last year so that means also in the process of the law we need no paper anymore. The draft of the bill prepared by ministry happened electronically, the internal consultation happened electronically, the decision of the council of ministers, the Government bill, the process of parliament and the decisions of the national council all these happen electronically. Only the signing and the counter signing by the president, chancellor, minister happens now on paper, the next step is also electronically and then it is a server based electronic signature and the official publication is only entered in an electronic way. So the official document is not on paper any more: it is the electronic version and this electronic version can be presented to the public, presented to the citizens at the same moment as it is signed by the president and the chancellor and everyone in Austria can have access to the whole law system, to every law in Austria.

What do we need to fulfil this digital gap to include all the people? A nationwide Government must be built on standardised paces so we have an electronic citizen cards faction for mobile phones and bank cards is only a function. It is available in Austria on all bankcards and 6.5 million bankcards and 8 million health cards, it is available on student cards, on school cards and on membership cards. We have an e-Payment standard which is the same for electronic business and for e-Government and we have also wireless line and multi-media telephones stations which you can see here for free so everybody can use this station and public wireless line for free if they want to have information from the Government, if they want to do e-Government.

Little bit to the Austrian statistics you see that more than 70% are using e-Government information. Each enterprise has already completed official procedures electronically, but we have also something to do by the citizens - only 50% are using e-Government information and only 30% have already completed officially procedures electronically. What does this mean in comparison with the European Union? The European Commission are making a web base survey on electronic public services every year and this time is the first time that 28 European countries are matched together and to see that Sweden together with Austria are leading the way with a percentage of online sophistications, but you see also that new member state countries of the European Union like Estonia, Slovenia have already done a lot to fulfil the list of electronic European targets in the field of e-Government. You see here Finland, Norway, Denmark, United Kingdom are under the top, but if you are

looking on the public services which are fully available on line also Sweden and Austria are leading the way. We are the only two countries with more than 70% of electronic Government information which are truly available online and again, Estonia and Slovenia are already above the European union average and they are big countries which are still behind so we have to do a lot in the next years, in the field of, let's say, a technical improbability.

How can we exchange electronic signatures, how can we exchange electronic documents, not only within Europe, also in the whole world? That's the reason why Austria has a long term vision for the public sectors contribution we will have our president in next year of the European presidency and one of our main topics will be technical improbability and also a high level of quality content. We have started with some countries also a project in pan-European services and cross border activities so corporation might start for Austria's technical level, I think that's a very important first step in identification of even distribution of trust and confidence. The first important step but then we have two important next steps to jump, let's say much more complicated like organisation improbability and also symmetrical improbability.

Within the European union, we are not only 25 member states, we have more than 20 languages; we have more than 300, let's say regions, and two hundred thousand principalities. So e-Government is a journey - it's not a destination and what happens in this journey and I will present you at the end, an example from the city of Salzburg. It's a combination of an interactive map, a city map where you can find different places, for example, here at kindergarten with opening times, how many children are in a group and you have the possibility to interact. You can step directly to the next point in an electronic notice, you can put in the names of your children, and some data is filled automatically and in the next step. So this is the combination of electronic file systems within the Government, together with geographic information systems local and central registers, together with electronic forms together with citizen maps. So this will be the future we will be working on in Austria and to have this also on virtual different places like PDAs, mobile phones or computers or public multimedia stations. At the end I will show you what is also Austrian and that is the future home. It was built in Vienna in the last couple of months and it shows also the citizens what can be possible in the future and which things we have to prepare. So, for example, for broadband: what can we do with broadband? We can enter this future home if you have registered by your face and this face registration system is now also used in the Austrian Parliament. All Parliamentarians have a new membership card – this face registration. There is a voice system, IP telephony, voice-over IP where it can leave messages and also get new information, actual information from the news. The refrigerator is still in the middle of the home, an important place, but this electronic system tells you also if the refrigerator is still open and that you have to close the door. We have the possibilities to present directly from big screens into the web, and to communicate with other people in this future home. Your video telephony, your video messages systems and so on.

We can digitalise notices and you have interactive tables, for example, they can play, they can surf, you can drive through the home through a central system. This is the network and this is, for example, an interactive table so the computer will look like in the future is not we have seen this computer today, it is integrated, for example, in tables where can surf through the worldwide web or you can learn or you

can communicate with other people. Also interactive television started in Austria a couple of months ago so it is possible to have all the e-Government information on a digital television. And you can have all the access to these future homes via your mobile devices, or by a computer. There is also a new platform for children, a new learning platform for children and this was presented by Telecom Austria a couple of months ago, maybe this is the future; we don't know.

I wish you a very interesting conference. Thank you.