

**ICA 39th Conference
ICA Round Table**

WELCOME ADDRESS

DR RUDOLPH ABFLUER, AUSTRIA

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, with our Minister of Education Science and Culture, Ms Elisabeth Gehrler regrets that she cannot be with us in person today but she has asked me to pass on a message to you.

I congratulate you for choosing Salzburg for this 39th ICA conference and I am very proud that one of the localschools will present its educational results and projects during this conference. This city, where tradition meets the future, seems to be a most appropriate venue for our annual conference. We trust that the creative environment of this place will contribute to the success of our conference, producing great ideas and findings, which can be used for the future both nationally and internationally.

The last ICA conference in Austria took place in Vienna in the year 1994. What has NOT changed since then in the field of e-Government! Internet developments have caused the greatest change in ICT and e-Government. Based on the protocol TCPIP a lot of useful services have been developed and established. For instance, World Wide Web, e-Mail, FTP, etc which spread extremely fast across the world and changed thoroughly the nature of information processing and the way in which people communicate and collaborate. The second driver was the improvement of the technical performance of computers, that rapidly increase in processing speed and in storage capacity of computers have created an appropriate platform for multimedia applications and for a relaunch of existing mainframe based e-Government applications. And the third driver was the improvements of computer software - operating systems as well as application software as they became more efficient, secure, stable and user-friendly. This enabled users to handle computers, Internet services and programmes more easily. And this is an important and essential precondition for a successful implementation of e-Government services.

We all know that we are moving forward step by step to the information - or, I would say, to the knowledge - society in the near future in our distinct e-Government services, Secondly strengthen user or target groups and target group related activities and support.

Concerning the first point: many government activities have already been computerised with the aim of providing more benefit for the citizens. But almost every activity still has its own features, characteristics and workflow. Now it is necessary to improve the compatibility between applications where user-friendliness and accessibility by standardising and linking applications, for instance by developing and implementing meta data; by unifying the structure of application design and the workflows by joining portals setting up a one stop shop for access, taking due account of people's special needs, etc., etc. A lot of things have to be done.

Concerning the second point - this means user-friendliness. It will be necessary to build awareness amongst citizens. That means users must be convinced of the practical and personal advantages of e-Government processes. It will be necessary to encourage acceptance of and motivation actually to use the offered electronic processes, for instance, by making learning programmes available; by setting up user-friendly help desks; by

demonstrating good practices by offering incentives for using e-Government services; by establishing a senior sign-on system, etc., etc.

And the third point is: it will be necessary to ensure a high level of security and of data protection, and take due account of the different user identities in the virtual space. That means implementation of temporary system access for users. Users must get confidence in electronic procedures and availability of electronic systems must be high.

In all cases our byword must be integration - integration of e-Governmental functions and organisations; integration of e-Governmental services; integration of costs for developing and maintaining e-Government services; and integration of users in the design processes of e-Government initiatives.

In this sense, I wish our conference Anticipating the Citizens' Needs in the 21st century a stimulating meeting, fruitful discussions and results which point the way for an efficient and effective progress in our journey to our knowledge society.

And last, but not least, enjoy your stay in Salzburg and return soon for another visit.

Thank you for your attention.