# GLOBALISATION AND e-EUROPE PROGRAMS

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**ABSTRACT:** *Globalisation is a fairly broad term that describes the phenomena of the 'local' turning into the 'global', or the coming together of different aspects of the world into a single and identifiable state. While the term globalisation may have at first been strictly applied to the international financial marketplace and its deregulation, what it means for many today has as much to do with cultural and political realities as economic ones. Globalisation involves economies, cultures and political movements in all of the different parts of the world. There is nothing new about different countries and cultures becoming integrated and working together, what is new though is the speed that it is now taking place. The Internet has also had a large effect on the acceleration of globalisation and can potentially act as a common cultural denominator. Broadcasting and the Internet are still economically and culturally dependent on other issues however and are not ubiquotous everywhere. From this point of view the e-Europe idea are the European vision of an information society these are the ways of implementing the same goal - with the use of computer networks and other multimedia.*

**KEY WORDS:** *globalisation, computer network, Internet, communication, e-Europe program*

## 1. THE INTERNET AND THE GLOBALISATION

Globalisation, the unavoidable process which the world entered, is affecting every one of us in different ways, sometimes right, other times not so right.

There are many different definitions of globalisation, but most acknowledge the greater movement of people, goods, capital and ideas due to increased economic integration which in turn is propelled by increased trade and investment. It is like moving towards living in a borderless world.

Globalization means growing permeability of all the boundaries such as time and space, national and state borders, borders of economy, branches and organizations and less tangible boundaries such as cultural standards and their assumptions [1].

Globalization is an octopus whose international tentacles touch practically all aspects of the state's activity. This expansion is seen mostly in political, economical,

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military and financial areas. The activity of a global company exceeds the state borders and is not attached to the country of origin.

There has always been a sharing of goods, services, knowledge and cultures between people and countries, but in recent years improved technologies and a reduction of barriers means the speed of exchange is much faster.

Global economy conditions and they concern: acceleration of technological changes, shorter life cycle of products, availability of production factors of similar quality and price in the world, progressive globalization of new industrial branches, etc.

On the other hand, global ideas cover globalization of: finances and own capitals; markets and strategies; technology, research and development, lifestyles and consumption models; governments and legal regulations; globalization as political unification of the world and globalization of awareness.

Conditions of the present globalization process create, of course, many old and new problems concerning, among others, social, economical, technical, technological, legal, organization, cultural, awareness and ecological areas. Polarization and differentiation of the world, e.g. into richer and poorer is growing, migrations, capital and culture flows are becoming more intensive. The control of the state over multinationals is usually limited. Supranational computerization and communication standards structure is being built. It creates both opportunities and threats form the point of view of states, nations, business groups and ordinary people. The question arises: how will the globalization process be conducted and who will benefit from it?

It is probably necessary to change business philosophy for the so-called sustainable development, put stress not only on economical values but also social and ecological in the whole world. A company should generate also social values (e.g. for the creation of new workplaces, demand and fulfilling people's needs) and ecological values for the protection of environment where the company also operates. It is really in its long-term need, not just egoistic maximizing its financial value [2].

The reality of globalisation is such that its implications are both impossible to ignore and equally impossible to comprehend. Governments are unable to forecast and deal with the realities of globalisation because in reality and by definition its force lies beyond the scope of any local government body. International corporations have the ability to expand more than the government of any one country and so are forcing the entire global political landscape to re-evaluate and redefine itself.

The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that communicate using a particular protocol. This is known as the Internet protocol and refers to the way that information is grouped together into packets and how these packets are addressed. The origins of Internet date back to 1960’s but he has a powerful development beyond 1991 when The World Wide Web became public.

The Internet is so big and all encompassing that it does require this fairly abstract and vague definition. In 2008 the Internet is accessed by almost 22% of the world population; however this number is highly skewed towards particular countries and particular socio-economic groups.

Countries like those in Western Europe, North America and Oceania have a much bigger percentage of their populations who are able to go online. In North

America 73.6% of the total population have access to the Internet, and this is by far the highest amount worldwide. The next biggest numbers are fairly far off with 59.5% for Oceania and 48.1% for Europe. With the Internet meaning so much in terms of networking and connectivity between industries, the lack of its relative availability in certain regions of the Earth could lead to problems with future global economic equality.

There are way more people in Asia than anywhere else on Earth, and so their total Internet presence is still the biggest at 39.5% of world usage. However this pales in relation to less populated areas when looked at in terms of relative population, as here the Asian usage only accounts for 15.3% of the total. The difference in these two figures gives us a worrying statistical insight into the global inequality of information access. It really is a staggering difference when the top 20 countries in terms of Internet availability account for over three quarters of total world usage, while the rest of the world lies at a little less that one quarter, or only 23.8%. [2]

Exactly what these differences in Internet availability across the world mean is a very interesting topic but not a very clear cut one. The Internet means different things to different people and is used in unique ways depending on a number of circumstances. The Internet has made new forms of social interaction possible while also having a large impact on the existing economic and political spheres. Especially in democratic nations the Internet has been used as a political tool that has a huge degree of influence and an enormous scope. Other governments like those of China, North Korea and Iran have restricted the free access to some parts of the Internet and have thus restricted its scope and therefore its influence.

The Internet is growing at a rapid rate all across the world, and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. The rate that it spreads into particular countries will have a big impact on the future of those nations both socially and economically. While it seems doubtful at times, hopefully the global digital divide does not get bigger but rather decreases and brings nations closer together in terms of both information availability and economic prosperity.

## 2. e-EUROPE - AN INFORMATION SOCIETY FOR ALL

For the development of the globalization and world information processes, new technologies and their constant implementation are needed. From this point of view in the new reality - e-Europe idea are worth considering. Although in general, European vision of an information society (more legal, state regulations, stressing also social values, cultural differences, etc.) differs from American vision (more commercial, technological information highways, market self-regulation), these are the ways of implementing the same goal - with the use of computer networks and other multimedia.

In connection with globalization processes, a possibility of creating new workplaces, for the economic development and being competitive with American economy, in December 1999 EU presented the program "*e-Europe - information society for everybody*". Its aim is to create the most competitive and dynamic market in Europe before 2001.

e-Europe was launched to ensure the EU fully benefits from the changes the Information Society is bringing. e-Europe's key objectives are to bringing every citizen, home and school, every business and administration, into the digital age and online. It plans to create a digitally literate Europe, supported by an entrepreneurial culture ready to finance and develop new ideas. e-Europe also wants to ensure the whole process is socially inclusive, builds consumer trust and contributes to social cohesion.

The first plan, *e-Europe 2002,* foreseen for 2 years was accepted at the meeting of the European Council in Lisbon, in March 2000, the second one, *e-Europe 2005* was accepted by the European Council in Seville in June 2002. Activities of *e-Europe* program are based on initiatives of EU member countries which generally aim at broadening access to the Internet, creating better and faster WWW sites, on-line services and software and developing Internet structure, remembering about net safety. These aims are to be achieved by mainly legal regulations (and not by self-controlled market - as it is assumed in the USA). These regulations should strengthen activities towards the development of the Internet in Europe, make EU firms more competitive and lower the costs - through direct UE financial support, coming form special funds [3].

The final shape of *e-Europe* initiatives was expressed in three thematic groups, developed into 11 detailed points: cheaper, quicker and safe Internet (cheaper and quicker access to the Internet, quick Internet for research and students, safe nets and smart cards), investing in people and abilities (European young people in the digital era, work in knowledge-based economy, general use of knowledge-based economy), stimulating use of the Internet (acceleration of electronic economy, government and authorities on-line, electronic access to public services, health service on-line, smart transport system).

To achieve the above objectives the e-Europe action plan has set out a set of key action lines:

*Broadband:* providing fast access to the internet at cheap prices, mainly through telephone lines (DSL) or cable but also using wireless technologies (3G mobile phones, WI-FI) and even satellite. Cheaper prices are to be guaranteed by a proper implementation of last batch of EU legislation;

*Security:* making sure electronic networks are free from hackers and viruses and safe enough to build consumer confidence in electronic payments. However, these security concerns have to be balanced with potential intrusion in to citizen's right to privacy;

*e-Inclusion:* making sure the information society is accessible to the largest number of citizens, overcoming geographical and social differences;

*e-Government:* bringing public administrations closer to citizens and businesses by providing modern online public services by 2005 - mainly through high-speed internet connections (broadband). *e-Government* plan was largely implemented till the end of 2002. Until 2005, the whole country administration system should be accessible on-line and the citizen will be able to contact the authorities on the Internet;

*e-Learning:* adapting the EU's education and training systems to the knowledge economy and digital culture. The plan assumes that until the end of 2005 all

UE schools, universities, museums, libraries and archives will be directly connected to the Internet. The plan also ensures on-line studies;

*e-Health**:*** providing user-friendly electronic health services and information for both patients and health professionals across Europe. The main issue under this action line is the implementation of an infrastructure to provide for medical care, disease prevention, and health education on-line. The plan assumes that until 2005 electronic health cards will be introduced. They will enable the transmission of all necessary data about the patient on the Internet. Until this time, all UE medical centers will have to be directly connected to the Internet. Creating on-line medical services on a large scale is also planned;

*e-Business**:*** stimulating the growth of e-commerce (buying and selling online) and the inherent re-organisation of business processes to digital technologies. e-Europe proposes to adopt e-commerce legislation and promote self-regulation, establish electronic marketplaces for public procurement and encourage SME's to "Go Digital". For the development of *e-business,* EU wants to create legal facilities for the companies using the Internet by removing those regulations which prevent *e-business* from developing. These solutions will make the Internet a safer and easier place for economic activity. Within the frames of *e-Europe* there is a tendency to lower the prices for telecommunication services.

The first two years of implementing *e-Europe* programme were quite successful. The number of households having the connection to the Internet increased from 18% in March 2000 to 38% in December 2001, the number of school to 80%. As a result of legal regulations and free competition process for telecommunication and Internet services dropped. More and more companies sells and buys through the Internet and works at home using a computer. The largest number of population (28%) use tele-working in Denmark.

European funds helped to create the largest European educational network GEANT which connects 27 national research and educational centres. At present, it is the fastest net in the world, because it enables to send up to 10 gigabytes per second. Further tasks implementing the assumptions of *e-Europe* are planned until 2005, especially as far as on-line portals are concerned, e.g. government, educational, health, economic and e-business with fast connection at low prices. Beyond the end of 2003 EU have their own cyber-police (Cyber Security Task Force) which take care of the safety of information flow in computer networks, protection against hackers and terrorists' attacks on the net.

In June 2005 The European Commission presented the program "*i2010 - A European information society for growth and employment*" - the new initiative for the years up to 2010. The *i2010* strategy is the EU policy framework for the information society and media. It promotes the positive contribution that information and communication technologies (ICT) can make to the economy, society and personal quality of life.

The *i2010* strategy has three aims:

- to create a Single European Information Space, which promotes an open and competitive internal market for information society and media services;

- to strengthen investment and innovation in ICT research;
- to support inclusion, better public services and quality of life through the use of ICT.

To achieve those aims there are various actions such as regulation, funding for research and pilot projects, promotion activities and partnerships with stakeholders.

The strategy and actions, presented in the *i2010 Communication* of 2005, are reviewed and updated through *i2010* Annual Reports. The annual report also analyses developments in the ICT sector and assesses the Member States' progress in implementing their ICT objectives.

Moreover, *i2010* has undergone a mid-term review to make sure that it remains up to date with the rapidly changing ICT environment. The updated strategy was presented in September 2009.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS

Globalization refers to increasing global connectivity, integration and interdependence in the economic, social, technological, cultural, political, and ecological spheres. Globalization is an umbrella term and is perhaps best understood as a unitary process inclusive of many sub-processes (such as enhanced economic interdependence, increased cultural influence, rapid advances of information technology, and novel governance and geopolitical challenges) that are increasingly binding people and the biosphere more tightly into one global system.

The Internet increase information flows between geographically remote locations with the advent of fiber optic communications and satellites. The *Web* is the most used component of the Internet.

In December 1999 the European Commission launched the *e-Europe* initiative to bring the benefits of the Information Society to all Europeans. This was followed in June 2000 by the *e-Europe 2002 Action Plan*, setting out a roadmap to achieve *e*-Europe's targets, in June 2002, by the *Action Plan for e-Europe 2005* as an important contribution to the EU's efforts towards a competitive, knowledge-based economy, and in June 2005 by "*i2010 - A European information society for growth and employment*" a new strategy for the information society and media.

From 2005, Europe has:

- a modern *online public services* (e-government, e-learning and e-health services);
- a dynamic *e-business* environment relying on widespread availability of *broadband* internet access at competitive *prices*;
- a *secure* information infrastructure.

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