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**INFORMATION PAPER**

**ON THE  
GLOBAL CITIES DIALOGUE**

# THE GLOBAL CITIES DIALOGUE

The Global Cities Dialogue is a strategic initiative started by the Telecities network and the Stockholm Challenge Award and supported by the Information Society Activities Centre of the European Commission. It proposes an open framework for action for all cities interested in working together to realise the potential of an information society free from social exclusion and based on sustainable development.

It builds on the premise that cities have a key role to play in the information society. They are the geographical, political, socio-economic and cultural entities where millions live, work and directly exercise their rights as citizens and consumers. They are close to grassroots processes and directly face a number of information-society issues, changes and opportunities from local democracy to more cost-effective services.

Today, most cities of the world are only at the beginnings of the information-society learning process. The opportunity exists to enhance this process by sharing knowledge and experiences, while simultaneously becoming a relevant contributor and partner to both the private sector and broader government levels on matters of governance and experience of direct concern to cities.

The direct representation of Mayors in the Dialogue ensures the necessary credibility and political authority. Cities are challenged to play a true leading role by contributing concrete actions and committing themselves to advance the vision of the Dialogue into a fruitful initiative for the Information Society. Similar initiatives such as the Global Business Dialogue are invited to work together to exploit synergies for the benefit of citizens, communities, cities and the private sector locally and globally.

The Dialogue is an invitation to share, learn and work together for the benefit of a sustainable and socially inclusive information society worldwide. It is ultimately an invitation to shape the future.

## LAUNCHING OF THE GLOBAL CITIES DIALOGUE, HELSINKI, 23 NOVEMBER 1999

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1999, Mayors and senior representatives of cities from different parts of the world met in Helsinki to launch the Global Cities Dialogue (GCD) in the setting of the European Information Society Technologies Conference. The new European Commissioner for Enterprise & Information Society, Mr. Erkki Liikanen, delivered the opening speech.

Several concrete actions were introduced on the agenda of the Global Cities Dialogue, following the signature of the Helsinki Declaration. These are:

- ***The Stockholm Challenge Award***, to take place in the City of Stockholm on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June 2000, as follow on to the Global Bangemann Challenge;
- First thematic conference/single-award on Education and the Information Society, ***The Global Junior Challenge***, committed by the **City of Rome** and to take place in Rome in November 2000;

- *Conference on Electronic Democracy* to be held in Issy-Les-Moulineaux, France, on 16 March 2000
- International Conference on *People, Cities and the New Information Economy - Strategies for Employment Growth in Europe*, to be held in Helsinki on 7.-8. December 2000

## **THE 1<sup>ST</sup> WORLD-WIDE FORUM ON ELECTRONIC DEMOCRACY, ISSY-LES-MOULINEAUX**

The 1<sup>st</sup> World-wide Forum on Electronic Democracy took place in Issy-les-Moulineaux on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2000. It was organised in the context of the third edition of the "Internet Fiesta", and is the first one of the 4 specific initiatives planned under the general umbrella of the Global Cities Dialogue.

Under the high patronage of Mr Chirac, the forum was organised by Mr Santini, Mayor of Issy-les-Moulineaux and more than 40 interventions, from participants around the world, were directly broadcasted on Internet. Around 350 persons attended the event (further information on: [http://www.ternova.com/eve/fset\\_ele.htm](http://www.ternova.com/eve/fset_ele.htm))

The main items covered were:

- Information Society, Internet and Democracy,
- Information Society, a threat for Democracy?: New tool for politics, Direct and/or Representative Democracy, Cyber war, Terrorism.
- The new e-Democracy
- Towards a Global Democracy?: Can the Internet be Universal? Regulatory and legal requirements
- A new social compact for the Information Society?: Will the Information Society foster new forms of Democracy? What will be the consequence on Political Parties? Is the technological revolution a political revolution ?

Mr Verrue, Director General of the Directorate General Information Society, presented the new Commission Initiative e-Europe. After the closing session by Mr Santini, a demonstration of an "Interactive City Council" took place in the City Hall of Issy-les-Moulineaux.

On the day before, 15.03.2000, a group of Mayors and representatives of cities around the world met together in a new ceremony of signature of the Global Cities Dialogue Declaration. Under the impulse of Mr Santini, five new cities, from five different countries, signed the Declaration: Belo Horizonte, Brazil; Madison, USA; Metz, France; Newcastle, UK; and Santiago, Chile.

The signature ceremony was followed by a dinner in the City Hall, with the participation of other Global Cities Dialogue Mayors, in particular the Mayor of Stockholm, Mr Carl Cederschiöld and the Mayor of Bamako, Mr Ibrahima N'Diaye

## **CONFERENCE ON INTERNET IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION HRADEC KRALOVE**

On March 27 and 28, 2000, the Conference on Internet in Public Administration, ISSS 2000, was held in the city of Hradec Kralove in the Czech Republic. It was the third year of this important and unique event and this year it was attended by about 1300 people from 22 countries (Spain, Portugal, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, Germany, France, the Great Britain, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sweden, Finland, Italy, USA, Latvia and Lithuania etc.). There were about 100 participants from abroad the Czech Republic.

Within the Conference a Telecities Seminar was held, for the first time in a country from Central and Eastern Europe. The Seminar was organised by the Office for the State Information System and the Union of Towns and Communities of the Czech Republic in co-operation.

During the Conference a new ceremony of signature of the Helsinki Declaration "Mayors of the World for a Global Cities Dialogue" took place. Mayors or representatives from the following cities attached their signature on the declaration: Prague, Hradec Kralove, Ostrava, Olomouc, Pilsen, Martin, Metz, Riga, Vilnius, Swarzedz and Katowice

### **33 CITIES HAVE ALREADY JOINED THE GLOBALCITIES DIALOGUE DECLARATION**

The total number of cities which signed the Declaration is now 33: Antwerp, Bamako, Barcelona, Bari, Belo Horizonte, Bologna, Bremen, Buenos Aires, Cairo, Helsinki, Hradec Kralové, Issy-les-Moulineaux, Katowice, Köln, London-Lewisham, Madison, Martin, Metz, Newcastle, Olomouc, Ostrava, Phoenix, Plzen, Prague, Riga, Roma, Ronneby, Santiago de Chile, Seattle, Siena, Stockholm, Swarzedz, and Vilnius.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The next event of the Global Cities Dialogue is being organised by the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, with the main objective of consolidating the Steering Structure of the Dialogue. It will be followed by the Stockholm Challenge Award Ceremony, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June.

### **CONTACTS**

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# **Declaration of Helsinki**

## **Mayors of the World for a Global Cities Dialogue on the Information Society**

The cities signatories to this declaration believe that the development of the Information Society should be for the benefit of all their citizens, communities, and peoples of the world, regardless of race, social position, creed, gender or age. They commit themselves to work tirelessly to realise this promise of equal opportunities and access, and invite all major cities across the five continents to join in this worthy enterprise through the Global Cities Dialogue.

The signatory cities subscribe to the principles:

- that cities are essential to the process of building a fair Information Society because they are the geographical, political, socio-economic and cultural entities where millions live, work and directly exercise their rights as citizens and consumers;
- that the effective creation and implementation of Information Society Technologies in our diverse societies has the potential to improve:
  - the quality of life and work of individuals,
  - the employment opportunities
  - the quality and cost-effectiveness of processes and services
  - the practice of government and democracy at all levels
  - the prospects of the social economy and sustainable development
- that there is the need for conscious steps to improve social cohesion and help avoid the division between information-rich and information-poor citizens and communities both inside societies and between societies;
- that the convergence and gradual globalisation of information society technologies and services need new forms of governance and co-operation;
- that the early phases of development of the Information Society imply a learning process in which the sharing of experiences, results and lessons among cities will be most beneficial;
- that the Global Cities Dialogue constitutes a most valuable initiative to advance the Information Society across the globe, helping to reduce the

gap between information-rich and information-poor within and between cities;

- that the Global Cities Dialogue provides an innovative mechanism for an informed interaction between cities and the private sector at local and global levels.

On this basis the signatory cities commit themselves to work together:

- to ensure the application of Information Society Technologies in cities with a view to improving the quality of life and work of individuals, the quality and cost-effectiveness of processes and services, and the effective progress towards sustainable development;
- to nurture trust and confidence in the development of the Information Society, respecting the laws, traditions, languages and culture of cities and countries; while nurturing democratic participation, freedom of speech and privacy in the practice of electronic government;
- to tackle the low technological literacy, poor public access and shortage of skilled people that in many cities and countries represent a major obstacle to an equal-opportunity Information Society;
- to encourage the sharing of experiences, results and lessons among cities in order to facilitate a local and global process of information-society learning and development;
- to define and implement a programme of action that will help build the Global Cities Dialogue into an exciting and fruitful initiative for the Information Society in the future;
- to work together with similar initiatives such as the Global Business Dialogue to identify and exploit synergies for the benefit of citizens, communities, cities and the private sector locally and globally.