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Arab Republic of Egypt
Ministry of Communications and Information Technology

*Proposal of the Arab Mediterranean Countries' Common Position to the Work of the
Second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Information Society*

Investing in our Future
Building Together Our Information Society

June 2007

The Arab-Mediterranean Countries¹

Acting on the recommendations of the **first Arab-Mediterranean Ministerial meeting held in Cairo on the 9th of January 2007** concerning the preparatory process of the EUROMED Ministerial Conference on the Information Society,

Abiding by the general rules and guidelines of the **Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference 27th-28th of November 1995**, and the **Five Year Work Programme** designed to implement the objectives agreed by partners at the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Summit in accordance with the Barcelona Declaration of 1995,

Realising the importance of the **European Neighbourhood Policy** as an important tool which contributes to reinforcing and complementing the Barcelona Process through the implementation of the Association Agreements and the ENP Action Plans,

Reaffirming commitment to the recommendations and actions set forth in the **Final Declaration of the EUROMED Ministerial Conference on the Information Society** held in Dundalk on the 10th-11th of April 2005, and the **Work Programme of the EUROMED Information Society Forum** held in Brussels, on the 4th of April 2006,

Hereby agree to propose the document herein to enhance Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of communications and information technology. Our intention is to re-affirm the importance of promoting channels for ongoing dialogue, consultations, and activation of the EUROMED Senior Officials Forum on the Information Society. The document reflects the Arab-Mediterranean countries position towards the upcoming ministerial conference; it reflects our vision, and suggested initiatives which are based on partnership models with a focus on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) using cost-sharing mechanisms.

¹ Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia.

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I. Executive Summary

1. The purpose of this paper is to propose a framework for discussion of Arab Mediterranean Countries' Common Position to the Work of the Second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Information Society. The Arab Mediterranean countries seek to create an environment that will facilitate the growth of an effective Euro-Mediterranean Information Society based on strategic win-win partnerships between the EU and Mediterranean countries, with an emphasis on policy and regulatory enabling issues.

2. With the realisation of the Euro-Mediterranean Information Society, channels for sharing content (such as entertainment, and learning) would be developed and thus better connect the peoples of the Euro-Mediterranean region. Hence, building more bridges of cooperation that would strengthen the political, economic, social, and cultural bonds.

3. The Arab Mediterranean countries' ICT sector allows innovative forms of cooperation based on the fast pace of development of the sector in the region. The ICT private sector in most of the Arab Mediterranean countries has robust activities that make it more connected globally. The ICT sector structure and legislations in the Arab Mediterranean countries and the EU states are very close. The two regions share common concerns and issues related to the growth of the Information society on the international level. These facts allow the close collaboration of the EUROMED region towards the development of an Information Society that fulfils the needs of the EU and Mediterranean Countries.

4. Regional cooperation has steadily increased during the past years since the Barcelona Declaration and now covers a wide variety of sectors and domains. In May 2005, the Dundalk Ministerial Conference on the Information Society adopted a series of recommendations that seek to promote sector reform and the development of a Euro-Mediterranean Information Society. The ministers agreed to create a Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on the development of the Information Society, addressing issues such as electronic communications regulation, regulatory harmonisation, the promotion of broadband infrastructure and online services, and the adoption of benchmarking and best practices. In April 2006, the EUROMED Senior Officials Forum on the Information Society adopted a work programme focusing on opening electronic communications markets, increasing cooperation between regulatory authorities, and strengthening Mediterranean objectives of the European Commission's i2010 framework as the reference point for these e-strategies.

5. To develop this regionally-integrated Information Society, Arab Mediterranean countries will draw on EU best practices in ICT-related scientific research and innovation, e-learning, ICT business models, and ICT SMEs. The Euro-Mediterranean countries will implement collaborative projects based on EUROMED harmonised policies in the fields of e-learning, e-government, multilingual e-content, and media convergence, using cost-sharing models and public-private partnerships, and complementing the needs of the EU in terms of Business Process and Knowledge Process Outsourcing, while facilitating entry to markets, defining guidelines to access, and provision of market incentives.

6. Arab Mediterranean countries have identified several priority areas for cooperation. They include the following:

A. Multilingual eContent

7. The general Arab Strategy for Communications and Information Technology 2007-2012 emphasises the importance of creating and developing Arabic digital content. There are existing efforts in enhancing electronic documentation of Arab heritage with all its different aspects including scientific and cultural heritage. To that end, the Arab countries will utilise their competitive edge embedded in the unity of the Arabic Language in the Arab world, and thus strengthen the Arabic eContent industry that enables it to compete globally. All efforts are done through partnership between the concerned and relevant stakeholders, eventually creating new opportunities for improving the revenues for investing in content.

On the other hand, the EC's i2010 affirms that support and complementary policies will be developed for the creation and circulation of European content and knowledge. This comes as part of the first priority of the i2010 which aims at the completion of a *Single European Information Space* to promote an open and competitive internal market for information society and media.

8. The objective of the multilingual eContent initiative is to improve access to and ensure a wider availability of high-quality digital content on regional and global networks. The initiative would support the increased availability, use and distribution of multilingual digital content from the Euro-Mediterranean regions. The initiative will provide a platform for the exchange of knowledge and cultural content and facilitate joint collaboration in different cultural and educational projects. The multilingual eContent initiative is an investment in the cultural dialogue between the peoples of the EU and Mediterranean regions.

B. Media Convergence

9. In order for the Arab Mediterranean countries to meet the challenges posed by the emerging digital economy, improvement and development is urgently needed to open the sector to competition and to create a coherent and transparent regulatory structure that will allow countries to take advantage of the possibilities of media convergence². The Arab Strategy Paper calls for exerting efforts to provide a developed infrastructure for information and communications networks and applications suitable for regional and national circumstances, that is cost effective and could make use of media convergence services. Convergence requires a responsive regulatory framework, business models and technology related harmonisation. Accordingly, harmonising multilingual e-content work together with Media Convergence and eLearning, will lead to the reciprocal benefits for ICT industries, on both sides of the Mediterranean.

² On a bilateral level, the regional "New Approaches to Telecommunications Policy" project is offering technical assistance on Media convergence to Egypt during the year 2007, to develop an action plan for the legislative, institutional and regulatory adaptation to Telecoms-Media convergence.

10. The main objective of the media convergence initiative is to develop the kind of supportive and efficient regulatory framework that will allow the Arab Mediterranean countries to become fully engaged players in the newly converged media marketplace and to foster the creation and circulation of quality content on the converged digital platform.

C. eLearning

11. The Arab Strategy Paper highlights the importance of capacity building through electronic learning and training, citizens should be able to acquire the necessary skills and talents to indulge in the information society. This process requires cooperation between the public and private sectors, as well as the civil societies. It is an ongoing process parallel to the increase in the Arab population growth, and the constant need for training new generations on the new technologies, and IT applications. The Arab countries are moving towards including it in the educational process at the pre-university stage, and to connect all schools with broadband internet connection.

eLearning as defined by the EU is the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration. The Regional Strategy Paper (RSP) 2007-2013 mentioned that the sectors most promising for a new phase are e-learning and e-culture. It should be noted that for e-learning and distance education sector the focus should be set on *the capacity of end users* (students, trainers or long term returning students) to fully benefit from the services developed. To that end, an expected outcome within the Information Society and Media Programme of the RSP is the Promotion of online services through advice and exchange of experience in the implementation of priority applications, such as e-learning.

12. The eLearning initiative aims to foster the investment in people through education and training. The intent of the eLearning initiative is to bring together and complement different educational and training elements as well as to help develop a digitally literate society. The eLearning initiative will act as a catalyst for harmonising the standardisation and interoperability issues of the two regions so content would be shared. The initiative will address issues that include the lack of adequate hardware and software in schools, universities, and public and private technical training centres as well as the shortage of qualified staff capable of using ICT in teaching. Goals include providing schools in the Euro-Mediterranean region with Internet connection, multimedia resources, and teachers with ICT skills by 2012 and encouraging the formation of a high speed network for linking research institutes, universities, scientific libraries and schools.

D. ICT R&D

13. Scientific and technological research is one of the main tools for Euro-Mediterranean regional integration and development. On a regional level the Arab countries have realised the importance of investing in scientific research, and industry development; and to this end, the Arab countries have set a research and innovation programme. Also, the EU Research and Technological Development Framework Programmes (FP), initiated specific activities to integrate scientific communities of the Mediterranean Partner Countries MPCs into the European Research Area ERA, to exploit

scientific results in order to generate innovation, and develop human resources and research capacities; this effort was also amplified under the current FP7.

14. The objective of the ICT R&D Initiative is to promote and facilitate the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Research Area focused on ICT research and development, in line with the ERA. The goals of this initiative include defining research priorities in the region, promoting networking between researchers and research centres in the EU and Mediterranean countries, increasing investment in ICT R&D, and defining e-business policies and other measures that will help stimulate private investment in ICT research and innovation. The initiative will encourage strategic ICT research in areas with recognised strengths; target research for bottlenecks; encourage the outsourcing of knowledge and business processes as needed; develop standards, business models, organisational skills, and investment models in R&D; and seek to reduce barriers between innovation and economic rewards.

E. eGovernment

15. There is strong consensus among the Arab-Mediterranean countries that the use of ICT to provide government services to citizens has the potential to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability. The objective of the eGovernment Initiative is to improve government services and transparency through e-government projects in a selected number of Arab-Mediterranean cities. The initiative will develop projects to deliver more cost-effective and transparent government services to both individual citizens and the business community, introduce and adopt best practices from the EU, benchmark systems to track improvements, train officials on eGovernment service provision and Information Society issues, and increase public awareness of eGovernment and the Information Society. The initiative will address many of the challenges facing government services provisions, including the need for common, user-friendly interfaces; identification and authentication systems; e-payment systems; new organisational practices and skills; and educating the public on the new rules and new services available to them. Moreover, the initiative will be in line with the Arab Regional Strategy's action in creating a regional portal for tenders and procurements to encourage commercial exchange and to create a common Arab Market, which is a model that enforces Government to Business relations G2B

F. Promoting ICT SMEs

16. At the region's 1st Ministerial Conference on the Information Society held in Dundalk 2005, ministers emphasised the need for liberalisation of electronic communications markets, a comprehensive regulatory framework, and the development of a favourable environment for the widespread use of ICT.

17. The objective of the promotion of ICT SMEs Initiative is to accelerate the process of liberalisation of ICT trade and services in order to establish a competitive Arab-Mediterranean market and to transfer EU best practices, expertise, and standards to the Arab Mediterranean countries. A key component of the project is its focus on the improvement of vital enabling sectors such as postal institutions and infrastructure, and the development of e-commerce and e-services for the Euro-Mediterranean peoples.

Conclusion

18. These initiatives will be developed and carried out through stakeholder partnerships, drawing on government agencies, public and private sector organisations as well as civil society organisations, to enhance coordination and collaboration and to reflect the needs of both the community and the marketplace. These partnerships will be based on cost-sharing mechanisms, including both cash and non-cash, to enhance commitment, sustainability, and the potential for true win-win alliances.

19. The close cooperation of Arab Mediterranean countries, combined with the experience and expertise of their European partners, is a recipe for success. These partnerships and alliances will create a truly integrated Euro-Mediterranean Information Society that will enable countries not only to meet their development goals and economic aspirations but will also help create a lake of prosperity and stability, from which all can benefit.

II. Theme

20. *“Building an Enabling Environment for the Euro-Mediterranean Information Society”*

21. The theme of the conference is the creation of an environment that will facilitate the growth of an effective Euro-Mediterranean Information Society based on strategic win-win partnerships between the EU and Mediterranean countries, with an emphasis on policy and regulatory enabling issues.

III. Arab Mediterranean Countries’ Position Statement

22. By 2010, the Euro-Mediterranean area is positioned to become a region of free trade and economic prosperity³. The ICT sector is a horizontal and enabler sector that cuts across sectors and contributes to the growth and development of different aspects of society. There is consensus among Arab Mediterranean countries of the importance of the development of a Euro-Mediterranean Information Society that can help integrate the EU and Mediterranean countries into the global information society and create an environment conducive to investment and private sector development in ICT-related industries. Geographic proximity between the two regions; a long history of close and successful cooperation in development, business, culture, and other projects; as well as the relative synergies available with regard to telecommunications policies and legislations provide a model platform for collaboration in the development of partnerships that can help create an information society with win-win alliances between the different players.

23. The Second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Egypt during the 1st half of 2008⁴ represents an ideal forum through which a number of initiatives and projects for the Euro-Mediterranean region can be devised and approved. The conference provides an opportunity for the following possible outcomes:

- a. Creating a platform and channel for collaboration between the EU and Mediterranean countries.
- b. Enabling the development of new partnerships to advance the goal of a Euro-Mediterranean Information Society.
- c. Identifying the capacities available in the South that could complement the needs of the markets in the North with regard to issues such as Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO).
- d. Demonstrating the current efforts and planned developments taking place in the South as well as providing insights to the EU strategies with regard to the Information Society.
- e. Identifying concrete initiatives that could support the further realisation of the Euro-Mediterranean Information Society, with an emphasis on eLearning; Media Convergence; Multilingual eContent; ICT R&D; eGovernment; and Promoting ICT SMEs.

³ Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise, p.1.

⁴ The conference will be held in Egypt based on her proposal to hold the meeting that was presented during the 8th Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Tampere, November 2006.

24. The second Euro-Mediterranean Information Society Conference will focus on the opening of telecommunication markets and exchange of experience in electronic learning and eGovernment, and the progress made on regulatory harmonisation and cooperation between regulatory authorities. The meeting is expected to take place over two days. The first day will be an experts meeting to discuss joint projects and initiatives and the formulation of detailed action plans⁵. Suggested joint projects will be based on the priority needs of Euro-Mediterranean countries. The second day will be on the ministerial level to discuss and approve experts' recommendations and final declaration.

IV. Background

25. The Mediterranean region is of strategic political and economic importance to the EU. The EU has long understood that cooperation in the field of the information society is essential in order to contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of an increasingly integrated Euro-Mediterranean region and the growth of intra-regional trade and research in IT-related industries.

26. In 1994, at the European Council in Corfu, the European Union confirmed the strategic character of a harmonious transition towards the information society. This was followed by the G7 summit in Brussels in February 1995, where the necessity for all countries, both developing countries and economies in transition, to participate in the information society was underlined. In November 1995, the Euro-Mediterranean Conference was held in Barcelona where the European Union and 12 Mediterranean countries adopted the Barcelona declaration for the new Euro-Mediterranean partnership creating a framework for political, economic, cultural and social ties between the different partners in the North and the South. The Barcelona declaration focused on the creation of an information and communication infrastructure to facilitate and intensify Euro-Mediterranean exchanges and access to the information society. In May 1996, a ministerial conference on the information society was organised in Rome. The objectives of the conference included identifying what is needed in terms of regulations, training, infrastructure, information and projects to help build the Information Society; illustrating the potential of new ICTs for education, training and research; as well as familiarising government and social agents with the challenges faced.

27. In May 2005, the Dundalk Ministerial Conference on the Information Society adopted a series of recommendations aimed at promoting sector reform and the development of a Euro-Mediterranean Information Society. EUROMED ministers agreed that ICT has an important role to play as an enabler for the development of the Mediterranean economies and that security, cultural identity, and linguistic diversity were essential issues to be addressed in relation to the Information Society. The ministers affirmed their belief that the benefits of the Information Society cannot be realised while a digital divide persists between those who have and those who do not have access to ICT and re-stated their commitment to increased cooperation. The ministers agreed to create a Euro-Mediterranean dialogue on the development of the Information Society, addressing issues such as electronic communications regulation, regulatory harmonisation, the

⁵ Regulatory issues will be addressed in regulators' meetings through appropriate channels such as NATP II.

promotion of broadband infrastructure and online services, and the adoption of benchmarking and best practices. In addition, the ministers agreed to:

- a. Exchange knowledge and experience on questions related to trust and confidence in ICT, particularly network and information security, combating cyber-crime, consumer protection, and privacy-related issues;
- b. Prioritise eGovernment as an area for cooperation and assistance;
- c. Encourage a EUROMED initiative on promoting ICT in education, in collaboration with the Global eSchools and Communications Initiative (GeSCI⁶);
- d. Develop a joint strategy, to allow the Mediterranean partners to fully benefit from the positive effects of the new information and communication technologies.⁷

28. The recommendations were taken up in April 2006 by the EUROMED Forum on the Information Society, which adopted a work programme focussing on opening up of electronic communications markets, cooperation between regulatory authorities, promotion of online services, the extension of the EUMEDCONNECT project, and boosting Mediterranean participation in the EU's Research Framework Programme. Participants adopted the three pillars of the European Commission's i2010 framework as the reference point for the Mediterranean e-strategies. These pillars are:

- a. To implement an appropriate framework for the emerging digital economy,
- b. To strengthen research in ICTs, and
- c. To promote inclusion, better services for citizens, and an improved quality of life.⁸

29. Since that time, member countries of the forum have worked to develop harmonised regulatory frameworks and e-strategies, exchange experiences and share expertise, strengthen capacities of regulatory authorities, and enhance cooperation in ICT research. The achievements to date are evidence of the advisability of continuing and expanding this cooperation:

- a. The EUMEDIS programme has connected European and Mediterranean research networks and has funded 21 regional pilot information society projects in five sectors. It is the largest project ever undertaken by the EC in the development of the global Information Society. Around 1,000 people have been directly involved in projects implementation, more than 10,000 have participated in events organised by the projects, and over 30,000 students use the EUMEDIS distance learning courses. The programme has demonstrated the potential of ICT to improve living conditions in terms of health care, education, culture, vocational training and employment.
- b. EUMEDCONNECT, one of the EUMEDIS projects, is the first regional research and education network in the Mediterranean region. Started in 2004, the network connects research networks in Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, and Tunisia.

⁶ For more information on the GESCI, visit: <http://www.gesci.org/>

⁷ Final Declaration. Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Information Society. Dundalk, 10/11 April 2005.

⁸ Work Programme of the EUROMED Information Society Forum, Brussels, 4 April 2006.

- c. The New Approaches to Telecommunications Policy (NATP) project established a EUROMED dialogue in this field. NATP-II, launched in 2005 and designed to run through 2008, has intensified cooperation in the field of regulatory reform and e-government.

30. Regional cooperation since the Barcelona Process has steadily increased and now covers a wide variety of sectors and domains. The importance of Arab Mediterranean countries' cooperation is vital for the development and realisation of the Euro-Mediterranean information society. Based on win-win partnerships and cooperation agreements among countries of the Arab and European Mediterranean regions, the prospects for the realisation of the information society are excellent.

V. Vision

31. To develop a Euro-Mediterranean Information Society through capitalising on emerging ICTs and the establishment of a vibrant high-tech industry that can support sustainable socioeconomic development.

VI. Strategy

32. In order to achieve this vision of a Euro-Mediterranean Information Society, the Arab Mediterranean countries will draw on EU best practices in ICT-related scientific research and innovation, e-learning, ICT business models, and ICT SMEs. The countries will implement joint projects based on EUROMED standardised policies in the fields of e-learning, e-government, multilingual e-content, and media convergence, using cost-sharing models and public-private partnerships, and complementing the needs of the EU in terms of Business Process Outsourcing and Knowledge Process Outsourcing, while facilitating entry to markets, defining guidelines to access, and provision of market incentives.

33. The Arab Mediterranean countries' strategy framework comprises a number of elements that includes – but is not limited to:

- a. The liberalisation of services that can help create a competitive Arab Mediterranean marketplace capable of integrating within the global economy.
- b. Promotion of partnerships between the private sector, the public sector and non-governmental organisations.
- c. Collaboration in the provision of ICT and media services to provide state-of-the-art services for the Euro-Mediterranean society.
- d. Leveraging this collaboration based on sound economic models to help create a well established ICT industry.
- e. Interaction with the global community to help transfer knowledge and technology, encourage investment and create job opportunities.
- f. Deployment of the various ICT tools that pave the way for multicultural understanding between the peoples of the EU and Mediterranean countries.

VII. Strategic Goals

34. The Arab Mediterranean countries will use these strategies to achieve a number of long-term goals, as follows:

- a. To enhance an enabling environment for market competitiveness that would represent a major building block in the formulation of an Information Society
 - To develop the ICT infrastructure
 - To improve the digital Arabic content
 - To upgrade and increase information and communication services
 - To establish security and confidence in deploying ICTs
- b. To realise universal access and improvement in the quality of the ICT services provided to the Arab Mediterranean citizens
 - To realise universal access to ICT
 - To diffuse electronic learning
 - To excel with electronic government services
 - To improve healthcare using ICT
 - To develop the electronic business and postal services
- c. To develop a vibrant and competitive ICT industry that creates jobs and provides export opportunities
 - To improve scientific research, innovation and development
 - To develop and support SMEs
 - To leverage human resource capacities to meet industry needs

VIII. Sectors Addressed

35. Based on the priority issues of the Arab Mediterranean countries, regional information society projects in a number of domains have been identified and include:

- A. Multilingual eContent
- B. Media Convergence
- C. Electronic Learning
- D. ICT R&D⁹
- E. eGovernment¹⁰
- F. ICT SMEs¹¹

IX. Partnership Model(s)

36. The collaboration among Euro-Mediterranean region should be based on partnership models with a focus on a public-private partnerships (PPP) modality using cost sharing mechanisms to secure their effectiveness and long term sustainability. Partnership models represent the basis for the development and implementation of the Information Society, capitalising on the resources and capacities of different stakeholders such as governments, civil society, private sector and international organisations across the Euro-Mediterranean region. PPP models will foster the creation of a coalition of the

⁹ ICT R&D component will be backed up by the Work Programme of the Senior Officials Forum (p.1 paragraph 2, and p.3)

¹⁰ eGovernment component will be backed up by the Work Programme of the Senior Officials Forum (p.2),

¹¹ ICT and SMEs component will be backed up by the Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise and the postal services component of DG market. For more information, go to http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/post/index_en.htm.

public and private sectors and individuals in the region with an objective of enhancing the Euro-Mediterranean Information Society. It is important to note that partnership models lead to more responsive project management, provide opportunities for participation by different players, and help in the management and sustainability of development activities as society becomes more complex. Public-private partnership (PPP) models range from the least sophisticated modes of private sector involvement to the most complex forms of PPP, with greater risk transfers from the public to the private party.

X. Model Initiatives¹²

A. Multilingual eContent Initiative

37. The multilingual eContent initiative aims at stimulating the development and use of multilingual digital content on the regional and global networks.

38. Producing, updating and translating multilingual quality content is resource intensive and time consuming. However, the benefits of having this kind of content for the Euro-Mediterranean region are enormous for both North and South. At present, there are considerable market inefficiencies because of the lack of cooperation between content producers, distributors and localisation industries and the absence of multilingual and multicultural strategies. Glocalization is a term used to describe the process of adapting products and/or services to the requirements of a specific community while catering for other cultural and social needs in different global regions and communities. In the case of content, this starts with linguistic adaptation (translation) and extends to cultural adaptation. This involves the glocalization of search and retrieval mechanisms and personalisation of interfaces and tools.

39. Today, there is still little awareness of the needs and nature of localisation. While there is an established tradition of translation, there is less experience with the process and requirements of digital content localisation and the maintenance problems of services in multiple languages. It is important to invest in digital content especially with a growing number of youth in the Arab countries of the Euro-Mediterranean community that are ICT-literate and are regular users of ICT services.

40. For many types of products and services, an effective multilingual and multicultural strategy can make the difference between global success and failure. In addition, a multilingual Internet can provide broader access to the Information Society for many citizens who might otherwise be excluded. For this to be realised there is a need to have a strategic plan to develop and deliver appropriately localised content. The plan has to have adequate resources and to be driven by a team who is knowledgeable about the methods and relevancy of localization with respect to different markets and industries. It is important that various stakeholders play an active role in the technicalities of content identification and development. Factoring in cultural and societal elements is an invaluable element in rendering the multilingual eContent initiative a success.

¹² A matrix of stakeholders of each initiative is attached as "Annex 1"

41. The objective of the multilingual eContent initiative is to improve access to and ensure a wider availability of high-quality digital content on regional and global networks. The initiative would support the increased availability, use and distribution of multilingual digital content from Euro-Mediterranean region. To ensure this objective is met, the initiative will tackle the technical aspects and business models of multilingual content. The projected implications on target groups of the community are that citizens of these communities will be more informed and the barrier between them will diminish because the language deterrent will be minimised. The initiative will provide a platform for the exchange of knowledge and cultural content and facilitate joint collaboration in different cultural and educational projects.

B. Media Convergence Initiative

42. The digital convergence of the information society and media services, networks, and devices is quickly becoming a reality, mandating dramatic changes in telecommunications, broadcasting, and other regulatory policies as well to help drive and manage this convergence of technologies and to take advantage of the investment opportunities presented in the new digital economy.

43. In order for the Arab Mediterranean countries to meet the challenges posed by the emerging digital economy, improvement and development is needed to open the sector to competition as well as fostering business models suiting the emerging Media Convergence era. Most Arab Mediterranean countries are working on meeting the challenge of creating coherent and transparent regulatory structures and a clear strategy for dealing with the opportunities posed by the emerging digital economy. The Arab Strategy Paper calls for exerting efforts to provide a developed infrastructure for information and communications networks and applications suitable for regional and national circumstances, that are cost effective and could make use of media convergence services.

Arab Med countries seek to identify new media channels and opportunities for the private sector in the field of convergence. This and a number of other regulatory initiatives are likely to provide a considerable impetus towards developing the kind of supportive environment that will allow the Arab Mediterranean countries to take advantage of the possibilities of media convergence. In this regards, multilateral initiatives are called for as a means to complement and strengthen the current bilateral efforts being made with regards to Media Convergence

In the broadcasting sector, regulatory control has lessened and private satellite and FM networks have been allowed to emerge. The opening up of the market increased competition and improved quality. The presence of satellite and subscription markets has attracted the interest of many organisations, local and international. However, there is still a need to highlight the importance of collaboration between the media and telecommunications sectors, while continuously improving media and telecommunications infrastructure.

44. Digital convergence calls for a consistent system of rules for the Information Society and for the media. In most markets in the region, the print media, terrestrial and satellite television, traditional and online trading, consumer credit, intellectual property rights, mobile phone networks, cable and broadband networks, WiFi and WiMax

networks, Internet service provision, and more are governed by a wide set of regulations maintained by different ministries and regulatory bodies. In the age of increasing convergence of these technologies as well as the services and content provided through them, there is a need for review and re-alignment of these regulatory structures and policies to reflect economic and technological realities and to develop a regulatory framework that will manage and facilitate the Arab Mediterranean countries participation in the new converged economy. The European electronic communications regulatory framework, implemented in 2003, is an example of best practice. Where it has been implemented well, it has increased competition, lowered prices, and encouraged investment. The Commission is continuing its review of these principles and modes of implementation in order to keep pace with technological and market developments and to avoid or eliminate bottlenecks delaying the provision of faster, more innovative and competitive services. This is a process that definitely provides an opportunity for knowledge sharing with Arab-Mediterranean countries.

45. The main objective of the media convergence initiative is to develop the kind of supportive and efficient regulatory framework that will allow the Arab Mediterranean countries to become fully engaged players in the newly converged media marketplace, and to foster the creation and circulation of quality content on the converged digital platform. This will entail the following actions:

- a. Review of the electronic communications regulatory frameworks
- b. Improve an efficient spectrum management strategy
- c. Define the legal framework for audiovisual services
- d. Promote the fast and efficient implementation of recommendations governing the Information Society and media services
- e. Support for the creation and circulation of quality content
- f. Identify and promote targeted actions on interoperability and digital rights management
- g. Develop joint projects to benefit from the EU's experience as a global leader in the definition and implementation of converged media regulatory frameworks.

C. Electronic Learning (eLearning) Initiative

46. The eLearning initiative aims to foster the investment in people through education and training. In a global society based on expanding knowledge, the society's welfare will depend on having the best possible education and access to lifelong learning. The future of the society's economic and social performance increasingly will be determined by the extent to which its citizens and its economic and social forces can use the potential of these new technologies and how efficiently they incorporate them into the economy and build up a knowledge-based society. The global connectivity of the Internet and the availability of innovative ICTs are factors that have contributed in catalysing the new Internet-based learning paradigm, offering great opportunities for organisations to educate and train their management, staff and students. Around the world, online learning, the use of digital networks to deliver and support learning opportunities, has emerged as a powerful and transformative means to meet these learning needs, as well as to extend and enrich traditional modes of instruction. Governments must respond by providing strategic leadership, resources, support, and the technological and regulatory

infrastructure that will enable public and private sector players to confront the challenges and capitalise on the opportunities arising from globalisation and the evolving knowledge-driven economy.

47. The objectives of the eLearning Initiative are the production and circulation of knowledge that can be rapidly generated and circulated as the market configuration changes. The eLearning Initiative has been developed to bring together and complement different educational and training elements as well as to help develop a digitally literate society. Every member in the Euro-Mediterranean region should be digitally literate and possessing the skills needed to have access to opportunities in a world in where digital functions are proliferating.

48. The eLearning Initiative will address issues such as the shortfall in hardware and software that affect schools, universities, and public and private technical training centres as well as the shortage of qualified staff, particularly teachers and trainers capable of using ICT in teaching. Moreover, there is a need to address issues such as the availability and quality of educational multimedia software, products and services, standards and interoperability to serve training and education needs.

49. The initiative seeks to achieve the following long-term goals:

- a. To provide schools in the Euro-Mediterranean region with Internet connection by 2012, and to ensure that by the same time students have a fast Internet connection and multimedia resources in the classroom.
- b. To encourage the continuation and extension of projects providing a high speed network for specific communications linking research institutes, universities, scientific libraries and schools¹³.
- c. To substantially increase on an annual basis investment per capita in human resource capacities with a focus on ICT skills.
- d. To ensure that a sufficient number of teachers using ICT and multimedia resources are trained.
- e. To define the basic ICT skills that lifelong learning must provide and enable the population at large to become digitally literate.

50. To achieve these goals, the initiative will take the following actions:

- a. Set up a general framework for discussion on innovation and collaborative projects in the field of education and training.
- b. Formulate a learning network of trainers and training institutions

¹³ The EUROMED Senior Officials Forum Work Programme called for the extension of the EUMEDCONNECT project. It is also stated in the RSP (p.40) that EUMEDCONNECT partners are very keen to see the network continue and to use it as research infrastructure for common IST projects of the EU Member States and the Mediterranean countries. Thus, there is a call for the support of the EUMEDCONNECT 2 initiative to ensure a longer term financial and organisational stability of research and education networking in the region, focussing on providing services and on applications by the user communities, including Euro-Mediterranean organisations (RSP, p. 42).

- c. Develop a roster of trainers with expertise in using ICT for education and training to train educators and instructors and to cater for present and future education and training requirements
- d. Develop an eLearning web presence to stimulate exchange of experiences and knowledge between education establishments, training institutions, as well as companies both private and public specialised in life long learning, education and training.

51. The eLearning initiative is designed to mobilise the education and training communities along with the economic, social and cultural players concerned, in order to enable the Arab Mediterranean countries to bridge the digital divide and accelerate the introduction of the knowledge-based society. eLearning will also help strengthen the partnership between the public and private sectors and between the players involved in education, training, culture, and those in the content industry. The eLearning initiative will be implemented and coordinated based on the best practices in the field, drawing heavily on both EU and member countries' expertise in successful implementation of similar projects. Moreover, closer links need to be established between the educational multimedia industry and the education and training systems. The goal is to develop and stimulate a market for contents and services, which addresses the needs of the education and cultural communities.

52. Through the EUMEDIS initiative, several projects focussing on eLearning have already been implemented, and their success is testament to the potential for the value that cooperation in this area can bring:

- a. The ODISEAME project created a network of 12 Euro-Mediterranean higher education institutions and a technological institute to transfer know-how and allow for effective distribution of content.
- b. The Avicenna project has increased eLearning in the region by establishing a network of 15 knowledge centres assisting 11 target universities to set up and run eLearning centres.
- c. Med Net'U created a Euro-Mediterranean network for open distance learning at university and Continuous Vocational Training level by harmonising educational activities and innovative teaching and learning practices.
- d. Medforist developed a network of ICT professors and industry partners. The professors shared learning resources and developed a common knowledge base, training students and executives on the design and implementation of ICT-based management applications.¹⁴

53. Investing in human capital is investing in the future of the society and it is important to identify the win-win partnerships that can realise an added-value to the community at both ends and can benefit both knowledge seekers and providers as well as other stakeholders in the educational sector. Information and communications technology will give an unprecedented boost to exchange and cooperation in the educational and cultural area between players and providers in the Euro-Mediterranean region. This presupposes transforming teaching and training centres into centres for

¹⁴ Work Programme of the EUROMED Information Society Forum, Brussels, Belgium, 4 April 2006.

acquiring knowledge that are versatile and accessible to everyone and of course equipping them and training their teachers with state-of-the-art information and communications technology tools, techniques and methodologies in delivering knowledge. This would consequently lead to multiplier effects as Training of Trainer (ToT) programmes would be improved and training institutions connected, in turn thousands on the local levels of the Euro-Mediterranean countries will benefit. Benchmarking of education and training policy actions is necessary to be able to evaluate the progress made in the attainment of the objectives set, the effectiveness of the actions taken and policies implemented, and the dissemination of best practices.

D. ICT R&D Initiative

54. ICTs make a critical contribution in countries throughout the world to growth, competitiveness, and employment. The ICT sector is a major contributor to the economy of a country, and the importance of this contribution is increasing daily. The skilful and effective application of ICTs is potentially one of the largest contributors to productivity, innovation, and growth throughout the economy.¹⁵ Global ICT sales are growing at 5% a year, with Europe accounting for one-third of those sales.¹⁶ This leadership role is facing strong challenges from countries investing heavily in ICT, like China. Yet Europe is relatively under-invested in ICT research and will need to increase its investment in R&D to meet the Barcelona target of 3% of GDP.¹⁷

55. On the Arab Mediterranean level, the Arab countries have set programmes promoting investment in ICT R&D, and innovation. Their priority areas in regards to ICT R&D include Arabic content, developing Arabic Research Engines and enhancing the electronic content medium. Research priorities also include visual content, media convergence, and mobile phones content services. The Arab strategy also highlights encouraging the creation of virtual research centres between the Arab countries.

56. Scientific and technological research should be viewed as one of the main tools for Euro-Mediterranean regional integration and development. There is a strong need to integrate and connect ICT researchers and research centres on the Euro-Mediterranean level. There have been calls for the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Research and Innovation Area as the main driving component of the opening of the European Research Area towards the Mediterranean region¹⁸. To that end, the EU, under the 6th Research and Technological Development Framework programme, initiated specific activities to integrate scientific communities of the Mediterranean Partner Countries into the European Research Area, exploit scientific results in order to generate innovation, and develop human resources and research capacities¹⁹; this effort was also amplified under the current FP7.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament – First Anniversary of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: A work programme to meet the challenges of the next five years (http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/euromed/barcelona_10/docs/10th_comm_en.pdf, p.35)

¹⁹ Ibid.

57. It is worth mentioning that the European Commission approved two projects under the 6th EU Framework Programme for Research & Technological Development with to the aim of bringing the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs) region closer to the European Framework Programme in the research field of Information Society Technologies. The two projects namely Mediterranean Information Society (MED-IST) as well as MAP-IT are important enablers for the MPC region.

58. Key task in the context of MED-IST is the establishment of national ICT strategic research agendas in order to set priorities for national and regional future MPC research in the field of ICT. These priorities will reflect the interests and actual needs both of the individual Mediterranean Partner countries and the region as a whole, and will be determined through an open consultation process with the research community in each country. Similarly, MAP-IT project intends to map the private sector competencies in the Mediterranean IST arena and raise awareness within the Mediterranean IT private sector community about co-operation within FP7.

59. Yet, despite the development of scientific and technological research cooperation over the last decade, the Arab Mediterranean countries still face obstacles that hinder them from keeping up the pace of research and development with European countries. These obstacles include:

- a. A lack of a clear strategy for ICT research and development in the region
- b. A lack of sustainable funding mechanisms and investment
- c. A Shortage of ICT researchers and research centres

60. The objective of the ICT R&D Initiative is to promote and facilitate through concrete actions the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Research Area, in line with the European Research Area.²⁰ To that end, the initiative has set the following strategic goals:

- a. Set and define the ICT research priorities in the EU and Mediterranean countries.
- b. Identify Arab Mediterranean ICT researchers and research centres and promote networking between these researchers and centres and their counterparts in the Euro-Mediterranean countries.
- c. Increase investment in, and define the financial instruments for, ICT research, innovation, and development.
- d. Define complementary measures to encourage private investment in ICT research and innovation.
- e. Propose e-business policies that will remove or reduce technological, organisational, and legal barriers to ICT innovation, with a focus on SMEs.
- f. Promote links between ICT research centres, universities, and ICT industry in order to make public research a relevant asset in the race for competitiveness²¹.

²⁰ The Second Forum of the High Representatives of the EUROMED Public Institutions as a tool for the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership”, held in Anatolia (Turkey), on 14-15 June 2002.

²¹ EUROMED Charter for Enterprise

61. To reach these goals, the initiative will develop bilateral and multilateral links between the main Euro-Mediterranean national research organisations and counterparts in Europe, new collaborations schemes and exchange programmes for young researchers, provide support and infrastructure for research, map excellence, provide support for private investment in research and intellectual property rights, benchmark research policies, and leverage the expertise and best practices of both European and Arab-Mediterranean partners. In addition, the initiative will encourage strategic ICT research in areas with recognised strengths, targeted research for bottlenecks suffered by Euro-Mediterranean countries, knowledge process outsourcing and business process outsourcing where appropriate and needed, and the development of standards, business models, organisational skills, and investment models in R&D.

62. In addition, the initiative will actively seek to reduce barriers between innovation and economic rewards and, wherever possible, build scale through public-private partnerships that mobilise the expertise, capabilities, and financial resources of industry and research around strategic priorities. Yet, it must be emphasised that the ICT R&D initiative rests on the protection and preservation of intellectual property rights. The WSIS Declaration of Principles spelt out that Intellectual Property protection is important to encourage innovation and creativity in the Information Society; similarly, the wide dissemination, diffusion, and sharing of knowledge is important to encourage innovation and creativity. Facilitating meaningful participation by all in intellectual property issues and knowledge sharing through full awareness and capacity building is a fundamental part of an inclusive Information Society²².

E. e-Government Initiative

63. As the use of ICT grows, so does its potential impact on society. The EU's i2010 document on the European Information Society lays out three goals: to make sure that ICT benefits all citizens, to improve public services and make them more cost effective and accessible, and to improve the quality of life of its citizens. Currently, over half of the EU population either does not benefit in full from ICT services or is effectively cut off from them. The problem is exponentially worse in Arab Mediterranean countries, with large populations of ICT-illiterate citizens, lagging ICT infrastructures, and outdated, paper-based government bureaucracies sagging under the demands of their citizenry.

64. The objective of the eGovernment Initiative is to improve government services and transparency through e-government projects in a selected number of Arab-Mediterranean cities. There is firm consensus among the Arab-Mediterranean countries that the use of ICT to provide government services to citizens has the potential to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accountability and would inevitably strengthen relations with citizens. A large number of ministers during the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Information Society (Dundalk 2005) noted that several Mediterranean countries have identified e-Government as a priority area for policy and

²² WSIS, Declaration of Principles-Building the Information Society: a global challenge in the new Millennium, paragraph 42, p. 6, last visited on 04/06/07, <http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html>

programmes to enhance efficiency and transparency of government operations²³. Aware of the potential of ICTs to overcome many of the constraints these countries face in the provision of efficient and user-friendly government services, Arab Mediterranean countries are calling for a Euro-Mediterranean initiative on eGovernment, where EU best practices and knowledge in this regard could be shared.

65. The initiative's goals are to:
 - a. Offer electronic government services for Arab-Mediterranean citizens.
 - b. Provide capacity building to officials involved in e-government projects.
 - c. Carry out training courses on e-government services and legal topics.
 - d. Enhance transparency of government operations.

66. To do this, the initiative will undertake steps to:
 - a. Develop demonstration projects to deliver more cost-effective and transparent government services to more end-users, including both individual citizens and the business community.
 - b. Introduce and adopt appropriate best practices from the EU.
 - c. Benchmark systems to track improvements in accessibility, efficiency, transparency, and utilisation.
 - d. Train officials on eGovernment services provisions and Information Society issues.
 - e. Increased public awareness of eGovernment and the Information Society.
 - f. Conduct a series of capacity building activities.

67. The initiative will also undertake steps to recommend policies to promote ICT-enabled public services that are transparent, accessible and cost-effective. Moreover, the initiative will address the many challenges, including the need for common, user-friendly interfaces; identification and authentication systems; e-payment systems; new organisational practices and skills; and educating the public on the new rules and new services available to them.

F. Promoting ICT SMEs Initiative

68. By 2010, the Euro-Mediterranean region is projected to become a vast area of free trade and prosperity, with strong prospects for entrepreneurs. This is an irreversible process, resulting from the global realities of increased trade and competition as well as the challenges and opportunities of the evolution of information and communication technologies.²⁴ The Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise lays out several of the common challenges: how to make the most of the opportunities presented by this vast economic area; how to remain competitive and create enough jobs; how to foster entrepreneurship and attract foreign investment in a sustainable way?²⁵ The Charter outlines the vision of an environment conducive to investment and private sector development as well as details common strategies and projects at both national and

²³ Final Declaration of the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Information Society, Dundalk, 10-11 April 2005; pt. 8, p.2.

²⁴ Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Enterprise.

²⁵ Ibid.

regional levels. The Charter also calls for the systematic exchange of experience, best practices, and knowledge amongst the Euro-Mediterranean countries.

69. Moreover, the Arab Strategy Paper lays emphasis on the positive relation between SMEs and the economic activity in the Arab world. The strategy suggests the main action lines that should be followed to enhance ICT SMEs, these include developing incubators, encouraging the private sector to support Venture Capital Funds, and setting the proper milieu to promote ICT Start Ups such as giving loans, or tax exemptions, and facilitate procedures related to exports.

70. In the final declaration of the 1st Ministerial Conference on the Information Society in Dundalk 2005, ministers emphasised the need for liberalisation of the electronic communications markets, for a comprehensive regulatory framework which takes into account the EU framework and for a favourable environment for the widespread use of ICT²⁶. Although there is agreement that the Charter's vision of a vast free trade area by 2010 is on track and many Arab-Mediterranean countries have started the liberalisation process of ICT trade and services, some countries still lack the necessary technical expertise and resources.

71. The objective of the "promoting ICT SMEs Initiative" is to accelerate the process of liberalisation of ICT trade and services in order to establish a competitive Arab Mediterranean market and transfer EU best practices, expertise, and standards to the Arab Mediterranean countries. The initiative will focus also on the improvement of vital enabling sectors such as the postal institutions and infrastructure of the Arab Mediterranean countries, the development of electronic commerce, and electronic services for the Arab Mediterranean peoples.

72. The initiative's long-term goals are to:
- a. Create a competitive information society market as part of the Euro-Mediterranean Information Society.
 - b. Develop the ICT industry with the aim of creating new employment opportunities.
 - c. Encourage investment between the Euro-Mediterranean countries in the ICT services sector, taking advantage of the geographical proximity. This should lead to the creation of new job opportunities and complement the mutual needs of the Euro-Mediterranean countries in areas like contact centres, ICT CoE, business process outsourcing, and knowledge process outsourcing.
 - d. Drive technology parks and incubators to become more services-oriented.
 - e. Enhance the use of ICT for SMEs.
 - f. Call for the promotion of ICT incubators.
 - g. Support the private sector to establish an SME Trust Fund.

²⁶ Final Declaration of the 1st Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on the Information Society, Dundalk, 10-11 April 2005; pt. 7, p.2.

73. To achieve these goals, the initiative will focus on the following areas for action:
- a. Define and coordinate with the relative entities responsible for enterprise policies and regulations:
 - To allow an easier access to finance and investment-friendly taxation, with particular attention to new ICT companies and those with high growth potential;
 - To simplify procedures for ICT SMEs working to ensure that all rules governing their business activities are transparent and evenly enforced;
 - To establish strong ICT business associations, increasing the representation of ICT SMEs in the policy and legislative process.
 - b. Create channels for enhancing Euro-Mediterranean networks and partnerships, reducing the isolation of ICT SMEs and develop means to pool their resources to facilitate the achievement of needed levels of investment.
 - c. Make available clear and targeted information, facilitating access by entrepreneurs to the information necessary for them to develop their ICT businesses.
 - d. Classify innovative Euro-Mediterranean ICT companies, helping to build a culture of innovation and supporting the development of knowledge-based economies.
 - e. Emphasise the importance of quality business support schemes and services, promoting EU best practices.
 - f. Work to identify opportunities and market complementarities to foster integration of Euro-Mediterranean ICT companies with the production systems of the world's strongest economies.

74. One of the key areas targeted for reform is the postal sector. Efficient and effective postal services provide critical infrastructural support for commercial, governmental, and social activities. In many Arab Mediterranean countries, they also provide financial services. Reform efforts will seek to reconcile the interests of national postal operators, current operators, possible new entrants, and users to rationalise rules on access to postal services, quality of service standards, and pricing levels. The goal of these efforts is to offer consumers with the best value for money while providing a stable environment for growth and investment in new products and services.

75. The Euro-Mediterranean postal²⁷ sector is a vital business partner for SMEs. Postal organisations could serve SMEs via giving them access to a wider regional market; hence support SMEs exchanges with other Euro-Mediterranean enterprises of the region. Postal services (e-commerce services, e-security, e-payments and money transfer, logistics and technological infrastructure, direct marketing and hybrid mail) could support Euro-Mediterranean enterprises through convergence of physical, electronic and financial dimensions of the postal network; posts should be able to develop a set of integrated and innovative solutions tailored to the needs of these SMEs to outsource certain processes and activities. The Euro-Mediterranean postal network must be viewed as a secured, interconnected, and trusted intermediary.

²⁷ The first EUROMED Postal Conference will be held in July 2007 in Marseille, France.

76. Through the EUMEDIS initiative, several projects focused on building the capacity for SMEs and ICT investment have already been successfully implemented and serve to demonstrate the potential of further work in this area:

- a. Med.pride has created a number of centres of excellence supporting enterprise creation and innovation in Malta, Cyprus, Morocco, Tunisia, the Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, and Egypt. The project supported SMEs by stimulating new business ideas and encouraging SMEs to adopt new technologies, providing them with tools for technological innovation.
- b. The ICT Solutions Med SMEs project promotes ICT solutions among SMEs in eight Mediterranean countries, helping SMEs improve their internal work procedures, manage their knowledge, and transfer innovations.
- c. E-Med Tex-Net provides support for the textile industry to help it meet global competition. The project created three integrated systems and made them available on the project's website.
- d. Mouvement helps artisanal and handicraft businesses to use ICT tools to strengthen their business management capacity, creating common management and quality practices for SMEs in Mediterranean and EU countries.
- e. SMITE developed a Mediterranean web information portal for SMEs in the food, textile, and hotel sectors, helping them improve competitiveness by adopting prevailing environmental practices and policies.²⁸

XI. Partners/Stakeholders

77. The partners and stakeholders envisioned in the formulation of the efforts leading to the realisation of the EUROMED Information society include government agencies, public and private sector organisations as well as civil society organisations. It is important to include all possible players and partners in an attempt to realise coordination and collaboration from the start to reflect the needs of the community and the marketplace from all perspectives.

XII. Cost-Sharing Models

78. The modality of operating all suggested initiatives will be based on cost-sharing mechanisms. This will reflect the fact that partners from different regions will pay the cost of their share in the project/ programme. This will realise additional commitment from all parties and will demonstrate partnerships and win-win alliances in their true sense and practice. It is important to note that cost sharing could also include the value of non-cash contributions provided by different parties. This could be in a variety of forms not limited to real property, equipment, supplies and other expendable property, and the value of goods and services directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to the project and/or programme.

²⁸ EUMEDIS Initiative. Last visited on 12/4/07, <http://www.eumedis.net/en/>.
EUROMED Charter for Enterprise, last visited on 04/04/07,
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/enterprise_policy/ind_coop_programmes/med/doc/f1949_en.pdf

XIII. Timeline²⁹

- **End of May 2007:** Arab-Mediterranean experts meeting
- **Early July 2007:** Approval by Arab-Mediterranean Ministers of document to be submitted to Senior Officials' Forum.
- **3rd Quarter 2007:** Arab Mediterranean experts meeting
- **3rd Quarter 2007:** EUROMED Senior Officials Forum
- **1st Quarter 2008:** EUROMED Conference and official adoption of document
- **April 2008:** Formation of a working group for each initiative
- **November 2008:** Develop an action plan for each initiative by working group
- **December 2008** Submission of proposal to be included in Regional Indicative Programme 2010- 2013
- **January 2009:** Implementation of action plan
- **2nd half of 2009:** Report back to ministers in next meeting

²⁹ Dates to be confirmed according to agreement with EU & Slovenian Presidency

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ANNEX 1: Stakeholders

Country	Multilingual eContent	Media Convergence	eLearning	ICT R&D	eGovernment	Promoting ICT SME's
Algeria	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>
Egypt	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Communications and Information Technology • Ministry of Culture • Center of Documentation of Natural and Cultural Heritage • Information Technology Industry Development Agency 	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Communications and Information Technology • National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority • Ministry of Information • Information Technology Industry Development Agency 	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Communications and Information Technology • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Higher Education and State for Scientific Research (National eLearning Center) • Information Technology Institute • National Telecommunication Institute • eLearning Competence Center • Information Technology Industry Development Agency 	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Communications and Information Technology • Technology Development Fund • Center of Documentation of Natural and Cultural Heritage • Information Technology Industry Development Agency • Software Engineering Competence Center • Nile University • Information Technology Institute • National Telecommunication Institute • Ministry of Higher Education & State for Scientific Research • Ministry of Trade & 	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Communications and Information Technology • Ministry of State for Administrative Development • National Post Authority • Ministry of Justice • Ministry of Health and Population • Egyptian General Survey Authority 	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Communication and Information Technology • Information Technology Industry Development Agency • National Post Organization • Social Fund for Development • Ministry of Trade & Industry • Egyptian Information Trade Point (EITP)

	<p>Civil Society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egyptian Publishers Union • E-Learning & Business 	<p>Civil Society:</p>	<p>Civil Society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eLearning & Business Applications Union • NGOs including Resala, and others 	<p>Industry</p> <p>Civil Society: Health and Population</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Cancer Institute 	<p>Civil Society:</p>	<p>Civil Society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chambers of Commerce • Federation of Egyptian
Country	Multimedia Content	Media Convergence	eLearning	ICT R&D	eGovernment	Promoting ICT SME's
Egypt						
	<p>Private Sector:</p> <p>Multimedia Content Creation</p>	<p>Private Sector:</p> <p>Media Convergence Companies</p>	<p>Private Sector:</p> <p>eLearning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Creation 	<p>Private Sector:</p> <p>ICT R&D</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informateks 	<p>Private Sector:</p> <p>eGovernment</p>	<p>Private Sector:</p> <p>Promoting ICT SME's</p>
Country						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and Conversion Companies • Applications and S/W Development Companies • Hosting companies & ISPs • Providers of Content Securing Tools • Providers of eCommerce and ePayment Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting companies & ISPs • Telecom Operators • Providers of eCommerce and ePayment Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and Conversion companies • Applications & S/W Development companies • British Council • Egyptian Foundation for Technological Education Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QTEL • IT Works • RDI • Valio • Linux Plus • Mentor Graphics • Alcatel • Ericsson • IBM • ECC Solutions • Microsoft Center for R&D • Banha for Electronics • Bahgat Group • Vodafone Egypt • Mobinil • Etisalat • Sakhr • Misr Optical • El Sewedy Cables 		

Jordan	<p><u>Public Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Information and Communications Technology • National Information Technology Centre • Ministry of Culture 	<p><u>Public Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Information and Communications Technology • Telecommunication Regulatory Commission • Audiovisual Media Commission 	<p><u>Public Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Information and Communications Technology • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research • Jordan Education Initiative 	<p><u>Public Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Information and Communications Technology • Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research • Royal Scientific Society • The Higher Council for Science & Technology • Yarmouk University • Princess Sumaya University • University of Jordan • Al Hassan Industrial Zone 	<p><u>Public Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Information and Communications Technology • National Information Technology Centre • National E-government Steering Committee 	<p><u>Public Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Information and Communications Technology • Ministry of Industry & Trade • Jordan Investment Board • Jordan Enterprise Development Cooperation • Amman Chamber of Industry
	<p><u>Private Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MNCs • Content Creation Development and Conversion Companies • Applications and S/W Development Companies • Hosting companies & ISPs • Providers of Content Securing Tools • Providers of eCommerce and ePayment Services 	<p><u>Private Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadcasting Companies • Hosting companies & ISPs • Telecom Operators • Providers of eCommerce and ePayment Services 	<p><u>Private Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MNCs • Content Creation Development and Conversion companies • Applications & S/W Development companies 	<p><u>Private Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Al Bahith • Philadelphia University 	<p><u>Private Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MNCs • Applications and S/W Development Companies • Providers of eCommerce and ePayment Services 	<p><u>Private Sector:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MNCs

Country	Multilingual eContent	Media Convergence	eLearning	ICT R&D	eGovernment	Promoting ICT SME's
Jordan	<u>Civil Society:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INT@J: Information technology Association • NGOs 	<u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Civil Society:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King Abdullah II Fund for development • CADER • NGOs 	<u>Civil Society:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • King Abdullah II Fund for development • INT@J: Information technology Association • Jordan Innovation Centers Network • iPARK Incubators • Jordan Innovation Center • NGOs 	<u>Civil Society:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs • Knowledge Stations 	<u>Civil Society:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGOs • INT@J: Information technology Association
Lebanon	<u>Public Sector:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Administrative Reform • Ministry of Telecommunications • National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority • Ministry of Information • Ministry of Industry • Ministry of Economy and Trade 	<u>Public Sector:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Administrative Reform • Ministry of Telecom. • Ministry of Finance • Ministry of Education • Ministry of Interior • Ministry of Justice • BDL 	<u>Public Sector:</u>
		<u>Private Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional 			<u>Private Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft 	

		Computer Association (PCA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ISPs/ASP • Broadcasting Companies • Mobile Operators 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco • Intel • Professional Associations (PCA, ICC, order of eng.) • Association of Private banks 	
Country	Multilingual eContent	Media Convergence	eLearning	ICT R&D	eGovernment	Promoting ICT SME's
Lebanon		<u>Civil Society:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several NGOs • Public and Private universities 			<u>Civil Society:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several NGOs • Public and Private universities 	
Morocco	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>
Palestine	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>
Syria	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Communications and Technology - Ministry of Culture - Ministry of Information - Ministry of Expatriates 	<u>Public Sector:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Syrian virtual University 	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of High Education - High Commission for Scientific Research 	<u>Public Sector:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Communications and Technology - Prime Minister Cabinet 	<u>Public Sector:</u>

	<u>Private Sector</u>	<u>Private Sector</u>	<u>Private Sector</u>	<u>Private Sector</u>	<u>Private Sector</u>	<u>Private Sector</u>
	<u>Civil Society:</u> - Syrian Computer Society - Syria Trust for Development (Fardous) (فردوس)					<u>Civil Society:</u> - Syrian computer Society - Syria Trust for Development (Rouwad) (رواد)، - Syrian European Business Center
Country	Multilingual eContent	Media Convergence	eLearning	ICT R&D	eGovernment	Promoting ICT SME's
Tunisia	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>	<u>Public Sector:</u> <u>Private Sector:</u> <u>Civil Society:</u>