



Malta-EU Steering & Action Committee

# Transport, Telecommunications and Energy



06.03.09

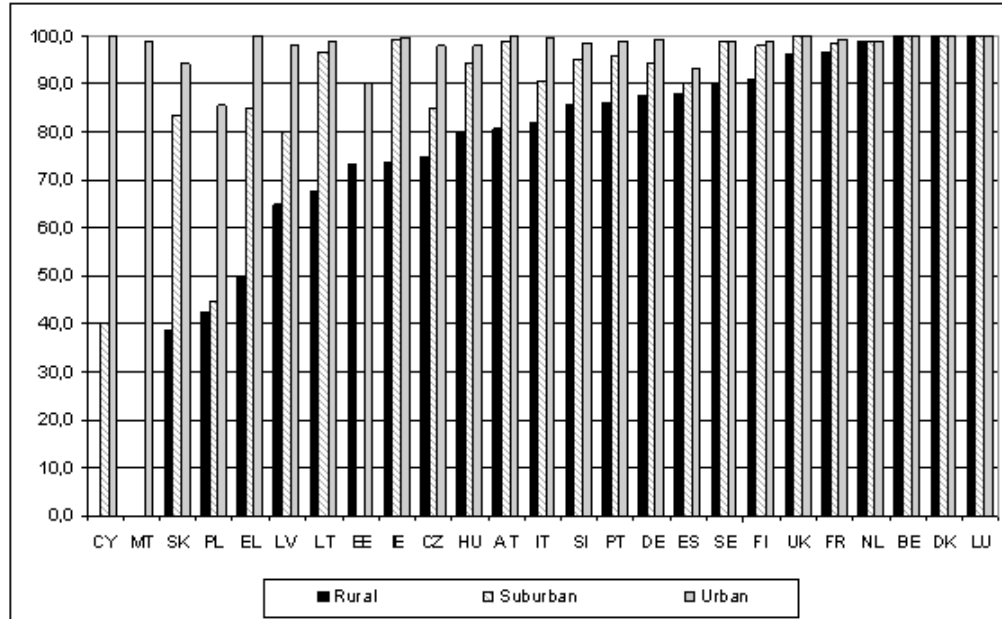
## [COM \(2009\) 103](#) - Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament - Better access for rural areas to modern ICT

While an average 93% of Europeans can enjoy access to a high speed online connection, the figure is only 70% in rural areas, and in some countries high speed broadband internet networks cover just 50% or less of the rural population. This communication outlines the benefits which better access of rural areas to modern Information and Communication Technologies like the internet can bring to businesses and individuals in rural areas, like farms and food producers, SME's, young people, women, elderly people and disadvantaged groups.



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% of total territory covered by fixed broadband, Dec 2007



Note: No data for rural areas in Malta and Cyprus

Source: Rural development statistical report 2008, European Commission

The Commission therefore calls on Member States, regions (including local authorities) to consider adapting their rural development programmes to place emphasis on information and communication technologies and on internet connectivity, especially within the mid-term review of their rural development plans due in 2010. It also proposes actions, as well as a budget and an evaluation process through the The Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) for rural development 2007-2013.



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As a complement to this Communication on better access for rural areas to modern information and communication technologies, the Commission is organising an [EU conference on broadband in Turin \(Italy\) on 2-3 April 2009](#). The event will bring together the Commission, national and regional authorities and other interested parties to discuss the increased EU investment in broadband under the EU recovery plan and the policies that will help achieve 100%

### A Note of Information from the Malta Standards Authority

Later on this month proposals on the eco design requirements for the appliances in caption are going to be submitted for a vote. The latest text of the proposals can be found at the links provided below. Kindly send any comments prior to the dates indicated to: [joseph.micallef@msa.org.mt](mailto:joseph.micallef@msa.org.mt)

- **Refrigerators for household use**, (including freezers and wine storage appliances). : [http://www.msa.org.mt/rad/ecodesign/EUP\\_discussed/commercial%20and%20household%20equipment/refrigerators/](http://www.msa.org.mt/rad/ecodesign/EUP_discussed/commercial%20and%20household%20equipment/refrigerators/)

Comments by 11 March

- **Televisions** (including those without an integral tuner): [http://www.msa.org.mt/rad/ecodesign/EUP\\_discussed/sound%20and%20vision/Television/](http://www.msa.org.mt/rad/ecodesign/EUP_discussed/sound%20and%20vision/Television/)

Comments by 13 March

- **Washing Machines and dishwashers for household use:** [http://www.msa.org.mt/rad/ecodesign/EUP\\_discussed/commercial%20and%20household%20equipment/washing%20machines/](http://www.msa.org.mt/rad/ecodesign/EUP_discussed/commercial%20and%20household%20equipment/washing%20machines/)

Comments by 27 March.

<http://www.msa.org.mt>

broadband coverage in rural areas.

### [COM \(2009\) 108](#)

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS  
ICT INFRASTRUCTURES FOR e-SCIENCE

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This communication calls on Member States and the scientific communities for a reinforced and coordinated effort to foster world-class ICT infrastructures to pave the way for the scientific discoveries of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. According to the communication, research of today cannot be imagined without the intensive use of sophisticated e-infrastructures. This cannot be achieved without coordination of efforts and reinforced commitment on the part of national and EU funding authorities. Five intertwined e-Infrastructure domains of the present are outlined, as well as Europe's response to the long-term challenges of e-science beyond 2020. The Commission's suggestions to lead the internet of the future are: member states are invited to reinforce the coordination of national and European policies in the area of research and education networks; and to support and use GÉANT (the world's largest multigigabit communication network dedicated to research and education.) as an experimental platform leading towards the Internet of the Future. In the meantime, the Commission will continue to provide steady support to GÉANT to reinforce its capacity and global perspective.

Additionally, the emerging National Grid Initiatives (NGIs) should eventually evolve towards a European Grid Initiative (EGI), and the communication outlines the ways on how this can be achieved. The Commission will also launch actions to define and support an ambitious European strategic agenda for supercomputing, ranging from components and systems to the required software and services.

### [COM \(2009\) 78](#)

**Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament concerning the common positions of the Council on the adoptions of the Commission's proposals to adjust the regulatory framework for e-communications.**

The Commission adopted its amended proposals incorporating many of the amendments voted by the European Parliament in its first reading on 24 September 2008. This communication sets out comments by the Commission on the Council's common position, and draws attention to the divergences that exist between its proposals, as amended and the Council's common positions.



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In this context, the Commission's wish is to reaffirm its position as set out in its amended proposals, which represent a substantial step towards a converged position of the three institutions.

To follow the documentation trail from the very beginning (COM (2007) 698), click [here](#).