# Report of SLOVAKIA
## On the Implementation of the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace

## 1. General Overview

Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace is an integral part of the govermental policy and strategy for the social development in Slovakia. Utilization of information and communication technologies (ICT) in economic and social processes has long tradition in Slovakia. In the last couple of years our effort has been concentrated on the improvement of all the aspects of ICT usage. In 2001, the Government of Slovakia adopted the basic document *the Policy of the Society Development in the Slovak Republic.* Part of the document was also eEurope+ initiative  and its elaboration of conditions of Slovak republic became a basis for *a Strategy of informatization of society in Slovakia.*

As the member state of European Union, Slovakia follows also the activities in EU in the context of the Report, particularly, the Lisbon Strategy of economic and structural reforms. In 2005, the Government of the Slovak Republic (SR) has adopted the document „*Strategy of Development an Information Society under conditions of SR and the Action Plan*", in which the process of developing an electronic public administration –eGovernment - is one of the key priority areas of information society development in Slovakia. Another important strategic document, which was adopted, is the „*Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until the year 2010.*" According to this strategic document, the development of information society is one of the best means of the transformation of Slovakia into a dynamic knowledge-based economy. Official program of the Slovak government for the development of the knowledge-based economy is called *Minerva,* with the following priorities:

- information society,
- investment to human resources and education
- innovation, science and research,
- business environment.
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In the line of the documents „*Strategy of Development an Information Society under conditions of SR and the Action Plan*" and „*Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until the year 2010* " there has been elaborated a *Roadmap for the Implementation of eGovernment Services in Slovakia.*

Development of an effective eGovernment is based on the following basic principles:

- Services for citizens,
- Effectiveness,
- Security,
- Transparency,
- Availability,
- Privacy,
- Multi-level cooperation,

- Interoperability,
- Application of „Open Standards",
- Technology and software neutrality.
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The basic strategic principles for the development of an effective eGovernment result partly from the generally recognized principles of eGovernment accepted by the EU Member States and partly from the Decision on the interoperable delivery of pan-European eGovernment services to public administrations, businesses and citizens (IDABC) adopted by the European Parliament, as well as the EU Council.

Realization of the above-mentioned documents covers also aspects of multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace. Therefore our report on the implementation of the recommendation concerning the promotion and use of multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace is based on measures adopted for the realization of the above-mentioned strategic documents.

## 2. Development of multilingual content and systems
Access to information, no matter how supported and prepared, is only feasible, once there is a corresponding information resource (IR). Therefore the government of Slovak Republic puts emphasis on IR too. We prepared a strategy where IR should serve to a large community with different background, different capacities including different languages. This strategy requires that qualified human resources are prepared to handle IR. The training of people responsible for IR consists of:

- professional competencies in respective areas,
- information competencies – information literacy,
- language competency.

The government of SR puts focus on the preparation, training of professionals who are in charge of IR preparation in different language mutations. Multilingual preparation is a part of our education system from the primary school up to the university level. In addition, there is an interest in multilingual preparation also outside the school education. From the preparation of multilingual IR point of view there are two main objectives.

- preparation of IR in the official language and languages of minorities
- preparation of IR of a global character

Different nation minorities can study in their respective mother tongues from the early education level up to the university level. In the same area, the government is putting much emphasis on the preparation of teachers. In the preparation of IR of a global character, the primary language is English, secondary languages are German, French and Spanish.

Preparation of multilingual IR is a part of Slovak Republic government's strategy to build an inclusive information society. This is valid mostly when it comes to the documents of the state administration and public itself - administration structure. Many public web domains of the state institutions are good evidence of the rich multilingual IR.

The Slovak Government is also showing interest in increasing information literacy of the Slovak population. Information literacy is part of the curricula from primary school up to the university level. Additionally, next objective is continual / life long learning. The state and public administration institutions offer also training of the ECDL system.

*Infovek* is a well-known project dealing with using of ICT in education, which was established back in 1999. One of the main tasks of this project was installing internet connection to schools. After 2000 this project went beyond schools and expanded to out-of-school activities. Schools became the main players in marketing and sharing information literacy also in non-formal education. Since 2003 Infovek has been implemented as part of a broad strategy of the ministry of Education *Open School*.

State and public administration institutions present IR mostly in two, and in some cases, in more language mutations.

## 3. Facilitating access to networks and services

Developing of infrastructure was the primary priority of the SR government in the policy and strategy of informatization. Nowadays, the attention is payed to availability of Internet, its speed and security. Penetration of Internet into enterprise is more than 90% in Slovakia. Internet connection is already available for all universities, academic and secondary level educational institutions – so called SANET projects – Slovak Academic Network, Infovek, Internet for all.

Almost 40% of population in age over 15 years make use of the Internet. The highest level of Internet utilization is present in the age category between 15 and 30 years, where the current number of Internet users is achieving 65%. More than 90% of these cases represents active Internet users. In general, there is no contentment neither with the number of Internet connections nor with the level of utilization. The main problem is recognized in availability of broad-band Internet.

In present, 50,1% of Slovak households own personal computer, providing that the ratio is more significant in the category of families with at least one non-adult member under 16 years. In this category, 69,1% of households own computer. Internet access at home is indicated by 26,6% of households, where 88,1% of households is accessing the Internet via personal computer. Households mostly use the modem connection – 43,8% while the broad-band connection is present in 43% of households.

o          *Barriers of Internet home connections*

The most households without Internet at home declare, that they either do not want or do not need it (40,4%). The ones who indicate Internet access outside their homes (34,4%) responded that the operation is too expensive (32,6%) and the cost of acquisition is too high (31,8%).

o         *Internet access in the enterprise*

In 2006, 97,5% of companies employed computers and 93,5% had the Internet access. Most of the companies is connect to Internet via DSL or other broad-band technology. Connections with speed between 144 kb/s and 2 Mb/s is used by 65,1%, only the one fifth of companies have connection speed more than 2 Mb/s. In the year 2005, 11,6% of companies realized purchasing of goods and services and 4.3% actually sold their goods and services over Internet.

o         *Project MDPT SR Internet for Education*

The aim of the project is to raise the penetration of the high speed Internet connection and information literacy of young people, citizens of SR, by the means of state grant, by 40.000 new users until the end of the year 2006. The grants are granted on the base of action plan in *Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until the year 2010 v*     .

o         *Free Wi-Fi Hotspots*

During the last year, number of places with free of charge wireless access to the Internet (Free Wi-Fi Hotspots) available around Europe doubled. Experts suppose the offer of free services or low-cost services (with financial support of advertisement) will show the leading direction in operation of free wi-fi services in the future.

Such a service is available for use by the people in Slovakia. Firstly this kind of Internet connection was provided by the hotels, motivated mainly by their foreign customers. Later it was provided by the bars, coffee houses and restaurants too. Today we can find such access points in all major cities.

**4. Development of public domain content**
Recognizing and enacting the right of universal online access to public and government-held records is a basic part of information literacy. As it has been mentioned, education concerning information literacy has in Slovakia long tradition and its content has been changed from pure computer literacy to general information literacy.

Access to information is covered also legislatively by *the act on free access to information*. Another acts related to a development of public domain content are *acts on state statistics, personal data protection* and others.

For a development of public domain content the Slovak government adopted the *Norm on standards for information systems in public administration.*

For the achievement of the objectives the EU Council evaluated 20 basic categories of public administration services that should be delivered for citizens and businesses in an electronic form and on-line. The Slovak Republic has acknowledged and approved these in its document „*Strategy for Building the Information Society under SR conditions and the Action Plan*":

*Basic categories of public administration services*
Service for citizens

- Natural person income tax
- Personal documents (identity cards and driving licences, passports)
- Notification of relocation
- Notifications to the police
- Enrolment at universities
- Social security contributions (benefits in unemployment, children allowance, health care costs, allowance for students)
- Vehicle registration
- Job search
- Building permits
- Extracts from the Register (birth and marriage certificate, registry events)
- Public libraries
- Heath services
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Services for business
- Customs declarations
- Value added tax
- Legal persons income tax
- Environment authorizations
- Registration of legal entities
- Digitalization of sending of the summary page of monthly statements from the employer to the Social Insurance Company
- Public procurement
- Statistical data reporting

Nowadays the *Central portal of public administration* (CPPA) is running which allows central and unified access to informartion resources and services of public administration.

Content of the CPPA covers digital content in a form of supporting information for utilization of services and as well as e-services themselves.

The Central portal of public administration is defined as an information system of public administration for rendering of services and information through a common access point to Internet in accordance with the act on information systems of public administration.

Development of the CPPA was co financed by EU through the Project "*Transparency in Functioning of State administration and Public Self-administration*".

## 5. Reaffirming the equitable balance between the interests of rights-holders and public interest

In the context of universal access to cyberspace the interests of rights-holders and public interest concern first of all two areas:

- IT systems,
- Documents and artefacts of other type.

Rights of right-holders are in Slovakia specified by *the act on author rights and rights related to author rights* adopted by the Government of Slovakia.

The act defines explicitly also „computer program" as an artefact which falls under the act. Author right can be understood as a motivation for author to produce original artefacts on one side, but on the other it brings a problem with its broader access and utilization.

The government undertakes sevrel way to „solve" this problem. First of all it is education on author rights. A content related to author rights is a part of curricula not only at law cources, but IT cources as well.
The goverment support more effectice utilization of IT systems – common licence for particular branch and open software.

As far as technological inovations, the government of Slovakia regards an inovation policy as its priority which contributes to building of knowledge economy and economocal prosperity of Slovakia. The government of Slovakia prepared a new inovation strategy. It is based on other strategic documents as it is „*Strategy of Development an Information Society under conditions of SR and the Action Plan*" and „*Competitiveness Strategy of Slovakia until the year 2010* " and at EU level it is *Inovation stragy of EU.*

## 6. Final Comments
Building inclusive information society in which each member of society will profit from application of new scientific results to material, technological and also to social processes is one of the priorities of the Slovak government. The strategic documents prepared and adopted by the government of Slovak republic are justification for it, as well as an organizational arrangement and its fulfillment. The government established a coordination unit responsible for implementation of the strategic documents concerning information society and the vice prime minister has competency for knowledge economy, higher attention is paid to science and education system. Nevertheless, we have very far to be satisfied. Not only amount of new information is exponentially increasing, but also it seems to be that claims and requirements of society increase exponentially as well. Higher quality and scope of services are required. It is already not enough to have access to Internet, broadband Internet is required, it is already not enough to have information resources, multilingual information resources are required. Of course, all this requires corresponding financial resources, but also human resources with high quality. The strategic documents of the Slovak government witness, that the government fully realizes it and the action plans witness that the government gradually fulfill them.

Open problem, not only in Slovakia, are negative consequences of informatization. Digital divide is not only "north / south", "west / east", but also "young / old", „boy / girls", etc. There is also lack of natural communication "face-to-face". Building information society we have to follow our basic goal: *improving quality of life of each individual and of all society as well.*

Bratislava January 2007                    prof.RNDr.Ľudovít Molnár, DrSc.
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