The eEurope Awards for Innovation in eGovernment

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As a further key initiative in its efforts to promote the idea of eEurope, EIPA has taken on the responsibility of supporting the European Commission in organising the eEurope Awards for Innovation in eGovernment.

Erkki Liikanen, Commissioner for Information Society, announced the launch of the “eEurope Awards for Innovation in eGovernment” back in November 2001 at the Ministerial eGovernment Conference entitled “From Policy to Practice”, jointly organised by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission.1

The eEurope Awards competition is based on the experience and is along the lines of the eGovernment label awarded at last year’s Ministerial Conference to 60 administrations in the EU, the Accession Countries, the EEA countries and other third countries such as Brazil.2 Heads of state and government agreed in Lisbon in Spring 2000 on eEurope’s ambitious goal to make Europe the most competitive knowledge-based society in the world by 2010. The eEurope Awards competition embodies the spirit of eEurope by promoting the exchange of best practices among EU Member States and Accession Countries in the field of eGovernment and in other priority areas covered by the eEurope Action Plans 2005, such as eHealth and eLearning.3

Earlier this year, the Commissioner gave the green light to the first two award ceremonies, to take place in 2003.4 EIPA has been entrusted with running the eEurope Awards competition for the European Commission for the next two years. EIPA will be an independent base for the project management secretariat for the eEurope Awards for Innovation in eGovernment and will contribute to research and the dissemination of results within the framework of eEurope. Thus, pursuing its mission to contribute to the European integration process by supporting public administrations throughout the European Union, EIPA will serve as the hub for a network of individuals dedicated to excellence in government and public administration in an enlarged Europe. The competition for each of the awards will have a specific theme related to the priorities set out in the eEurope Action Plan. For the coming year, Mr Liikanen has announced two award competitions. The first Europe Awards for eHealth, organised by the Commission in cooperation with the Greek Presidency, will be presented within the framework of the Ministerial Conference on eHealth – “The Contribution of ICT to Health” – scheduled for 22-23 May 2003 in Brussels. The second eEurope Awards ceremony will take place at the follow-up Ministerial Conference to last year’s eGovernment Conference – “From Policy to Practice”, which will be jointly organised by the Italian Presidency and the European Commission, on 3-4 July 2003 in Como (Italy).

Within the framework of the objectives set out in the eEurope and eEurope+ Action Plans, the overall aim of the eEurope Awards is to draw attention to and to recognise exemplary practices of governments, and to provide a platform for public sector innovators to disseminate their achievements. The awards will recognise innovative initiatives in public administration within the European Union and the candidate countries. Applications from all levels of administration, i.e. local, regional and central, in the EU Member States and the candidate countries will be eligible for the award.

The initiative aims at highlighting, disseminating and promoting the efforts made by national, regional and local administrations in the EU Member States and the candidate countries in using Information Society Technologies (IST) to improve the quality and accessibility of their public services, and also aims to support mutual recognition and the adoption of best practices. The eEurope Awards will be a concrete manifestation of the fact that governments across Europe can work to improve the quality of life of their citizens and to increase public trust in government in the enlarged European Union.

More details on the eEurope Awards will be published on the eEurope Awards web site, which will be launched shortly. EIPASCOPE will regularly report on the eEurope Awards competitions in its upcoming editions.

More information can be obtained from Ann Stoffels, Information Officer, Ann.Stoffels@eipa.nl. Please also check EIPA’s website www.eipa.nl for the announcement of the launch of the eEurope Awards Website, planned for the end of the year 2002.

NOTES

1 For details see http://europa.eu.int/eEurope
3 For details see http://europa.eu.int/eEurope
4 See also previous EIPASCOPE 2002/2 p. 24.