

# The *e*Europe Awards for Innovation in *e*Government



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

Erkki Liikanen, Commissioner for Information Society, announced the launch of the “*e*Europe Awards for Innovation in *e*Government” back in November 2001 at the Ministerial *e*Government Conference entitled “From Policy to Practice”, jointly organised by the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the European Commission.<sup>1</sup>

The *e*Europe Awards competition is based on the experience and is along the lines of the *e*Government 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.<sup>2</sup> Heads of state and government agreed in Lisbon in Spring 2000 on *e*Europe’s ambitious goal to make Europe the most competitive knowledge-based society in the world by 2010. The *e*Europe Awards competition embodies the spirit of *e*Europe by promoting the exchange of best practices among EU Member States and Accession Countries in the field of *e*Government and in other priority areas covered by the *e*Europe Action Plans 2005, such as *e*Health and *e*Learning.<sup>3</sup>

Earlier this year, the Commissioner gave the green light to the first two award ceremonies, to take place in 2003.<sup>4</sup> EIPA has been entrusted with running the *e*Europe Awards competition for the European Commission for the next two years. EIPA will be an independent base for the project management secretariat for the *e*Europe Awards for Innovation in *e*Government and will contribute to research and the dissemination of results within the framework of *e*Europe. 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 *e*Europe Action Plan. For the coming year, Mr Liikanen has announced two award competitions. The first Europe Awards for *e*Health, organised by the Commission in cooperation with the Greek Presidency, will be presented within the framework of the Ministerial Conference on *e*Health – “The Contribution of ICT to Health” – scheduled for 22-23 May 2003 in Brussels. The second

*e*Europe Awards ceremony will take place at the follow-up Ministerial Conference to last year’s *e*Government 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 *e*Europe and *e*Europe+ Action Plans, the overall aim of the *e*Europe 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 *e*Europe 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 *e*Europe Awards will be published on the *e*Europe Awards web site, which will be launched shortly. EIPASCOPE will regularly report on the *e*Europe Awards competitions in its upcoming editions.

More information can be obtained from Ann Stoffels, Information Officer, a.stoffels@eipa-nl.com. Please also check EIPA’s website [www.eipa.nl](http://www.eipa.nl) for the announcement of the launch of the *e*Europe Awards Website, planned for the end of the year 2002.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> For details see <http://europa.eu.int/eEurope>

<sup>2</sup> See also <http://europa.eu.int/eEurope>: Final Report “From Policy to Practice”, Ministerial Conference, Brussels 29-30 November 2001.

<sup>3</sup> For details see <http://europa.eu.int/eEurope>

<sup>4</sup> See also previous EIPASCOPE 2002/2 p. 24. □