

[eInclusion in]

Poland

Polska



ICT & Ageing

Geographic Digital Divide

eAccessibility

eInclusion

Cultural Diversity

Inclusive eGovernment

Digital Literacy & Competences

Country Profile

History

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Disclaimer:

This document is not intended to be exhaustive. Its purpose is to give an overview of the general eInclusion status in Poland. Even though every care has been taken to ensure accuracy, the information herein should be treated as indicative and no responsibility for errors can be assumed. Neither the European Commission, nor any person acting on its behalf can be held responsible for the use that could be made of the information provided.

Country Profile

Basic data and indicators

Basic Data

Population (1 000): 38 167.3 inhabitants (2010)

GDP at market prices: 222 892.9 million Euros (2009)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (Purchasing Power Standards, EU-27 = 100): 61.0 (2009)

GDP growth rate: 1.7 % (2009)

Inflation rate: 4.0 % (2009)

Unemployment rate: 8.2 % (2009)

Government debt/GDP: 50.9 % (2009)

Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): -7.2 % (2009)

Source: [Eurostat](#)

Area: 312 679 km²

Capital city: Warsaw

Official EU language: Polish

Currency: Zloty

Source: [Europa website](#)

Information Society Indicators

Percentage of households with Internet access: 63 % (2010)

Percentage of households with broadband connection: 57 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals regularly using the Internet: 55 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for uploading self-created content: 7 % (2008)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for reading online newspapers/magazines: 17 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for finding information about goods and services: 39 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking health-related information: 25 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for looking for a job or sending a job application: 10 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for doing an online course: 2 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for seeking information with the purpose of learning: 33 % (2010)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for interaction with public authorities: obtaining information 18 %, downloading forms 13.2 %, returning filled forms 6.6 % (2010)

Source: [Eurostat](#)

Editorial notice: Statistical indicators referenced in this section reflect those of Eurostat at the time the Edition is being prepared.

eInclusion History

Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: [ePractice news for eInclusion](#)

Recent News

December 2010

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (*Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej*) began working on a [draft law](#) on sign language and other means of communication. The project calls for increasing the availability of television programmes for the deaf through the use of subtitling.

November 2010

The [Cities on Internet Association](#) (*Stowarzyszenie Miasta w Internecie*, COI), in cooperation with the [Information Society Development Foundation](#) (*Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*, FRSI) and the Polish Computer Training Foundation, launched on 9 November 2010 a campaign for the digital education of adult Poles. The campaign is being carried out through a social networking media and aims to mobilise support towards the design and implementation of a nationwide adult digital education programme.

October 2010

The Ministry of National Education (*Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej*) launched a public consultation on the '[Action plan for teaching children and young people and school functioning in the information society. New technologies in education](#)' (*Plan działań dotyczący nauczania dzieci i młodzieży oraz funkcjonowania szkoły w społeczeństwie informacyjnym. Nowe technologie w edukacji*). The overall aim is to prepare children and young people to actively participate in the information society by making the best use of ICT in education. The document is in the preparatory stages.

July 2010

On 21 July 2010, the government outlined its [priorities](#) in preparation for the EU presidency in 2011. According to the submitted document, the government intends to focus on the full exploitation of the intellectual capital and to provide equal opportunities for the disabled.

June 2010

A [bill](#) amending the 'Act on the Computerisation of Activities Undertaken by Entities Fulfilling Public Tasks' entered into force. One of the provisions concerns eAccessibility.

During the [14th 'Cities on Internet Conference](#) (*14. Konferencji „Miasta w Internecie”*) that took place on 23-25 June 2010 in Zakopane, event participants signed a memorandum calling on the Prime Minister to put into place actions which will give a fresh impetus to the development of an information society. The document necessitates immediate establishment and implementation of a universal digital education programme for adults.

May 2010

- ▶ On 12 May 2010 in Warsaw, as part of the 'World Information Society Day', the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*) organised the conference '[Condition of the Polish Internet](#)'. The information society and the development and use of the Internet were the key focus of discussion among all stakeholders.
- ▶ On 7 May 2010, the government passed the '[Act on the support of telecommunications network and services development](#)' (*Ustawa o wspieraniu rozwoju usług i sieci telekomunikacyjnych*), thus creating the conditions for investing in broadband infrastructure. The new provisions aim to improve the investment process through the reduction of barriers to investment in ICT infrastructure, to increase the competitiveness on the telecommunications market and to eliminate both social and geographic digital exclusion. This Act is a part of the broader 'Digital Poland Programme' (*Programu Polska Cyfrowa*).

News 2009 and before

2009

- ▶ On 6 August 2009, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*), the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (*Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego*), the national telecommunications provider *Telekomunikacja Polska SA* (TP SA) and the [Information Society Development Foundation](#) (*Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*, FRSI) signed the '[Memorandum of Understanding to Launch a Programme to Provide Polish Public Libraries with Internet Access](#)'. TP SA committed to provide all public libraries in Poland with free Internet connections for three years. The memorandum of agreement was in line with the long-term objectives of the '[Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013](#)' (*Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013*).
- ▶ On 17 June 2009, the Board of Strategic Advisors to the Prime Minister published the '[Poland 2030](#)' Report (*Raport "Polska 2030"*), which aimed to serve as the basis for long-term policy planning documents over the next 20 years. It provided an analysis of development dilemmas faced by Poland, the resolution of which will have a crucial effect on the country's continued development in the specified time. It stressed the need to eliminate digital exclusion, particularly in rural areas, and to create a sustainable and universal mechanism for the inclusion of emerging technologies by Polish society.
- ▶ In May 2009, under the 'Digital Poland Programme' (*Programu Polska Cyfrowa*), the [National Broadband Forum](#) (*Krajowe Forum Szerokopasmowe*) was set up by the [Office of Electronic Communications](#) (*Urząd Komunikacji Elektronicznej*, UKE). It is a platform for exchange of experiences and best practices in the area of development of broadband infrastructure and the telecommunications market. The Forum is intended to support the development of broadband infrastructure and services, and to reduce the regional digital divide. It is open to government bodies, market operators, NGOs, research institutes, investors, local authorities and consumer organisations.
- ▶ On 23 April 2009, the [Library Development Programme](#) (2009-2013) was launched. It aims to prepare librarians to run public libraries through IT means. Multimedia and ICT equipment (desktop and laptop computers) are supplied as part of the programme, as well as projectors and peripherals to enhance the attractiveness of libraries and help them pursue digital media projects.
- ▶ In January 2009, the Council of Ministers set up a special interministerial group composed of secretaries and under-secretaries of state and external advisors tasked with preparing [reports](#) for the implementation of the 'Digital Poland Programme' (*Programu Polska Cyfrowa*). While the first report concentrated on proposing legislative changes necessary to stimulate investment in telecommunications infrastructure and the elimination of administrative and legal barriers to electronic administration, the second presented a programme for eInclusion, based on the education and the development of digital content and services in broadband networks.

2008

- ▶ On 28 December 2008, the [Information Society Development Foundation](#) (*Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*, FRSI) and the [Office of Electronic Communications](#) (*Urząd Komunikacji Elektronicznej*, UKE) concluded a cooperation agreement. The parties agreed to work together to develop access to ICT by increasing availability to the Internet in rural areas.
- ▶ In December 2008, the '[Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013](#)' (*Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013*) was adopted by the government. The long-term key strategy document was a response to the need to reduce digital exclusion by identifying and removing existing educational, economic and geographical barriers. The main aim is to ensure the universal and effective use of information and knowledge for harmonious social, economic and personal development. The policy document lays down three priority areas: people, business entities and public administration. The areas contain the mapping out of strategic directions that determine the objectives which should be accomplished in order to achieve the desired development for the information society by 2013. It is fully in line with European information society policy.
- ▶ On 1 August 2008, the Information Society in the Ministry of Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*) was established. It is the main body in public administration responsible for co-ordination and supervision of the information society policy in Poland.
- ▶ On 16 June 2008, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*) commenced a formal [tendering process](#) for eInclusion projects that would help bridge the digital divide and enable digitally excluded groups to access eGovernment services.
- ▶ In March 2008, the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*) published an [update](#) on the implementation of '[ePoland - the Strategy on the Development of the Information Society in Poland for the years 2004-2006](#)' (*Strategia informatyzacji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej – ePolska na lata 2004-2006*), which was initially adopted in 2004. The Ministry concluded that while there had been significant investment in infrastructure in several areas, there was insufficient progress in the provision of eServices to the public.

2007

- ▶ The Polish region of Podlaskie tackled the digital divide by bringing technology to its residents. A specially-equipped bus, '[N@utobus](#)', travelled within the region with the aim to introduce new technologies, modern applications and the Internet to the rural population. Training courses and presentations were held in the mobile bus. 'N@utobus in the Podlaskie region' constituted the second stage of the 'N@utobus programme'. The first covered the neighbouring Warmińsko-Mazurskie region. In six months (July 2006-January 2007), more than 10 000 people benefited from the initiative.
- ▶ The '[National Computerisation Plan for the period 2007-2010](#)' (*Plan Informatyzacji Państwa na lata 2007-2010*) entered into force on 21 April 2007. It was the first planning document which described in a systematic manner concrete tasks to be carried out by public bodies within the context of an information society and for the provision of eServices.

2006

- ▶ On 29 November 2006, the '[National Development Strategy 2007-2015](#)' (*Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2007-2015*, NDS) was adopted by the Council of Ministers with a view to improve the standard and quality of life for all Polish citizens, including special needs groups. The principle long-term strategic document would serve as the point of reference for subsequent strategies and programmes to be prepared by all government levels. NDS determined the goals and identified the major areas which

would be the focus of Poland's activities. It also set out priorities for the country's socio-economic development and the conditions to sustain it.

- ▶ On 4 September 2006, Mazovia became the first administrative region to implement a regional strategy for the development of the information society: '[Strategy for Regional eDevelopment of the Mazovia Region 2007-2013](#)'.
- ▶ In 2006, the Ministry of Regional Development (*Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego*) and the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*) stepped up funding for the period 2007-2013 in an effort to build the information society. The government supplied free internet connections to disadvantaged members of society in a bid to ensure that all citizens enjoyed equal access to the growing number of online services available. Additional funding was earmarked for developing IT resources within the public administration.

In the same year, the project 'Infostart' came to an end. It analysed the needs of the disabled in relation to the Internet, and also identified standards (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines - WCAG) for website creation in the public sector and eGovernment.

2005

On 29 June 2005, the Council of Ministers adopted the action plan '[Computerisation Development Strategy of Poland until 2013 and Perspectives for the Information Society Transformation by 2020](#)' (*Strategia kierunkowa rozwoju informatyzacji Polski do roku 2013 oraz perspektywiczna prognoza transformacji społecze_stwa informacyjnego do roku 2020*).

2004

In 2004, the Council of Ministers adopted '[ePoland - the Strategy on the Development of the Information Society in Poland for the years 2004-2006](#)' (*Strategia informatyzacji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej – ePolska na lata 2004-2006*).

The objectives of the information society document were to:

- ▶ provide affordable, fast and secure Internet access to all citizens and businesses;
- ▶ develop a broad and valuable range of online content and services;
- ▶ achieve widespread ICT literacy.

'ePoland' included the 'Poland Gateway' project (*Wrota Polski*), which aimed to promote eGovernment. It called for barrier-free access to information for all citizens and the prevention of digital exclusion.

2003

The then Ministry of Science and Informatisation launched the '[Ikonk@](#)' project. Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs) were created in the cultural institutions of all municipalities in Poland. The main objective was to ensure that as many local communities as possible enjoyed easy, universal and free access to the Internet.

2001

In 2001, the Council of Ministers adopted '[ePoland – An Action Plan for the Information Society Development for the years 2001-2006](#)' (*Plan działań na rzecz rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce na lata 2001-2006*), a strategy document to build the information society in Poland in line with '[eEurope 2002 - An Information Society for All](#)'. It aimed to ensure access to digital resources and eServices for all, and acknowledged the specific needs of users.

2000

The strategy document '[Aims and Directions of the Information Society Development in Poland](#)' (*Cele i kierunki rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce*) was published in *November 2000*. One of its strategic objectives was the use of ICT in order to assist in the establishment of open, transparent, user-friendly structures within public administration.

eInclusion Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles

National Development Strategy 2007-2015

The '[National Development Strategy 2007-2015](#)' (*Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2007-2015*, NDS) is the key, long-term strategic document for the country's socioeconomic development, and serves as the point of reference for all future strategies and programmes prepared by the government in specific areas, including the information society.

NDS defines goals and identifies areas recognised as the most important from the point of view of achieving these aims, upon which the government's activities will be concentrated. At the same time, it takes into consideration the most important development trends in the world economy and the goals that the EU set in the Lisbon Strategy. NDS gives priority to activities that will be undertaken in the years 2007-2015 in order to fulfil the vision of Poland.

Based on this, the following key priorities have been set:

1. Improvement of the economy's competitiveness and innovativeness

- ▶ **Encourage entrepreneurship:** Promote entrepreneurial activities by increasing the access and scope of online public service use.
- ▶ **Develop the information society:** The information society is intended to drive the growth and competitiveness of the Polish industry. The continuous development or adoption of ICT skills through education and training is a necessary precondition for this to occur. Providing access to electronic services and modern ICT creates new opportunities for economic and social development. The growth of the internet and broadband creates incentive for ICT investment. As a result, public and private entities will be obliged to follow suit. A national information strategy that is aimed at creating a 'uniform electronic economy' will reduce ineffective public spending for initiatives that overlap or compete against each other.

2. Improvement of technical and social infrastructure

- ▶ **Communications infrastructure:** Increasing the competitiveness of the economy and harmonising the development opportunities of the Polish regions is not possible without modern ICT and broad-based public and private online services. Initiatives targeting fast broadband will be supported, as well as increasing the scope and reach of infrastructure throughout the entire country. The government will create points of public access to the Internet.
- ▶ **Educational infrastructure:** The school system will be upgraded and modernised (digital media resources), especially in remote areas. Development of the infrastructure will involve creating conditions for vocational education, including practical training and promoting lifelong learning.
- ▶ **Health care and social infrastructure:** The health care IT infrastructure will be continually modernised. Boosting investments to increase the quality and competitiveness of the healthcare services provision will lead to the purchase of assistive aids for special needs groups such as the elderly and the disabled. Funding to institutions that provide social services for the elderly, the disabled and marginalised groups will be increased, as will training for their primary carers and professionals in the sector.

3. Employment growth and quality improvement

- ▶ **Promote flexible forms of employment and growth of mobility of work resources:** The creation of new jobs requires encouraging and applying flexible and alternative forms of work on a large scale. An essential precondition is the take-up of universal and affordable Internet access.
- ▶ **Stimulate job growth programmes:** Setting up both public and private long-term initiatives (ICT skills training) for the reintegration of excluded groups, namely seniors and the disabled. Adapting

the workplace to suit the needs of the disabled entering the labour force is necessary for reintegration, and enterprises accommodating such efforts will be supported in their eAccessibility efforts.

- ▶ **Adapt curricula to meet the needs of the job market:** Place a greater emphasis on digital media skills at all levels of education, both formal and informal, in an effort to increase the employability of learners of all ages, including special needs groups.

4. Growth and progress of rural areas

- ▶ **Develop and improve technical and social infrastructure:** The development of broadband infrastructure will raise the standard of living and transform the countryside into an area more attractive to investors.
- ▶ **Develop human capital and enhance professional skills of residents:** Encourage lifelong learning and vocational training for the digitally excluded in order to stimulate local communities, remove disparities, combat joblessness, and raise low-level educational and professional skills. Set up computer labs at schools in neglected areas.

5. Regional development and improvement of territorial cohesion

- ▶ **Boost the competitiveness of the regions:** Support the promotion of access to electronic services through investment activities in IT services, and the development of commercial networks and electronic services in each of the 16 regions.
- ▶ **Support underdeveloped regions in Eastern Poland:** Providing fresh impetus and mechanisms to support the growth potential of Poland's deprived regions constitutes a separate task for the NDS. Creating broadband infrastructure and targeting the digitally illiterate is key to reducing the disparity in proportion to the central and western regions.

Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013

The information society in Poland is lagging behind with benchmarks for the majority of indicators well below EU rankings. In an effort to better position itself, the government launched the national action plan '[Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013](#)' (*Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013*). The strategy document envisages a society where citizens and enterprises consciously use the potential of ICT for economic, social and cultural progress, with effective support from a modern and user-friendly public administration.

Poland's information society strategy should respond to the specific needs of society and be consistent with the European initiative '[A Digital Agenda for Europe](#)'.

The following attributes for the information society in Poland have been set:

- ▶ **Availability, security and confidence** – access to reliable information or a secure service that is indispensable to citizen and businesses.
- ▶ **Openness and diversity** – no preferences in access to information, especially public information.
- ▶ **Universality and acceptability** – efforts to ensure that participation in the information society is manifest and widespread to the maximum extent feasible, and information society products and services are as broad as possible.
- ▶ **Communicativeness and interoperability** – the search for and access to desired information is secure, quick and simple.

The information society strategy is multidimensional and covers different aspects of information society development. It defines the vision and mission for the development of the information society in Poland. Within each of the three priority areas (Human, Economy and State), it maps out strategic directions and determines the objectives that should be accomplished in order to have achieved the desired outcome by 2013.

Strategic directions and main objectives:**▶ People (area: HUMAN)**

- **Strategic direction:** Accelerate the growth of the intellectual and social capital of Polish citizens with the use of ICT solutions.
- **Objectives:**
 - Improve the level of motivation, awareness, knowledge and skills in the use of ICT solutions for all segments of the population, including groups with a higher risk of digital exclusion.
 - Improve the level and accessibility of education (pre-school to university), and promote lifelong learning by using ICT solutions.
 - Adapt the educational sector to meet the requirements of the labour market, with ICT as one of its vital components.
 - Increase Polish citizens' social, cultural and political activities by using ICT solutions.
 - Ensure that ICT infrastructure is cost-effective, secure and orientated towards the future needs of citizens so as to build up the information society.

▶ Business entities (area: ECONOMY)

- **Strategic direction:** Increase the productivity, innovation potential and competitiveness of Polish companies - and Poland in turn - in the global market, and facilitate business-to-business communication and cooperation with the use of ICT solutions.
- **Objectives:**
 - Create favourable conditions for the development of the ICT sector and eServices.
 - Increase the competitiveness and innovation potential of enterprises by creating conditions that will allow for better use of ICT.

▶ Public administration (area: STATE)

- **Strategic direction:** Increase the accessibility and effectiveness of public administration services with the use of ICT solutions in order to modernise internal processes in government and the provision of online services.
- **Objectives:**
 - Provide a broad range of public administration services via electronic channels.
 - Increase the effectiveness of public administration via the extensive use of standardised and interoperable IT solutions.

National Computerisation Plan for the Period 2007-2010

The aim of the '[National Computerisation Plan for the Period 2007-2010](#)' (*Plan Informatyzacji Państwa na lata 2007-2010*, NCP) is to introduce 24 eServices between 2007 and 2013.

NCP lays down activities to reduce digital exclusion, mainly via the '[Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013](#)' (*Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013*). Inclusive eGovernment actions are centred around facilitating Internet access and ICT training in schools, local government bodies and Public Internet Access Points (PIAPs). Furthermore, it envisions that the initiatives set will significantly improve the level of ICT literacy, especially among students, teachers, rural populations and remote areas.

National Strategy on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010

The European Commission required all Member States to present national strategy reports on social protection and social inclusion for the period 2008-2010. The Polish '[National Strategy on Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010](#)' (*Zabezpieczenie Społeczne i Integracja Społeczna na lata 2008-2010*) covers three areas of activity, including social inclusion. Groups at risk of social exclusion, such as the disabled and immigrants, are outlined in the national action plan.

Priority 2 'Integration through activation' contains measures targeting people with disabilities. The measures focus on labour market participation (ICT skills adoption) among disabled jobseekers unable to find employment. Actions are planned to improve coordination between vocational education and training services, and social services. A legal framework facilitating the employment of people with disabilities is being planned, including the simplification of procedures and methods to support employers and better coordination of the activities targeting disabled people within various public bodies. The provision of assistive devices is foreseen, as is legislation preventing discrimination against disabled persons in the labour market. New individual rehabilitation schemes providing flexible support will also be introduced.

eInclusion Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eInclusion

eAccessibility Legislation

With the exception of the telecommunications field, there is no direct legislation on eAccessibility in Poland. Even though the national information strategy emphasises the eAccessibility of public institutions and the development of eAccessible education, it seems that specific implementation measures have yet to be put in place. In terms of actual levels of accessibility achieved to date, Poland is well below the European average.

Source: '[Measuring Progress of eAccessibility in Europe - MeAC](#)'

An amendment to regulation aimed at improving eAccessibility in public administration is under preparation.

Rights of Persons with Disabilities

[Charter of Rights for Persons with Disabilities](#)

According to the Charter of Rights for Persons with Disabilities (1997), citizens have the right to public access for treatment and medical care, and to take an active part in a society free of functional barriers. The Charter is a resolution, and as such, does not guarantee rights. Nevertheless, it is widely considered as the foundation for equal rights in Poland. It imposes a number of obligations in relation to the rights of disabled people. Section 1.1 specifies the right to "access goods and services enabling full participation in social life". It is not clear what impact, if any, this resolution has had on the provision of accessible ICT goods and services to date.

Source: '[Measuring Progress of eAccessibility in Europe - MeAC](#)'

[Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

Poland has signed the United Nations Convention, but not the Optional Protocol. Article 4 states that the government will undertake or promote R&D, and encourage the availability and use of new technologies, including ICT, mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, suitable for persons with disabilities. According to Article 9, the government shall take appropriate measures to:

- ▶ ensure people with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to ICT and other facilities and services open to or provided for the public, both in urban and in rural areas;
- ▶ promote access for people with disabilities to new ICT, including the Internet.

Labour Legislation

[Labour Code](#)

Article 11(3) of the 'Labour Code' of 26 June 1974 (with further [amendments](#)) states that any kind of discrimination at work, including disability-related, is prohibited. Amendments implemented the two EU directives that refer to equal treatment ([2000/78/EC](#) and [2000/43/EC](#)). According to Article 18(3a) of the legislation, employees have to be treated on an equal basis. In principle, provisions in the 'Labour Code' may be interpreted as covering eAccessibility.

Source: '[Measuring Progress of eAccessibility in Europe - MeAC](#)'

[Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities](#)

The 'Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities' of 27 August 1997 ([amendments](#) in 2008) makes provisions for disabled people who wish to enter the labour force. Article 8(2.5) requires that the disabled should be given the opportunity to seek employment. It states that it is necessary to define the technical means which will make possible, or facilitate on-the-job performance. Article 9 states that social rehabilitation for the disabled is aimed at enabling inclusion, which is to be realised through the elimination of technical, communication and information access barriers. The Act expands upon the right to rehabilitation as stated in the 'Charter of Rights for Persons with Disabilities'. Article 47(1.4a) stipulates that 30 % of funding for the State Fund for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (*Państwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych*, PFRON) should be devoted to tasks such as programmes aimed at social and vocational rehabilitation, especially those addressed to disabled people. The Act addresses ICT-related issues, namely, participation in training and the purchase of assistive devices that facilitate or enable/provide access to learning.

Websites

There is no legislation or regulation for private websites; however, it is reported that a number of private websites fulfil the basic criteria for eAccessibility and comply with W3C (Web Accessibility Initiative, WAI) guidelines. [osiolki.net](#) lists Polish sites not matching the W3C requirements.

Even though no legal framework specifically addresses the eAccessibility of public websites, there are a number of acts that in principle offer a legal basis for accessibility. Article 61 of the [Constitution of the Republic of Poland](#) guarantees the right of access to public information; the '[Act on Access to Public Information](#)' defines the types of information that should be accessible, but not the ways to ensure accessibility.

Source: '[Measuring Progress of eAccessibility in Europe - MeAC](#)'

A [bill](#) amending the 'Act on the Computerisation of Activities Undertaken by Entities Fulfilling Public Tasks' includes provisions on the rights of people with disabilities. One of the new provisions applies to eAccessibility. Article 18 requires that the needs of people with disabilities be taken into account when defining the minimal requirements for telematic systems in public administration.

[Resolution of the Internet Society Poland Board nr 18/2006 \(4/10/2006\)](#)

The motion put forth by the [Internet Society Poland](#) (ISOC) addresses standards applied during the development and implementation of web services, and calls for the use of open standards as defined by W3C initiatives. Specifically, facilities for people with disabilities should be in accordance with generally accepted technical standards (Web Accessibility Initiative, WAI). Compliance with the WAI standards is a prerequisite for the reliable operation of software to support the disabled so as to further prevent exclusion from the information society.

White Book for the Public Information Bulletin

The 'White Book for the Public Information Bulletin' proposed that regulation should be amended to include W3C criteria for online services, as well as for all public administration websites (WAI standards for people with disabilities, the elderly or people who use less popular operating systems and internet browsers). However, it is unclear whether this proposal will be implemented.

eCommunications Legislation

Telecommunications

[Telecommunications Law](#)

eCommunications legislation is based on the 'Telecommunications Law', which was amended in 2010. It transposes the EU regulatory framework for electronic communications, which was adopted in order to upgrade the regulative process in telecommunications, better adjust national provisions to EU regulations, and introduce new pro-consumer regulations, especially within the scope of resolutions to settle arguments between telecommunications operators and consumers.

The law explicitly states that a public telecommunications service provider has to ensure that "users, including disabled users, derive maximum benefit in terms of prices, choice of service and quality". With respect to the disabled, it makes clear reference to universal and equal access to all telecommunications services and the provision of required facilities for disabled people.

Broadcasting

There are no policy initiatives dealing with the accessibility of digital TV. There seem to be no regulations dealing with subtitling, sign language or audio description for analogue television. Some broadcasting licences by the National Broadcasting Council of Poland contain provisions concerning the broadcaster's commitments to facilitate access for deaf and hearing-impaired people. On this basis, broadcasters are required to provide subtitling.

Telewizja Polska (TVP SA), Poland's public broadcasting corporation, appears to be the only broadcaster that provides subtitling of national language programmes and signing. More than 30 hours of new broadcasts with subtitles are provided per month, mainly films, popular series, news bulletins, educational programmes and documentaries. There are plans to extend subtitling to live sport and news programmes. The subtitling is done in cooperation with the Polish Association of the Deaf. In addition, there are some sign language programmes, including news. The TVP SA website contains a section devoted to disabled viewers, which includes a guide listing all programmes provided with access services.

A bill to amend the 'Radio and Television Act' (1992) is being prepared by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (*Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego*). It will extend the scope and the scale of facilities to be employed by the disabled in their access to broadcasting.

eInclusion Actors

Main roles and responsibilities

National eInclusion

Policy/Strategy

Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*)

The Ministry is the central body for the development of the information society in Poland and the eInclusion aspects of ICT. It has prepared the key documents '[Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013](#)' (*Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013*) and '[National Computerisation Plan for the Period 2007-2010](#)' (*Plan Informatyzacji Państwa na lata 2007-2010*). It is also responsible for proposing legislation in the area of eAdministration.

Information Society Department (*Departament Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*), **Ministry of the Interior and Administration**

The Information Society Department assists the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*) in the formulation of strategic actions and programmes for development of the information society.

Ministry of Infrastructure (*Ministerstwo Infrastruktury*)

The Ministry deals with all matters concerning telecommunications strategies, policies and related legislation. It is tasked with drafting national and international projects that fall within the scope of communications, and providing a legislative framework for their implementation. Furthermore, it supervises the telecommunications activities of the [Office of Electronic Communications](#) (*Urząd Komunikacji Elektronicznej, UKE*).

Ministry of Regional Development (*Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego*)

The Ministry drafted Poland's overriding document '[National Development Strategy 2007-2015](#)' (*Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2007-2015, NDS*).

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (*Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej*)

The Ministry is responsible for issues concerning the disabled, the labour market, social security and family policy, in addition to other social services. It aims to reduce social exclusion through the vocational rehabilitation (ICT skill straining) of the elderly and the disabled.

Coordination

Ministry of Regional Development (*Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego*)

The Ministry coordinates the '[National Development Strategy 2007-2015](#)' (*Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2007-2015, NDS*). In addition, it is responsible for coordinating the Regional Operational Programmes 2007–2013 (*Regionalne Programy Operacyjne, ROP*).

Ministry of Regional Development (*Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego*)

The Ministry coordinates the implementation of programmes financed by EU funding instruments.

Information Society Department (*Departament Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*), **Ministry of the Interior and Administration**

The Information Society Department coordinates projects related to the development of the information society.

Council of Ministers' Committee for Computerisation and Communications (*Komitet Rady Ministrów do Spraw Informatyzacji i Łączności*), **Ministry of the Interior and Administration**

The Council deals with the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of public institutions' activities in the area of informatisation, information society development and electronic communications.

Implementation

Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*)

The Ministry is tasked with implementing Operational Programmes on information society development.

Ministry of Regional Development (*Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego*)

The Ministry is responsible for implementing the '[National Development Strategy 2007-2015](#)' (*Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2007-2015*, NDS). Furthermore, it implements the Regional Operational Programmes 2007–2013 (*Regionalne Programy Operacyjne*, ROP).

Information Society Department (*Departament Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*), **Ministry of the Interior and Administration**

The Information Society Department is in charge of implementing the objectives set in the '[Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013](#)' (*Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013*).

Office of Electronic Communications (*Urząd Komunikacji Elektronicznej, UKE*), **Ministry of Infrastructure**

UKE is the national regulatory authority for the telecommunications sector. It intervenes in all matters related to the functioning of the telecommunications market, and ensures that all citizens have access to universal service.

Ministry of National Education (*Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej*)

The Ministry is responsible for ensuring ICT skills training in the educational system and providing students with eSkills competences.

Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People (*Pełnomocnik Rządu do Spraw Osób Niepełnosprawnych*), **Ministry of Labour and Social Policy**

The Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People implements measures to minimise the effects of disability and barriers to disabled persons in society.

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (*Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego*)

The Ministry is responsible for drafting and implementing the legislation concerning the facilities for the disabled in order to access cultural property and radio and television broadcasting services.

State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (*Państwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji Osób Niepełnosprawnych, PFRON*)

PFRON is the state's targeted fund for the professional and social rehabilitation of disabled persons. It is responsible for implementing activities that lead to computer training, subsidised ICT equipment and assistive devices, among others.

Support

Office of Electronic Communications (*Urząd Komunikacji Elektronicznej, UKE*), **Ministry of Infrastructure**

UKE supports the development of telecommunications services in Poland.

Telecommunications activities:

- ▶ cooperate with domestic and international telecommunications organisations, other competent national authorities, the EC and related bodies;
- ▶ ensure that end-users, including excluded groups, derive maximum benefit in terms of choice, price and quality;
- ▶ promote innovation and investment in infrastructure;
- ▶ remove obstacles to conducting telecommunications activities;
- ▶ ensure that there is no discrimination in telecommunications undertakings;
- ▶ cooperate with other regulatory authorities in the Member States and with the EC, aimed at the consistent implementation and application of legal provisions.

Information Society Department (*Departament Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*), Ministry of the Interior and Administration

The Information Society Department carries out dissemination activities on the information society and the implementation of modern ICT solutions.

Information Society Development Foundation (*Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*, FRSI)

The statutory goal of the NGO FRSI is to support and promote the development of the information society in Poland.

Activities:

- ▶ improve access to the Internet for citizens, institutions and organisations, as well as to Internet-based information and ICT;
- ▶ disseminate knowledge of the benefits of ICT in all aspects of society;
- ▶ initiate, stimulate and support cooperation between entities from various sectors in order to create conditions conducive to information society development;
- ▶ administer educational activities in ICT.

Cities on Internet Association (*Stowarzyszenie Miasta w Internecie*, COI)

The NGO COI carries out socio-economic research focused on the information society, eInclusion and digital literacy.

Foundation Institute For Regional Development (*Fundacja Instytut Rozwoju Regionalnego*)

The main mission of the Foundation Institute For Regional Development is to improve the employment, education and social opportunities for people with disabilities, to promote their equal rights and to prevent digital exclusion. It provides support to businesses, administrations and NGOs in the introduction and use of modern technologies.

The Visibles Foundation (*Fundacja Widzialni*)

The Visibles Foundation creates web services for public organisations and commercial enterprises which are accessible to the disabled, and provides assistance in adjusting such services to W3C and WAI guidelines. It promotes the eAccessibility of websites which are adapted to groups at risk of digital exclusion, including the disabled, the elderly and marginalised sectors of the population.

eInclusion Who's Who

Main eInclusion decision-makers and executives

Ministers responsible for eInclusion



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eInclusion Areas

Riga Declaration Priorities

ICT & Ageing

Status in ICT & Ageing

The report [Eurostat Data in Focus](#) compared Internet use in 29 European countries. It showed that elderly men and women (55-74) in Poland ranked far below the corresponding EU-27 averages.

The number of people who regularly use a computer is gradually rising in Poland. Among these users, the elderly consistently rank lowest (20 %:2009; 21 %:2010).

Source: [Central Statistical Office](#)

According to the report '[Between alienation and adjustment - Poles aged 50+ and the Internet](#)' (*Między alienacją a adaptacją – Polacy w wieku 50+ wobec internetu*), among Poles aged 50 and above, only 21.6 % (2.8 million) use the Internet, even though 40 % have Internet access at home. Nearly 10 million people in the 50+ age bracket do not use the Internet (3.9 mil.: 50-59; 6.26 mil.: 60+).

Actions to support ICT & Ageing

'M@turity in the Net'

The Coalition for eInclusion of Generation 50+ '[M@turity in the Net](#)' (*Dojrzałość w sieci*) is an initiative of [The Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland](#) and [UPC Poland](#), the leading cable TV, Internet and telephony services provider. It brings together companies, NGOs, authorities and public institutions including Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*) and the Office of Electronic Communications (*Urząd Komunikacji Elektronicznej, UKE*) with the overall goal to combat digital exclusion among the elderly. The initiative aims to reduce the digital divide in access to ICT, the Internet and IT services, and increase the opportunity for equal access to the digital society (for the 50+ age group). Activities include promoting new technologies as well as joint actions aimed at facilitating access. The Coalition published the report '[Between alienation and adjustment - Poles aged 50+ and the Internet](#)' (*Między alienacją a adaptacją – Polacy w wieku 50+ wobec internetu*) which provided a detailed analysis of the state of play of seniors in the context of the information society. Findings show that this age group has the lowest digital literacy levels and is the most digitally excluded among all Poles.

eSenior Academy UPC

[UPC Poland](#) administers ICT courses for the elderly via the [eSenior Academy UPC](#) (*Akademia eSeniors*), intended to increase accessibility and exposure to ICT for the ageing population.

Geographic Digital Divide

Status of Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

Poland has made progress on most information society indicators, but is still at the low end of EU rankings. It lags behind on all broadband internet indicators. Total DSL coverage is relatively low, which partly explains the low broadband penetration (13.5 %, third lowest in the EU). Nevertheless, household connectivity rose from 48 % to 59 % in 2009. Approximately 86 % of connected households have a broadband subscription, in comparison to 79 % for 2008. Wireless internet markets are catching up, even though they are still below the EU average. While growing steadily over the past few years, rates of regular and frequent internet use in Poland are still relatively low compared to the EU average. Furthermore, there are as many people who have never used the internet (39 %) as there are regular users. Correspondingly, rates of internet service use are also relatively low.

Source: [Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report 2010](#)

Official Polish statistics paint a positive picture. The number of broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (broadband penetration rate expressed as a percentage) is growing rapidly. In the period from January 2008 to January 2009, the penetration rate increased by almost 5 percentage points, reaching 13.2 %.

Source: [Central Statistical Office](#)

Actions to support Common Access to Electronic Content and Services

Act on the support of telecommunications network and services development

In May 2010, the government passed the '[Act on the support of telecommunications network and services development](#)' (*Ustawa o wspieraniu rozwoju usług i sieci telekomunikacyjnych*), which provides support for the development of telecommunications services and networks, in effect creating the conditions for investing in infrastructure. Poland has received support from EU funding instruments to deploy broadband networks and foster the information society. Local authorities are the main beneficiaries of this EU assistance, and the legislation now enables them to take actions in the field of telecommunications. Under the new act, it is simpler and more efficient to invest in telecommunications, build competition within the market, boost investment potential and facilitate implementation of telecommunications projects.

The act establishes a legal framework for universal access to telecommunications services, especially broadband access.

The most important regulations are aimed at:

- ▶ allowing local authorities to undertake economic activity in telecommunications, and specifying fundamental rules to intervene in the local market without disrupting competition;
- ▶ facilitating investment in regional broadband networks (implemented by local authorities and funded by the EU);
- ▶ abolishing investment barriers in local plans of spatial planning;
- ▶ introducing an obligation for road operators to place technology channels within the right-of-way during the construction or conversion of public roads;
- ▶ establishing an exclusive property on optical fibres.

National 'Innovative Economy Operational Programme' 2007-2013

The [National 'Innovative Economy Operational Programme'](#) (*Programu Operacyjnego Innowacyjna Gospodarka 2007-2013*, OP IE) provides the general framework for project implementation on eInclusion. Under Priority VII of OP IE, project support will be given to initiatives dealing with the establishment of electronic public administration. Priority VIII provides Internet access to remote regions and covers the costs of Internet connections and hardware for social groups at risk of digital exclusion.

Specifically, Action 8.3 ('Preventing digital exclusion - eInclusion') under Priority VIII is intended to provide Internet access for those at risk of digital exclusion due to challenging conditions or disability. Beneficiaries include local government, consortia of local governments and consortia of local governments and NGOs. Amendments by the Ministry of the Interior and Administration (*Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych i Administracji*) have entered into force facilitating beneficiaries (local governments, NGOs) in carrying out projects under 8.3. As a result, schools, public libraries, cultural institutions and families have also been incorporated.

Projects eligible for funding are entitled to the following:

- ▶ The part or whole cost of Internet access for households in the project area (up to 3 years) will be covered.
- ▶ Complete coverage of costs for the supply, installation and service of computer hardware and/or the necessary software in households identified by the project.
- ▶ The purchase of services to conduct ICT training for end-users, as well as other skills required for employment, or its effective implementation through online means.
- ▶ The funding of operating expenses (computer equipment and the maintenance of internet access), employment and training of local government authorities and/or NGOs participating in consortia with local governments, tasked with carrying out actions to reduce digital exclusion.
- ▶ Promotion of funding in the project area.

Action 8.4 aims to support micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in providing broadband Internet access directly to end users through the construction of telecommunications infrastructure between the nearest or most effective point of Internet distribution and the end user. It seeks to ensure that access is provided in areas where this activity would not be commercially viable. This action supports the implementation of 8.3.

'Operational Programme Development of Eastern Poland 2007 – 2013'

['Operational Programme Development of Eastern Poland 2007 – 2013'](#) (*Program Operacyjny Rozwój Polski Wschodniej 2007 – 2013*) is a regional policy instrument aimed at improving access to broadband internet in Eastern Poland's five most disadvantaged regions: Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, Podlaskie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie. They are characterised by low living standards, limited economic development and insufficient growth factors. It has set forth the following targets for the five eastern regions by 2013:

- ▶ access to broadband services to 90 % of households;
- ▶ access to broadband services to 100 % of public institutions and enterprises.

Under Priority II 'Infrastructure of an Information Society', the measure 'Broadband network in Eastern Poland' calls for:

- ▶ establishment of a trans-regional broadband network comprising five regional backbone networks in the provinces of Eastern Poland;
- ▶ training of groups threatened by digital exclusion (up to 10 % of eligible costs).

Principal beneficiaries under this measure include territorial self-government bodies, unions and associations of territorial self-government bodies, entrepreneurs and NGOs.

Regional Operational Programmes 2007 – 2013

The Regional Operational Programmes 2007 – 2013 (*Regionalne Programy Operacyjne, ROP*) are designed to take advantage of the European Regional Development Fund, and as such serve as the main instruments for implementing a regional development policy until 2013. The main objective of ROP is improving regional competitiveness and increasing its socio-economic and spatial cohesion.

ROP manage the financial resources allocated to support the various regions of the country in areas such as the information society. They are adapted to the needs of each individual region, and numerous eInclusion actions can be found in the 16 ROP (one programme for each region). The priority area 'Technical infrastructure' comprises eInclusion, and specifically measure 2.2 'Information Society Infrastructure' (services and applications for the citizens).

'Cities on Internet' Association

The [Cities on Internet](#) Association (*Stowarzyszenie Miasta w Internecie, COI*) pursues various activities together with local regions in the joint implementation of action plans for information society development. Such activities are based on good planning practices and methodologies for creating

innovative projects by the EU. Projects are focused on supporting local initiatives and raising awareness about the possibilities of using ICT for local and regional development. Various communication activities conducted by advisory bodies (i.e. conferences, courses, workshops, seminars and meetings) trigger information sharing on the critical needs of ICT use, while contributing to the preparation of new innovative eDevelopment projects.

'[eDevelopment for Mazovia](#)' (*eRozwoju Mazowska*, SIRMPlus) became the first such project. Actions intend to systematise and speed up the implementation of eServices for local citizens based on four priorities:

- ▶ building a system of online services for the general public;
- ▶ stimulating the growth of a knowledge-based economy;
- ▶ bridging the digital divide;
- ▶ managing eDevelopment, and creating and enhancing human capital.

The eDevelopment project outlined the estimated costs and resources needed for eight major projects to be implemented during the seven-year period. They are aimed directly at improving the quality of life of Mazovia residents and ensuring broadband access. Mazovia is the largest of Poland's 16 administrative regions. Other regions which followed suit were Świętokrzyskie, Łódź, Wielkopolskie, Western Pomerania and Podkarpackie.

Library Development Programme 2009-2013

The [Library Development Programme](#) (2009-2013) is a long-term, innovative, nationwide undertaking that will help transform public libraries in all rural, semi-urban and urban areas (up to 20 000 inhabitants) into local centres of knowledge and activity. Thanks to modern ICT, libraries will contribute to reducing the digital divide and providing people better economic and social opportunities. It aims to increase access to computers, the Internet and training through a network of rural public libraries in Poland. Approximately 3 350 libraries in 1 120 communes will receive development support to provide thousands of people living in villages and small cities access to ICT that can help improve the quality of their lives. The programme includes library staff training and educational initiatives, technology support for the libraries, capacity building of the national library system, and strong advocacy and outreach activities. On account of private funding, at least 2 050 software packages will be delivered to more than 1 900 local libraries.

Planned actions include:

- ▶ 1 910 computers to be delivered;
- ▶ 1 960 participants in library work planning and implementation workshops;
- ▶ 1 680 participants in specialised training;
- ▶ 2 685 participants in ICT training.

Free Internet for public libraries

In 2009, nearly 40 % of the 8 500 public libraries did not have access to the Internet, mainly in rural areas and small towns. Following the 2009 '[Memorandum of Understanding to Launch a Programme to Provide Polish Public Libraries with Internet Access](#)' co-signed by the government, the national telecommunications provider *Telekomunikacja Polska SA* (TP SA) and the Information Society Development Foundation (*Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*, FRSI) committed to supply all public libraries across Poland with fixed broadband connections through to 2012. For locations where this is not viable, TP SA will provide wireless broadband. Libraries do not incur any installation, activation or subscription costs for the duration of the agreement, and branches already equipped with digital media are given the option of switching to the provider scheme at no extra cost.

Distance education centres in rural areas

The Ministry of National Education (*Ministerstwo Edukacji Narodowej*) carried out the '[Distance Education Centres in rural areas](#)' project (*Centra kształcenia na odległość na wsiach*) between 2007-2008, which

was co-financed by the European Social Fund. 1 374 distance learning centres were established in rural areas. The centres are equipped with computers and software, as well as the required technical infrastructure. Furthermore, they provide free eLearning training.

eAccessibility

Status of eAccessibility

People with disabilities constitute a significant part of the disadvantaged population, accounting for 11.7 % of the entire population, or 4.5 million.

In 2008, as many as 69 % of people with legal disability status (aged 16-74) had never used a computer, and 75 % had never used the Internet, compared to 37.7 % and 43.7 % respectively for the general population.

Source: [Central Statistical Office](#)

Actions towards eAccessibility

'Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013'

One of the key actions of the '[Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013](#)' (*Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013*) is to adapt all public online services to W3C requirements.

'Computer for Homer 2010' programme

The overall goal of the '[Computer for Homer 2010](#)' (*Komputer dla Homera 2010*) programme is the occupational and social rehabilitation of the visually impaired. Financial assistance is provided for the purchase of assistive technology and Braille devices. It targets adults as well as seniors.

'Pegasus 2010' programme

'[Pegasus 2010](#)' (*Pegaz 2010*) intends to remove functional barriers that prevent, or impede education opportunities and gainful employment for the disabled. Subsidies are provided for assistive devices and ICT hardware and software. Funding schemes support both the general disabled population, as well as disabled students in all levels of education.

'Pythagoras 2007' programme

'[Pythagoras 2007](#)' (*Pitagoras 2007*) is directed at deaf, hearing impaired, and blind college and university students. It finances the purchase of hardware and software for visual impairment, deafness and hearing loss.

Digital Literacy and Competences

Status on Digital Literacy and Competences

The overall level of IT skills in Poland is roughly half of the EU average. This figure is strongly correlated to age. There is a distinct digital gap between the 16-24 age group and seniors over 65.

Source: [Eurostat](#)

Nearly 13 million Poles lack the basic skills to benefit from the content and services offered by the Internet. At the same time, they lack fundamental knowledge on the use of ICT in daily life and work. As a consequence, in the context of a knowledge-based economy, Polish opportunities for growth and global competitiveness are impaired.

Source: '[Digital Poland of Equal Opportunities](#)'

Actions towards stimulating Digital Literacy and Competences

'National Action Plan for Employment 2009-2011'

The continuous building of ICT skills and knowledge throughout the life of a Pole via formal, or informal means is a key priority area within the '[National Action Plan for Employment 2009-2011](#)' (*Krajowy Plan Działań na rzecz Zatrudnienia na lata 2009-2011*). Lifelong learning enhances social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development, but also competitiveness and employability. The strategy document targets the disabled, people over the age of 50 and marginalised groups.

Cities on Internet Association

The [Cities on Internet Association](#) (*Stowarzyszenie Miasta w Internecie*, COI), in cooperation with the [Information Society Development Foundation](#) (*Fundacja Rozwoju Społeczeństwa Informacyjnego*, FRSI), has launched a social campaign for the digital education of adult Poles. It is aimed at mobilising support for the design and implementation of a nationwide adult digital education programme.

COI, in its capacity as a partner, assisted several local governments in the preparation of four eInclusion project proposals in the framework of the call '8.3 PO Innovative Economy' ('[National Innovative Economy Operational Programme](#)', Priority VIII, 8.3 'Preventing digital exclusion - eInclusion').

The overall purpose of the eInclusion projects is to provide underprivileged households with computer equipment, Internet access and comprehensive training in order to acquire the required skills for computer/Internet use in all aspects of everyday life. In total, the projects include 37 training sessions (1 056 hours) targeting 325 households. A subsidiary aim is to replace the hardware of local agencies, i.e. the local community centres designated by the partner municipalities.

The four projects are the following:

- ▶ **'Internet for Rural Western Pomerania'**: provide support to 65 households in the municipality of Choszczno (project leader) and the municipality of Barlinek.
- ▶ **'MEW@ - Digital Competence'**: offer enhanced training to 90 families in rural areas in the local government of Nowe Warpno (leader), the municipality of Gryfice and the town of Międzyzdroje.
- ▶ **'Equal Internet opportunities in Suwalski'**: target 120 households in the Podlasie province and Suwalski county (leader), in partnership with the municipality of Suwalski and the village of Raczki.
- ▶ **'Equal Internet opportunities in Narwiański'**: support to 50 families in the Podlasie province and involves the Choroszcz municipality (leader).

Another round of calls for proposals in the framework of the '8.3 PO Innovative Economy' action began on 2 August 2010.

'Digital Poland of Equal Opportunities'

The 2010 memorandum '[Digital Poland of Equal Opportunities](#)' (*Polska Cyfrowa Równych Szans*) calls for the establishment and implementation of a universal digital education programme for the years 2011-2014 aimed primarily at adults over 45 years of age, the rural population, the disabled, women and public sector employees. Other actions set forward by the memorandum include:

- ▶ creation of a central, operational and know-how management centre for public investment in ICT and competence-building actions;
- ▶ creation and implementation of a programme for alternative use of ICT solutions in education, in line with the needs of the 21st century.

'Interkl@sa Programme'

Interkl@sa is a country-wide cooperation network made up of thousands of educational institutions, teachers and NGOs all working together to bring Polish education closer to EU standards. The '[Interkl@sa Programme](#)' helps to equip schools with computers and Internet access, organises teacher training and promotes the use of ICT. It focuses on areas within the education sector that are characterised by a higher digital exclusion risk.

'Student II' programme

The strategic objective of the '[Student II - lifelong learning for the disabled](#)' programme (*kształcenie ustawiczne osób niepełnosprawnych*) is to provide people with disabilities equal opportunities to receive an education, and to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment, including digital competencies. It is intended mainly for people with disabilities enrolled in institutions of higher learning, teacher training colleges, secondary schools and vocational schools.

'eVita3' 2009-2010 programme

The '[eVita3](#)' 2009-2010 programme targets rural communities within municipalities across the country in an effort to foster ICT for the benefit of socio-economic development. The activities planned under the scheme are directed primarily at government, business, NGOs and youth. Training and advice for programme leaders (local government and municipal office authorities, NGOs management) in planning and carrying out projects to build an information society, is being provided. Local instructors are coached to conduct training in basic computer skills and the Internet to residents.

Polish Virtual University

The [Polish Virtual University](#) (*Polski Uniwersytet Wirtualny*) offers courses and supplementary classes on the Internet. Its task is to promote modern educational methods, and as such functions as a competence centre for eLearning (online distance learning) methodology, technology and organisation. It provides state-of-the-art ICT and methodological support to all interested educational establishments, especially higher learning institutions.

E-ABC

[E-ABC](#) (*E-Lementarz*) is a television programme that promotes the idea of the information society, and the practical everyday use of advanced technologies and ICT solutions.

BIBWEB

[BIBWEB](#) is an online training platform that offers workshops and training for librarians in the scope of new ICT and web-based technologies. The three modular courses introduce users to Internet basics, web search techniques and web page design.

eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

Status on eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

According to the Riga Dashboard, the 'Index of Regular Internet Use in At-Risk Groups by Country', compiled by the European Commission's '[Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report](#)' (2010), Poland at 0.59 for the 'Riga Total-at-Risk Groups' is below the EU-27 average (0.68).

Actions towards eInclusion and Cultural Diversity

EU-Imminent

[EU-Imminent](#) is a free online entrepreneurship resource aimed at assisting immigrants in setting up a business in their host country. The website serves as an interactive platform for current and future entrepreneurs with an immigrant background, and hosts a comprehensive online training course, as well as podcasts, videos and ezines covering topical issues for potential entrepreneurs living outside their country of origin. It contains up-to-date information related to business start-ups in Poland. The Polish Chamber of Commerce is the EU-Imminent project partner.

Inclusive eGovernment

Status on Inclusive eGovernment

According to the 2009 EC report '[Smarter, Faster, Better eGovernment - 8th Benchmark Measurement](#)', Poland has significantly progressed since the 2007 benchmark, and leapfrogged in the ranking as a result. In terms of full online availability, it has achieved 53 %, 27 percentage points higher than 2007. In terms of online sophistication, it now stands at 74 % (20 percentage points higher than 2007). The 'User Experience' of Polish websites is on track. It achieved 64 % on 'Usability' and 38 % on 'User Satisfaction Monitoring'. The portal-related scores, 'One-Stop-Shop Approach' and 'User-focused Portal Design', are rated below the EU27+ average and require further attention. Poland scores reasonably well in terms of accessibility of their national portal.

The online availability and sophistication of services for citizens tend to lag behind. Usage by citizens is relatively low in comparison with the EU average. Responsibility for eGovernment is part of a wider information society strategy. eGovernment policy focuses on improving basic infrastructure across all levels of government.

Source: [Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report 2010](#)

Actions towards Inclusive eGovernment

'Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013'

The '[Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013](#)' (*Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013*) lays down the following eAccessibility-related initiatives:

- ▶ Fulfilling the needs of citizens and businesses by facilitating access to ICT-based public services.
- ▶ Providing extensive support to groups susceptible to digital exclusion by identifying and removing barriers that deprive such groups of access to public online services.
- ▶ Ensuring the multi-channel distribution of public services, so that the progress of technology does not hamper their usability and they are easily accessible for all target users.
- ▶ Removing technological barriers in order to ensure citizens benefit fully from public online solutions.

'National Computerisation Plan for the period 2007- 2010'

The aim of the '[National Computerisation Plan for the period 2007-2010](#)' (*Plan Informatyzacji Państwa na lata 2007-2010*) is to introduce 24 eServices between 2007 and 2013. It details the level of development of eGovernment and is a starting point for discussion on the priorities of the action plan, which includes eAccessibility.

The Future of eInclusion

Research in Practice & Future Challenges

Future Challenges

'Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013'

The '[Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013](#)' (*Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013*) provides a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats), which assesses the prospects of information society development in Poland:

- ▶ Development of the information society is threatened by: declining student interest in technical studies and sciences; the ageing population; the elderly's reluctance and distrust in using new technologies; and the digital exclusion threat in certain geographical areas and social groups.
- ▶ Weaknesses that may hamper the development of the information society include the low saturation of schools with ICT solutions, the insufficient links between the educational system and labour market needs, as well as the low rate of adult education. Additionally, there is still a considerable segment of the population that is either not interested in using ICT, or just lacks the necessary skills, not only among seniors, but in all age groups.
- ▶ Despite growing interest, the absorption of ICT solutions by companies is below the Member States average and the ICT industry displays a poor performance.
- ▶ The lack of a consistent plan for developing the information society that encompasses all governmental departments and agencies, and the inadequate cooperation between them, is a key factor for the overall slowdown in such activities.
- ▶ Another opportunity is the allocation of considerable public funds for the development of ICT structure related to the preparations for Euro 2012. In addition, Poland has been given a tremendous opportunity to use its EU Presidency in 2011 to achieve objectives related to the development of the information society in the EU.

Report on the telecommunications market in Poland in 2009

The '[Report on the telecommunications market in Poland in 2009](#)' (*Raportu o stanie rynku telekomunikacyjnego w Polsce za 2009 rok*) detailed the state of play of the telecommunications sector. The year 2009 witnessed rapid change in telecommunications, both technologically and in terms of customer requirements. It stressed the importance and necessity for regulatory action in the field of telecommunications, as proper rules and regulations in the sector are vital to the future availability of broadband services. All market actors agreed that the most topical and pressing issue in the telecommunications industry was to create appropriate investment conditions in order to eliminate the digital divide entirely.

'Broadband network projects' workshop

A [workshop](#) on broadband network projects in Poland was held in Warsaw in May 2010. It put forth the following future goals and objectives:

- ▶ support the policy-making and evaluation activities of regional government on ICT matters;
- ▶ document the diffusion of ICT in the regions and provide international benchmarks;
- ▶ encourage dialogue on ICT-related topics;
- ▶ scenario analyses over new technological trajectories (WiMax) or paradigms (Web 2.0);
- ▶ reduce duplication of costs due to uncoordinated monitoring activities.

European Commission - eInclusion Practice

eInclusion practice (epractice.eu) is an information and exchange service for European professionals.

The eInclusion factsheets are one of the epractice.eu services. The factsheets present an overview of the eInclusion status and progress in the European countries.

The eInclusion factsheets are produced and updated once a year.

eInclusion practice is an initiative of the Directorate General for the Information Society and Media.

Production/Publishing: eInclusion Practice Editorial Team, EUROPEAN DYNAMICS S.A.

