TELEWORK WEEK 98

WATCHING EUROPE WORK

Telework Week 98 paints picture of Europeans at work

The evidence of a changing workforce is all around us, but it takes a well organised event like Telework Week 98 to show us how far we’ve come in such a short time. The event itself gets larger and more sophisticated every year and the people and corporations it highlights represent a wider range of the human experience. Both on the web and at local venues, the event has grown from a grass roots meeting-of-the-minds to a well financed, corporate sponsored celebration that reaches tens of thousands.

This year the European Commission, France Telecom, Telecom Italia, Siemens, Cisco, Toshiba and European Telework Development hosted the event, which took place during the first week of November.

Teleworking a priority

EU governments were also well represented, as high-ranking cabinet ministers showcased recent efforts to make telecommuting, the virtual workplace and offsite handheld communication devices common terms in today’s workplace. For example, Ms. Barbara Roche, the British Minister for Small firms, Trade and Industry, plans to launch several initiatives aimed at making teleworking a priority for every business in the UK. In Italy, Portugal and Holland teleworking is making a difference in the lives of those with disabilities. In the Dutch initiative, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has launched a targeted effort aimed at reaching those citizens who were previously excluded from the labour process. In this way, teleworking widens the labour pool, reduces government expenditures, returns skilled workers to the workforce and opens doors to those who were once locked out of the system.

The winners

In keeping with the telework theme, votes could be cast on the Awards website. This year, over 2,000 electronic votes were cast. And without further adieu... the winners are:

Category One
Best Contribution to European Competitiveness
First Place: Telecom Italia Mobile

Category Two
Best Advertising Campaign
First Place: BT

Category Three
Most Entrepreneurial Use of Telework
First Place: KITE

Category Four
Most Innovative Use of Technology
First Place: CSELT

Category Five
Best Public Initiative
First Place: Fueva

Category Six
Best Contribution to European Sustainability
First Place: THINK

Category Seven
Best Single Article or Programme
First Place: Teleworker Magazine

For further information on the Telework week and presentation of the awards finalists, visit: http://www.ewt.org/contents.htm

See page 2 for the latest publications on Teleworking.
TELEWORK ENTERS THE MAINSTREAM

2.5% of Europeans are teleworkers

Teleworking is coming out of the closet, according to the most recent figures released by European Commission. Today some four million people across the European Union – that's 2 percent of the total workforce – are working in this new way. This is twice the number of people involved in teleworking one year ago. Even more significant is the fact that telework is no longer perceived by those involved as a 'special work status', but as a normal way of working – signalling its entry into the mainstream.

These observations and a comprehensive body of information on the state of teleworking in the EU today have been published in the annual Telework Status Report that highlights efforts made through various European initiatives – such as the Structural Funds, Trans European Networks, and EU Research Programmes.

To obtain a copy of the Status Report, point your browser to http://www.eto.org.uk/telework/tw98/index.htm

or contact:
European Commission, ACTS Central Office:
Tel: +32 2 295 06 54
Fax: +32 2 295 06 54
e-mail: ACO@bxl.dg13.cec.be

A further body of useful information is contained in the publication that documents the discussions at the Annual European Assembly on New Ways to Work, held in Stockholm last year. This publication gives a wealth of practical information, including a chapter entitled "European Top 100 Telework Cases".

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Implementing Telework, a CD-ROM recently published by the MIRTI project of the European Commission's Telematics Application Programme examines the Telework from the Industrial relations perspective. It outlines 27 collective agreements recently achieved on teleworking, offers 14 case studies and gives practical advice such as checklists and recommendations for implementing telework, and other useful tips. This information has been specially prepared for national and local government bodies, employers, employees and their representatives, community organisations and the self-employed.

www.telework.mirti.org
http://www.eto.org.uk

SUCCESS STORY

HOW EURES LINKS BUSINESS AND LABOUR

Information Society Service creates new cross-border job market

Some people's vision of a useful Information Society services might be a skilled tradesman walking into a high street 'employment shop' in Stoke on Trent, and securing a year's contract on a major construction project in 1,500 kilometres away in Berlin.

Fiction? Certainly not! Thousands of skilled European tradesmen and professionals are finding jobs in other countries today through the EURES network. This is an information service created with European Union funding to make cross-border employment a reality for workers of all skill levels.

The EUROPment Employment Services (EURES) is a unique co-operative network designed to improve the mobility of European workers. Much more than a database or Internet site, EURES goes beyond the usual protocol of listings and categories. Made possible by advances in Information and Communications Technology, EURES remains surprisingly human at its core. This is because a staff of 500 'Euroadvisers', located throughout the European Economic Area (EEA), combine information with guidance and placement advice to help both job seekers and employers interested in the international job market.

More than a job service
The advisors start from a technical base. Using a database that is specifically designed to connect mobile workers from across Europe, with employers seeking non-nationals. In the 3 years since its inception, the network and the experience level of advisors have grown considerably, allowing coverage of a wider geographic area and more types of jobs. But EURES is more than a job service linking worker with worker. Advisors also use the system to provide their clients with useful details on working conditions, living situations and financial matters in other countries. This may sound straightforward, but historically – with a different set of administrative rules in each European country – these are precisely the issues that become obstacles for employees seeking work in another country. Using EURES as an Information Society tool, the Euradvisors are changing the way people think about work, clearing many of the traditional barriers hindering easy mobility and creating new cross border partnerships.

EURES achievements
And it's working. The European Commission has recently adopted a report highlighting EURES achievements. The report shows that EURES was instrumental in the recruitment and placement of over 1 million workers from 1996-1997, twice the number reached during a similar period in 1994 and 1995.

The success of EURES was noted by Social Affairs Commissioner Padraig Flynn, during a speech at a Social Policy Forum in Brussels. "When I launched EURES three and a half years ago, I said that I believed it had great potential. I underestimated it. The last few years have seen EURES take off. In greatly facilitating freedom of movement, EURES has played an important role in our employment strategy."

The health sector, information technology and the tourism industry, logically seem to benefit most from the success... but the Commission also noted advances in non-traditional jobs, as areas previously not known for cross-border cooperation begin to show increased mobility. EURES role has also become more balanced over the past 2 years, as co-operation with employers has become a higher priority. In fact, the number of jobs available on a daily basis fluctuates between 50,000 and 100,000.

Long term Internet focus
But EURES is looking beyond co-operation that provides jobs, information on working and living conditions, links to national Public Employment Services Internet sites and strategies for linking employees and employers.

And this is just the start of a long term Internet focus. Future prospects also include implementing a strategy for correcting labour market imbalances and increasing the skills of the average worker. It has long been a goal of the Commission and the Public Employment Services to provide a link between business and labour...a link that benefits both. EURES is making that a reality.

EURES was initially created as a project under the European Union programme for the Interchange of Data between Administrations (IDA).

For more information on EURES see:
http://europa.eu.int/jobs/eures

IDA: http://www.ispo.cec.be/ida
Telematics has been at the forefront of innovative medical care for over a decade. But the fast-changing, rapidly evolving technology upon which it is based remains elusive for many practitioners and administrators.

A new book from the European Health Telematics Observatory and The British Royal Society of Medicine is helping to change that. “European Telemedicine 99” provides practical solutions based on case studies, as well as the latest theory on newly emerging applications and advanced technologies.

The book also serves to highlight the change that. “European Telemedicine 99” fills that void. All IRIS initiatives have successfully applied the same innovative methodology, by following a strategic, bottom-up, inclusive and integrative approach. They all managed to raise the level of awareness and to create consensus between, and commitment of, key regional players around a Regional Information Society Strategy and Action Plan, which eventually was instrumental to benefit from Structural Funds support.

The experience and the lessons learned from this experimental pilot action have been summarised in the new publication. This publication provides two perspectives: the first, of observant participation, from a team of external evaluators. Both perspectives were designed with a view to learning whether and how regions might use the Information Society as a new paradigm for regional regeneration and development. The publication is accompanied by a CD-ROM which contains many of the basic documents as well as accompanying reports produced in the context of the IRIS initiative.

For more information, contact the European Health telematics Observatory at: www.ehto.be/ehto or e-mail Ms. Maria Laires: maria.laires@ehto.org

Meeting the challenge of change: 1888-1999 continued from page 1.

The CERP challenge invites students in public relations programme to inform European consumers about the Information Society, and to motivate Europeans to take advantage of these benefits themselves. By presenting the innovative ideas of tomorrow’s European public affairs leaders, the CERP challenge can help convince the Information Society Luddites that this is one high speed train that they should be jumping on board.

COMMUNICATING THE BENEFITS OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

The CERP challenge invites students in public affairs to propose a communication programme about the Information Society, and to motivate people in all age groups to be more comfortable in taking advantage of the benefits of the Information Society.

The Challenge is open to all institutions in Europe that have a full-time course in public relations. Entrants are free to select their own target audience, provided it has an international scope.

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NEW REFERENCE BOOK PROMOTES TELEMEDICINE

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For further information on the follow up of the IRIS approach, or for ordering copies of this publication, please contact:
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EVENTS UPDATE

OECD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON E-COMMERCE

The Commission, led by Commissioner Bangemann and representatives from DGs I, III, XIII, XV, XXI and XXIV, participated in the OECD Ministerial level conference in Ottawa, Canada, 7-9 October. The conference followed several earlier initiatives taken by the OECD and the Commission to develop a common approach to the evolution of e-commerce as a key tool for trade and commerce and an enabler of growth around the world. The OECD Ministers approved an Action Plan and several declarations – on consumer protection, privacy and authentication and on taxation – outlining the work to be undertaken by the OECD and other international organisations to facilitate the effective, secure and easily accessible application of e-commerce in worldwide trade and commerce. To take advantage of this international gathering (600 or more delegates including ministers and officials, as well as business representatives, from the 29 OECD member states and the European Commission) the Ottawa Delegation organized a booth at the e-commerce showcase. The showcase represented the efforts primarily of the private sector but also of governments to introduce new services, technologies and applications of e-commerce to the global community represented by the 800 or more delegates while the booth highlighted the Commission's role in the development of programs and policies in support of e-commerce. It was also represented in a joint exhibit together with Industry Canada, describing the work being undertaken by the EU and Canada in the Global Inventory Project. The Commission was thus able to demonstrate in a tangible way its important role in the evolution of e-commerce, not only in the EU but worldwide.

For more information, contact: patrice.husson@cec.be

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FINLAND: EUROPE’S IS LABORATORY

The role of citizens in a technology-driven world

Finland will host the 2nd Annual International Congress on Media & Citizenship in an Information Society, 6-9 January, 1999. This unique conference will examine how living in an Information Society can affect quality of life and the exercise of power... From politics to employment and housing to recreation, some of Europe’s leading thinkers will contribute to the Finnish IT experiment. Advanced Information Technologies, including the Internet and multimedia are becoming a part of daily life, especially in Finland, where more people per capita subscribe to cell phones and on-line services. The conference, hosted by STRA (Finnish National Fund for Research and Development) and the Parliament of Finland, challenges participants to consider technology in the context of human interaction and the political process. Antti Hautamaki, Director of Research at SITRA, frames the challenge of the congress quite succinctly, "Will IT raise the quality of life... or will it lead to unemployment, alienation and a technosystem no longer under human control?" To explore these issues and many more, plan on a midwinter excursion to the warmly welcoming northern environs and witness firsthand the Nordic perspective on IT and how it can play a positive role in society.

To obtain a copy of the program, send e-mail to: secretariat@congcreator.com. An exhibition will also be held during the congress. Exhibitors include financial services organisations, service solution suppliers, software and hardware vendors and IT providers.

For more information, point your browser to: www.kolumbus.fi/is99
Further contact details: see calendar.

EVENTS UPDATE

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CALENDAR

Technologies et organisation flexible : des défis pour l’emploi
14 December 1998
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Envisioning Knowledge – The knowledge society and the new media
3-4 February 1999
Munich (D)
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E-mail: ispo@ispo.cec.be

LEARNTEC ’99 - Multimedia education and learning
9-11 February 1999
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Information Society Project Office
Proceedings Information Day
15 February 1999
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http://www.cordis.lu/ist/infoday.htm

Euromedia ’99
27-28 April 1999
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