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# COMMUNICATIONS & STRATEGIES

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## Call for contributions

Special Issue – November 2004

## EU enlargement and ICTs

**Editorial Committee: Edmond BARANES, Jean-Claude BURGELMAN, Jerzy KUBASIK, Karl-Heinz NEUMANN, Gérard POGOREL & Didier POUILLOT**

On May 1<sup>st</sup> 2004, ten countries of Baltic Europe (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), central Europe (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia) and Mediterranean Europe (Cyprus and Malta) become members of the European Union. This enlargement of the Union represents a 20% increase in its population versus an increase in wealth of only 5%. Enlargement of the European Union is a major challenge for existing members and newcomers, doubtlessly offering benefits to both in the long term, but calling for heavy investment and several adjustments in the short term.

In recent years these countries have undertaken an extensive overhaul of their economic and political systems. Their ability to reform and react to changes in their environment consequently resulted in relatively sustained growth at a time when mature economies were hit hard after the speculative bubble surrounding the internet burst. This dynamic can be seen in their modernisation of telecommunications infrastructures by strengthening the role played by competition and attracting foreign investors to the telecommunications sector. This is particularly significant in terms of mobile telephony, where the catching up process was very rapid. Some countries like the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia now have penetration rates comparable to those of Western countries. This catching up phenomenon is naturally not homogenous. It reveals differing trends within these countries between urban and rural populations, for example, and complicates investment in modernising the fixed network.

This brief overview outlines the economic and political risks and opportunities associated with EU enlargement, especially in terms of the balance of power. The availability of a highly qualified and modestly paid workforce in new member countries offers large companies in the ICT sector fresh investment alternatives. Growth of 9.4% was seen in ICT markets in candidate countries in 2002, while average global growth did not exceed 5%.

However, the share of investment in ICTs versus GDP and the level of purchasing of information technologies per inhabitant remains lower than “standards” in Western Europe (which themselves are lower than in the USA).

In the ICT sector, enlargement also represents real investment and growth opportunities, as well as concerns regarding the Union’s capacity to cope with the individual situations of its new members.

The aim of this special edition is to identify trends in the ICT sectors of these countries, to analyse their impact on industry dynamics in the mid and long term by underlining the importance of regulatory frameworks and international cooperation. Contributions published for the first time should:

- Provide insights into ICT markets (IT, telecom, electronic media) in new member countries (detailed analysis of a country – strengths and weaknesses – comparison between countries and outline of specialisations, strategies of key players etc.)

- Identify the main “gaps” separating the newcomers from existing member states (degree of competition in telecommunications and the media, corporate investment in ICTs, R&D initiatives etc.), by underlining common and specific national problems, assessing the efforts expected to be made and the accompanying measures implemented on integration.

- Assess the consequences of integration in terms of direct investment, consumption, productivity and growth for the new member countries and, lastly, its impact on EU objectives in terms of ICTs.

As in previous years, the special edition of Communications & Strategies will be published to mark a seminar to be held in November 2004 in Montpellier (FR), which brings together industrial players (IDATE Foundation) and the authors of the papers selected.

The timetable for contributions is:

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| 28 May 2004                | Abstracts of proposed articles (2 pages) must be submitted to the Editorial Committee. |
| 15 June 2004               | A notice of selection will be sent to the authors.                                     |
| 13 August 2004             | Contributions must be received by the Editor in their final format.                    |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Sept. 2004 | Notification of acceptance/rejection of paper.   |

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