



Going Local 2011

Jaarcongres ECP-EPN

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Summary

After having welcomed the participants in the Going Local 2011 event, Arie van Bellen introduced the members of the panel for the discussion that followed: Gerard de Graaf (Director DG Information Society and Media, European Commission), Nicole Kroon (Directorate Regulatory Pressure & ICT-policy, a division of the Directorate General Business Trade and Industry & Innovation, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation (Min. EL&I), Arno Groenendijk (coordinator Agenda Digital Cities, Stedenlink). Questions to be answered were:

- Plans have been made (Digital Agenda Europe, Digital Agenda NL, etc.), which projects run smoothly and which offer problems?
- What (sub)themes are 'hot' for each one of you at this time of the year and why?
- Which contributions from public players (such as citizens, the business community, local projects) are valuable for you?
- What can you do for these players? What can you do together? How can this meeting today contribute to getting in touch more easily?

The general conviction is that the Digital Agenda Netherlands is gaining political importance as well as a firm anchoring in the national ICT & enterprise policy. Despite the different accents, priorities on a European, national and local level seem to head for the same strategic goals: it is time to go "really local", by strengthening the ties with the regional and local authorities, and with the business community and the academic world, and by bringing together all possible stakeholders and assessing ins and outs of existing projects.

Next on the agenda were local cases concerning different aspects of ICT and social challenges like usage, development, ownership, needs, financial aspects, privacy and so on. These cases made clear that more awareness-raising might be needed in order to ensure broader commitment, beyond "the usual suspects", and a bottom-up approach, both indispensable for a successful implementation. The concrete examples given showed that a lot of potential remains unused:

Anno 2030, Will there still be people living in Zeeland? What about infrastructure?

Arno Rootsart talked about wireless internet in the province of Zeeland. Several social and economic motives underlie this project (aging of the population, trying to stop talented people leaving the province, stimulating entrepreneurship and tourism, better/faster healthcare-on-the-spot). Since 2007 quite a few barriers have been evened out: realization is in sight, but not yet within arm's reach. The European Commission and the Ministry of EA&I are presented with questions concerning the European and the Dutch Digital Agendas.

Infrastructure in rural areas

Rob van Arkel, program manager Broadband of the Province of Overijssel, started a discussion on the project 'Wijk aan Land' about the European ambitions for rural areas. The Provincial States are going to invest 80 million Euros in spreading broadband in the so-called unprofitable areas.

Eindhoven: realization of the Brainport 2020 ambition, while focusing on the digital infrastructure.

Henk Brink, Alderman of Economics, Employment and Occupational Education, raised the subject of reducing regulatory pressure, facilitating tender procedures, the importance of the Digital Entrepreneurs' Dossier, good infrastructure, services and skills.

Enschede: Healthcare and ICT

Hans Haveman, program manager Healthcare, Municipality of Enschede spoke about Enschede as 'the City that Cares', about Longer Living at Home Independently through Remote Healthcare Monitoring, up to Care Made-to-Measure, which fits in better with the wishes and habits of people, with special attention to:

- support by means of ICT: The Ministry of Healthcare wants general practitioners to coordinate and direct healthcare supported by ICT;
- remote healthcare monitoring.

Education in the cloud

Mark Jan Ahne, managerial dossier keeper of Digital Agenda, Alderman Economic Affairs, Municipality of Deventer informed participants of education in the cloud at Deventer schools. He elucidated the practice of interactive teaching methods and digital blackboards, which cater for more made-to-measure lessons; he described the School in the Cloud and pointing systems which quickly notice dropouts. He paid special attention to legal issues.

Knowledge sharing

Mark Jan Ahne, alderman Economic Affairs Municipality of Deventer and Jan Wester, TNO speak about the importance of better knowledge sharing, both on a national and and international level. Jan Wester agrees with Ahne's ideas about European knowledge sharing as for regional activities. Jan Wester is one of the initiators of the Vanguard Group. The Vanguard Group is a joint activity of a number of European areas and cities (such as Friesland, Helsinki and Catalunya) , which exchange experiences and knowledge meant to result in optimal use of digitization for integral regional development. Together they are developing a Local Digital Agenda Exchange (LDAX), which focuses on the 'how' and not on the 'what'. What role could governments play in this exchange of knowledge and how can Europe contribute hereto?

Main messages

The main messages that were laid before the EU at the end of the Going Local event were:

- The need for an intensified competition on and between the ICT networks;
- A request for more clarity as regards state aid rules applied to next generation networks and for EU funding in support of broadband deployment in rural areas. This message will be taken onboard in the next revision of the State Aid Guidelines, due for the second half of 2012;
- The need for standards in the area of ICT and societal challenges;
- The need for policy makers to focus both on content and on infrastructure deployment. Two concrete requests were made: clarifying the copyright issues and supporting educational content in "small" languages;
- As regards EU funds for research, the level of financing should be adjusted downwards (lower co-financing rates by the EU, higher stakes from beneficiaries), on the principle "what is free has no value". Downstream activities are in fact not stimulated if research received 100% public funding. On the other hand, more flexibility was requested as regards the potential beneficiaries (SMEs should be able to participate) as well as the research focus;
- Facilitating the exchange of knowledge among European regions on how to implement the Digital Agenda, but also stimulating competition between them, for example via the EU or the Member States creating a simplified Regional Scoreboard, following the example of the Digital Agenda Scoreboard.

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