



Joint Declaration

The members of National Governments, professors from Universities and Academies of Science, and practitioners of research and education ICT infrastructures from the Eastern Partnership countries, as well as representatives of key organisations from the EU Member States, jointly agree on the following declaration.

Taking note of:

- The Warsaw Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit – September 2011¹

18. Co-operation and policy dialogue under the Eastern Partnership on education, research, youth and culture should be further enhanced. [...] A Common Knowledge and Innovation Space linked to Smart Growth and the EU innovation agenda will be established in order to give the policy more impact and visibility.

- The conclusions of the UNESCO/ITU Working Group on Broadband and Science – October 2011²

Broadband connectivity facilities are basic infrastructure in a modern society, just like roads, electricity or water; it almost becomes a human right –even more so when it's used for science. E-infrastructures build on broadband to provide online services to science and education communities. Not only have these services become today indispensable, they have also transformed the scientific process by enabling the instantaneous sharing of knowledge, virtual collaborations spanning the globe, and remote access to scientific resources and instruments. E-infrastructures are today one of the main engines of scientific progress and its potential in other social and economic areas is enormous. Developing regions stand to benefit in particular because broadband networks dramatically reduce the barriers of distance and location.

- The conclusions of the "Policies for Development of E-Infrastructures in Eastern European Countries" conference - November 2011³

25. Eastern Partnership participants affirmed that the development of e-infrastructure is a key policy for their countries and therefore, that this should be reflected in the multi-lateral dialogue of the Eastern Partnership, as well as in the bi-lateral one, especially in the context of the renewed interest in the partnership

¹ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/124843.pdf

² <http://www.broadbandcommission.org/work/working-groups/science.aspx>

³ <http://www.terena.org/publications/files/20120201-epe-report.pdf>

following the Warsaw summit and the perspective of a new roadmap that would specify the objectives, instruments and actions.

Witnessing:

- That the rapid development of e-infrastructure in many European countries has brought a high return on investment as well as the possibility to participate in research and development programmes.
- That past and current investments of the EC towards regional cooperation in research and education networking have proved highly successful in South-East Asia (TEIN), Latin America (ALICE), the Mediterranean region (EUMEDCONNECT), Sub-Saharan Africa (AfricaConnect), and the Caribbean region (CARIBnet).
- That aggregation of demand allows research and education networks to achieve economies-of-scale, improve their infrastructure, and in turn stimulate the use of new services and applications.
- How e-infrastructure is essential to knowledge-based societies, innovation, job creation and retention of talent.
- How societal challenges such as climate change, disasters, pandemics and resource management know no borders and need to be addressed through global and regional scientific collaboration.
- How high-capacity e-infrastructures open up greater possibilities in arts and culture through remote performances and teaching.

Agreed that:

- Development of e-infrastructures is a key priority of the Eastern Partnership and requires financial and technical support. The National Research and Education Networks of Eastern Partnership countries in conjunction with the GÉANT network and activities have an important role to play in terms of supporting research and facilitating learning through advanced services and applications.
- Development of e-infrastructures requires ongoing support for research and education networking. EC support for regional initiatives provides a catalyst for improvement, but National Governments should undertake to match this support to ensure that e-infrastructures can be sustained, and there is confidence to invest in new services and applications.
- Cost of connectivity remains a significant barrier to the development of e-infrastructures in the Eastern Partnership countries. National Governments will undertake to continue the process of improving the competitiveness of the telecommunications environments in their countries; specifically with respect to pricing and access to dark fibre circuits.

- National Research and Education Networks play a key role in developing and integrating e-infrastructures in Eastern Partnership countries. As well as connectivity and traditional network services, they also have a role in provision of services such as identity federations, grids and clouds to support end institutions and their users.
- GÉANT plays a key role in linking the e-infrastructures of Eastern Partnership countries and providing connectivity to the rest of Europe and other world regions. National Research and Education Networks should be supported to the level necessary to fully participate in the GÉANT network and activities.
- DANTE, TERENA and EGI.eu and National Research and Education Networks are invited to continue their training of the ICT specialists who are responsible for building and maintaining research and education networks in Eastern Partnership countries.
- Further consideration should be given as to how to retain ICT specialists working on research and education networks. Specialist skills and experience are essential to the development of e-infrastructures in Eastern Partnership countries.