OECD TISP

Workshop on Internet Traffic Exchange

Welcome speech

Ulrich Mohr

Head of Section, International Policy on Telecommunications and Posts

Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology (BMWi), Germany

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues,

Welcome in Berlin!

In times where the Internet has opened new ways of communication between citizens, companies and social institutions, the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology sees itself more and more as a focal point within the Government to promote all the issues related to the Information Society. It is in the light of this role that we co-organise the present OECD workshop in Berlin.

The Ministry's organisation reflects the broad spectrum of its activities. A total of 1762 persons work in the eight Directorates-General into which the Ministry is divided. Additional 7200 persons are employed in our eight subordinate agencies, which co-operate with the Ministry as important partners and view themselves primarily as service providers for the private sector. Among those agencies are the Federal Cartel Office - our competition authority - and the Federal Authority for Telecommunications and Posts - our regulator.

Prior to Berlin, the OECD has held three workshops on Internet issues in Dublin, Osaka and Venice. At each of these workshops Internet traffic exchange has been the focus of one of the sessions. Today, at our workshop, Internet traffic exchange and communications development are the leading issues.

Internet traffic exchange and global Internet connectivity are key topics on the international agenda. The financial mechanisms in place for the exchange of Internet traffic have been questioned. There is an ongoing discussion to which extend these mechanisms encourage world-wide Internet development.

To stimulate Internet development and to address the international digital divide, policy and regulatory reforms may be required. We may have to identify which regulatory barriers exist to the development of the Internet, including infrastructures such as international connectivity, domestic tele-density and Internet exchange points. Once identified, we

should guide countries to maximise the benefits of Internet development including lower costs for infrastructure services to their economies.

Internet telephony is an emerging service. ENUM is the Internet Engineering Task Force protocol that will assist in the convergence of the PSTN and the IP network. As Internet access grows, by devices other than PCs, ENUM is expected to be one of the key technologies facilitating communications between switched and IP based networks. We will certainly have an interesting ENUM information session tomorrow.

Let me present a brief overview on the history of this building.

The *Invalidenhaus* is on of the oldest buildings used by the Federal Government with regard to its 250 year history.

In 1747 King Frederick the Second of Prussia laid the cornerstone for the *Invalidenhaus* outside the city walls. The location was adjacent to the *Charité* Hospital, where "the view of the countryside regenerated spirit and soul". So the whole area here was in the countryside while today we are close to the city's centre.

In 1910 a magnificent building with sandstone facade in the style typical of the state buildings of the time was inaugurated. It hosted the "Imperial Academy for Military Medical Training" which provided places for 350 students and left no desire unfulfilled. It had comfortable living area, as well as reading rooms and a lecture theatre. In this lecture theatre we convene our workshop today.

The study did not only provide medical knowledge but also social polish in the banquet halls and reception rooms. Students learned to dance, play billiards and bridge, and they learned impeccable table manners.

More recently the complex was used as Government Hospital of the GDR, and also as hospital for diplomats.

In 1991 the decision was taken to relocate the Federal Ministry of Economics in this building and extensive conversation and restoration

work was carried out with the aim to re-create as far as possible the original conditions of the historically significant building.

You may have a look at the results during the next two days.

Finally I would like to express my thanks to AOL Europe for organising the cocktail this evening - where I was told, we will have the possibility to look at the service offered by of one of the largest European Internet service providers.

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues, I would like to assure you that I will do everything to make your stay in Berlin as fruitful and pleasant as possible. I look forward to very open and frank exchanges of views inspired by the academic tradition of this site.

I wish you a very successful workshop.