

Promote re-use of public sector information: a shared goal of EU, Latin America and the Caribbean

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The [Spanish Presidency](#) of the European Union, in collaboration with the European Commission and [ECLAC](#) (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), organized in La Granja de San Ildefonso (Segovia, Spain) during the 15th and 16th March the V European Union (EU) - Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) Ministerial Forum on the Information Society, entitled "Digital Content for a Digital Society".

As its main objective, the forum served to facilitate the exchange of experiences, perspectives and objectives of Information Society public policies on both sides of the Atlantic.

Nowadays, Information Society policies are in a crucial moment, since both, the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean, are designing new plans in this area, namely the European "Granada Strategy" and the Latin "eLAC2010". In this context, the participants of the forum looked through the recent public policies in this field and discussed the needs and priorities for future digital programmes, in order to, take into account of the specificities of each region, reduce the digital divide and foster economic growth.

The conclusions of the meeting were adopted by the Ministers and heads of delegations as the "[Declaration of La Granja](#)". This Declaration emphasizes the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in driving productivity and economic growth, the management of scarce resources and the creation of stable employment and recognizes the urgent need to reduce the digital divide and to help developing countries to fully benefit from ICTs.

All participating countries agreed to highlight the value of ICT as a crucial element in guaranteeing welfare and quality of life in different areas such as education, culture, healthcare, e-government, work, energy and environmental issues. In this context, during the Forum it was pointed out that the public authorities are required to respond in a dynamic way to the new demands, to promote investment and innovation, to guarantee citizens' rights to enjoying the benefits of the digital age, to ensure the security and privacy on the network and to protect digital content creators' rights.

In this sense, the Declaration of La Granja establishes the need to move towards universal broadband access and a dynamic regulation that encourages investment and innovation as some of the most significant policy objectives. It also notes the shared responsibility of governments, private sector and civil society in promoting actions to foster online safety and protect privacy. In addition, the text highlights the growing value of digital content and the opportunities the Internet provides to its users to create and distribute digital content and new services.

Moreover, the text calls upon public authorities to increase their use of ICTs so as to provide a better service to citizens and to enhance openness and transparency, thus promoting the participation of citizens in public life. In particular, the text of the Declaration emphasizes the benefits of the Internet and the web 2.0 for Administrations, users and the private sector.

The Declaration also mentions the need for governments and governmental entities to stimulate openness and access to public data, in order to promote its re-use and to enable the creation of new services for citizens and businesses. The text also encourages public authorities to make reusable information available to citizens and businesses in an easily accessible form.

Consequently, the Declaration of La Granja establishes the promotion of public sector information

re-use and, more specifically, the need to improve the availability of public information by electronic means and accessible formats, as a shared political objective of the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean, hence, endorsing a priority promoted, among others, by the [Aporta Project](#) since its inception.