



From Internet of Things to Internet for People

ANEC statement on European Commission Communication

« Internet of things - An action plan for Europe »

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ANEC welcomes the European Commission Communication to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions on « Internet of things - An action plan for Europe », published on 18 June 2009, as it fully takes on board consumers demand that the “Internet of Things (IoT)” is an “Internet for people”¹.

ANEC, who has been working jointly with BEUC on this issue², believes that the Internet of Things needs to be built in such a way as to ensure an easy and safe user control. Consumers need confidence to fully embrace the Internet of Things in order to enjoy its potential benefits and avoid any risks to their security and privacy.

We therefore praise the Commission for committing to the respect of the principles of openness, neutrality and accountability of the Internet of Things architecture and of the fundamental right of consumers to privacy and personal data protection³.

Furthermore, we welcome the application of those important principles as the guiding light the Commission will use in monitoring any standardisation developments on Internet of Things⁴. In ANEC’s opinion, a balance between efficiency and openness must always be maintained in the standards development process, in order to allow all concerned stakeholders to meaningfully participate. And we consider that standards could be use to embed privacy protection features since the design phase of Internet of Things applications (“privacy by design”).

ANEC is particularly pleased by the Commission commitments to tackle the crucial issue of tags waste management and electromagnetic fields emissions (EMF)⁵. ANEC expressed several times concerns about the amount of heavy metals contained in the sensors that will allow all objects to be connected to one another,

¹ Communication, page 11

² Joint ANEC/BEUC answer to the consultation on Commission Staff Working paper on Early challenges regarding the “Internet of Things” (ANEC-ICT-2008-G-062).

³ Communication, page 5 and 6

⁴ Communication, page 7

⁵ Communication, page 10



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and about the risks the increasing number of sources of EMF emissions represented by the Internet of Things sensors pose to consumer health.

While looking forward to further contributing to the “Internet of Things for People”, we would like to reiterate the urgency for the Commission to effectively address the digital divide issues as consumers of all ages and abilities will be more and more dependent on Internet of Things technologies for exercising their fundamental rights such as electronic voting. Full access to Internet of Things applications can only happen when end-to-end connectivity and interoperability between mainstream and assistive technologies are ensured.

ANEC in Brief

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, representing and defending consumer interests in the development of technical standards, in the application of certification schemes to standards, and in the creation or revision of legislation on products and services. ANEC brings together national consumer organisations from the EU Member States and EFTA countries in order to define European positions on matters affecting consumer protection and welfare. ANEC receives funding from the European Commission’s DG SANCO and the EFTA Secretariat. It relies too on the participation of volunteer experts which is considered a contribution in kind. Consumer participation in standardisation is crucial. Consumer representation complements the business view, and goods and services based on standards developed with effective consumer participation can be more easily accepted in the market place. In the EU context, consumers ensure that the public interest is represented in the standardisation work that complements European legislation and broader public policy initiative