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The Information Society Policy in the European Union and Poland

Abstract: *This article focuses on the EU and Polish information society policies. The current state of EU policy in this respect is presented on the basis of the implemented strategies, plans and initiatives. The Polish information society policy is presented in chronological order, with special attention given to the attitude of Polish authorities towards the EU information society policy. Furthermore, both parts additionally emphasize the role of academic research in this policy.*

Introduction

The aim of this article is to present the current situation with respect to the development of the information society in the European Union (EU) and in Poland. The failures in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy gave rise to a revision of the key principles underlying the development of the EU information society, and the preparation of new projects and implementation of new tools stimulating the development of digital infrastructure. The Europe 2020 strategy constitutes the basis for the new actions, which are meant to contribute to the economic development of the entire EU. One of its seven main projects is the Digital Agenda for Europe, which constitutes the continuation of the EU's information society policy. The Digital Agenda for Europe, commenced already in 2010, constitutes a new outlook on the implementation of the principles of the information society in Europe and on the role of academic research in this regard.

The second part of this article refers to the information society policy in Poland. While discussing the changes which have taken place in Poland in the last twenty years, we note the influence of the process of preparation for

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the accession to the EU, and later the membership in this organisation, on the directions of the socio-economic solutions implemented. Many fields of Polish policy and economy are clearly inspired by EU solutions. The Polish information society policy is a good example of this. This article presents the history of Polish policy concerning the information society and the attitude of the Polish authorities towards EU policy in this field. Special emphasis has been put on the difficulties in reaching Poland's goals and on the position of academic research in this policy.

1. EU information society policy, 1993–2012

Below we present the information society policy of the European Union – its historical outline and its role in the Europe 2020 strategy, which is currently being implemented. Particular attention is paid to the Digital Agenda for Europe and the academic research related to it.

1.1. History of the information society policy in the European Union

The first explicit reference to issues related to the information society can be found in Jacques Delors' White Paper of 1993,¹ in which the emerging information society was perceived as a prospective new source of economic and employment growth. Just a year later, more attention was devoted to the information society in the famous report² of Commissioner Martin Bangemann, who was responsible for the development of telecommunications in the EU between 1995–1999. The information society policy was officially put in place under this name in 1999–2012 by one of the Directorates-General of the European Commission (EC), which was first named DG Information Society, later changed to the DG Information Society and Media in 2005. This Directorate-General was established as a result of the restructuring of DG Telecommunications, Information Industries and Innovation, established in 1986. This undeniably represented a turn from purely technical issues related to the development of pan-European telecommunications networks to social issues regarding the use of information and communication technologies by the entirety of European society.

¹ Commission of the European Communities, *Growth, competitiveness and employment. The challenges and the ways forward into the 21st century. White paper*, Brussels, 5.12.1993, COM (1993) 700.

² *Europe and the global information society. Recommendations of the high-level group on the information society to the Corfu European Council*, "Bulletin of the European Union" suppl. No. 2/1994, pp. 4–39.

The Bangemann report proposed ten initiatives aimed at the development of tele-information technology for the European society: telework, tele-training, networks linking universities and research centres, tele-information services for small and medium enterprises, road traffic management, air traffic management, networks for the healthcare system, computerisation of the public procurement sector, trans-European networks of public administration and information highways for rural areas.

The next steps taken with regard to the information society policy were: the Green Paper *Living and working in the Information Society. People first* published in July 1996,³ followed by the eEurope⁴ initiative. The initiative was consequently adopted in the 10-year EU development plan for 2000–2010, known as the Lisbon Strategy,⁵ which included a comprehensive development plan for information society policy. The initiative was comprised of two action plans. The first was eEurope 2002,⁶ the main aims of which were: to lead the citizens into the information civilisation in as many areas of their life as possible, and to support social cohesion and develop confidence in new technologies. The second plan was eEurope 2005,⁷ dedicated to the development and implementation of four key electronic services: e-government, e-business, e-health, and e-learning. Another goal was to ensure, by 2005, universal access to broadband Internet, third generation mobile network and digital television, while also ensuring the security of the information highway.

By the mid-2000s, the execution of the Lisbon Strategy was encountering many problems, mainly due to the fact that most actions related to the development of the European information society had to be financed from the national budgets of the Member States, which made it difficult to achieve the expected joint results. Furthermore, the technical infrastructure was at different levels of development. The implementation of the information society policy was based on non-binding EU documents (plans, strategies,

³ Commission of the European Communities, *Green paper. Living and working in the Information Society. People first*, Brussels 26.07.1996, COM (1996) 389.

⁴ Commission of the European Communities, *eEurope – An Information Society for All*, Brussels 8.12.1999, COM (1999) 687.

⁵ Lisbon European Council. Conclusions of the Presidency, “Bulletin of the European Union” No. 3/2000, <http://ec.europa.eu/archives/bulletin/en/200003/somma02.htm> (last visited 2.04.2013).

⁶ Commission of the European Communities, *eEurope 2002. An Information Society For All. Draft Action Plan prepared by the European Commission for the European Council in Feira, 19–20 June 2000*, Brussels, 24.05.2000, COM (2000) 330.

⁷ Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *eEurope 2005: An information society for all. An Action Plan to be presented in view of the Sevilla European Council, 21/22 June 2002*, Brussels, 28.05.2002, COM (2002) 263.

initiatives), i.e. open cooperation, which encouraged progress along this path but did not make any of these steps obligatory.

The amended Lisbon Strategy, published in 2005,⁸ was aimed at eliminating these barriers, as well as directing the actions in this field towards innovation, improving the conditions for conducting business activity and developing a knowledge-based economy. In relation to this another strategy⁹ concerning the European information society was prepared – *i2010 – A European Information Society for Growth and Employment*.¹⁰ This document was announced in Prague in 2005 by Viviane Reding, who at that time was the European Commissioner for Information Society and Media. The letter ‘i’ in the name of the i2010 plan referred to the information space, innovation, investments, and inclusion. The principal priorities of the i2010 strategy were: completing the single European information space, improving innovation and investments into research on information and communication technologies, and establishing an integrated European information society. The strategy also included actions concerning digital libraries and guidelines on digitisation, availability of cultural heritages on the Internet and protection of digital collections. With respect to the audiovisual sector and the media it formulated principles for adjusting television to the convergence criteria as well as for promoting and protecting the European cultural heritage. In 2008, the EU launched the portal Europeana,¹¹ which allowed access to the collections of libraries, museums and archives all around Europe. Presently, Europeana comprises several million digitised library, museum and archive items. The i2010 strategy has also contributed to considerable progress in the areas of e-government and e-learning.

1.2. Principles of the EU Europe 2020 strategy concerning the European information society

Undeniably, much has been achieved throughout the entire period of 1999–2012, in which the development of the European information society was considered a priority. But with the unequal starting conditions and different financial capabilities in the various Member States, the level of devel-

⁸ Commission of the European Communities, Communication to the Spring European Council, *Working together for growth and jobs. A new start for the Lisbon Strategy*, Brussels, 2.02.2005, COM (2005) 24.

⁹ In the documents of the European Commission, the i2010 is sometimes called a strategy, and sometimes an initiative.

¹⁰ Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment*, Brussels, 1.06.2005, COM (2005) 229.

¹¹ <http://www.europeana.eu/portal/>

opment of the EU information society has been quite varied, as is evident in the relevant data collected by Eurostat.¹²

The latest EU Europe 2020 strategy¹³ was devised during the omnipresent economic crisis, at a time of ongoing population ageing and a dwindling of resources, especially energy resources, for which there is a growing demand. Consequently, the EU's priorities shifted towards such areas as healthcare, the energy industry, biotechnologies, or environmental protection. Although those countries which were lagging behind in terms of the information society in the 1999–2012 period are still lagging behind and need to keep catching up, the policy of building the foundations of the information society was essentially closed on 30 June 2012, with the closing of the Directorate-General for the Information Society and Media. This does not mean that all actions in this field have ceased, but the focal point has shifted to expansion of tele-information networks and improving their digital content, and the notion of a digital society has been introduced. The new Directorate-General, established on 1 July 2012, is called the Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology.

The new EU strategy for 2014–2020 contains three priorities: 1) smart growth, i.e. developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation; 2) sustainable growth, i.e. promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy; and 3) inclusive growth, i.e. fostering a high-employment economy with economic, social and territorial cohesion. Under the umbrella of these priorities, the EU has proposed 7 flagship initiatives, to wit: 'Innovation Union', 'Youth on the move', 'A digital agenda for Europe', 'Resource efficient Europe', 'An industrial policy for the globalisation era', 'An agenda for new skills and jobs', and the 'European platform against poverty'. The first priority of the Europe 2020 strategy – smart growth – is to be mainly supported by the first three flagship initiatives, i.e. the 'Innovation Union', 'Youth on the move' and 'A Digital Agenda for Europe'.

A Digital Agenda for Europe¹⁴ was announced already on 19 May 2010 by Neelie Kroes, the Vice-President of the European Commission responsible for the agenda. It was to be executed after the completion of the actions conducted under the i2010 strategy. Its main goals are: establishing a digital

¹² Eurostat, *Information Society*, 2013, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/information_society/introduction (last visited 2.04.2013).

¹³ European Commission, Communication from the Commission, *Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, Brussels, 3.3.2010, COM (2010) 2020; European Commission, *Europa 2020*, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_pl.htm (last visited 2.04.2013).

¹⁴ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *A Digital Agenda for Europe*, Brussels, 26.08.2010, COM (2010) 245/2.

single market, increasing interoperability of equipment, databases, applications and networks, ensuring network security, supporting an ultra-fast Internet (next generation networks), increasing and improving the opportunities provided by digital technologies, using the potential of information and communication technologies in such fields as: climate change, population ageing, or intelligent transportation systems. Presently, the Digital Agenda for Europe comprises 100 detailed plans. This time, however, the levels of involvement in the execution of these plans will be controlled by a group of Commissioners cooperating with the European Parliament and the Member States as well. The implementation of digital technologies will be subject to annual summaries and monitoring by the European Council. Individual Member States will also be assigned individual goals, monitored by the Commission, a process which is already taking place.

The execution of actions in the EU essentially takes place through two instruments: hard and soft law, as well as the funds spent on a given policy and meant to support the execution of the set goals. As previously mentioned, the activity of the Directorate-General for the Information Society and Media in 1999–2012 consisted of an open cooperation supporting practical actions, e.g. actions related to improving the functioning of the common European market by strengthening the position of small and medium enterprises with information and communication technologies and the development of next generation services. These actions were undertaken in cooperation with, for example, the Directorate-General for Internal Market and Services (e.g. under the e-TEN programme, i.e. the Trans European Network Policy known as Ten-Telecom¹⁵), but they were not research-related.

However, apart from the practical activities undertaken in this field by the Commission, the issues related to telecommunications and later to the information society have also received the status of research areas and, in consequence, receive considerable support from the EU funds allocated to research, technological development and innovation. It should be noted that the first and foremost aim of the scientific research conducted using European funds has always been to support the process of European integration. Therefore, it focuses on those issues which are closely related to this process. However, the range of research issues is very broad and often universal in character.

1.3. Scientific research regarding the information society

The first research in this field was conducted in the European Communities already in the early 1980s, under programmes such as ESPRIT (European

¹⁵ European Commission, *About E-TEN*, ca. 2012, http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/eten/library/about/intro/index_en.htm (last visited 2.04.2013).

Strategic Program for Research in Information Technology)¹⁶ and RACE (Research into Advanced Communications for Europe).¹⁷ They focused on issues related to telecommunications and information and communication technology. In the later years, these issues became a permanent element of subsequent framework programmes for research and technological development of the EU, constituting strong support for the implementation of the information society policy. Here we should mention at least the multiannual e-Content¹⁸ programme initiated on 22 December 2000 and aimed at stimulating development of European digital resources in global networks and promoting language diversity in the information society. The e-Content programme was later continued as the e-Content Plus programme.¹⁹ The list of all the research projects completed and in progress, including those concerning the fields discussed in this article, can be found in the EU database CORDIS,²⁰ which is a massive and valuable collection of information on EU research projects.

The Digital Agenda for Europe was devised following consultation with interested parties. The Agenda identifies seven areas in which actions should be undertaken: a vibrant digital single market; interoperability and standards; trust and security; fast and ultra-fast Internet access; research and innovation; enhancing digital literacy, skills and inclusion; and ICT-enabled benefits for the EU society. The development of the Agenda was a result of the European Commission having identified the seven main barriers to the creation of the information society, and the slowdown in the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy. The barriers identified are: the continually divided digital market in the EU; the lack of interoperability; the increase of cybercrime and the risk connected with low confidence in networks; the lack of investments in networks; insufficient funds for research and investments; the inability to use digital technologies; and finally, insufficient use of the opportunities available in terms of tackling social challenges.

The Digital Agenda for Europe puts the main emphasis on the development of the Internet and its content in the trans-European context, and on

¹⁶ G. Metakides, *Welcome to Esprit, the information technologies programme*, 1997, <http://cordis.europa.eu/esprit/src/intro.htm> (last visited 2.04.2013).

¹⁷ *ACTS*, ca. 1997, <http://cordis.europa.eu/infowin/acts/analysys/intro/chap1.htm> (last visited 2.04.2013).

¹⁸ Council decision No. 2001/48/EC of 22 December 2000 adopting a multiannual Community programme to stimulate the development and use of European digital content on the global networks and to promote linguistic diversity in the information society, OJ 2001 L 14/32–40.

¹⁹ Decision No. 456/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2005 establishing a multiannual Community programme to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable, OJ 2005 L 79/1–8.

²⁰ *CORDIS. Community Research and Development Information Service*, 2013, http://cordis.europa.eu/home_en.html (last visited 2.04.2013).

innovation concerning information and communication technologies as the basis of Europe's socio-economic development. At this time, several legislative steps have already been taken in all the seven areas of the Digital Agenda for Europe in order to improve the quality of networks. These are, among others: pan-European licensing for rights management; a Directive on orphan works to facilitate digitisation and dissemination of cultural works in Europe; a review of the eSignature Directive; a review of the EU data protection regulatory framework to enhance individuals' confidence and strengthen their rights; a review of the Directive on the enforcement of intellectual property rights; issuing a Recommendation on digitisation of European cinema, and others. These actions are conducted by the EU's legislative bodies. Furthermore, the Digital Agenda for Europe enjoys strong support from the research and innovation policy, both in the current 2007–2013 budget perspective and in that part of the new Europe 2020 strategy which concerns research and innovation, i.e. the planned Horizon 2020 programme.²¹ It should be stressed that Horizon 2020, as the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation for 2014–2020, is a central element of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Under Horizon 2020, the to-date dispersed sources of funding for research, technological development and innovation in the EU will be united and the total budget of this programme is planned to amount to EUR 80 billion, which is the largest amount spent on technological development and innovation under any EU research policy so far.

Among the issues identified as priorities in the Digital Agenda for Europe, first and foremost are the Internet and information and communication technologies, as broadly understood. The first 'Internet Science'²² conference, scheduled to be held in early April 2013 in Brussels and still financed from the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, shows that in the context of the new perspective of the Europe 2020 strategy the Internet is perceived as a comprehensive tool, indispensable in all areas of life. Any new solutions allowing progress in this respect are welcome. Hence, the scope for activities by researchers and innovators is very broad. The goal is to introduce next generation networks with a speed of up to 100 Mbps and to develop wireless, mobile Internet using the spectrum of

²¹ European Commission, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. *Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation*, Brussels, 30.11.2011, COM (2011) 808; European Commission, Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014–2020), Brussels 30.11.2011, COM (2011) 809.

²² "Network of Excellence in Internet Science.", 1st International Conference on Internet Science. Brussels, 10–11.04.2013, <http://www.internet-science.eu/> (last visited 2.04.2013).

electromagnetic waves (radio waves).²³ The division into the Internet of ideas and the Internet of things is becoming pronounced.²⁴ The former, containing collections of recorded human thoughts, is more developed. The Internet of things, its younger counterpart, is dynamically developing at present. It is expected to revolutionise our surroundings (e.g. it will lead to the development of smart buildings, smart household items, and controlling and monitoring equipment in logistics, transportation and various areas of infrastructure). In the area of the Internet of ideas, Europeana²⁵ will be further developed as a pan-European public library and collection of European cultural resources. Its tools will be improved, digital media will be introduced, and access to content under Open Access²⁶ will be expanded, etc. The spheres of e-government, e-health and e-learning are also to be further developed and improved. The priorities also include issues related to metadata in the Internet of ideas and the Internet of things, the development of semantic linguistic technologies (machine translations, semantic Web), robotics, as well as cloud computing. The degree of standardisation in this area is also expected to improve, especially regarding quicker adoption of the standards devised by global consortiums.²⁷

Although it seems that this sphere is dominated by technical issues, there are also plenty of research opportunities for specialists in the humanities. There is talk about the so-called e-humanities or e-culture. Everything will depend on the ingenuity of the researchers. Projects in the field of dissemination of knowledge about the potential of the Internet, i.e. in the sphere of education, will also be supported from the Horizon 2020 programme, as the European Union expects that under the Europe 2020 strategy the number of young people with higher education will increase to 40 per cent.²⁸

In order to stimulate the development of research from the organisational side, the EU is trying to establish the so-called European Research Area,²⁹

²³ European Commission, *Digital Agenda for Europe. Action 44: European Spectrum Policy Programme*, 2013, <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/pillar-iv-fast-and-ultra-fast-internet-access/action-44-european-spectrum-policy-programme> (last visited 2.04.2013).

²⁴ *Internet of things*, ca. 2012, <http://www.internet-of-things.eu/> (last visited 2.04.2013).

²⁵ European Commission, *Digital Agenda for Europe: About Cultural Heritage*, 2013, <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/node/1351> (last visited 2.04.2013).

²⁶ European Commission, *Digital Agenda: more open access to scientific information – Commission seeks views*, 2011, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-890_en.htm (last visited 2.04.2013).

²⁷ European Commission, *Digital Agenda for Europe. Action 22: Promote standard-setting rules*, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm (last visited 2.04.2013).

²⁸ European Commission, Communication from the Commission, *Europe 2020...*, op.cit.

²⁹ European Commission, *European Research Area*, 2013, http://ec.europa.eu/research/era/index_en.htm (last visited 2.04.2013).

integrating European research circles and laboratories, as well as to develop cooperation with the academic circles of third countries. The recently-established European Institute of Innovation and Technology³⁰ is creating so-called Knowledge and Innovation Communities, which are academic communities with similar interests operating in distant locations but dealing with the same projects. This Institute has led to the development of a strong community of knowledge in the field of information and communication technologies.³¹

The projects executed under EU framework programmes for research are usually large projects involving research centres – both from the public and the private sector – from at least three countries. They promote work in a ‘triangle’, which means the cooperation of entities responsible for academic research with business and education circles. The creation of a uniform European research area supported by, for example, rapid Internet allowing teleconferences, is aimed at facilitating the cooperation of distant research centres on common subjects.

All the information on EU research programmes can be obtained at information centres of a specially-established information network – the Network of National Contact Points,³² and in the CORDIS³³ database, which provides information on competitions and helps find partners for cooperation. The EURAXESS³⁴ information network is also helpful in identifying various types of research centres in Europe and in the world. Never before have there been such good conditions for the development of academic research in the EU and, what’s more, the issues of the Internet and information and communication technologies are priority topics.

2. Polish information society policy, 2000–2012

Below we present the history of the information society policy of the Polish government. The main focus is on strategies, priority goals and key projects. Another point of interest is the relationship between this policy and its EU counterpart, as well as between the respective positions of academic research in the two strategies.

³⁰ <http://eit.europa.eu/>

³¹ European Institute of Technology and Innovation, *EIT ICT Labs*, ca. 2012, <http://eit.europa.eu/kics/eit-ict-labs/> (last visited 2.04.2013).

³² European Commission, *Network of National Contact Points (NCPs) in Member States and Associated States*, 2011, http://cordis.europa.eu/fp7/ncp_en.html (last visited 2.04.2013).

³³ *CORDIS...*, op.cit.

³⁴ European Commission, *EURAXESS*, 2013, <http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/> (last visited 2.04.2013).

2.1. ePoland

We can speak of a Polish information society policy from 2000, when the Sejm and the government issued the first programme documents concerning this subject.³⁵ This represented a delay of several years in relation to the other EU countries. It's noteworthy that in 1994 Martin Bangemann³⁶ warned that a late transformation of a society into an information society could result in a considerable drop in investments and problems in the labour market, while other scholars focusing on this issue believed, in turn, that if the policy was conducted in the right way, real benefits could be drawn from a late start in the creation of the information society.³⁷

The first Polish government documents stated that the establishment of the information society would take place in accordance with market forces, which would be corrected by social mechanisms. Consequently the government's task was to ensure fair competition and the possibility to use information science in all its applications. Another goal was to ensure that everyone had access to the tele-information network.³⁸

These first general objectives and directions were formulated in more detail in the long-term (2001–2006) action plan referred to as ePoland,³⁹ announced in mid-2001 and concerning the development of the information society. In accordance with an explicit recommendation of the Polish Council of Ministers,⁴⁰ this plan was to be modelled after the EU initiative named

³⁵ Uchwała Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 14 lipca 2000 r. w sprawie budowania podstaw społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce (Resolution of the Polish Sejm of 14 July 2000 on Building the Basis for the Information Society in Poland), Monitor Polski (Polish Official Gazette) of 2000, No. 22, Item 448; State Committee for Scientific Research, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, *Aims and directions of the information society development in Poland*, Warsaw 2000, http://kbn.icm.edu.pl/en/cele_en.html (last visited 6.02.2013).

³⁶ *Europe and the global information society*, op.cit., p. 12.

³⁷ K.Krzysztofek, *Polska – społeczeństwo trzech „prędkości”* (Poland – a ‘Three-Speed’ Society) in: Program Narodów Zjednoczonych ds. Rozwoju, *Polska w drodze do globalnego społeczeństwa informacyjnego. Raport o rozwoju społecznym (Poland on the Road to the Global Information Society. Report on Social Development)*, Warszawa 2002, pp. 16–17.

³⁸ State Committee for Scientific Research, Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, op.cit., p. 6.

³⁹ Ministerstwo Gospodarki, *ePolska. Plan działań na rzecz rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce na lata 2001–2006 (ePoland. Action Plan for the Development of the Information Society in Poland for the Period 2001–2006)*, Warszawa 2001, <http://kbn.icm.edu.pl/cele/epolska.doc> (last visited 7.02.2013).

⁴⁰ Stanowisko Rady Ministrów wobec uchwały Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 14 lipca 2000 r. w sprawie budowania podstaw społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce (The Position of the Council of Ministers on the Resolution of the Polish Sejm of 14 July 2000 on Building the Basis for the Information Society in Poland), Warszawa 2000, <http://kbn.icm.edu.pl/cele/index2.html> (last visited 7.02.2013).

eEurope.⁴¹ Krystyna Doktorowicz stresses that the aim of the eEurope initiative was to complete the process of common informatisation in the EU Member States,⁴² while Poland was in a fundamentally different situation, as the process of informatisation of the country was only starting. Hence, the ePoland action plan was starting from the 'zero' point, that is expansion of the telecommunications network. This was consistent with the principles of the eEurope+ action plan,⁴³ devised jointly by the European Commission and the EU candidate countries at the conference in Göteborg in 2001.

In 2003, the Polish government established the Ministry of Science and Computerisation (MNiI), assigned with the task to supervise the ePoland action plan. In early 2004, the government adopted a revised ePoland strategy (also called the ePoland 2004 strategy).⁴⁴ This strategy explicitly stated that the directions of its actions were in accordance with the EU directions. The selection of priorities and the flagship projects at that time, as well as their more detailed descriptions, demonstrate that the information society policy was entering a new stage. The flagship projects of the renewed strategy were: providing each school with broadband Internet access; establishing an integrated platform for providing eGovernment services (the so called Gateway to Poland – Wrota Polski); creation of a key Internet base of information in Polish (e.g. the Polish Internet Library); and common computer science education. Dorota Grodzka⁴⁵ notes that the new strategy put greater emphasis on information society services and on education and less on the technical problems of computerisation. The fact that decision-makers became more interested in information society services is confirmed by the e-government action plan adopted in September 2004,⁴⁶ which was a clear signal that out of the

⁴¹ Commission of the European Communities, *eEurope – An Information Society for All*, op.cit.; Commission of the European Communities, *eEurope 2002...*, op.cit.

⁴² K. Doktorowicz, *Europejski model społeczeństwa informacyjnego. Polityczna strategia Unii Europejskiej w kontekście globalnych problemów wieku informacji (The European Model of Information Society. The Political Strategy of the European Union in the Context of Global Problems of the Information Age)*, Katowice 2005, p. 189.

⁴³ Action Plan prepared by the Candidate Countries with the assistance of the European Commission, *eEurope+ 2003, A co-operative effort to implement the information society in Europe*, 2001, <http://graduateinstitute.ch/aspd/wsis/DOC/434EN.PDF> (last visited 7.02.2013).

⁴⁴ The initial ePoland project was called an action plan, while ePoland 2004 was called a strategy, cf. MNiI, *Strategia informatyzacji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej – ePolska na lata 2004–2006 (Informatisation Strategy for the Republic of Poland – ePoland 2004–2006)*, 2003, http://www.epractice.eu/files/media/media_291.pdf (last visited 7.02.2013).

⁴⁵ D. Grodzka, *Spółeczeństwo informacyjne – idea, programy, badania (Information Society – Idea, Programmes, Research)*, "Studia BAS" No. 3/2009, p. 21.

⁴⁶ MNiI, *Plan działań na rzecz rozwoju elektronicznej administracji (eGovernment) na lata 2005–2006 (An Action Plan for the Development of Electronic Governance (eGovernment) for 2005–2006)*, 2004, http://www.epractice.eu/files/media/media_241.pdf (last visited 7.02.2013).

four main directions of the eEurope initiative, e-government was selected as the crucial one, while e-learning, e-health and e-trade were considered less important.

The European Commission has issued many documents concerning the implementation and evaluation of the eEurope initiative. Unfortunately, these evaluations did not take into account the achievements of candidate countries which became EU members in 2004. However, partial information on the state of the information society in the candidate countries can be found in the 2002 report on the progress of implementation of the eEurope+ action plan.⁴⁷ The indicators presented therein show the state of advancement of the information society in each country, but they do not provide information on the scale of actual progress made.

In 2006, the Polish Supreme Audit Office (NIK) evaluated the extent of implementation of the ePoland 2004 strategy.⁴⁸ The results of the audit were negative. NIK believed that both the preparation and execution of the ePoland 2004 strategy were performed in a negligent manner as, among other things, they did not take into account the state of implementation of the earlier plans nor social needs. The same opinion was voiced with regard to the level of preparation of public administration with respect to providing electronic services. The competent ministries had failed to execute many of the planned projects, including the Gateway to Poland and the Central Vehicle and Driver Register (CEPiK). NIK also voiced a negative opinion of the manner in which the Public Information Bulletin (BIP) was managed, and pointed out neglect in the drawing up of legislative acts concerning electronic signature. The Ministry of Science and Computerisation was accused of failing to inform the government about the actual level of implementation of the strategies in its reports.

The results and information in NIK's audit also contain references to the EU information society policy. According to the NIK the Polish authorities, when preparing the ePoland 2004 strategy, failed to take into account the Commission's recommendations. The strategy was not properly prepared, as it was not based on a realistic analysis of the achievements of the 2001–2003 period, and it contained plans for reaching only some of the objectives (16 out of 25) mentioned in the Commission document on eEurope 2005. Furthermore, the planned support for development of the information society in

⁴⁷ Progress report, Ljubljana 2002, <http://kbn.icm.edu.pl/cele/ljubljana/progress.rtf> (last visited 7.02.2013).

⁴⁸ NIK, *Informacja o wynikach kontroli świadczenia usług publicznych przez niektóre organy administracji rządowej przy zastosowaniu mediów elektronicznych (Information on the Results of Audits of Public Services Provided by Some Government Administration Bodies with the Use of Electronic Media)*, Warszawa 2006.

small and medium enterprises was insufficient, and with regard to the informatisation of public administration – the information systems which were established were completely incompatible and would require additional funds to be combined into a single system.

In late 2007, The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration (MSWiA), which in 2005 assumed the role of supervisor over the issues related to the informatisation of the country, issued a report summing up the implementation of the ePoland 2004 strategy.⁴⁹ The report avoids any explicit assessment of the strategy and the general summary focuses more on future informatisation plans than actual results. The report suggests that in the case of a great many projects, the coordinating ministry did not have the data which could constitute a basis for evaluating the execution of this task. Small wonder then that the report does not end with general recommendations for future action plans.

2.2. iPoland

In 2005, Poland took steps to prepare the next stage of implementation of its information society policy. It should be noted that this work had been commenced even before conclusions were drawn from the actions undertaken under ePoland, and an MSWiA report of 2007 on this subject revealed that the ministry had not had information which would allow it to properly evaluate all the previously taken actions. This, however, did not prevent it from formulating a strategy for the development of the informatisation of Poland until 2013, combined with a forecast until 2020.⁵⁰ The content of the new strategic document once again followed the EU model, in this case the i2010 strategy presented by the European Commission.⁵¹ The starting point for determining the proper actions was an assessment of the current situation. However, it was not based on any internal evaluation of the previously executed actions or current needs, but rather on external rankings comparing the level of development of the information society in various countries. On this basis, it was established that the level of development of the information society in Poland was unsatisfactory. With these assumptions in mind, it was

⁴⁹ MSWiA, *Raport końcowy z realizacji Strategii informatyzacji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej – ePolska na lata 2004–2006 (Final Report on the Implementation of the Informatisation Strategy for the Republic of Poland – ePoland 2004–2006)*, Warszawa 2007.

⁵⁰ MNiI, *Strategia kierunkowa rozwoju informatyzacji Polski do roku 2013 oraz perspektywiczna prognoza transformacji społeczeństwa informacyjnego do roku 2020 (Indicative Strategy of Informatisation of Poland until 2013 and Long-Term Forecast of Transformation of the Information Society until 2020)*, Warszawa 2005.

⁵¹ Commission of the European Communities, Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *i2010...*, op.cit.

decided that the aim of the strategy was to support economic and social growth, which should be achieved through stimulating the use of information and communication technology in all areas of life. The document set out twelve strategic goals of informatisation of the country and for almost all of them specified the levels of implementation which each should reach by 2013. The principal goal was popularisation of the provision and use of information society services. This was aimed at stimulating the economy on one hand and reducing digital exclusion on the other. The second important group of goals was related to the provision of electronic services by public administration. The third group of goals concerned the use of the Internet in education and science. These tasks were further complemented with the introduction of digital television and with opening access to Polish digital collections in foreign languages on the Web. Comparing the Polish strategy to the EU i2010 strategy, one immediately notices some important differences between them. First of all, in the Polish strategy there is virtually no mention of innovation and investment into research on information and communication technologies. The execution of this task was postponed until the implementation of operational programmes financed from European funds for the years 2007–2013.

Furthermore, the Polish strategy referred to the newly passed act on informatisation,⁵² which had introduced, *inter alia*, the obligation to regularly devise plans for informatisation of the country. The strategy announced that a five-year action plan would be developed, but the plan has never been created. In autumn 2005, the government of Poland changed and the MNiI was dissolved, with its competences concerning the information society passed to the MSWiA. The new ministry and the new government approved the informatisation plan for 2006, as well as the plans for 2007–2010.⁵³

In the plan for 2006, there is no reference to the Polish strategy, but only direct references to Commission documents concerning the i2010 strategy. The priorities set therein require special attention. They are referred to as priorities for the development of communication and information systems:

⁵² Ustawa z dnia 17 lutego 2005 r. o informatyzacji działalności podmiotów realizujących zadania publiczne (*Act of 17 February 2005 on the Informatisation of Activities Undertaken by Entities Carrying Out Public Tasks*), Dziennik Ustaw (Polish Journal of Laws) of 2005, No. 64, Item 565, as amended.

⁵³ Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 1 sierpnia 2006 r. w sprawie Planu Informatyzacji Państwa na rok 2006 (*Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 1 August 2006 on the State Computerisation Plan for 2006*), Dziennik Ustaw (Polish Journal of Laws) of 2006, No. 147, Item 1064; Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia 28 marca 2007 r. w sprawie Planu Informatyzacji Państwa na lata 2007–2010 (*Regulation of the Council of Ministers of 28 March 2007 on the State Computerisation Plan for 2007–2010*), Dziennik Ustaw (Polish Journal of Laws) of 2007, No. 61, Item 415.

rationalisation of expenditure in the field of informatisation and creation of a modern, citizen-friendly state. The first priority essentially concerned the problems with carrying out the information society policy rather than actual problems connected with the information society in Poland. The second priority set a general and superior goal, which was hard to achieve within a single year. This document exhibits a clear lack of reference to any programme document.

The plan for the years 2007–2010 included the resolution to devise a new strategy for the development of the information society in Poland until 2013, which was to verify the principles of its predecessor in every aspect, including consistency with EU guidelines. The strategy was supposed to be devised by June 2007, but it was finally completed only at the end of 2008, i.e., after the next change in government. A new element introduced in the informatisation plan for 2007–2010 was the third priority of the development of communication and information systems, namely technological neutrality, which meant the development of solutions which would not favour the products or technological solutions of any single producer or producer group.

The new strategy for the development of the information society in Poland of 2008⁵⁴ referred very explicitly to the i2010 strategy. First of all, an analysis of the situation with respect to the information society in Poland was conducted in all the fields indicated as key fields in the i2010 strategy, including innovation and scientific research. Applying the indicators used by Eurostat and the rankings authorised by the European Commission, it was determined that only a few indicators were higher for Poland than the average indicators for the entire EU, while the majority showed that Poland was lagging behind.

The initial analysis of the state of the information society allowed the authors of the strategy to present three main directions of development: development of the citizens' intellectual and social capital; increased efficiency, competitiveness and innovation by entrepreneurs; increased efficiency and availability of eGovernment services. For each of these directions, specific goals and indicators were specified to measure performance. The current and desired levels of these indicators for Poland was specified as well. For each goal, the measures taken in the past were listed and key tasks for the future were formulated. Compared with the earlier strategies, this one is truly impressive, although the choice of indicators to measure the performance of specific goals is debatable.

When analysing issues related to the information society in Poland, we have to mention the use of European funds for the performance of various

⁵⁴ MSWiA, *Strategia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacyjnego w Polsce do roku 2013 (The Strategy for the Development of the Information Society in Poland until 2013)*, Warszawa 2008.

tasks. They had already been in use since Poland's accession to the EU. All the operational programmes implemented in the years 2004–2006 treated the problem of development of the information society as a horizontal objective and strived to create favourable conditions for the execution of projects in this field. Additionally, the Integrated Regional Development Operational Program (ZPORR) specified those actions which were to serve the development of infrastructure for the information society.⁵⁵ Even more attention was paid to the information society in the cohesion policy for the years 2007–2013. The operational programme 'Innovative Economy',⁵⁶ established under the country's regional development programming, was designed to a large extent to support development of the information society. An element worthy of special attention in this regard are the priority axes 1 and 2 of this programme, the funds of which were to be used to finance research on new technologies and modern R&D infrastructure, as well as axes 7 and 8, which were to directly contribute to the development of eGovernment and an innovative economy. The development of the information society was also executed in a decentralised form through 16 regional operational programmes, each of which partially dealt with issues related to the information society. The preliminary summaries of the first half of the implementation period of the 'Innovative Economy' programme indicate that while R&D infrastructure is being modernised in Poland without essential problems, the objectives related to the development of academic research are proving much harder to fulfil.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *Narodowy Plan Rozwoju 2004–2006 (National Development Plan 2004–2006)*, Warszawa 2003; *Zintegrowany Program Operacyjny Rozwoju Regionalnego 2004–2006 (Integrated Operational Programme for Regional Development 2004–2006)*, *Dziennik Ustaw (Polish Journal of Laws)* of 2004, No. 166, Item 1745.

⁵⁶ *Program Operacyjny Innowacyjna Gospodarka, 2007–2013. Narodowe Strategiczne Ramy Odniesienia 2007–2013 (Operational Programme 'Innovative Economy' 2007–2013. National Strategic Reference Framework 2007–2013)*, 2011, http://www.poig.gov.pl/Dokumenty/Lists/Dokumenty%20programowe/Attachments/116/Program_Innowacyjna_Gospodarka_zatwierdzony_przez_KE_22122011.pdf (last visited 15.02.2013).

⁵⁷ Some of the problems are, for example, the use of new devices for commercial purposes and the long patent procedure. Cf. P. Kościelecki *et al.*, *Raport końcowy z badania pt.: Ocena stanu realizacji 1. i 2. Priorytetu Programu Operacyjnego Innowacyjna Gospodarka w połowie okresu programowania (Mid-Term Evaluation of the Implementation of the Priorities 1 and 2 of the Operational Programme 'Innovative Economy'. Final Report)*, Warszawa 2011, http://www.poig.gov.pl/AnalizyRaportyPodsumowania/Documents/Raport_koncowy_midterm_1_2_priorytet_POIG_X_2011.pdf (last visited 22.02.2013); P. Gorgol, J. Kotrasiński, A. Weremiuk, *Metaewaluacja wyników badań ewaluacyjnych Programu Operacyjnego Innowacyjna Gospodarka, 2007–2013. Raport końcowy (Meta Assessment of the Evaluation of the Operational Programme 'Innovative Economy' 2007–2013. Final Report)*, Warszawa 2012, http://www.poig.gov.pl/AnalizyRaportyPodsumowania/Documents/Raport_Koncowy_Metaewaluacja_12_12_2012.pdf (last visited 22.02.2013).

The informatisation plan for 2006 enumerated the key projects which were to be used to attain the set goals, for example: the public administration services platform ePUAP, the Public Administration Network for Communication and Information (STAP), the tax return system e-Deklaracje, the new civil register PESEL2, the Central Vehicle and Driver Register, and the court register e-Portal. The plan for 2007–2010 mentioned 24 public services which were expected to be available to citizens and entrepreneurs on the Internet not later than by the end of 2010. The implementation of these initiatives has been partially evaluated by NIK. In 2009, the Office stated that STAP had not been implemented and ePUAP was executed with much delay.⁵⁸ In 2012, NIK⁵⁹ negatively assessed the development strategy of the information society for 2013, pointing out that it did not have any schedule and failed to indicate which institutions were responsible for the tasks. The Office also established that there was a very high risk of failure in the goal set for the development of broadband Internet. More information on the execution of information projects was gathered by the Ministry of Administration and Digitisation (MAiC), which was established in 2011. In its ‘Państwo 2.0 report’⁶⁰, the Ministry divided the projects into those fully completed, implemented in accordance with the objectives and on schedule, and those not started, requiring improvement, or requiring a correction of initial organisational and project premises. The list of completed projects is very short.

Assessment of the development of the Polish information society can also be found in European Commission documents. The EC communication issued in 2009⁶¹ on the implementation of the i2010 strategy allows for comparison of the situation in Poland with that in other countries. Unfortunately, according to most of the indicators, Poland is near the bottom of the rankings

⁵⁸ NIK, *Informacja o wynikach kontroli realizacji projektów dotyczących elektronicznej Platformy Usług Administracji Publicznej (e-PUAP) i Sieci Teleinformatycznej Administracji Publicznej (STAP) (Information on the Results of Audits of the Implementation of Projects Relating to the Public Administration Service Platform (e-PUAP) and the Public Administration Tele-Information Network (STAP))*, Warszawa 2009.

⁵⁹ NIK, *Działania organów administracji publicznej podejmowane w celu zapewnienia dostępu do sieci i usług telekomunikacyjnych. Informacja o wynikach kontroli (Actions Taken by Public Authorities to Ensure Access to Telecommunications Networks and Services. Information on the Results of Audits)*, Warszawa 2012.

⁶⁰ MAiC, *Państwo 2.0. Nowy start dla e-administracji (State 2.0. A New Start for the e-Administration)*, Warszawa 2012.

⁶¹ Commission of the European Communities, Commission Staff Working Document, Accompanying document to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *Europe’s Digital Competitiveness Report. Volume 1: i2010 — Annual Information Society Report 2009. Benchmarking i2010: Trends and main achievements*, Brussels, 4.08.2009, SEC (2009) 1103.

of information infrastructure. Another thing highlighted in this document are the extremely high costs of access to the Internet in Poland.

2.3. Digital Poland

In the following years (2011–2012) the description of the information society policy in Poland at the level of mostly general strategies reached its apogee. In organising the strategic documents describing the objectives for the country's development, the government revised the term 'information society' policy and began calling it a 'digital society' policy. Today, the most important document describing this problem is the long-term national development strategy until 2030.⁶² Before it was finally adopted by the Council of Ministers on 5 February 2013,⁶³ two variants of development of the information society in Poland had been considered: 'catching up' and 'impetus for digitisation'.⁶⁴ In the end, the second option was chosen. The flagship project mentioned in the strategy was Digital Poland, but almost every sphere of development includes some issues related to the digital society. The mid-term development strategy for Poland until 2020 demonstrates this very clearly.⁶⁵ The spheres of the country's intervention, development aims, and priorities are mostly connected with the creation of the information/digital society. The long-term and mid-term strategies are to be executed through nine integrated strategies. Among those, the most interesting are: the innovation and economic effectiveness strategy, human capital development strategy, and efficient state strategy. The first and the last were adopted by the government in early 2013. The plans include using European funds for development of the

⁶² MAiC, *Polska 2030. Trzecia fala nowoczesności. Długookresowa strategia rozwoju kraju (Poland 2030. Third Wave of Modernity. Long-Term National Development Strategy)*, Warszawa 2013.

⁶³ MAiC, *Jaka ma być Polska w 2030 r.? Długookresowa Strategia Rozwoju Kraju (What is Poland Supposed to Look Like in 2030? The Long-Term National Development Strategy)*, 2013, <http://mac.gov.pl/dzialania/jak-ma-byc-polska-w-2030-r/> (last visited 14.02.2013); Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, Uchwała w sprawie przyjęcia Długookresowej Strategii Rozwoju Kraju Polska 2030. Trzecia fala nowoczesności, przedłożona przez ministra administracji i cyfryzacji (*Resolution Adopting the Long-Term National Development Strategy 'Poland 2030'. Third Wave of Modernity, Submitted by the Ministry of Administration and Digitisation*), 2013, <http://www.kprm.gov.pl/wydarzenia/decyzje-rzadu/uchwala-w-sprawie-przyjecia-dlugookresowej-strategii-rozwoju-kraju-polska.html> (last visited 14.02.2013).

⁶⁴ Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, *Polska 2030. Trzecia fala nowoczesności. Długookresowa strategia rozwoju kraju. Projekt (Poland 2030. Third Wave of Modernity. Proposal for the Long-Term National Development Strategy)*, Warszawa 2011, p. 112, http://zds.kprm.gov.pl/sites/default/files/dsrk_2_tom_17_listopada_2011__0.pdf (last visited 14.02.2013).

⁶⁵ Uchwała nr 157 Rady Ministrów z dnia 25 września 2012 r. w sprawie przyjęcia Strategii Rozwoju Kraju 2020 (*Resolution no 157 of the Council of Ministers of 25 September 2012 Adopting the National Development Strategy until 2020*), Monitor Polski (Polish Official Gazette) of 2012, Item 882.

digital society in the period 2013–2020. The Digital Poland project will serve this aim.⁶⁶

Nevertheless, at the level of short-term plans, actions supporting the development of the digital society are not being executed correctly, as shown by the problems with formulating an informatisation plan after 2010. The draft plan for 2011–2015 was presented for public consultation by the Council of Ministers⁶⁷ and was heavily criticised⁶⁸ and consequently withdrawn. The Minister of Digitisation promised a new version of the plan in 2012 but failed to keep this deadline. Instead, in autumn 2012 the government proposed an amendment of the act on informatisation and, under the provisions of the new act, replacing the informatisation plans by programmes of integrated informatisation of the country.⁶⁹

It is hard to say to what extent the latest plans for creating the digital society in Poland correspond to the Digital Agenda of the European Commission. In the sphere of declarations, the Polish government has supported the Agenda, but the documents issued by the Polish authorities include no direct references to it. The MSWiA report of 2011⁷⁰ contains a table showing how the Digital Agenda for Europe was implemented by the Polish authorities.

⁶⁶ W. Waliszewski, *10 mld zł w Programie Operacyjnym Polska Cyfrowa (10 Billion Zloty for the Operational Programme 'Digital Poland')*, "Cyfrow@Polska" 26.10.2012, <http://www.cyfrowa-polska.pl/strona-glowna/item/1499-10-mld-z%C5%82-w-programie-operacyjnym-polska-cyfrowa> (last visited 14.02.2013).

⁶⁷ Projekt z 9 sierpnia 2011 r. Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów z dnia...2011 r. w sprawie Planu Informatyzacji Państwa na lata 2011–2015 (*Proposal of 9 August 2011. Regulation of the Council of Ministers of... 2011 on the State Computerisation Plan for 2011–2015*), 2011, http://bip.msw.gov.pl/download/4/9670/PIP_20112015_projekt_z_9_sierpnia_2011_r.pdf (last visited 14.02.2013).

⁶⁸ Cf. e.g. Polskie Towarzystwo Informatyczne, *Opinia Polskiego Towarzystwa Informatycznego na temat projektu rozporządzenia Rady Ministrów w sprawie planu informatyzacji państwa na lata 2011–2015 (Opinion of the Polish Information Processing Society on the Proposal of the Council of Ministers for a Regulation on the State Computerisation Plan for 2011–2015)*, Warszawa 2011.

⁶⁹ Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, Założenia do projektu ustawy o zmianie ustawy o informatyzacji działalności podmiotów realizujących zadania publiczne oraz niektórych innych ustaw, przedłożone przez ministra administracji i cyfryzacji (*Guidelines for a Proposal of an Act Amending the Act on the Informatization of Activities Undertaken by Entities Carrying out Public Tasks and Some Other Acts Submitted by the Minister of Administration and Digitization*), 2012, <http://www.kprm.gov.pl/wydarzenia/decyzje-rzadu/zalozenia-do-projektu-ustawy-o-zmianie-ustawy-o-informatyzacji-dzialalnosci.html> (last visited 14.02.2013).

⁷⁰ MSWiA, *Odwzorowanie działań Europejskiej Agendy Cyfrowej w pracach oraz planach polskich instytucji rządowych (Mapping the Actions under the Digital Agenda for Europe in the Activities and Plans of the Polish Government Institutions)* in: MSWiA, *Europejska Agenda Cyfrowa w pracach i planach polskich instytucji rządowych (The Digital Agenda for Europe in the Activities and Plans of Polish Government Institutions)*, 2011, pp. 43–152, http://szs.mac.gov.pl/download/56/12285/Europejska_Agenda_Cyfrowa.pdf (last visited 14.02.2013).

However, the document does not indicate that the Digital Agenda for Europe was perceived as a new stage of implementation of the digital society policy in Poland, but rather that it was treated as an obligatory checklist for measuring progress in this respect. The passiveness of the Polish authorities is also shown by the fact that the development strategy for the information society in Poland until 2013, issued in December 2008, is claimed to be consistent with the Digital Agenda for Europe issued in August 2010.⁷¹ As proven in subsection 2.2 of the present article, this Polish strategy essentially implemented the provisions of the i2010 strategy. This shows that the Polish authorities do not perceive the Digital Agenda for Europe as a new stage in the execution of the information society policy.

The European Commission continues to negatively assess the progress of Poland in its implementation of the Digital Agenda for Europe. According to the data of 2012, Poland is below the average level in all the aims set forth in the Agenda.⁷²

Conclusions

The development of the information society in the EU, initiated by the White Paper of Jacques Delors in 1993, was at first related only to implementation of the Lisbon Strategy and was treated as the driving force behind economic development at the beginning of the 21st century. Subsequent documents specified priorities in this respect, however they were implemented through soft law and the funds allocated to these aims mainly came from national budgets. Thus, the differences between the EU Member States in their levels of development of the information society were not significantly reduced. This situation should change under the new Europe 2020 strategy and its Digital Agenda for Europe. The introduction of stronger legal instruments and a more thorough monitoring of progress in the Member States by EU institutions is expected to improve the current situation. Since its inception, the EU information society policy (and later digital society policy) has included strong support for the R&D and innovation policy. This support has largely stimulated success in this respect.

Poland is lagging behind in its development of the information society in comparison with the other EU Member States. This problem stems from the former socio-economic system, and in particular its backwardness in the

⁷¹ Ibidem, p. 53.

⁷² Cf. the charts in European Commission, *Digital Agenda for Europe. Scoreboard 2012*, Luxembourg 2012, p. 6, and the chart *Contribution to EU targets. Poland*, 2012, <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/sites/digital-agenda/files/poland.jpg> (last visited 15.02.2013).

sphere of tele-information infrastructure. The development of the information society in Poland has also been affected by the lack of experienced elites who would be able to effectively manage this multidimensional policy. Instead, its history in Poland shows considerable incompetence on the part of Polish authorities, although the last two years have shown that the situation is improving. Still, the Polish information society policy lacks a plan and a schedule of concrete actions. There are also no indications that the scenario of 'rapid catching-up' adopted by Poland has been successful. Poland does not have strong enough assets to enable it to reduce the gap separating it from the more technologically advanced countries in a short period of time.

In the sphere of declarations, the Polish policy is implemented in accordance with EU guidelines. In practice however, the implementation of EU strategies in Poland does not come easy. As a result of the failures in the execution of some earlier EU initiatives and the Poland's growing distance from the average level, new EU ideas meet with an ever less enthusiastic response. This is clearly visible in the period for making commitments under the Digital Agenda for Europe. The government has not taken any actions which would mark a new stage in this policy, which proves that it does not treat the EU development schedule for the information society as a priority.

As regards research and innovation supporting the development of the information society, it should be mentioned that the strategic goals of the strategy for informatisation of Poland until 2013, adopted in 2005, do not include ICT research. Although since 2007 ICT research has been one of the priorities of the programmes financed from EU funds, until now the results have not been satisfactory and demonstrate that the sector is not strong enough. The question of further investment in research depends on Poland's vision of the information society. The government declares that the Polish society should not only be a consumer of services offered by the digital world, but also should participate in creating these services. This, however, seems impossible without stronger support from the scientific sector.