



**1<sup>st</sup> IT STAR Workshop on R&D in Information and Communication Technology  
11 November 2006, Bratislava, Slovakia**

*We, the participants of the 1<sup>st</sup> IT STAR Workshop on R&D in ICT in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe (CESE),*

***Appreciating** the efforts of IT STAR, the regional ICT association of leading national computer societies to promote ICT related activities in the region and to organize this workshop,*

***Recognizing** the potential of ICT and the importance of this event to develop synergies in the direction of the Information Society,*

***Agree** to adopt the following*

**DECLARATION**

1. The **CESE** countries share geographical, historical and cultural ancestry and have a past record of strong research communities and bilateral and multilateral R&D activities. Today's new geopolitical, economic and technological realities reveal new challenges and opportunities.

2. The countries as represented by their leading professional ICT societies in IT STAR are a mix of old, new, incoming and candidate EU members, and the European R&D programs and platforms offer principal directions and benchmarks. ICT is of paramount importance to further economic progress and the extent and quality of R&D in ICT will greatly determine the economic trends and societal transformation.

3. Many **CESE** countries currently enjoy remarkable economic growth but it is not clear to what extent this is due to new policies and regulations, or whether it is largely the bounce-back from the recession of the 1990-ies. In all cases, to ensure solid growth in future the region is well advised to stay abreast and compare its R&D investment and output to that of the leading EU countries, as well as to other world regions, in particular to South East Asia.

4. A stable R&D environment in ICT with appropriate regulations, financing and incentives has to be ensured to keep the best scientists at home and the leading national R&D institutions competitive and integrated within the European network of programs and institutes. Further care should be taken to foster the traditionally good university education and fundamental research, to encourage R&D in innovative SMEs and to ensure that multinationals dedicate support to R&D within their scope of operations. To this end, national governments and the European Commission, in partnership with industry and civil society, need to further refine policies and ensure favorable conditions.

5. IT STAR offers a regional forum of professional institutions, scientists, practitioners and experts willing to support initiatives, activities and projects related to the Information Society. It is developing the capacity to promote best practices and to establish regional teams of experts for national, regional and EU program activities. This 1<sup>st</sup> IT STAR Workshop, whose mission is to investigate the current state of the ICT related R&D environment in CESE and to draw conclusions and recommendations to facilitate policymaking within the Region and the European Union, is one such activity.

6. The participants of this workshop will assist in informing governments, opinion leaders, policy makers and the general public of this event and seek their support and collaboration. The workshop proceedings, its conclusions and recommendations will be available to all interested parties and we express our readiness to continue supporting similar IT STAR initiatives in future.