

Polish ICT Strategies

As part of the implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, Polish Parliament adopted in 2004 amendments to the Act on Public Administration creating a new department of "computerization" with the head in the rank of the Minister. In February 2005 Parliament adopted the Act "On IT business entities pursuing public goals", which creates a legal conditions for the systematic implementation of information technologies in the "e-government" – specifically, areas of citizen services and functioning of state and local authorities. This Act provisions, that the Minister responsible for the computerization must establish the Council for Information Technology, which consists of representatives of government and non-governmental organizations. The Council is a consulting body to the Minister, with the term of office lasting two years. Currently, the Council is chaired by Professor Zdzislaw Szyjewski, Vice-president of the Polish Information Processing Society.

On the basis of the above Acts in the years 2005 - 2007 several laws related to specific problems associated with use of information technology in the public sector and to relations with citizens were issued. These laws have helped to implement the guidelines contained in the European framework of interoperability into the Polish legal system and create the minimum requirements for public records, administration systems, databases, exchange of information in electronic form, publication of legislative regulations in Internet, requirements for electronic signature within the administration, templates of electronic documents and forms based on XML. Rules for archiving electronic documents and their descriptions were set out, as well as principles of electronic confirmation of delivery through electronic means. Introduced solutions provided basic framework of interoperability of information systems created within the public sector. As a result, since August 2008 all state bodies are obliged to receive complaints from citizens filled by means of electronic communication and signed with the electronic signature, and must consider them to have an effective legal status.

Regardless of the solutions of a technical nature, such legal framework made possible for the Council of Ministers to issue the regulation determining the state IT development roadmap – Information Technology Plan for years 2007 - 2010. It is the first document in the history of the computerization of Polish public administration, which systematically describes specific tasks to be carried out by government departments for the development of the information society in Poland.

The IT Plan defines:

- IT priorities and objectives of the country that should led to development of systems used in performing public functions,
- list of projects, which will be needed in order to meet specific priorities and services, detailed descriptions of these projects, estimated costs of their implementation, possible sources of funding and entities responsible for their implementation,
- action plan for the development of information society, taking into account implementation priorities of information systems, consistent with the initiative *i2010 European information society for growth and employment*,
- public tasks, which should be implemented with the use of electronic means (priority services for citizens and businesses); additionally, entities responsible for implementing specific services have been identified as well as dates for their commencement.

In order to ensure proper coordination of the IT Plan, in March of 2007 the President of Council of Ministers established a standing Committee of the Council of Ministers for information technology and communication. Its objectives include initiating and preparing opinions on government documents in the field of computerization of public administration, development of information society, communication, public registers and applications of information technology in building a knowledge-based economy. One of the first actions of

this Committee was to create legal conditions for facilitating free Internet access in areas at risk of digital exclusion.

Regardless of the strategy aimed at the application of information technology in public administration, in 2007 the information society strategy was set out. Both strategies have been subjected to extensive public consultation, for instance they were widely discussed in May 2008 during events celebrating World Information Society Day, coordinated by the Polish Information Processing Society. In those annual events, purpose of which is to promote public awareness of the idea of the information society and to address barriers to be overcome, the largest Polish chambers of commerce, professional associations, non-governmental organizations and public institutions are involved.

Considerable part of the tasks arising from the strategy is implemented within the framework of the projects supported by the European Union for the period 2007-2013. Currently, in conjunction with advanced discussion on the European Interoperability Framework version 2.0, Minister in charge of the computerization began the process of adopting solutions proposed during the discussions on the EU document to the Polish legal system.

The process of updating the information society development strategy is almost finished with help from participating local self-government, scientific and non-governmental organizations, as well as open consultations over the Internet. According to the schedule, revised strategy should be published in November 2008, constituting the basis for updating the Information Technology Plan.