

## Essen Conference

### Federal Minister for Education and Research Edelgard Bulmahn on TEN-155

Federal Minister for Education and Research Edelgard Bulmahn at the Conference in Essen on 25 February 1999 on the Fifth European RTD Framework Programme on the Transeuropean Research Network at 155 megabit per second (155 Mbps) -

1. Research networks have worldwide become a medium of paramount importance; they are absolutely necessary for scientific communication and cooperation. So it is only logical that we must set up efficient research networks in Europe if we want to improve European cooperation in science and research.
2. Science is an important driving force and multiplier for the information society. After all, the Internet and the World Wide Web developed out of efforts to improve communication within the scientific community. If the science community is to retain this pioneering role, it needs to be able to be ahead of the market. The younger generation will at any rate be quicker than my generation and the previous one to fully anticipate and pick up the development of the information society and of new markets for information and communication technology. Offering guaranteed bandwidths, TEN-155 constitutes an example of an innovative step which prepares the ground for new applications, above all new real-time applications. Before long, these quality features will be copied in commercial networks.
3. It is very appropriate for the commissioning of the TEN-155 to take place at the Conference to launch the EU's Fifth Framework Programme to which our neighbouring Middle and Eastern European countries, and Cyprus, will be associated from the beginning. These countries are already included in TEN-155. Scientist in Eastern European countries who had to live with limited communication and cooperation possibilities for years, will thus have the benefit of participating through this medium in international scientific cooperation. We, ourselves, were able to perceive the positive impulses which the networking of research provided, after the unification of East and West in our own country. The scientific community is readier and quicker to cooperate than governments. This is encouraging because it shows that integration is already under way.
4. At the demonstration of the Meccano Project, it was impressive to see that a new quality of scientific cooperation is evolving in the era of networking. But we are seeing just the beginnings of this development and of European transborder cooperation. We will have to extend this communication infrastructure very soon so that it can keep pace with the growth of national research networks. After abolishing national borders in Europe, we must not allow new boundaries to be set up with regard to European research networks. It is, therefore, very appropriate that the further expansion of TEN-155 will be a part of the Fifth Framework Programme.

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