European Green Party Congress
Rome, 20th - 22nd February 2004

Accepted resolution

First steps towards a Sustainable Information Society

The co-operative production and exchange of software, information and knowledge opens a new age of human civilisation. Free software, open scientific publishing, and free information and knowledge sharing on the Web already demonstrates this potential. However, before all can benefit from these new forms of cooperation, we live through a dangerous period in which expanded property mechanisms and centralised control are used by a limited number of large firms to channel the development of information exchanges in a restrictive direction. Decisions taken in the coming years will decide whether information and communication technology will be directed towards passive reception and access to standardised contents, or whether it will fuel new cooperation and solidarity.

Whereas the European Greens work towards an "Information ecology" as we do for the environment and promote a sustainable information society with access for all to information and communication technologies and with the creation of a public domain as the Commons of the Information Society.

Whereas Free/Open Source Software supports our model of social development : exchange and sharing of knowledge, democracy and diversity, cooperative working structures, respect of the privacy and diversity of software

We therefore recommend the following policy guidelines, in particular in the management of public administrations and information systems:

1. Recommend to promote the introduction and use of free and open source software within their governmental bodies and public administrations as a starting point to enforce open standards and take all necessary measures to prevent the creation of monopolies;

2. Recommend the use of free and open source software to reduce the digital divide and to promote the equitable participation to e-government services and public information to all citizens regardless of their gender, ethnic origin and social disadvantages in order to ensure their active participation to exchange information and knowledge;

3. Require that public procurement procedures be adapted in order to ensure fair competition between free/open source and proprietary software, in particular by taking into account local and regional structures ;

4. Recommend free/open source software within the educational system, in particular with young children, to encourage an active behaviour in the information society;

5. Demand that source code of software whose development is financed through public funds be distributed under appropriate Open Source Licences;