

***Educa3 Plan**

Since free schooling is guaranteed for children between 3 and 6, the new challenge of the Government is increasing seat availability in primary schools, where demand keeps exceeding supply. The Educa3 plan is aimed at creating 300,000 new seats for children under 3 between 2008 and 2012. This plan has been endowed 1,087 million Euros, 50% for the Crown and 50% for the Autonomous Regions.

Beneficiaries

Families with children under 3. By creating 300,000 new primary school seats the Government will promote early schooling, which is highly important as it enhances school success in the future. Besides, it will favour the harmonisation of work and children care.

Development

It is currently under development. This Plan was approved of by the Council of Ministers last 29 August 2008.

Further information

<http://mepsyd.es/horizontales/prensa/notas/2008/08/educa3.html>

***Charter of Rights of Telecommunication Service Users**

This strengthens consumer protection in the area of telecommunications and it contemplates measures such as:

- Greater legal guarantees for users in registration, cancelation and operator-changing processes.
- Those operators that offer Internet access through landlines using xDSL technologies will not be authorised to implement offers in which the theoretical speed of the customer's loop does not achieve 80% of the maximum speed announced in the offer.
- A two-day period has been established for the implementation of portability between two operators; this period might be reduced to just one day.
- The conditions that the customer attention services of the operators must observe are hereby regulated and a maximum retail price for the calls to such service is established.

Beneficiaries

Consumers will be provided with greater guarantees to contract or cancel a telecommunications' service, to switch between operators or to call the customer attention service.

Development

The Government's Delegate Commission on Financial Affairs has already been presented with a Bill Draft which will be sent to the Council of State next January.

Further information

<http://www.usuariosteleco.es>

Telephone no.: 901 33 66 99

***Saving and Energy Efficiency Plan 2008-2011**

This initiative contains 31 measures aimed at intensifying saving and energy efficiency in our country. This Plan will be in force between 2008 and 2011 and it will be aimed at reducing energy consumption by an amount equalling 10% of Spain's annual oil imports.

Beneficiaries

Consumers and companies will enjoy higher revenues as their expenditure on energy will be reduced.

Development

It is currently under development. The Council of Ministers approved of this Plan last August 2008.

Further information

<http://www.la-moncloa.es/NR/exeres/66659A05-D28E-443F-84C4-3BF2203BACF1.frameless.htm?NRMODE=Published>

Telephone no.: 901 50 1002

***Plan to promote and boost up freight transport by train**

This Plan is aimed at improving the management of exchanges by train in order to guarantee greater reliability for hauliers, in order to guarantee a better management of train stations and in order to guarantee a new operation model in RENFE's freight transport and logistics area. This Plan is based upon the creation of an essential network for freight transport by implementing the following actions:

- Building high speed railways both for freight transport and for passengers in those sections in which it is possible to harmonize both transport modalities. Thus, it is necessary to point out that the Strategic Infrastructures and Transport Plan (PEIT) put forward by the Ministry of Development contemplates the construction of 10,000 kilometres of high speed railways, 7,000 of which would be used both for freight transport and for passenger transport.
- Adapting conventional railways to freight transport in those sections that can be devoted to freight transport, preferably, once the high speed lines start to work.
- Building new railway by-passes between different points of the conventional rail network.
- Increasing the capacity of the existing network.
- Providing more connections between the rail network and the main ports of the State.

The considerable improvements implemented in the area of railway infrastructures will be complemented by a considerable investment in furniture, thus, leaving aside the investments corresponding to the construction of the aforementioned 7,000 kilometres of High Speed railways for passenger and freight transport, this Plan will be endowed with nearly 5,000 million Euros (4,717). A series of new measures concerning freight transport management will add up to these investments in order to increase the competitiveness of this sector and in order to provide it with greater guarantees.

The Plan is intended to promote freight railway transport, to relieve traffic problems on roads, to reduce the number of accidents, to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to lower transport costs in our productive sector.

Beneficiaries

Companies will benefit from better transport services at a reduced price, which will result in a greater competitiveness. This measure will benefit, in particular, exporting sectors such as the vehicle sector, which will enjoy a greater margin of manoeuvre to defend their prices in the international market. Apart from its important economic consequences, this Plan will bring about great social benefits as it will reduce polluting emissions, which is good for society as a whole.

Development

It was taken to the Council of Ministers last 26 December 2008. Over the first months of 2009, the main management and regulatory measures will be established.

***Bill draft on the free access to and exercise of service activities. Transposition of the Services Directive**

The Bill Draft on the free access to and exercise of service activities, also known as “Ley Paraguas” in Spanish, incorporates the principles of the Services Directive to the existing Spanish regulations. Thus, this Bill Draft is aimed at:

- Eliminating any unjustified, discriminatory or exaggerated requisites to access or exert services activities.
- Simplifying the procedures governing the actions of service providers by using the potential of information and communication technologies. Thus, the so-called single window system is created; this system will make it possible for citizens to obtain information and to carry out the necessary procedures in order to start up an activity in the services’ sector, both in Spain and in any other European country.
- Improving the protection of consumers and service users’ rights, imposing information duties on the providers.

Beneficiaries

The transposition of this directive will benefit Spanish consumers, facilitating their access to a wider range of services at better prices. In fact, according to official estimates, once it has been fully implemented, it will allow for a 0.5 reduction in Spain’s inflation differential in the Euro zone. It will also benefit Spanish companies, for they will be operating in a more objective, transparent regulatory frame with less administrative hindrances, and it will improve their access to European markets.

Development

The European Services Directive came into force last 28 December 2006, and the three-year period for the Member States to implement the transposition will come to an end next 28 December 2009. The Council of Ministers has already been presented with this umbrella law (“Ley Paraguas”). It will be sent to the Council of State once the public hearing is over.

Further information

www.meh.es/es-ES/Areas%20Tematicas/Internacional/Union%20Europea/Paginas/Directiva%20Servicios%20Union%20Europea.aspx

***Action Plan to reduce administrative charges**

This Plan is aimed at reducing the administrative charges paid by self-employed workers and companies to the Crown by 30%. Thus, the resources that companies have traditionally devoted to activities that do not have much to do with production may be now used to carry out strictly production-related activities, and it will also reduce the waiting time for companies to start or carry out those activities.

This Plan has a twofold purpose:

- Eliminating redundant, obsolete, reiterative and unnecessary administrative procedures from the regulations in force.
- Acting preventively with regards to future regulations in order to avoid the imposition of new administrative duties both on citizens and companies.

Beneficiaries

Citizens and companies involved in Crown procedures will benefit from the reduction of the procedural costs resulting from a requirement reduction; they will also benefit from the possibility to carry out many of those procedures without having to go to a Crown office; and they will also benefit from the elimination of the corresponding procedure in those cases it is considered unjustified. According to the estimates of the European Commission, the rigorous application of this Plan might result in an additional 1.5% growth in the Spanish Gross Domestic Product.

Development

The Plan was approved of by the Council of Ministers last 20 June 2008. Two sets of measures intended to reduce administrative charges have already been approved of and they are going to result in the simplification of 81 procedures, helping both citizens and companies save time and costs.

Further information

http://www.map.es/iniciativas/reduccion_cargas

***Way Bill for Professional Training**

The “way bill” is based upon four essential axes: excellence in education, the recognition of experience, the expansion and flexibilization of the study offer and the European orientation of the new Professional Training system. This is aimed at making Professional Training match students’ expectations, workers’ demands and the needs of

the economic system in order to improve the opinion of society about this type of studies and to approach Spanish and European registration fees. These measures include:

- Expansion of the System of Centres for Professional Training and creating a System of National Reference Centres including the 26 professional sectors.
- Boosting up the creation of new specialised studies and of a virtual platform so as to promote distance learning.
- Evaluating and certifying the professional competence acquired through labour experience and through other ways outside school training.
- Setting forth a scholarship programme aimed at granting scholarships and aids to workers between 18 and 24 who have not obtained the Professional Training so that they may harmonize work and the necessary training activities in order to get a certificate.
- Encouraging and supporting national and international mobility, as well as language study.

Beneficiaries

Young people will benefit from an improved educational offer and companies will have the chance to hire workers that will be better prepared to adapt to their needs. Besides, according to official estimates, there are 12 million workers without a certificate but with proved labour experience. During the first stage, nearly 80,000 workers might benefit from this measure, mainly workers from emerging sectors such as those contemplated in the Dependency Act and those related to the areas of Children Education or Renewable Energies.

Development

The social interlocutors were presented with the general guidelines of the way bill in the context of Social Dialogue last 1 September 2008. The Council of Ministers will approve of the Royal Decree regulating experience validation during the first few months of 2009.

Further information

<http://www.mepsyd.es/horizontales/iniciativas/reforma-fp.html>

***General Audiovisual Act and Creation Act of the State Council for Audiovisual Media**

These acts are intended to:

- Provide the whole sector with basic, homogeneous regulations: the radio and TV regulations are unified, doing away with regulatory differences between the different operators at the level of coverage or transmission technologies, adapting the new EU regulations (Audiovisual Media Directive) and incorporating the new technological realities.
- Promoting free competence and pluralism: an open, free competence market model is hereby established for the different private operators. This Act also defines the mission of the public TV service as a specific, well-differentiated mission and it is assigned to public TV channels.
- Providing the sector with independent regulatory institutions: the State Council for Audiovisual Media is hereby created. The Act also encourages the creation of independent regulatory organs with regional competences.

Beneficiaries

Operators in the audiovisual sector (broadcasters, editors, advertising companies, content providers, etc) will benefit from the regulation of the sector through both laws. Besides, these laws will strengthen citizens' rights and improve the protection of children and teenagers under eighteen in the sector of audiovisual communications. Besides, they will serve to introduce measures guaranteeing the accessibility to audiovisual services.

Development

The Council of Ministers will be presented with a Bill Draft on the Audiovisual Sector before next 31 March 2009 and with a Bill Draft on Audiovisual Creation put forward by the Council for Audiovisual Media.

***Innovating Vehicles, Ecologic Vehicles Programme (VIVE 2008-2011)**

In 2008 the Ministry of Industry and the Official Credit Institute set forth the so-called VIVE Plan in order to promote the substitution of old vehicles. The ICO-Plan VIVE action line is endowed with 1,200 million Euros and it is aimed at encouraging the substitution of those vehicles that are more than ten years old in and the acquisition of new, less contaminating vehicles. Cars with more than 250,000 kilometres are also accepted, regardless of how old they are.

Beneficiaries

Society in general will benefit from gas emissions and accidents reduction. Thanks to this measure, workers, natural persons, self-employed workers and small and medium-sized enterprises will get 100% financing to purchase their new vehicles provided that the price does not exceed 30,000 Euros. The first 10,000 Euros will be financed at 0%

interest and the rest of the loan will be financed at the Reference interest rates established by the Official Credit Institute up to 2.5%.

Development

It is currently under development. The VIVE Plan was authorised by the Council of Ministers last 4 August 2008. Later on, on 14 November, the Council of Ministers approved of a revision of the plan that will remain in force until 2010.

Further information

<http://www.mityc.es/Industria/Servicios/PlanVIVE/>

Telephone no.: 901 50 1002

***New airport management model (AENA)**

Development of a new airport management model characterised by the differentiation of airport management and those activities related to air navigation control, so as to enable the entrance of private capital into the global airport management system and the participation of Autonomous Regions in the management system of certain important airports, while the State keeps most of the stocks.

Beneficiaries

The investment of private capital in our airports is a business chance for Spanish companies. The new management model will contribute to provide citizens with higher quality airport services and it will also make it possible to move on towards the implementation of a single sky project.

Development

It is currently under development. The model was approved of by the Council of Ministers last 1 August 2008. At present, the necessary measures to implement it are being developed.

***Law to modify and adapt other laws to the Law on the free access to and exercise of service activities**

The so-called “Ley omnibus” is a global, comprehensive law intended to adapt existing national laws to the Law on the free access to and exercise of service activities. According to the estimates, this might affect 60 laws.

Beneficiaries

Spanish consumers and users will benefit from the adaptation of Spanish regulations as they will have access to a wider range of services at better prices. In fact, according to official estimates, once it has been fully implemented, it will allow for a 0.5 reduction in Spain’s inflation differential in the Euro zone.

Development

It will be taken to the Council of Ministers over the first few months of 2009.

***Company creation plan: Plan Empresa 24 horas**

The Government will implement the necessary regulatory reforms so as to make it possible for interested parties to create a company in 24 hours. At present, this takes between 14 to 19 days.

Beneficiaries

Entrepreneurs, as they will have the chance to implement their projects faster. Society as a whole will benefit from the economic activity and from the employment created by these new companies.

Development

The Government has created a work team which is in charge of presenting the Government’s Delegate Commission on Financial Affairs with a proposal by March 2009. Besides, different agreements have been subscribed with agencies and with other private entities in order to boost up the company creation procedures.

Further information

Telephone no.: 901 50 1002

***New Law on Science and Technology**

This new Law will update the previous Law on Science, which was the one the different Research and Development policies implemented over the last 22 years have been based upon. The new regulations will adapt to the new needs of the Research, Development and Innovation system: increasing the cooperation in the corporate sector; improving the existing result transfer mechanisms in the area of research; strengthening the relationships with the Autonomous Regions and increasing the presence of Spain in the European Research Area. Besides, this Law will contribute to simplify procedures and, finally, to regulate research staff career development and to facilitate mobility.

Beneficiaries

Society as a whole will benefit from the improvements implemented upon our Research, Development and Innovation system, because they will encourage the implementation of changes in the existing productive model, which will boost up the recovery of our economy.

Development

An experts' commission has been created in order to prepare the bill draft. The delegate Commission for Financial Affairs will be presented with the law over the next few months.

Further information

http://web.micinn.es/contenido.asp?dir=01_Portada/AA@NLey

***Public calling for radio electric spectrum use**

It is aimed at encouraging the efficient use of the radio electric spectrum while promoting the development of new telecommunication services in the area of mobility, in consonance with the new regulations on the spectrum created to promote an efficient use of this precious resource.

Beneficiaries

Citizens, as they will enjoy new mobility services, and society as whole for this will bring about a greater development of the telecommunications industry and, therefore, it will contribute to wealth and employment creation.

Development

The Government's Delegate Commission for Financial Affairs will be presented with a proposal on the use of the radio electric spectrum over the next few months.

***Agreement with France to double the capacity of our electrical interconnection line**

Last June 2008, the Governments of Spain and France signed an agreement to create a new electrical interconnection line between Santa Llogaia (Spain) and Baixas (France). It is aimed at doubling the current exchange capacity increasing it by 1,400 MW.

Beneficiaries

Consumers and companies will benefit from greater safety and quality in the electric supply as well as from lower prices due to the greater competence in our imports. Besides, the interconnection line will favour the development of renewable energies as it will improve the electrical reserves' capacity.

Development

The project is still being prepared and, then, the corresponding works will have to be implemented. According to official estimates the works will conclude by 2014 and the line will start to operate by then.

***New Ports Act**

This reforms Law 48/2003 on Economic regime and service provision systems of ports, so as to provide a better solution to the needs of this dynamic sector, the maritime transport sector, and to the needs of the services offered to this sector at the different ports. Thus, Port Authorities become the promoters of the whole port offer, including infrastructure exploitation and also the services offered by private companies.

In order to favour autonomy at the level of port management and competences, the corresponding Port Authorities will be entitled to adjust the basic amounts of the applicable taxes in the port or ports managed by them, adapting them to their specific characteristics.

Beneficiaries

Exporting and importing companies using the national port system will benefit from the cost reduction and from the higher quality of the services provided. Indirectly, consumers will benefit from the lower prices of the imported goods.

Development

The Government's Delegate Commission for Financial Affairs was presented with the bill draft. The Council of Ministers will be presented with it during the first few months of 2009.

***Bill Draft on Professional Services**

This is aimed at reforming professional services, applying the Services Directive to Law and Engineering professionals, among others. This will strengthen the principle of free access to these professions, doing away with unjustified restrictions on competence and strengthening consumer protection, giving pre-eminence to the role of Professional Associations, which will be provided with updated regulations.

Beneficiaries

Consumers, for they will have access to a wider range of professional services at better prices and they will obtain greater protection; and also professionals, for they will be working in a more favourable context and they will be provided with greater legal guarantees.

Development

The general guidelines of this reform were put forward before the Government's Delegate Commission for Financial Affairs last 6 November 2008.

***Reform of the model of preventive legal certainty**

The control system exerted by notaries public and registrars will be revised in order to prevent duplicity and overlapping, for this generates unnecessary costs both for citizens and companies. Besides, the Crown's mechanisms to supervise and control notaries public and registrars will also be strengthened. Finally, the information systems of the Land Registry and other Registries will be revised in order to enhance the quality of the data provided and the accessibility of citizens and companies to those data. The Government will put forward a "way bill" containing the different stages to reform the model.

Beneficiaries

Citizens and companies undertaking legal actions that need to be stamped by a notary or by a registrar, as the duration of the procedure will be reduced. Besides, both citizens

and companies will benefit from higher quality and guarantees in the services provided by notaries and registrars and their accessibility to the information at the Land Registry and other Registries will also improve.

Development

The main agents involved in the reform and the Ministry of Economy and Financial Affairs and the Ministry of Justice will present the Government's Delegate Commission for Financial Affairs with a joint reform proposal by the beginning of 2009.

***University strategy “Estrategia Universidad 2015”**

The so-called Estrategia Universidad 2015 is an initiative aimed at modernising Spanish universities through teaching and scientific excellence, through the internationalisation of the university system and through its participation in innovation improvement. Its different action lines are aimed at promoting the specialisation and diversification of Spanish universities, at strengthening the social role of universities, at enhancing student mobility and also researchers' mobility and at propitiating an approach between universities and companies. It is also intended to improve university governance, reducing bureaucracy, updating the control and follow-up systems and making it possible for universities to develop their autonomy fully. One of the main axes of this Strategy is the programme entitled “International Excellence Campus”, which is intended to modernize and improve the international projection of university campuses during the 21st century, and which was endowed with 150 million Euros for aids in 2008. In 2009, this measure will be endowed with 169 million Euros, plus 50 million Euros provided by the Special State Fund for the Stimulation of Economy and Employment.

Beneficiaries

Students, for they will have the chance to access higher quality university education which will prepare them better to enter the labour market. Companies, for workers will be better trained and adapted to their needs and because university will have a greater capacity to support the technological and innovating development of companies.

Development

The Council of Ministers will approve of this Strategy during the first quarter of 2009. The Directive establishing the basic Guidelines of the International Excellence Campus Programme and the call for applications will be published during the first quarter of 2009.

Further information

http://web.micinn.es/contenido.asp?dir=04_Universidades/AA@EU2015

<http://universidades2015.fecyt.es>

Contact e-mail: eu2015@micinn.es

***Promoting the enforcement of the Strategic Lines to fight climatic change**

The Spanish Strategy on Climatic Change and Clean Energies 2007-2012-2020 and the Plan on Urgent Measures were approved of last July 2007. They were aimed at setting forth a set of measures that might make it possible to implement the required emission reductions for the period 2008-2012. On July 2008, the Government's Delegate Commission for Climatic Change identified six Strategic Action Lines which, in consonance with the Spanish Strategy on Climatic Change and Clean Energies (EECCCEL), establish the main areas on which the Government will focus during this Legislature:

1. Waste and manure management
2. Sustainable mobility
3. Sustainable construction
4. Energy efficiency and renewable energy
5. Forest policy and urban drainage systems
6. Innovation

Beneficiaries

Citizens will benefit from the reduction of emissions and from several changes in the way of life which contribute to increasing welfare; and, at the same time, the productive system evolves towards more efficient, sustainable models based upon less energy dependency; models that contribute to increasing international competitiveness in Spanish companies.

Development

All the strategic lines are operative and their goals form part of the different sector policies. The main ongoing actions are:

- Waste: The National Plan on Waste and the Manure Biodigestion Plan have already been approved of.
- As to mobility, the Delegate Commission for Climatic Change has approved of a Draft of the Strategy on Sustainable Mobility. They will be published after January 2009.

- In the area of construction, the Government approved of the Royal Decree whereby the Initiative for the modernisation of Old Tourism Premises (RENOVE Plan for tourist premises) and the 2009-2012 State Housing Plan (which adds up to the RENOVE Plan for housing in one of its strategic Axes).
- In the area of energy, the Government is working at present on a bill draft on energy efficiency and renewable energy, under the presidency of the General Secretary on Energy.
- In the area of forest policy and drainage system, the Government is working on the development of a Plan to Plant 45 million trees.
- As to the area of Innovation, the Council of Ministers has agreed to create the Research Institute on Climatic Change in Saragossa, the granting of 11 projects as part of the Strategic Action on Energy and Climatic Change set forth by the National Plan on Research, Development and Innovation 2008-2011 and the final preparatory conference for the creation of an International Agency on Renewable Energy (IRENA), an initiative that has been promoted by Spain, Germany and Denmark.

Further information

http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/cambio_climatico/

***Revision of norms on sector regulators**

The norms concerning sector regulatory organisms in the area of network industries (telecommunications, energy, transport, postal services) will be revised in order to improve their independence and their governance and in order to establish their functions.

Beneficiaries

Society in general and, in particular, companies and customers demanding the regulating activities, for they will benefit from an improvement in the regulations of the sectors concerned.

Development

The Government's Delegate Commission for Financial Affairs will be presented with a reform proposal in 2009, during the first few months.

***Reform of public research institutions**

Spanish Public Research Organisms will be restructured so as to provide them with a homogeneous legal frame and to improve coordination among their common actuation areas, encouraging the synergies among them. This reorganisation will be reinforced by a series of measures intended to improve the situation of the staff; measures such as career development for researchers, aimed at making researching careers more attractive.

Beneficiaries

The Spanish researching capacity. The reorganisation of public research organisms will bring about rationality to the public Research and Development system, which will result in an optimisation of resources, as it will contribute to avoid duplicities and it will improve cooperation with universities and with other regional research centres.

Development

It is currently under analysis.

***New Law on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies**

Energy efficiency and renewable energies have become a growingly important factor for the achievement of the goals of the energy policy: guaranteeing supplies and competitiveness and respecting the environment. Given the strategic, essential character of energy efficiency and renewable energies and given the need to meet the medium and long term national goals, it is necessary to establish new regulations that may complete and improve the existing legal frame; and that may bring about stability to the promotion of energy efficiency and to the development of renewable energies. Besides, the Law contemplates the transposition into Spanish laws of the EU regulations on energy and climatic change, which includes a new Directive on Renewable Energies.

Beneficiaries

Society in general will benefit from the reduction of our energy dependency and from the reduction of emissions. Besides, this will increase our supply guarantees.

Development

The Ministry of Industry presented the Government's Delegate Commission for Financial Affairs with a draft containing the essential principles last 27 November. The Bill Draft will be presented during the first quarter of 2009.

***Reform of the Bid Law in order to make it more agile and efficient**

Partial reform of the legal frame in order to guarantee a more agile, less costly bidding procedure, as well as to guarantee a greater efficiency of the existing bidding procedure as far as results are concerned and to encourage companies and applicants to enter bids, eliminating unnecessary procedures, reducing costs and restructuring the bidding management system.

Beneficiaries

The economic system as a whole and, more specifically, those companies that are undergoing difficulties, over-indebted consumers and their creditors.

Development

A regulatory assessment has already been carried out and the Government is already working on the draft.

***Expansion of the deductions on Investigation and Development to research projects carried out outside the EU**

The deductions on Investigation, Development and Innovation in the Corporate Tax are expanded and, thus, from 2008 onwards, they will also be applicable to companies carrying out more than 25% of their research activities in a non-EU country or in a country outside the European Economic Area.

Beneficiaries

Innovating companies. This measure will enable Spanish companies to benefit from the knowledge generated by research centres abroad preserving their right to Research and Development allowances.

Development

It is currently in force. It is contemplated in Law 4/2008 dated 23 December.

***2011-2020 Plan on Renewable Energies**

Spain has committed to take 20% of the energy consumed from renewable sources. Thus, in order to meet this compromise, the 2011-2020 Plan on Renewable Energies will establish the minimum binding obligatory goals, taking into account the production quota for energy from renewable sources and the total energy consumption rates. Besides, this Plan will contemplate the individual goals for each type of technology (hydraulic technology, wind technology, photovoltaic solar technology, thermal solar technology, etc.), and the corresponding measures that will have to be adopted in order to attain such goals. The regulations concerning the Plan on Renewable Energies has been developed through the Law on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energies.

Beneficiaries

Society as a whole will benefit from a reduction in energy dependency and from a reduction of the emissions, as well as from an increase of the supply guarantees. The development of renewable energies has an important positive social-economic impact because it contributes to employment creation. According to the study carried out for the 2005-2010 Plan, nearly 100,000 net jobs will be created during this period.

Development

It is currently under development.

***Red Iris Nova**

An advanced communications network based upon high capacity optic fibre technology will be created for the Spanish teachers, students and researchers. This network will substitute the existing Red Iris, providing it with greater speed and capillarity. The budget for this action amounts to 130 million Euros between 2009 and 2011, and 55 million Euros will be provided by the FEDER European financing programme. The rest of the project will be financed by the Crown in cooperation with the Autonomous Regions.

Beneficiaries

Spanish researchers. The new network will improve the capacity of Spanish researchers to collaborate and it will enhance research in areas with high bandwidth requirements. Besides, the Red Iris Nova will improve the possibilities to place in Spain certain European scientific-technological infrastructures which demand guaranteed high speed connections. It will also propitiate a fast, efficient connection to the networks of our neighbouring countries.

Development

The Government's Delegate Commission on Scientific and Technological Policies has been presented with a report on this issue; and the hiring procedures to install the network laying have already started, as well as the conversations with the Autonomous Regions.

***Regulating last resort electricity supply and different measures to strengthen competence**

Next 1 July 2009, the general charges imposed on all consumers will be eliminated and they will have to sign an electricity default contract with suppliers in order to receive energy supply. This measure is intended to complete the liberalisation process. Low tension small retailers, with less than 15 kW (families and small and medium-sized companies), not wishing to sign a default contract with a supplier may apply for the last resort supply. The development of these regulations will serve to provide consumers subscribing this tariff with greater guarantees and it will also provide a foreseeable regulatory frame for last resort supply providers.

Beneficiaries

Consumers. Tariff liberalisation will enhance competence in the electricity retail market, promoting the establishment of more competitive prices. Besides, the last resort tariff will enhance the protection of those consumers that face difficulties to negotiate satisfactory contracts. They will have the chance to subscribe contracts established by regulators by means of a transparent methodology.

Development

A regulatory proposal will be presented during the first few months of 2009.

***Regulating natural gas wholesale auctions for last resort supply**

Last July 2008 the gas charges were eliminated completely and the last resort supply was established for families and small and medium enterprises. Natural gas wholesale auctions will be carried out in order to obtain a price list of this raw material (the natural gas) and update the last resort tariff. The development of the regulations concerning

auctions will serve to provide consumers subscribing the last resort tariff with greater guarantees and it will also provide providers with a foreseeable regulatory frame.

Beneficiaries

Consumers and last resort natural gas suppliers will benefit from this new price-fixing methodology. The price resulting from this auction will guarantee the competitiveness of suppliers.

Development

The National Energy Commission has already prepared a report on this Royal Decree and it is now pending for approval by decision of the Council of State. It will surely be approved of before March.

Further information

<http://www.mityc.es/es-ES/Servicios/AtencionCiudadano/>

Telephone no.: 901 50 1002