

First published in World eBusiness Law Report, May 22, 2003

May 22 2003 - European Union

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## **New communications encourage small businesses to embrace the Web**

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The [European Commission](#) has adopted three communications that reinforce its [Lisbon Strategy](#). The strategy was formulated during the March 2000 Lisbon summit to bolster innovation in Europe in order to make it a more - if not the most - competitive and knowledge-based economy in the world. The communications focus on helping small and medium-sized enterprises better use the Internet as a business tool.

The [communication on adapting e-business policies](#) emphasizes the need to move companies from mere e-commerce (ie, buying and selling via the Internet) to e-business (ie, integrating information and communication technology into their business processes). The commission considers that small enterprises in particular are lagging behind in this respect, possibly impairing their competitiveness and slowing Europe's overall productivity growth. The communication recommends that member states review their e-business policies and adopt clear quantitative and qualitative goals, such as improving managerial e-business skills.

The [communication on innovation policy](#) addresses the challenges to innovation in the European Union, including inadequate performance, enlargement of the union, demographic trends, and the large public sector in many EU economies. The commission believes that both it and the member states need to intensify cooperation and mutual learning. In particular, the commission emphasizes the need for a deeper understanding of the relevance to innovation of market dynamics, including the emerging concept of 'lead markets' (ie, markets that are most receptive to new products).

The final communication, [Innovation Tomorrow](#), provides practical solutions on how to implement the innovation policy, suggesting that it should be central to competition, intellectual property, employment and education policies.

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