Modern information and communication technologies enable government services to develop new procedures for interacting and consulting with citizens. E-Government is rapidly on the increase across European and neighbouring countries and is increasingly popular among European citizens.

However, not all citizens can equally benefit from e-Government. Persons of low socio-economic status are less likely to have access and/or use e-Government services. Examples are minorities, unemployed people, low income people and people with low education levels. Excluding such groups from e-Government may have a diverse effect on social cohesion and increase the digital divide within European countries.

Against this background, a high-level consortium of European researchers have launched the ELOST project to look into the needs and expectations of these groups in order to improve their situation as well as the quality of e-Government services.

The ELOST partners studied the attitudes, needs and readiness of persons from low socio-economic status groups with regard to e-Government by means of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. A special foresight study has analyzed the impact of emerging technologies on future e-Government services with special attention to these groups. The findings led to policy recommendations for effective and inclusive deployment of e-Government services in Europe, including R&D priorities to address existing and future needs.

**Key outputs and deliverables**

- A survey of low-socio-economic groups in the seven participating countries.
- An expert consultation on the potential of new technologies and new policies to bridge the digital divide will be launched in the Summer of 2006.
- An internet-based interactive policy tool box with information on the newest e-Government initiatives, problem-oriented knowledge maps, a Wiki and an open forum.
- A pan-European conference on e-Government and low socio-economic status groups.
ELOST - E-government for Low Socio-economic Status groups

ELOST Consortium

The ELOST project is coordinated by the Tel-Aviv University of Israel, involving the Interdisciplinary Center for Technology Analysis & Forecasting (ICTAF) and the Netvision Institute for Internet Studies (NIIS).

Other partners include:

- The Interdisciplinary Centre for Comparative Research in the Social Sciences (ICCR), Vienna, Austria
- Centre Interdisciplinaire De Recherche Comparative En Sciences Sociales, Paris, France
- Institute of Mathematics and Informatics - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, Bulgaria
- Zentrum Technik und Gesellschaft, Technische Universität Berlin, Germany
- University of Tampere - Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Finland.

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