

## **OpenForum Europe Response to Open Parliament Petition Hearing held on 6/11/2008**

Yesterday's petition hearing was viewed as very positive in advancing resolution of the petition complaint. Discussions are going to continue no doubt behind closed doors, and we await with interest(!) the final outcome. Our presentation is available here (together with supporting slides), we were admirably supported by expert presentations from Rishab Ghosh of UNU Merit (who spoke on market pressures, standards and procurement) and Peter Strickx of FEDICT (describing the Belgian experience, and their successful and pragmatic implementation of ODF)

However, it should be recognised that in responding to the petition both the Commission and the Innovation and Technological Support Directorate (ITEC) within the Parliament gave strong support on the issue of Open Standards and the need to link strategy with practice. The Commission confirmed that we were correct in our presentation of EU and EC strategy, ITEC are responsible for implementation within the EP, and that they are currently trialling alternative streaming formats - particularly those compatible with open source - and they hope that these will be available early in 2009. This clearly is very much welcomed, we will be seeking more detailed information which we hope to publish shortly.

On the issue of support for ODF, notably for communication between the citizen and MEPs, the response was somewhat more mixed. ITEC confirmed their understanding of the problem and indeed that they were testing solutions, including the use of plug ins, but they believed these solutions did not give 100% fidelity so there was reluctance to implement. There was some disagreement from MEPs on the potential resolution and I believe ITEC will now look to accelerate their work. In our conclusion we pointed to the presentation by Peter Strickx who had already successfully delivered solutions to the fidelity problems identified by the ITEC.

The Petitions Committee will now consider their next steps, including the request from David Hammerstein MEP for an independent legal investigation.

OFE and our partners, FSFE and ESOMA, will of course continue our pressure and discussions, and will be pleased to provide advice from members and partners in achieving full resolution of our concerns.