

ECIS Press Statement

ECIS Urges Review of Danish Competition Authority's Recommendation on Dual Standards

A Statement by Thomas Vinje, partner at Clifford Chance representing ECIS and Acting as its
Spokesman

(Brussels – 12 August 2009) “The Danish competition authority has today issued a report in which it concludes that there would be no effect on competition should ODF be chosen as the sole open document standard for use in Danish public sector information technology systems. Moreover, the authority further concludes that there is currently a lack of competition due to the dominant position of Microsoft’s proprietary OOXML document standard. ECIS entirely shares these conclusions, as do many other competition authorities around the world.

“ECIS is therefore surprised and worried that the Danish authority nevertheless recommends that both ODF and OOXML be recognised as open standards for public procurement by the Danish public sector. ECIS calls for an immediate review of this recommendation within the framework of both Danish and European Union competition and standards policies.

“Far from stimulating competition on the basis of truly open standards, the risks to competition of recognising OOXML as equivalent to ODF far outweigh any foreseeable benefits. The ISO open standard version of OOXML is not yet implemented in any product in the market place, while Microsoft continues to use its proprietary doc.x format in its most current Office suite. By accepting current proprietary Microsoft products as equivalent to the truly open, non-proprietary ODF standard – based on the assumption that Microsoft will in later versions implement ISO-OOXML – the Danish competition authority is accepting that the digital infrastructure of the future will be built on proprietary Microsoft technology.

“This outcome – essentially an endorsement of the status quo – cannot possibly be in line with the Danish Parliament’s call for enhanced competition in public sector IT procurement. The best way to achieve that objective is to create competition on the basis of a single, truly open document standard – ODF, not competition between two competing standards while one is still controlled by a dominant player.

“We recommend that the Danish public sector stops purchases of new Microsoft doc.x licenses, and as in Norway, that it puts on hold recognition of OOXML awaiting market implementations of the ISO version.”

About ECIS

ECIS is an international non-profit association founded in 1989 that strives to promote market conditions in the ICT sector allowing vigorous competition on the merits and a diversity of consumer choice. ECIS has actively represented its members on many issues related to interoperability and competition before European, national and international bodies, including the EU institutions and WIPO. ECIS’ members include large and smaller information and communications technology hardware and software providers Adobe, Corel, IBM, Nokia, Opera, Oracle, RealNetworks, Red Hat, and Sun Microsystems.

ECIS media desk at POD Associates: +32 2 735 43 70 / email: info@ecis.eu

end