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Safer and more secure: new computer network is milestone for e-government in Belgium

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The new FedMAN II, an acronym of Federal Metropolitan Area Network, services all federal public servants in Brussels: some 80,000 people working at 24 different locations. The network provides a super fast and secure connection to just about all e-government applications such as the federal portal site www.belgium.be, the Crossroads Bank for Social Security (KSZ-BCSS), Tax-on-Web or the Crossroads Bank for Enterprises (KBO-BCE). For teleworking public servants FedMAN is very important. FedMAN II heralds a new phase for e-government in Belgium. FedMAN I, the previous version of the high-speed network, also launched by Fedict and BELNET, has delivered impeccable service over the past three years. FedMAN allowed the high-speed and secure transfer of data between different federal government departments. Now, they have a much higher speed Internet access. Because the bandwidth used by the federal government departments doubled every year, the government decided last year to upgrade the FedMAN I network. Departments such as the Belgian Federal Treasury and the Federal Justice department were at the limits of their capacity. The design and the development of the new network were assigned to BELNET because of its extensive experience with high-speed and secure computer networks, more specifically FedMAN I. FedMAN II offers every federal department a connection of 1 gigabit per second, free of transfer limits. This capacity is ten times larger than the first version of the network. FedMAN II opens the door to a whole range of new opportunities for the communication between federal public servants and their colleagues in other public bodies in Belgium as well as the private sector and the general population. Just about all components of the FedMAN II computer network are redundant in two different locations, thus ensuring the availability of the network in case of catastrophes as well. Moreover, by integrating fairly recent network technology, such as so-called multiprotocol label switching (MPLS), participating government departments can undertake cost cutting measures independently. Many departments lease additional land lines to establish high security data transmissions between certain departments or applications. FedMAN II allows fully protected connections to be generated, so-called virtual private networks (VPN). Data transmitted via VPN is only accessible by the recipients, making expensive, leased land lines redundant. Exchanging data has just become a lot safer, simpler and cheaper. Expansion plans Fedict and BELNET are currently investigating how to expand the new network into a so-called FedWAN (Federal Wide Area Network). This would provide high-speed network access to federal government departments, such as the Justice department, the Police or the Finance department, in a number of other cities. Currently, FedMAN serves public servants at the central government departments in Brussels but can also be connected to a possible future FedWAN. About Fedict Fedict works for the Belgian federal government on e-government or electronic government. It assists the federal government departments to improve their communication and services to the general population, companies and public servants through information and communication technology. Fedict also develops new electronic

services that are available via the federal portal. For instance, Fedict has been jointly responsible for making the electronic identity card or eID possible. Fedict has initiated campaigns to help close the digital gap and to encourage the use of the Internet. The number of people that will have access to e-government will increase thanks to these initiatives. For more information, please go to

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Brussels T: +32 (0)2 212 96 25 M: +32 (0)479 43 06 24 E: mila.druwe@fedict.be About BELNET - "The knowledge network" The government agency BELNET provides Internet access with a very high bandwidth to Belgian educational institutes, research centres and government services. More than 550,000 end-users use bandwidths of up to 2.5 gigabits per second; this is about a thousand times faster than the Internet access for consumers. References include all Belgian universities and most non-university higher education institutions, the computer network of the Federal Government services (FedMAN), all federal scientific institutes, the largest public research centres and various government administrations. BELNET provides high-quality Internet access with access control via the CERT (Computer Emergency Response Team) and a direct connection with world-wide research networks, including the American Internet2 and the European Géant. Internet pioneer BELNET was founded in 1993 at the Federal Research Policy's initiative. The network encourages research, training and scientific co-operation. For more information, please go to

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