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## Commission to light up Europe's world-leading networking infrastructure for scientists and students

***From today onwards, GÉANT2, Europe's world-class research networking infrastructure, will use pulsed light (photons), rather than electrons, to carry huge volumes of research data faster than ever before. Dark fibre-optic cables offering a performance of up to 320 Gigabit per second are lit to process data for advanced applications such as high-energy physics experiments or to connect radio telescopes worldwide. Europe's research network will thereby supply unprecedented computing power to an estimated 3 million users from over 3 500 academic institutions in 34 countries across Europe. Compared with similar research networks in the US or in Asia, GÉANT2 innovates by seamlessly combining dark fibre with more traditional broadband technology, notably to supply research networking services to schools, via its partner networks.***

"GÉANT2 is a truly giant step forward. With this modern network, we will ensure that researchers will be better and faster connected in Europe than anywhere else in the world", said Information Society and Media Commissioner Viviane Reding at the launch of the upgraded network today in Luxembourg.

Following a substantial upgrade of the network, GÉANT2 will provide a Europe-wide "roaming" service that enables scientists to access the network and their home university's working environments from anywhere, at any time. In radio astronomy, GÉANT2 provides the ability to observe the universe in real time, by linking up radio telescopes across Europe.

The original GÉANT network has been the first pan-European multi-gigabit data communications network that served research and education needs from Iceland to the Caucasus and beyond. It created the world's largest interconnected community of scientists and academics, enabling them to share research data faster than ever before. This has attracted advanced research work to Europe, ranging from applications exploiting the new Internet Protocol Version 6 to Grid computing. GEANT also handled peta-bytes of data from the large hadron collider at CERN.

Financially, GEANT2 is the result of joint efforts at European and national level. The European Commission contributes €93 million to this project (see [IP/04/1058](#)), just under half the total cost. The rest is funded by national research and education networks. Without EU funding, GÉANT would continue as at present, but would lose its innovative, market-leading role.

Promoting high-speed and secure broadband networks that offer rich and diverse content is a key focus of the Commission's new strategy "i2010 – European Information Society 2010" (see [IP/05/643](#)). The i2010-strategy aims at promoting growth and jobs through the use of information and communication technologies.

For further information:

<http://www.geant2.net>

<http://www.geant2.net/media>

see MEMO/05/

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