

Brussels, 15 December 2010

## Digital Agenda: eGovernment Action Plan to smooth access to public services across the EU

*The European Commission has outlined an ambitious programme to work with Member States' public authorities to expand and improve the services which they offer via the Internet. The new eGovernment Action Plan foresees forty specific measures over the next five years to enable citizens and businesses to use online facilities to, for example, register a business, apply for and access social security and health benefits, enrol in a university or bid to provide goods and services for public administrations. Promoting eGovernment can help boost Europe's competitiveness and allow public authorities to offer improved services more cost-effectively at a time of budget constraints. This is why it is a fundamental part of the [Digital Agenda for Europe](#), which aims to increase the use of eGovernment services by citizens to 50%, and by businesses to 80% by 2015 (see [IP/10/581](#), [MEMO/10/199](#) and [MEMO/10/200](#)). The new Action Plan builds on experience gained with the 2006 [European eGovernment Action Plan](#) (see [IP/06/523](#)).*

Neelie Kroes, Commission Vice President for the Digital Agenda, said "This eGovernment Action Plan will help public authorities to use information & communication technologies to offer better services at lower cost, while making life easier and better for individual citizens and businesses in terms of improved access to public services."

Specific Digital Agenda goals include:

- to increase the use of eGovernment services to 50% of EU citizens and 80% of EU businesses by 2015 and
- to ensure that a number of key public services are available online so that entrepreneurs can set up and run a business from anywhere within the EU independently of their original location and so that citizens can more easily study, work, reside and retire anywhere within the EU.

The European eGovernment Action Plan aims to support the transition to a new generation of open, flexible and seamless eGovernment services at local, regional, national and EU levels. More specifically, the Plan aims to make services work as well in other EU Member States as they do at home and to open the way to allowing users actively to shape the online public services which suit their needs best.

National governments will play a central role in the implementation of the Action Plan whilst the Commission's main responsibility is to improve the conditions for development of cross-border eGovernment services. This includes establishing pre-conditions, such as interoperability, eSignatures and eIdentification.

The Action Plan measures fall into four categories:

- User empowerment:

- services designed around users' needs
- collaborative production of services e.g. using Web 2.0 technologies
- re-use of public sector information (including reviewing the public sector information Directive – see [IP/10/1103](#))
- improvement of transparency
- involvement of citizens and business in policy-making process
- Internal Market:
  - seamless services for businesses
  - personal mobility
  - EU-wide implementation of cross-border services
- Efficiency and effectiveness of public administrations
  - improving organisational processes (e.g. electronic procurement, faster processing of applications)
  - reduction of administrative burdens
  - Green Government (e.g. electronic archiving, using videoconferences instead of travelling)
- Putting in place pre-conditions for developing eGovernment
  - open specifications and interoperability (e.g. applying the European Interoperability Framework)
  - providing key enablers (e.g. revision of the eSignature Directive, a proposal on pan-EU mutual recognition of identification and eAuthentication);

Concrete examples of Action Plan measures include:

- implementing once-only secure registration of data with government (to avoid having to give the same information again and again to different parts of government)
- developing the EU-wide use of national electronic identities ("eID") to smooth cross-border procedures such as starting a company abroad, moving home or work abroad, arranging your pension online if you retire to another country, or registering at a foreign school or university
- allowing citizens and business to see in real time the state of progress of their transactions with government thanks to more transparency and openness
- customising services to respond better to users' real needs, such as ensuring the safe and fast digital delivery of documents and information
- making data available for re-use by third parties so that new public services and applications can be developed, such as maps for navigation systems or travel information applications.

The Action Plan builds on the success of EU-funded large scale pilot projects in cross-border services piloted by the ongoing EU projects STORK, PEPPOL, SPOCS and epSOS (see [MEMO/10/680](#)), with the aim of making it easier for citizens and businesses to access online services across the EU.

## **Background**

The European eGovernment Action Plan is the Commission's response to Member States' call for a shared eGovernment policy in the EU, as outlined in the 2009 Malmö Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment ([IP/09/1738](#)).

**For more information:**

[MEMO/10/681](#)

[The European eGovernment Action Plan for 2011-2015](#)

[Malmö Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment press release](#)

eGovernment Conference ['Lift Off Towards Open Government'](#)

The European eGovernment [Action Plan for 2006-2010](#)

[Digital Agenda for Europe](#)

[STORK](#) – (Secure Identity Across Borders Linked)

[PEPPOL](#) – (Pan-European Public Procurement Online)

[SPOCS](#) (Simple Procedures Online for Cross-border Services)

[epSOS](#) (Smart Open Services for European Patients)

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