

MINUTES OF THE
14TH MEETING OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION GROUP
LUXEMBOURG, 27 JANUARY 2011

1. Welcome and introduction by the chairman

The Chairman, Richard Swetenham, Head of Access to Information Unit, welcomed the members of the Public Sector Information (PSI) Group and other participants. He presented [the agenda](#) of the 14th PSI Group meeting and invited the participants to give their comments on it.

The first part of the meeting focused on the review of the Directive on re-use of PSI (PSI Directive) and on the results of the public on-line consultation on the PSI Directive and on ongoing studies. The second part dealt with the PSI re-use/open data developments in the EU.

Review of the Directive and other Commission activities

2. [Review of the PSI Directive: overview and calendar of work](#)

Richard Swetenham, the chairman, opened the meeting with the presentation of the Commission's intention to review the PSI Directive. In this context, he presented the Commission's activities and the provisional timetable.

3. [Results of the public on-line consultation on the PSI Directive](#)

Grazyna Piesiewicz—Stepniewska from the European Commission presented the results of the public on-line consultation on the PSI Directive. The consultation was launched on 9 September 2010 and closed on 30 November 2010. The Commission received 585 responses from citizens, public authorities, PSI content holders, PSI reusers, experts and others. The responses came from the EU and non EU countries, such as China, Turkey, the USA, etc.

Thereafter she presented the views of the PSI content holders and other public authorities. She underlined that the views of these two groups are most diverging on almost all questions, also with respect to the amendments to the PSI Directive. However, they all call for strong support and guidance from the European Commission (to raise awareness and ensure consistency of application), for standardised formats for data release. Some also call for guidance on definition of public task.

She continued with the views of the reusers who are in majority in favour of amendments to the PSI Directive. This group calls for guidance of the European Commission, general obligation to re-use all accessible information, for clarification of public tasks, obligation to deliver raw data and for open formats, harmonised licensing terms, etc.

Experts and/or academics call for a general obligation to make PSI available for re-use, standardised, transparent licensing terms, for a standardised, harmonised way of making data available (preference to open formats), clarification of admissible tariffs, etc.

Compared to other groups, the citizens' responses were the most "radical". Their motto is: open data, open standards, open source. She presented their most frequent views: all public data available to everyone free of charge, without any licensing restrictions or under a GPL/

LGDL/ one of the Creative Commons licences, obligation to make PSI available for re-use, not delivery upon request, etc.

She wrapped up her presentation by saying that the responses to the consultation undeniably show that the information society is growing and that the value of PSI is increasingly recognised.

4. Ongoing studies for the review of the PSI Directive: Economic studies and PSI and the cultural sector

Grazyna Piesiewicz—Stepniewska and Juan Pelegrin from the European Commission presented the studies which will accompany the review of the PSI Directive:

- Assessment of the different models of supply and charging for PSI (commissioned to Deloitte Consulting);
- Revised EU PSI Market value (commissioned to Graham Vickery);
- PSI and the cultural sector (commissioned to Curtis and Cartwright).

All the above mentioned studies are ongoing.

Juan Pelegrin also presented the Commission's eGovernment action plan adopted in December 2010 which highlights the importance of PSI. The action plan foresees an agreement between Member States on a common set of PSI re-use indicators, a study to assess to what extent open data catalogues and/or PSI portals (e.g. data.gov.uk) have been developed and implemented by Member States, and the exchange of good practices and awareness-raising activities, etc.

5. Best technology practices on publishing and consuming government open data: recent EU developments

Stefano Bertolo from the European Commission explained that his Unit, INFSO/E2, deals with, among other things, semantic technologies. The European Commission is a major funder of research on semantic technologies. He continued by saying that a lot of today's PSI is produced in an artisanal way which makes it relatively expensive and difficult to maintain. He argued that common technology and standardisation would enable the production of PSI with lower costs. Moreover, the semantic technologies provide standardized = reusable information and knowledge components and, semantic technologies allow knowledge components to be published in networks and reasoned over by machines.

Afterward he presented two Commission's projects:

- Linked Open Data Around-The-Clock, <http://latc-project.eu>;
- LOD2; <http://lod2.eu>.

The goal of the first project, Linked Open Data Around-The-Clock, is to support people and organisations to better publish and consume Linked Open Data, whereas the LOD2 project aims to contribute high-quality interlinked versions of public Semantic Web data sets, promoting their use in new cross-domain applications by developers across the globe.

6. Round table – Member States' views on the review of the PSI Directive

The round table was chaired by Richard Swetenham. A few Member States presented their positions concerning the review of the PSI Directive. In brief, in their opinion the amendments to the PSI Directive are not as necessary as the clearance and/or guidance from the European Commission in matters such as licensing, charging, definition of public task, etc.

There was a general consensus amongst member states that the Directive continued to be an effective framework for PSI. It was agreed however that there was need for greater clarity on topics such as licensing, charging and definition of public task and that guidance from the Commission on these would be welcome. Some concerns were expressed that amending the

Directive could actually prove counterproductive in that it would lead to a loss of momentum on the PSI agenda. There were also concerns expressed about amending the scope of the Directive to include cultural organisations, especially as these organisations by their very nature held information where the copyright was owned by third parties

PSI Developments in the MS

7. The re-use of PSI: the optimal pricing model

Julien Pénin from the Bureau d'Economie Théorique et Appliqué (BETA) of the University of Strasbourg presented a recent study on the charging of PSI.

He argued that most of the older economic studies consider PSI to be unprocessed, easily transferable raw data for which demand is highly elastic. These studies also generally disregard the financial constraints confronting public bodies. Furthermore, in the current economy, a useful policy analysis must allow for the severe budgetary restrictions imposed on public entities.

On the other hand the study conducted by BETA takes these broader factors into account and suggests that to maximize dissemination of PSI and stimulate its re-use, the producers may have to add value to the PSI by modifying its format or adding and organizing content.

The authors of the study conclude that in times of tight budgets, the optimal policy may be to charge for commercial re-use at reasonable rates designed to cover the cost of the added value. This policy rightfully shifts a share of the costs of producing PSI from taxpayers to those who obtain a commercial benefit from using it outside its primary purpose. Significantly, this approach would not diminish the overall economic equilibrium of PSI re-use. For non-commercial re-use, setting rates equal to the marginal cost of making the information available would be optimal in most cases, as the willingness to pay for this type of re-use is generally low. The study did not specifically address the case where public entities competes with private operators and/or are required to self-finance parts their budgets.

8. National rules and policy following the PSI directive. From the transposition law to the adoption of Creative Commons: The Greek case

Kalliopi Angeletopoulou from the Ministry of Interior presented the Greek PSI legislation and their national PSI policies.

First she shortly presented the Greek PSI legislation (Greece transposed the PSI Directive in 2006). She emphasised that Greece was all the time very active in the PSI re-use discussions. In May 2008 they organised a meeting concerning the challenges and opportunities coming from the PSI re-use under the umbrella of the ePSIplatform project.

Afterwards she presented the web portal called e-Themis, which is providing access to the entire Greek legislation. Data from the portal can be reused under the obligation to explicitly state the source.

Later on she presented the DIAVGEIA (law 3861/2010) project <http://diavgeia.gov.gr/en> which establishes obligation to publish laws, presidential decrees and acts issued by legal entities and public sector bodies on the internet and ensure wide publicity of these acts. All data acquired from the system are available with Creative Commons Licensing - Attribution. This type of licensing means that anyone can use, reproduce or modify these data without any restrictions, except for the obligation to state their source and to explicitly state as different any secondary data, derived from the original data..

She continued by presenting the geo-data portal, built on open source software, which provides data to all citizens for free. The data are provided under the Hellenic Creative Commons Licensing - Attribution (CC BY v.3.0). This means that stating the source (www.geodata.gov.gr) is appropriate.

At the end of her presentation she shortly presented their initiatives for opening up the police and meteorological data.

9. [Recent PSI re-use developments in the EU](#)

Ton Zijlstra from Interdependent Thoughts started his talk by presenting recent EU PSI re-use initiatives ranging from legal, such as new PSI legislation in some MS and licences for PSI re-use, to more concrete, such as national and local PSI portals enabling innovators to download raw data for development of new services and products. He also mentioned many studies which help the stakeholders to overcome issues with regards to PSI re-use: charging models, privacy issues, technical standards, etc.

He emphasised that the stakeholders' community has grown recently with new groups and also that the importance of the PSI re-use is getting new dimensions with new fields and themes joining: Governments using transparency and PSI re-use to more effectively execute their own tasks (international aid as example), scientific research, data journalism, cultural heritage etc.

He notes that where potential re-users (citizens, companies) are connected across the EU, as the same questions and issues need to be addressed everywhere, government bodies themselves are by necessity less connected across jurisdictions. However, they too face the same main questions.

Currently two major questions are heard most: how to establish impact of PSI re-use, and how to drive adoption of PSI re-use.

For impact measurement looking for patterns in the experiences and stories of civil servants and citizens in PSI re-use is a way forward, out of which more quantitative indicators may arise. There is currently a lack of clear evidence about the impact of PSI re-use. At the same time there has not been a strong backlash effect. Even when delicate data, such as public spending in the UK, were published, no big scandal has emerged. So existing fears may be unwarranted. However showing impact is becoming more important, as the longer it takes to show impact, the louder the case can be made that opening up PSI for re-use is unneeded. Some early signs of the latter seem to be emerging.

Driving adoption of PSI re-use needs a 'social infrastructure', meaning direct interaction between public data holders and the stakeholders around PSI re-use. Where that interaction comes to life, we see that companies as well as citizens are prepared to release own data in return as well. Out of the adoption of PSI re-use come the stories that can be used to create better impact measurements.

Slides of the presentation are available for viewing and download online at <http://www.slideshare.net/TonZijlstra/psi-developments-in-the-eu>

10. [Towards a standard agenda for PSI](#)

Margot Dor from ETSI and Thomas Roessler from W3C presented one of the ideas from the [Digital Agenda Stakeholder Day](#) which took place on 25 October 2010 in Brussels, Belgium.

They explained that the focus of the idea is using data, such as public transport data, geospatial data, environmental data, statistics, financial data etc. in standardized, interoperable, machine-

readable formats, linked across silos, to enable broad integration. They propose to bring together the diverse stakeholders in the European PSI ecosystem, across sectors and across levels, to forge the lightweight agreements and standards that are needed to enable interoperability and integration of PSI.

They summed up their presentation by emphasising that to realize the value of cross-border services, Europe needs a common policy and technical agreements. Their goal is common vision, common formats, and common visibility.

11. The follow up to the PSI platform project

Tom Kronenburg from Zenc presented the Follow up to the PSI Platform project (Zenc B.V. in partnership with Interdependent Thoughts, time.lex CVBA and Citadel Consulting were [awarded the contract](#) Follow up to the PSI Platform - www.epsiplatform.net). The project starts on 1 march 2011.

He started his presentation by saying that the new team will continue with the good work performed by the previous contractor. The web site will continue to be the "one-stop-shop", the library and the reference news site for all interested in the PSI re-use matters. However, he believes there is still place for improvement.

Furthermore, they will revamp the web site, put more emphasis on people and on experiences/best practices/narratives, create more intuitive interface and the MS PSI Scoreboard, organise meetings, workshops, PSI re-use competitions, etc. Their objective is to maintain the web platform with content, stimulate the stakeholders, run the advisory service, as well as raise awareness on the importance of the PSI re-use.

In conclusion he said that the project will, under their guidance, be an even more visible beacon, guiding EU citizens and corporations into a PSI-rich future.

12. AOB

The chairman, Richard Swetenham, thanked the participants for their presence and contributions.

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