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Communications Networks, Content and Technology Directorate-General

Media & Data
Data Value Chain

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Subject: Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the Public Sector Information Group, Luxembourg, 24 January 2013

1.   WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

In the welcome message, the Chairperson Mr Yvo Volman (Deputy Head of the Data Value Chain Unit of DG CONNECT) drew the attention of the representatives of the Member States to the fact that policies around (open) data are receiving more and more attention within the European Commission. Following the reorganisation of DG CONNECT, data has become more significant with a special Unit being set up to work on European policies and funding around the data value chain.

The main achievements of the last year on open data and Public Sector Information were also briefly mentioned, including the implementation of the Open Data Package of December 2011 as well as the Communication and Recommendation of July 2012 on scientific information. This work now continues with the setting up of a European strategy on a data value chain in which the whole open data policy will be embedded, including the revision of the PSI Directive.

The PSI Group was asked to play an active role in the follow-up of the revision of the PSI Directive and its implementation, once adopted, and will have a key role in establishing guidelines on charging and licensing. Active contribution is expected also to the process of setting up a pan-European open data portal.

2.   PSI SCOREBOARD

In his presentation on the PSI Scoreboard, the representative of the ePSI Platform Mr Ton Zijlstra invited all the members of the PSI Group to join their conference in Warsaw on 22 February 2013 (http://epsiplatform.eu/conference2013) as well as in the workshop on the value of open government data to be held on the preceding day.

As far as the PSI Scoreboard is concerned, the process of setting up the scoreboard started in February 2012. Once the initial list of indicators was available, it was sent to Member States whose comments have been analysed and integrated in an updated version of the scoreboard to the possible extent. Not only are the PSI Scoreboard related interactive charts available on the website of the ePSI Platform but all the underlying figures are also downloadable. The idea is that the scoreboard should be a dynamic tool to grasp the latest developments on open data/PSI in the EU and for that purpose regular updates are possible also on the indicators. It was highlighted that the scoreboard is not meant to

monitor national governments, rather to monitor the PSI re-use "ecology" in the Member States.

When answering to questions, the Speaker highlighted the importance of regular check-up and update of the underlying data in which the PSI Group through its outreach to the national, regional and local open data communities could play a key role. It was also underlined that in the end the scoreboard is meant to provide evidence on the real impact of PSI re-use, including economic impact as a central element. However, on the latter point the available information is rather limited and therefore further efforts need to be made to grasp this significant aspect. Finally, members of the PSI Group were encouraged to contact the ePSI Platform whenever they encounter information that has implications on the PSI Scoreboard.

Action: **Members of the PSI Group will check the data and scores for their specific Member State in the PSI Scoreboard available on the website of the ePSI Platform (<u>http://epsiplatform.eu/content/european-psi-scoreboard</u>). Comments, updates will be sent to colleagues from the ePSI Platform (<u>ton@epsiplatform.eu</u>) by Thursday 7 February 2013 end of business.**

3. OPEN DATA AND COMPANY REGISTERS IN THE EU

The Speaker Mr Chris Taggart from Open Corporates gave a quick overview of their report on openness of company registers to the PSI Group. Through the website of Open Corporates, information on 50 million companies is accessible and available for both non-commercial and commercial re-use.

The level of openness of company registers greatly varies from Member State to Member State. As examples of good practice the UK and Denmark were mentioned where the last couple of years saw immense progress in the domain of opening op company data.

Members of the PSI Group were encouraged to make steps in their respective Member State to move things forward in this domain so that the highest possible proportion of company data becomes available for re-use.

When answering to questions, the Speaker explained why the necessity to register to have access to a database means a major hurdle and how it prevents the free flow of the data locked up in such databases. As far as privacy issues are concerned, the Speaker highlighted that personal data like passport numbers or home addresses can be filtered to the necessary extent so the mere fact of the existence of such data in a database should not prevent the database owner from opening up their data.

Action: **Members of the PSI Group were asked to check the information on their specific Member State in the report of Open Corporates and send feedback to Mr Chris Taggart (<u>chris.taggart@opencorporates.com</u>). The link to the report itself is: <u>http://opencorporates.com/downloads/eu_company_data_report.pdf</u>.**

4. EUROPEAN POLICIES ON OPEN DATA – STATE OF PLAY

Mr Szymon Lewandowski (Policy Officer in the Data Value Chain Unit of DG CONNECT) presented an update on the main European policies on open data, including the creation of a policy environment that is data value chain-friendly, the setting up of a multilingual open data infrastructure as well as supporting research and innovation activities around data.

As a crucial element of the open data legal environment, the revision of the PSI Directive has been going on. The respective legislative procedure is expected to come to an end in Spring 2013.

As far as the development of a European Digital Service Infrastructure is concerned, significant progress has been achieved on the open data portal of the European Commission while work on the pan-European open data portal has also started. The pan-European open data portal will provide a multilingual access point to data from across the EU.

The Speaker also presented the most important financing and support measures for open data infrastructures both under the current financial framework and also under the upcoming multiannual financial framework. In the current period, financing is available through the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP) for such purposes. In the period 2014-2020, funding will be available from the Connecting Europe Facility for the progressive implementation of the open data infrastructure.

In the roll-out of the open data-related policies of the European Commission, supporting research and innovation activities on data play a key role. Through these activities, the intelligent use of complex and large amounts of data can be fostered. In the period 2014-2020, financing for research and innovation activities at the service of new data handling technologies will be available through the Horizon 2020 programme.

5. LEAD-UP TO A PAN-EUROPEAN DATA PORTAL

Before an update on the state of play of the pan-European portal from the European Commission, members of the PSI Group were asked to provide a brief update on the latest developments regarding open data portals in their respective Member State.

Information has been provided on recent developments in the following Member States:

The Netherlands:
- the national open data portal has been up and running;
- there were 4700 datasets available at the end of 2012 and it has been constantly expanding;
- it has been recognised that publishing open data on the portal is not sufficient in itself so efforts have been made to identify a list of local and regional problems to which solutions could be offered by using open data;
- it is foreseen that the first results of these efforts can be analysed and reported back to the PSI Group before the end of 2013;
- discussions are on-going within government and with stakeholders in order to define in an abstract fashion what constitutes a 'public task' in the sense of the PSI Directive and what is a commercial activity by a public sector body.

Sweden:
- the site öppnadata.se (opendata.se) is available with open datasets on it;
- an entire open data community has been built around this site;
- a committee has been mandated to propose legislation that is necessary to implement the changes in the PSI-directive;
- it has been recognised that addressing existing and large companies is not sufficient but also small start-ups need to be aware of the benefits of open data so that they can profit from the available business opportunities.

Spain: - the existing PSI Directive has been transposed in national legislation and serves as a reference point for all kinds of activities linked to open data re-use both at national level and at the level of the regions;
- the UK Open Data Licence has been used as input to define the terms of a national open data licence;
- it has been recognised that the issue of interoperability needs to be properly addressed to make full use of the opportunities offered by open data;
- there has already been intense work on measuring the economic impact of open data re-use and these efforts will continue in 2013 to measure the impact on the economy as a whole and on a number of sectors.

The UK: - the data.gov.uk national open data portal was established two years ago with a large number of previously unpublished datasets;
- there has been a review ('Shakespeare review') of public sector bodies going on which focuses on the benefits of data re-use including transparency aspects and economic benefits. The results of this review can be shared with the European Commission once available;
- the Open Government Licence has proved to be a successful tool, both local and regional governments use it;
- The UK is developing the Open Government Licence with particular emphasis on personal information issues. One of the likely refinements will be that of not making references to specific UK legislation on data protection. This will mean that the Open Government Licence could be used easily by other Member States because it is no longer UK specific.

Slovenia: - there is no national open data portal available;
- there has been a lot of work going on, however, to encourage public sector bodies to open up their data for re-use;
- Ministries and the Parliament try to show examples of best practice how data can be opened up and made available for re-use;
- NGOs seem to be very active in the domain of open data;
- the question of licencing is one of the intensively debated topics.

Slovakia: - data.gov.sk as the national open data portal is available with 45 datasets from central services;
- a campaign on data was put in place to make some publicity for the benefits of open data;
- there are some problems that need to be tackled in the legislative framework, for example publishing PSI in line with data standards and with regard to NGOs as portal administrators .

Portugal: - the idea of a common licence for Member States is supported;
- in the framework of the "Apps for Portugal", feedback is expected from the society on what information would be the most useful for them;
- there has been intensive reflection on how best to address the issues linked to the quality and format of data.

Poland: - a consultation has started on whether to move towards greater openness with respect to public resources, encompassing the Open Data, Open Access and Open Education fields;
- copyright issues in the context of open data have been broadly discussed;
- as a question of principle, three degrees of openness have been identified for data: 1) basic; 2) partial and 3) free re-use or free licence.

Italy: - there is a national portal available with 4000 datasets from public institutions;
- the necessary mechanisms have been put in place to make PSI

available;
- there has been a consensus on open data definition at national level;
- the "open by default" principle has been introduced;
- for those public bodies who do not make the necessary to comply with the above, it will be reflected in the key performance indicators of the manager of the PSB that they are not compliant;
- there are some best practice examples, like the Ministry of Economic Development which has made available all the data on the Structural Funds projects on their portal (http://www.opencoesione.gov.it/);
- a H2020-like national multiannual programme is in the making which includes initiatives on open access to data and publications.

Denmark:
- relating to the Open Government Partnership, a catalogue of PSI data sets available for reuse has been established in 2009. It currently contains some 750 data sets.
- a base data initiative has been put in place with the intention of improving the quality of administrative databases and opening the data for reuse;
- in line with that, major quality initiatives have been put in place to correct datasets and improve the structure of datasets;
- address data is being used by OpenStreetMaps and OSM return suggestions for improvements to data quality;
- large amounts of data regarding companies, buildings, addresses and geodata has been made free for re-use as of 1 January 2013;
- a data distributor is being established offering one technical solution with a number of base data registries behind it;
- a common public data licence has been defined and published.

Finland:
- the national open data portal data.suomi.fi is up and running (consisting currently of links to open data sources);
- facilitating the re-use of public sector information for businesses and individuals is an integral element of the newly launched ICT strategy of the Finnish government;
- a working group looking at opening up PSI proposed that the guiding principle on charging is to make re-use possible free of charge or for marginal costs as an upper limit;
- ministries and agencies have been asked to list their data resources and possibilities to open datasets, and to estimate the costs incurred from opening their data as part of the framework budget process
- the national innovation funding agency (Tekes) is prepared to spend up to EUR 50 million on projects that support big data/open data re-use by companies, and together with the Academy of Finland, to fund big data/open data research;
- four Apps for Finland competitions have been organised. In the organisation of the 4th competition, the mapping agency, the meteorological agency and Statistics Finland were very active and opened up a number of data sets for the competition itself.

Germany:
- there has been a range of positive developments with regard to data re-use, among them the setting up of a number of new platforms which cover the national, regional or local levels as well as thematic platforms on geo-data, environmental data or statistical data;
- the importance of open government data with regard to transparency,

democracy and civic engagement has been more and more recognised;
- in 2013 further developments are expected, such as the launch of a national aggregating portal for open data.

Greece:
- all the existing portals, such as http://diavgeia.gov.gr/en which establishes obligation to publish all financial and regulatory acts issued by public sector bodies on the internet in order to ensure wide publicity of these acts, are functional under a new contract,
- a large scale of legal data, or geographical information has been made available for re-use as open data, through open – data portals, free of charge, under the Hellenic CC licencing –Attribution.
- the central open data portal of the Prime Minister's Office is currently under construction;
- A co-funded by NSRF project on central registry of company data is under construction, too. Besides, a large scale of company data, under the company's name is published, by law, on the internet for download, free of charge.
(http://www.et.gr/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=106&lang=el)

The representative of the European Commission Mr Malte Beyer-Katzenberger (Policy Officer in the Data Value Chain Unit of DG CONNECT) highlighted that through the open data portal of the European Commission (http://open-data.europa.eu) there are approximately 5800 datasets available. The portal has been available in beta version since the end of 2012. Its core mission is to provide a single entry point to datasets produced or held throughout the European Commission, and as a next step, in the other EU institutions and bodies. The datasets currently available on the portal are those of the European Commission and the European Environment Agency.

In 2013, a pan-European open data portal is going to be set-up to provide one single gateway to reusable information with the aim of enabling combination of information held by various open data holders at various levels. The objective is to have multilingual search options available in this portal. The www.publicdata.eu page can be regarded as the embryo of the pan-European portal. It is of essential importance that all the open data portals that are up and running or under construction in the Member States at national, regional or local level register themselves in the www.publicdata.eu page.

For the smooth functioning of a pan-European data portal, it is important to continue discussions between the European Commission and the Member States on interoperability and licensing issues. The members of the PSI Group will be asked to play a key role here. As a first step, Member States were asked to identify one person per Member State who would be the main contact point for the Commission on technical questions linked to the open data portals. The technical questions will be discussed by the Open Data Portal Sub-Group of the PSI Group.

Action:
Members of the PSI Group were asked to pass on the request of the European Commission to the all the interested parties in their specific Member State that all open data portals (let them be national, regional, local, generic or thematic) need to be registered in the site www.publicdata.eu. Member States will also identify one technical expert by Member State who will be the main contact point on technical issues linked to the open data portals.

6.   APPLYING LINKED OPEN DATA TO PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

In his presentation on applying linked open data to public procurement, the representative of the LOD2 project Mr Jindřich Mynarz gave an overview of the wide range of possibilities on how to use linked open data. He also briefly presented the LOD2 project funded from the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development.

The Speaker explained that their vision was to establish a distributed marketplace for public contracts to enable supply meeting demand in an open, linked data infrastructure. A range of tools have been developed to support the realisation of this vision. All the efforts made in this direction will, in the end, promote transparency of public contracts, fair competition and efficient resource allocation. Better data and better understanding of data will lead to better procurement.

There have been a number of challenges that needed to be addressed like unclear licensing conditions, issues on machine readability or entity reconciliation, the long tail of public procurement or the difficulties of cross-country procurements. Special attention has been paid to each of these challenges individually to address them the most effective way possible.

The Speaker highlighted that according to his views that the next important step in this domain for the European Commission would be to open up public procurement data together with the raw data.

7.   CONCLUSIONS

In his wrap-up, the Chairperson thanked all the participants of the meeting for their active participation. He reminded the members of the PSI Group of all the actions mentioned below Points 2, 3 and 5, which need to be followed up from their side.

It was promised that the participants of the meeting would receive the minutes of the discussion in 10 working days following the meeting. Information on the next meeting of the PSI Group and of the Open Data Portals Sub-Group will be circulated as soon as available.

Copies: Participants