# Single Market Scoreboard

*Performance per governance tool*

# Points of Single Contact

*(Reporting period: 01/2013 - 12/2013)*



*Internal Market and Services*

# About

The Services Directive provides for Points of Single Contact (PSC) to be set up in each Member State.

**PSCs** allow service providers to:

- Obtain all **information about the procedures** they need to complete to provide their services at home or in another EU country (e.g. company registration, business licences, recognition of professional qualifications);

- **Deal with all formalities** via one single contact point; and

- **Complete** the necessary **steps remotely** by electronic means.

**PSCs** have to make it possible for users to complete **administrative procedures** both for **national situations** (a travel agency in Rome that wants to open a branch in Palermo) and for **cross-border situations** (an architect in Warsaw who wants to take on a building project in Berlin). They are encouraged to provide their services in several languages and to offer **personalised advice** to users.

# Performance

## Performance per indicator
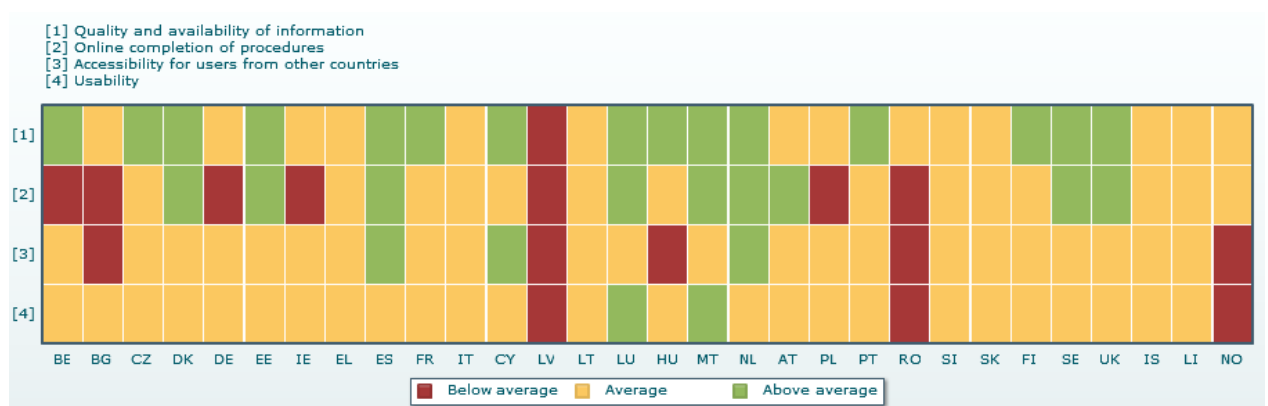


**[1] Quality & availability of information** (the scores above 75 % are rated as "green", below 40 % as "red", and yellow in the middle)

- How much relevant information is online?

- Is it comprehensive, well-structured and readily intelligible?

**[2] Online completion of procedures** (the scores above 70 % are rated as "green", below 40 % as "red", and yellow in the middle)

- How many procedures are available online?

- Can they be completed online (e.g. downloading forms, completing webforms

- Are there any online fee payment tools?

**[3] Accessibility for users from other countries** (the scores above 70 % are rated as "green", below 40 % as "red", and yellow in the middle)

- Can the site be used by businesses in other countries (especially regarding its technical aspects)?

- Does the site accept e-signatures issued abroad (when those are needed to complete procedures)?

- Can users in other countries readily understand the requirements they must meet?

- Is information is available in languages other than that/those of the host country?

**[4] Usability** (the scores above 75 % are rated as "green", below 40 % as "red", and yellow in the middle)

- Are the processes user-friendly?

- Can users do what they want to do on the site?

- Is effective help available?

## Overall performance
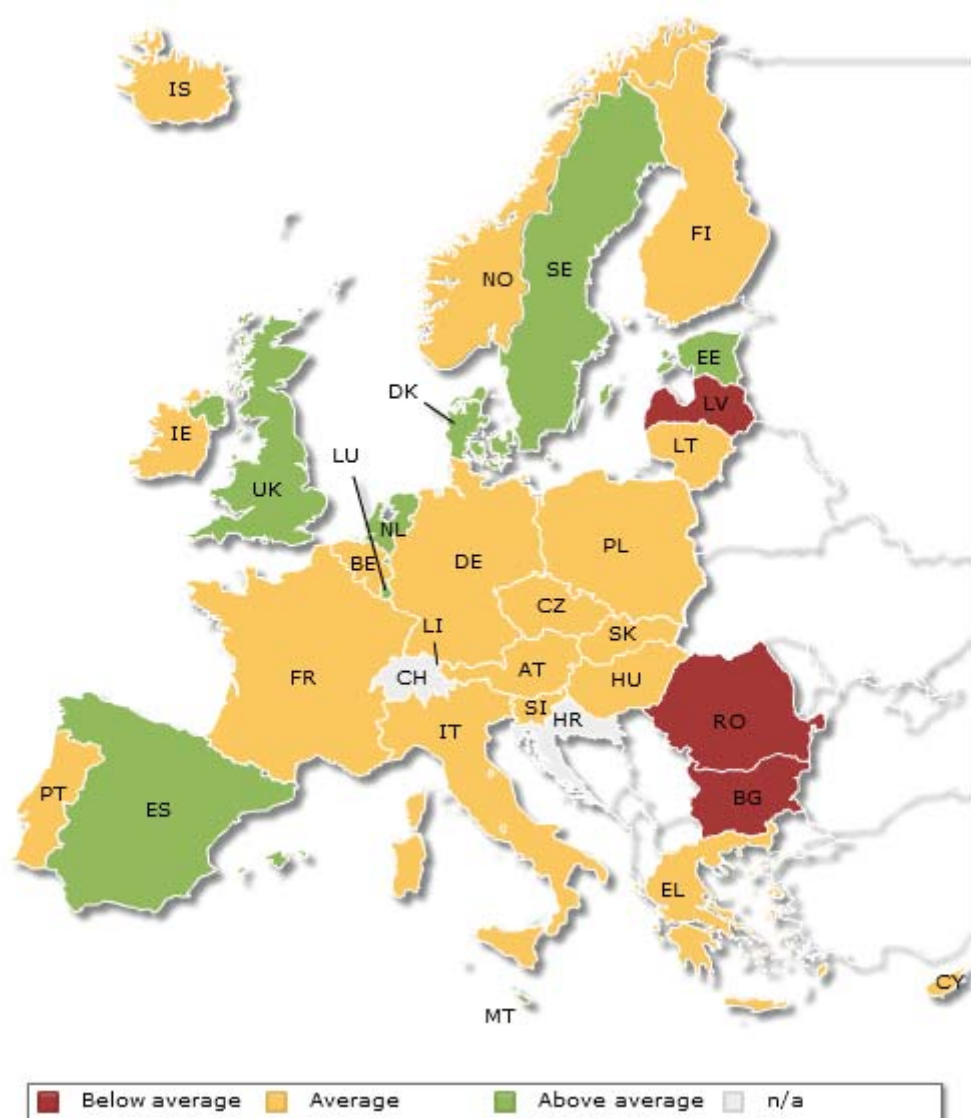
Based on user testing in 2013 and Commission's information.

The indicators are weighted as follows:

- Quality & availability of information – 30 %

- Online completion of procedures – 35 %

- Accessibility to users from other countries – 25 %

- Usability – 10 %

## Achievements

Some EU countries have further improved their Points of Single Contact, to serve businesses' needs better – but **most still have a long way to go**.

The Commission has worked with them to tackle these shortcomings:

- Points of Single Contact Charter (**PSC CHARTER**) – following the Communication on implementing the Services Directive (2012), the Commission and EU governments agreed on a PSC Charter, setting out **standard criteria** (the 4 indicators in the chart above) for improving and benchmarking points of single contact. The governments then reaffirmed their commitment to the PSC Charter in the 2013 Competitiveness Council Conclusions.

> **Why are there such big differences between PSCs?**
>
> In contrast to other governance tools, PSCs do not use a centralised electronic system. Member States are free to choose the most appropriate structure to reflect their legal and administrative realities.
> A number of PSCs are embedded in mature, well-developed eGovernment structures, while others have been set up from scratch to comply with the Services Directive.
> This often impacts on the scope of services available online.

- 2014 Annual Growth Survey – acknowledged the important role of Points of Single Contact in modernising public administration by driving the deployment of e-government, including services for foreign users. This can transform how public administrations interact with the business world.

- **User-testing in 2013** – organised by the Commission for the Points of Single Contact within EUGO Network (EUGO Network joins Points of Single Contact from EEA). Businesses participated through the Enterprise Europe Network, with input from Eurochambres and BusinessEurope). The testing identified further areas for improvement

## Facts and Figures

- Only 8 out of 31 countries have high performing **Points of Single Contact**.

- Contact points in **19 out of 31** participating countries provide an **average** level of service (*yellow colour code*). This means that there are still areas for further improvement (especially for e-procedures).

- In **4 out of 31** countries quality remains **very low** (*red colour code*). This means they are not fully functional overall.

- *Available information* **–** rated **very good in half of all the countries**.

However, there is still room for improvement, especially by providing key business information not covered by the Services Directive (e.g. taxation, social security, posting of workers, sectors not covered by the Directive).

- *Online procedures* –in most countries, only a **small number of procedures can be completed online.**

Even where available, they are **notalways open to users in other countries** (especially where requirements for authentication and e-signatures are stringent but no technical support is yet available). This aspect still poses the most challenges. But several countries have told the Commission they plan to make technical improvements.

- *Usability* –only **2 contact points** (Luxembourg and Malta) are rated **easy to use**.

- *Usagetrend* – most countries recorded a **slight or strong increase** in visitors to the contact point websites (but this does not mean more users were completing procedures on the sites, given the continued lack of them).

# Priorities

In 2014 the Commission will:

- work with national authorities to make sure they are **implementing the PSC Charter** and that this is improving the services on offer. It will conduct a **study** to assess whether the Points of Single Contact meet the criteria in the PSC Charter and identify further areas for improvement;

- focus on improving **online procedures,** and access to them for **foreign businesses**. It will continue to offer practical assistance (in the form of an open source software) for the acceptance of **e-signatures** issued in other countries;

- continue to **address underperformance** in some countries. One tool it will use is the **European Semester**, the basis for economic policy coordination;

- encourage further **cooperation & sharing of good practice** through the **EUGO Network**, which links all the Points of Single Contact.