European Commission

Single Market Scoreboard

Performance per governance tool

Points of Single Contact

(Reporting period: 01/2014 - 12/2014)

THE EU SINGLE MARKET
Single Market Scoreboard

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Performance by governance tool » Points of Single Contact

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Points of Single Contact

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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.

Internal market,
Industry,
Entrepreneurship
and SMEs

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Performance

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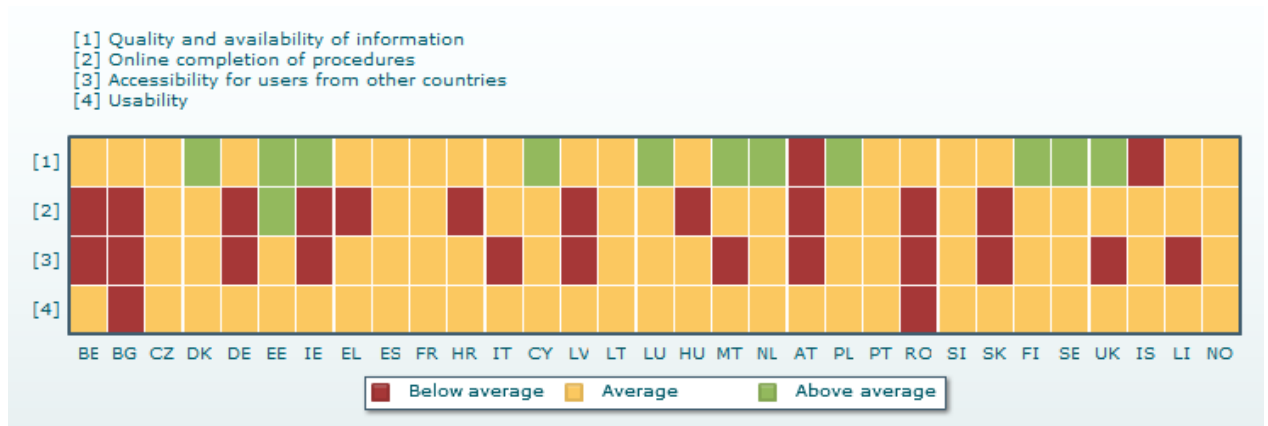
[1] Quality & availability of information (the scores above 75% are rated as "green", below 40% as "red", and yellow in the middle)

- 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?

2. overall
(all 4 indicators combined)
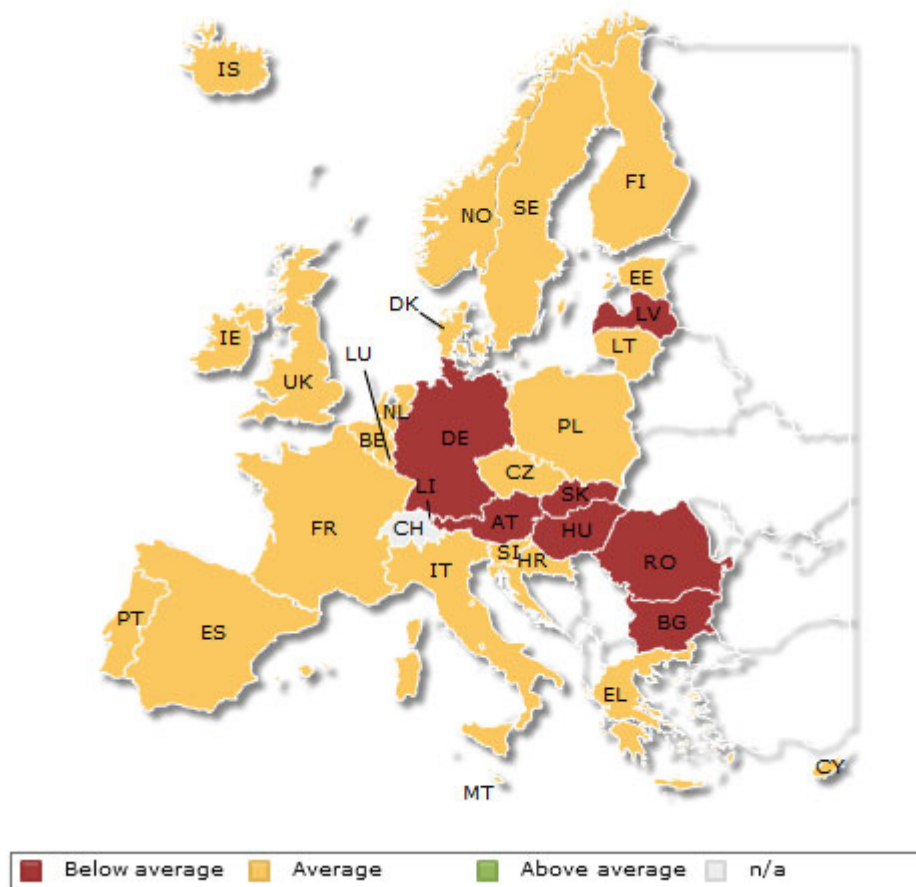
Based on the study "Performance of the Points of Single Contact: An Assessment against PSC Charter" and user testing from January 2015.

The indicators reflect the weighting agreed in the PSC Charter:

- 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 assisted them by:

- **assessing the performance** of the Points of Single Contact against the Points of Single Contact Charter (PSC Charter) – which sets out standard criteria (the 4 indicators in the chart above) for improving and benchmarking points of single contact. This is the second study assessing the points of single contact, but first one taking into account the agreed criteria;

- **organising user-testing in January 2015** in the framework of the EUGO Network (EUGO Network joins Points of Single Contact from EEA). This was a third testing exercise organised by the Commission for the Points of Single Contact. The testing identified further areas for improvement.

Facts and Figures

Overall performance

- None of the Points of Single Contact has highly performing PSCs. Cyprus, Estonia, Sweden and Luxembourg are close to being classified as best performers.

- Contact points in **23 out of 31** participating countries provide an **average level of service** (*yellow colour code*). The level of service in this group differs greatly between the Member States.

- In **8 out of 31** countries quality remains **very low** (*red colour code*).

- Consecutive assessments of the Points of Single Contact show continuous but slow progress.

Available information

- **11 countries** are rated **as very good** (*green colour code*).

- Only one country is rated as very low performer (Austria).

- The PSC study found that users have difficulty in finding the information on the points of single contact, especially for specific sector related issues, such as obtaining licences and permits. This is mainly due to a lack of information available and the way the information is structured and organised. Structuring the information according to the business life cycle helps to find the information needed. Navigation tools are in place on most portals, but do not always lead to the information need.

- No big progress has been recorded since last assessment.

Online procedures

- Only one country is rated as very good (Estonia) (*green colour code*).

- In **11 out of 31 countries** online procedures remain **very low** (*red colour code*).

- The PSC study found that it is relatively easy to complete general procedures online e.g. company registration. However for most points of single contact more specific registrations, such as applying for permits, still requires a physical visit at an office or sending forms by post.

- Some progress has been made but overall objective still remains far from the objectives of the Services Directive.

Accessibility for users from other countries

- In **12 out of 31 countries** accessibility remains **very low** (*red colour code*).

- **None** of the countries is rated as **very good**.

- The PSC study found that **barriers still exist for cross-border trade and establishment.** E-government procedures for foreign users are still lagging behind compared to national users and although most points of single contact provide information in multiple languages, the quality and consistency of the translations is insufficient.

- Cross-border accessibility remains the key weakness of the Points of Single Contact.

Usability

- None of the Points of Single Contact is rated as very **easy to use**.

- In **2 out of 31 countries** usability remains very low (Bulgaria and Romania) (*red colour code*).

- The PSC study found that there is room for improvement regarding the usability of the PSCs. Users found the manner in which information was structured generally poor. Especially overviews of procedures and information can be improved in this regard. Furthermore, the portals could be designed in such a manner that it makes it easier to complete procedures more swiftly.

- No visible progress has been recorded in the perception of usability of the points of single contact portals.

Priorities

In 2015 the Commission will:

- **address the performance** of the Point of Single Contact with the **national authorities**;

- look into possible ways of **integrating European and national portals**, including points of single contact to work towards a **'Single Digital Gateway'** as announced in the Digital Single Market Strategy;

- encourage Member States **to improve access to online procedures for foreign businesses**. The Commission is providing necessary **support** for e-signatures and e-IDs via **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)**;

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