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Digital Single Market

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<http://open-data.europa.eu/open-data/>.

Just before Christmas, we launched an important element of the Commission's Open Data Policy: a portal site for data held by the Commission, the European Environment Agency, and potentially other institutions and bodies of the Union.

DATA PORTAL (BETA)

The Open Data Hub of the European Union

[1]

We have launched it in [beta version](#) [1], and we would love you to try it out and give us feedback while we continue to work on the capabilities and the content of the site. The site provides, for the first time, a single point of access to data held by different departments of the Commission, making it easy to find and retrieve datasets currently published on a multitude of different sites and portals. It currently also includes data from the European Environment Agency. And that's not all: other institutions of the Union can publish there, and we hope that in time it will give access to data from more and more EU bodies.

Why are we doing this?

Raw data is an essential commodity in the information age, and a basic resource for decision-making tools and smartphone apps. Better access to raw data makes life easier for developers of information tools and removes barriers to information, contributing to growth and jobs in the information sector.

For these reasons the Digital Agenda for Europe identifies a need to [opening up public data resources for re-use](#) [2]. Besides [legislative action](#) [3], developing open data portals is a key element of the Commission's policy on [Open Data](#) [4]. Work is on-going on two levels: developing a portal for data held by the Commission and other European institutions and bodies, and working towards a pan-European aggregator for data.

Finally, by setting up its own open data portal, the Commission is also showing its commitment to the principles of openness and transparency. This commitment has first and foremost materialised in [decision](#) [5] by the Commission on the reuse of Commission documents (from 2006, amended in 2011). This decision essentially says that almost all accessible documents of which the Commission is the rights owner can be reused for non-commercial and for commercial purposes and that such reuse can be subject only to a limited number of constraints, if at all. So: Even if you do not find a certain document or data in the new open data portal, it does not mean that reuse of such document or data is not allowed. In many cases it simply may take a bit more time to make it available through the portal.

Why is a data portal key to any open data policy?

A data portal doesn't only provide access to data: At an even more basic level, it makes it easy to find out what data is available. This helps developers to build information services around data: it helps them to identify at very little cost what types of data exist, and which administrative entities hold it. Automated programming interfaces allow for easy download. Licensing conditions are clearly spelled out, removing uncertainty about how data can be re-used.

What's next?

Launching the data portal is not the end of the process. Rather, we are confident that it will be a catalyst for change in the way data is handled inside the Commission as well as beyond. More data will become available as the Commission's services adapt their data management and licensing policies and make machine-readable formats the rule. Our ambition is to make an open licence applicable across the board for all datasets in the portal.

Furthermore, in 2013, an overarching pan-European aggregator for open data should federate the content of more than 70 existing open data portal initiatives in the Member States at national, regional or local level.

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Links

[1] <http://open-data.europa.eu/open-data/>

[2] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/pillar-i-digital-single-market/action-3-open-public-data-resources-re-use>

[3] <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/news/revision-psi-directive>

[4] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_data

[5] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:330:0039:0042:EN:PDF>