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Digital Single Market

Blog post

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Do digital public services and smart cities serve people's needs?

We look forward to your opinion and initiatives!

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Posted by the organising team in DG CONNECT for the Digital Agenda Assembly Workshop "Going smart and accessible in public services and cities"

Public services should be shaped around people's needs, be easily accessible and delivered effectively and efficiently. Citizens should be at the heart of any smart city solution. When every Euro matters, governments need to think digital, and think European. What do we mean by that and how can it be done?

Faced with shrinking public budgets, providing high-quality public services is essential. Digital technologies, together with other forms of innovation, can boost efficiency and effectiveness, laying the foundation for sustainable growth while we "Do more with less!" In Europe, in the Single Market, these digital services need to work also across borders. The common specifications that make this possible should allow citizens to enjoy their rights in the single market, and by avoiding to reinvent the wheel, they deliver 'more with less'.

Public services websites should in principle be accessible to all. Making websites easier to understand and navigate. It's not difficult, nor too expensive. Good standards already exist, so no need to reinvent the wheel and governments will quickly get their return on investing in web-accessibility. Web-accessibility is not only for people with disabilities, it benefits most. And yet the truth is that despite ten years of initiatives many public websites are still not accessible. This is why the European Commission proposed a [directive](#) [1] aiming at making twelve types of public sector websites accessible according to one standard by the end of 2015. The proposal, once adopted, will create clarity and scale in the market for web-developers and procurers.

Digital technologies can also help address the challenges of urbanisation. [Smart cities](#) [2] promote environmental, social and economic sustainability by linking existing digital solutions in the energy,

transport and ICT sectors. The related [European Innovation Partnership](#) [3] encourages industry and (local) governments to change people's behaviours and raise awareness. On the other hand, new solutions and applications have to be developed close to the citizen, in a transparent and secure manner.

These issues will be discussed at [Digital Agenda Assembly](#) [4] Workshop on "Going Smart and Accessible in Public Services and Cities" in Dublin on 19th June. [Online discussion](#) [5] has already revealed some interesting areas for debate and you are welcome to join and add your story. We are also gathering inspiring high impact initiatives on Digital Skills and Jobs. If you are part of such projects, add your initiative on the [map of the Digital Agenda for Europe](#) [6]. The most relevant, novel and impactful ones will be presented at the Assembly.

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Links

- [1] <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/proposal-directive-european-parliament-and-council-accessibility-public-sector-bodies-websites>
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