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Government - More than the sum of the parts

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The session “Government - More than the sum of the parts” chaired by Jeremy MILLARD was focused on challenges for governments and the future of public services. The question how public administration can become agents of change and innovation as well as drivers of smart growth was discussed by three inspiring speakers: Taavi KOTKA from Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications Estonia, Anna MAZGAL from Ashoka Poland and Carsten SCHMIDT from e-CODEX and e-SENS projects from Justizministerium des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, Budget, Information Technology and Organisation Germany.

The first speech by Taavi KOTKA was based on using a digital signature as a tool to reduce the waste of time and money while making contracts. A short video at the beginning showed that using digital signature in Estonia saves a whole week of time each year, but unfortunately most Europeans still haven't started using it yet, mainly because of privacy issues. At that point, due to his seven years' experience in using digital signatures, Kotka assured that there are no security problems and the key issue of not using digital signatures among Europeans is the lack of knowledge. In addition to this, Taavi KOTKA encouraged the building of trust. We should not be afraid of challenges coming along with new technologies because there is a solution for every challenge.

In the second presentation Anna Mazgal used Polish examples of citizens employing technology to make the government better and how the government “employs” citizens towards better governance. The first example covered possibilities of shaping the future by creating frameworks and policies that are based on evidence coming from big data. Also, the platform for consultation about changes in regulation was represented as an example of a technology for greater accountability and transparency of the process. Anna MAZGAL motivated the audience by ending her speech with the remark: “The reward is worth the risk”.

Mr Carsten SCHMIDT highlighted the e-CODEX project as a solution for encouraging people to feel comfortable enough to take a matter to court. Everyone is touched by e-Justice. For example, when luggage gets lost passengers can get their money back, but it is a paper based process at the moment. So, e-Justice can help to protect your rights and access court information which leads to building the trust in the legal system.

There was plenty of discussion about how to know which solutions are the best ones, why is it important to build long term goals and relationships and should government be allowed to make mistakes or not. The session was concluded by discussing the role of innovation in the H2020 programme and how implementation of Europe-wide cross-border solutions should be prioritized to save money and make the public sector more effective.

Session Reporters: Gintarė Budrauskytė and Sören Hahn

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