

Digital Agenda: pilot projects show the way in easy access to online public services across the EU



ICT for Government
and Public Services



The five-year eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015 presented by the European Commission today (see IP/10/1718) builds on the results of several ongoing EU large-scale pilot projects. For example, STORK fosters the EU-wide interoperability of electronic identities whilst procurement and communication with governments have become simpler with PEPPOL and SPOCS. These innovative projects centre on the needs of citizens and businesses and make life easier through better access to more efficient and cost effective public services.

The implementation of the first [European eGovernment Action Plan](#) saw governments exchange good practices and resulted in a number of large-scale pilot projects. STORK, PEPPOL, and SPOCS are three examples of these major initiatives set up over the last years. They harness information and communication technologies (ICT) to develop concrete solutions for EU-wide services which meet the needs of citizens and businesses. These projects do not impose a single solution, but build on existing technical ones and on available infrastructures, interlinking Member States' systems so that they can "talk to each other".

Despite considerable progress made in recent years, more effort is needed to increase overall usage and reinforce user empowerment and interoperability. The new eGovernment Action Plan proposes concrete measures so that by 2015 it should become, for example, much more convenient to apply for and access social security and health benefits, or receive pension rights from one EU country to another. For businesses, it should be even easier to open a branch or subsidiary abroad using online systems or provide services and goods anywhere in Europe.

STORK - electronic identity for easier access to public services

Several barriers to free movement still exist in the digital Single Market. For example, it is not easy to access online public services while working or living in another country.

The [STORK](#) (Secure Identity Across Borders Linked) pilot project makes the cross-border use of electronic identification possible. As identification and authentication of persons are essential for the security of electronic transactions, the project aims to build levels of trust amongst Member States and respective services by ensuring interoperability.

It aims to allow citizens and businesses to access eGovernment services in any Member State they live in or travel to. For example, the pilot project gives foreign students access to online services offered by universities (e.g. online enrolment, access to online courses or tutorials, access to computing infrastructures, etc.) in five countries (Austria, Estonia, Italy, Portugal and Spain).

The STORK activities on eID are also relevant for other pilot projects and initiatives.

PEPPOL - towards cross-border public eProcurement

Many EU countries use electronic procurement (eProcurement) to make tendering procedures of the public sector simpler and more efficient. However, these solutions are often implemented as separate islands within Member States.

[PEPPOL](#) (Pan-European Public Procurement Online) aims to enable the connection of existing eProcurement systems and allow entrepreneurs to perform the full public procurement cycle online, across the EU, with the participant countries.

For both businesses and governments, this means easier communication and more transparency, but also larger markets and cost savings. As governments are the largest buyers of goods and services in the EU (in 2009, 19.4% of the Union's GDP), this is an important step for the Single Market's competitiveness.

SPOCS – next generation Points of Single Contact

In December 2006, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the [Services Directive](#). Implementing this Directive called for setting up '[Points of Single Contact](#)' (PSC), which act as intermediaries between service providers and national public administrations. These "one-stop shops" fulfil essentially two functions: the completion of administrative procedures online (for example, company registration) and information dissemination.

The [SPOCS](#) (Simple Procedures Online for Cross-border Services) pilot project aims to enhance the quality of these procedures, with more interoperable and user-friendly systems, making it easier for businesses to offer their services abroad.

In relation to cross-border use of electronic identity and signatures validation, SPOCS will benefit from the results achieved by the STORK (electronic identity) and PEPPOL (electronic procurement) projects.

To find out more:

[MEMO/10/681](#)

[eGovernment](#)

[ICT PSP](#)

[Digital Agenda for Europe](#)

[STORK](#) (Secure Identity Across Borders Linked)

[PEPPOL](#) (Pan-European Public Procurement Online)

[SPOCS](#) (Simple Procedures Online for Cross-border Services)