

EU eGovernment action plan 2016-2020

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The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection adopted the own-initiative report by Sabine VERHEYEN (EPP, DE) on the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020.

Public administrations going digital: Members are of the view that public administrations should be open, transparent, efficient and inclusive, providing borderless, personalised, user-friendly, accessible and end-to-end digital public services to citizens and businesses by 2022, thereby reducing costs, barriers and administrative burdens for citizens and businesses, in particular SMEs, and thus reaping all the benefits of the digital revolution. They considered, however, that this should be **compatible with fair restructuring in public administration**. Members supported the plan to base future initiatives on the **‘digital by default’ principle**, and stressed the importance of implementing the **‘once-only’ principle**, which will make interaction with public administrations easier for citizens and businesses by avoiding unnecessarily time-consuming administrative processes and make it easier for information previously supplied to be reused for other applications.

They welcomed the Commission’s intention to establish as early as possible a **single digital gateway** that would provide citizens and businesses with a linked-up, coherent package of online single-market services at both national and EU level, covering information about the EU and national rules, as well as assistance services, and to complete the most important procedures for citizens and businesses in cross-border situations and help implement the once-only principle in the EU.

Members called on the Commission to consider further ways to promote digital solutions for formalities throughout a company’s lifecycle, the electronic filing of company documents and the provision of cross-border and other information for business registers.

They highlighted the importance of **inclusiveness, accessibility and general access to digital public services**, an essential factor underpinning the design and delivery of policies promoting competitiveness, growth and jobs, and called on the Member States to fully implement and apply the [new directive](#) on the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies, which will benefit people with disabilities and elderly people.

Members noted that only one third of public websites are **mobile-friendly**. They called, therefore, on the Member States to assess the possibilities of developing mobile solutions for eGovernment services, and to ensure their user-friendliness and accessibility for all. They stressed that in order to **future-proof the accessibility of eGovernment services**, public administration websites and instruments must be kept up to date with modern technology and the ever-evolving cyber security requirements.

Members emphasised the importance of developing **safe, reliable, interoperable cross-border public services**, avoiding further fragmentation and supporting mobility. They stressed that interoperability and standardisation are among the key elements for implementing eGovernment structures. They also stressed that standards must serve the interests of society at large by being **inclusive, fair and future-proof**, and be developed in an open and transparent way.

Members also stressed the need for an inclusive online and offline dual approach, so as to avoid exclusion, given the current rate of digital illiteracy and the fact that more than 22 % of Europeans, especially elderly people, prefer not to use online services when dealing with public administrations.

Cross-border eGovernment at all administrative levels: Members highlighted the importance of cross-border eGovernment services for citizens in their daily life, and stressed the benefits of further developing the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI) and the EURES European Job Mobility portal, as well as the cross-border eHealth services. They underlined that eHealth can significantly improve the quality of life of citizens by providing **more accessible, cost-effective and efficient healthcare** to patients. They considered that, for the full functioning of cross-border eGovernment services, **language barriers** must be addressed, and that public administrations, especially in border regions, should make their information and services available in the languages of their Member States but also in other relevant European languages. Members highlighted the importance of an exchange of best practices, examples and project experience between all levels of administration, both within and between Member States.

Data protection and security: Members emphasised that citizens' trust in the protection of personal data is fundamental to securing the success of the eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020, and underlined that public administrations must handle personal data securely and fully in line with the General Data Protection Regulation ([GDPR](#)) and the EU Rules on Privacy. They stressed the need for effective guidance on the application of the GDPR, as well as for a continuous exchange with stakeholders.

Lastly, Members emphasised that measures to protect public authorities from cyber-attacks and to enable them to withstand such attacks are extremely important and need to be developed.