Single digital gateway to provide information, procedures, assistance and problem solving services

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The Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee adopted the report by Marlene MIZZI (S&D, MT) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a single digital gateway to provide information, procedures, assistance and problem solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012.

As a reminder, the Regulation puts forward a centralised single entry point, a 'Single Digital Gateway' which will provide access for EU citizens and businesses to all the information necessary when enjoying their rights to free movement in the EU.

The committee recommended that the European Parliament's position adopted at first reading under the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows:

Aims: the gateway shall consist of a **common user interface integrated in the single portal 'Your Europe'** managed by the Commission. The gateway shall provide access and links to relevant national and Union websites and webpages.

The Union level online service logo of the gateway and link shall be made available on the national and Union level websites and webpages linked to the gateway

The gateway shall be **easily findable** through the related portals for which they are responsible and that clear links to the gateway are included through search facilities accessible to the public and in all relevant websites and webpages at Union and national level.

The proposed Regulation establishes a user-friendly, interactive single digital gateway which, based on users' needs, shall guide them to the most appropriate services. The single digital gateway could help contribute to the greater transparency of rules and regulations in areas such as travel within the Union, work and retirement in the Union, residence by citizens in Member States other than their Member States of origin, access to education in other Member States, access to healthcare, exercise of family rights, residence rights, citizens' rights and consumer rights.

Once-only principle and data protection: the Regulation shall facilitate the use of online procedures, including by users from other Member States, and **facilitate the exchange of supporting documents** for the procedures listed in Annex II to the proposed Regulation and for the procedures provided for in Directives 2005/36/EC, 2006/123/EC, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU by applying the 'once-only' principle which aims at ensuring that citizens and business are requested to supply the same information only once to a public administration, which can then be re-used.

The Regulation shall **fully respect the fundamental right to the protection of personal data**, for the purpose of the exchange of evidence between competent authorities in different Member States.

Quality requirements: in order to ensure the clarity of the single digital gateway, the information provided through that gateway should be clear, accurate and up-to-date, the use of complex terminology should be minimised and the use of acronyms should be limited to those which provide simplified and **easily understandable** terms that do not require a pre-existing knowledge of the issue or area of law.

In this regard, Members proposed a series of amendments to ensure that both the national and the Union webpages within the scope of the proposal are ensured to be accessible also for users with disabilities.

The Commission shall **ensure that the common user interface complies with those requirements** and in particular it should be available and accessible online through various channels, be easy to navigate and use clear information. To ensure that users are aware of the common user interface, it should be easily recognisable on both national and Union level websites and webpages.

Where an assistance or problem solving service to which links are provided no longer meets the needs of the users, the Commission may **disconnect it** from the gateway after consultation with the national coordinator of the Member State or Member States concerned and, where necessary, with the gateway coordination group. The Commission and the national coordinator or coordinators concerned shall adopt a joint action plan proposing measures to improve the service and to connect it back to the gateway.

Access to online procedures: the online procedures listed in Annex II in relation to Article 5 will be obligatory for Member States. Consequently, Member States need to ensure that the procedures in Article 5 are **fully online** and accessible to all users.

Furthermore, the amended text ensures that, if Member States provide certain procedures to their nationals, they shall **provide them in a non-discriminatory manner to cross-border users** so that they can exercise their rights in the internal market derived from Union law and comply with those obligations and rules.