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

2017/0086(COD) - 21/11/2018 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish a single digital gateway to ensure that citizens and businesses have easy online access to the information, procedures and assistance and problem solving services they need for the exercise of their rights in the internal market.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 October 2018 establishing a single digital gateway to provide access to information, to procedures and to assistance and problem-solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012.

CONTENT: the Regulation establishes a single digital gateway which shall enable EU citizens and businesses to access all the information necessary to exercise their right to free movement within the Union.

On several occasions, the European Parliament and the Council have called for a more comprehensive and user-friendly offer for information and assistance to help citizens and businesses orient themselves in the internal market.

Purposes of the single digital portal

The single digital gateway ('the gateway') shall be established by the Commission and the Member States in accordance with this Regulation. The gateway shall consist of a common user interface managed by the Commission ('the common user interface'), which shall be integrated into the Your Europe portal and shall give access to relevant Union and national webpages.

The gateway shall act as the single entry point through which citizens and businesses are able to access information about the rules and requirements that they have to comply with, by virtue of Union or national law. It shall contribute to the greater transparency of rules and regulations relating to different business and life events, in areas such as travel, retirement, education, employment, healthcare, consumer rights and family rights.

Furthermore, it shall facilitate interactions between citizens and businesses, on the one hand, and competent authorities, on the other hand, by providing access to online solutions, facilitating the day-to-day activities of citizens and businesses and minimising the obstacles encountered in the internal market.

Procedures to be offered fully online

The main principle of the portal is that any procedure available to nationals of a given Member State shall be equally accessible to those of other Member States.

Some basic administrative procedures shall be available online for both nationals and cross-border users, such as: (i) applying for a certificate of birth registration or proof of residence, (ii) applying for proof of residence, (ii) applying for loans and study grants, (iv) applying for recognition of training qualifications, (v) obtaining a European Health Insurance Card, (vi) submitting an income tax return, (vii) registering a vehicle, (viii) applying for a pension and registering employees with pension and insurance schemes.

Once-only principle

The new portal shall help to reduce the administrative burden on citizens and businesses wishing to exercise their rights. It shall facilitate the use of online procedures, including by users from other Member States, and shall facilitate the exchange of supporting documents for the procedures listed in Annex II to the Regulation 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.

The Regulation shall fully respect the fundamental right to the protection of personal data for the purpose of exchanging supporting documents between competent authorities of different Member States.

Quality requirements

In order to ensure that the single digital portal meets users' needs, the Regulation sets standards for the quality of information. To be readable, the single digital portal shall provide clear, accurate and up-to-date information, the use of complex terminology shall be minimised and the use of acronyms shall 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.

The national and EU web pages falling within the scope of the Regulation shall also have to be accessible to persons with disabilities.

The Commission shall ensure that the common user interface complies with those requirements, and the interface should in particular be available and accessible online through various channels, as well as being easy to use.

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