eGovernment accelerating digital public services that support the functioning of the single market

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The European Parliament adopted by 557 votes to 50, with 36 abstentions, a resolution on eGovernment accelerating digital public services that support the functioning of the single market.

Efficient digitalisation of public administration increases the productivity and resilience of the public sector, enhances the quality of public services, enables lower costs and unlocks business potential, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the single market. According to Members, public services should fully meet the needs of their users, be accessible online, including for persons with disabilities and elderly people, and benefit from easy-to-understand and easy-to-use tools with high security, privacy and data protection standards.

eGovernment in the digital single market

Parliament emphasises that in order to strengthen the single market, it is necessary to carry out a digital transformation that increases the availability of online public services. Digitalisation should be an integral and integrated part of all government policies and administrative procedures. **eGovernment should be the primary way in which government services function**, while ensuring that public services are fully accessible for all.

The Commission and the Member States are invited, *inter alia*, to:

- encourage **cross-border collaboration** between public administrations and identify, analyse and publish best practices in eGovernment from Member States and other countries ;

- pay particular attention to the **protection of personal data** of individuals, especially sensitive data such as medical data and electoral rolls, and ensure that the provision of digital public services fully respects the General Data Protection Regulation;

- ensure the necessary infrastructure for broadband internet access, including fibre to the home, in particular with a view to ensuring stable broadband internet connectivity and coverage, especially on islands and in rural areas;

- implement the **Digital Education** Action Plan, including by publishing good practices from individual Member States and other countries;

- properly measure results to deliver benefits to individuals are real in terms of **e-medical records** and cross-border healthcare provision;

- improve the European **e-Justice** strategy and action plan for the period 2019-2023;

- present **recommendations** to allow individuals to monitor administrative processes that involve them and to engage with stakeholders in the design and delivery of eGovernment services.

The role of eGovernment in stimulating business, especially SMEs

The resolution underlined the importance of **removing remaining barriers** in the single market and emphasised that improving access to finance will encourage the entry and growth of innovative companies and foster competition. Members believe that eGovernment could help to speed up this transition. They also noted the importance of **cross-border online access to information**, administrative procedures and assistance services for EU businesses and consumers. They emphasised the need to ensure interoperability to avoid fragmentation and allow a seamless provision of digital services throughout the EU internal market.

Members called for the complete digitalisation of **land registers** as soon as possible and for significant progress to be made in simplifying applications for **building permits** and in shortening the deadlines for issuing them in each stage of a building's development. They also called on the Commission to encourage interconnection between all Member States' **business registers** to facilitate transparency and the availability of up-to-date information and financial reporting on companies and beneficial owners.

Member States are encouraged to establish GovTech programmes to promote transparency, innovation and benefits for users.

E-procurement and electronic customs

Members considered that full access to public procurement data could significantly improve public probity, promote innovation and support single market objectives. They stressed that the interoperability of procurement systems and open data systems can be useful to simplify the tasks of contracting authorities when conducting procurement procedures and to make business participation easier while increasing the efficiency and accountability of public procurement.

The resolution stressed that electronic customs procedures play a crucial role in the digitalisation of public services and that they are therefore beneficial for businesses operating in the single market as well as for consumers.

Towards a new eGovernment strategy

Parliament welcomed the Commission's initiative to create European data spaces in various sectors, including health, justice and public procurement. It considered it crucial for these data spaces to be interoperable so that consumers and entrepreneurs, especially SMEs, can achieve their full potential.

The resolution underlined that digital public administration should be **inclusive** and by default easily and fully accessible for people with different needs, such as elderly people, people with disabilities or economically. It stressed the importance of the **'digital by default'** principle, which means that public administrations should deliver services digitally. It also stressed that eGovernment should not lead to the exclusion of any user.

Faced with the development and use of **artificial intelligence** in eGovernment, that humans must continue to be central to decision-making and that they need to be able to override or reverse automated decisions.

Parliament called on the Commission to propose a **new evidence-based long-term action plan for eGovernment** with a quantified cost-benefit analysis, indicators and targets for delivering results for individuals and ensuring that modern public administration is fit for the digital age.

The new eGovernment strategy should aim to incorporate the 'once-only' principle (OOP), which will simplify contact with public authorities by enabling public entities to share data with each other so that information only needs to be entered once.