



Breaking Barriers to e-Government

Solutions for e-Government

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Information Society
and Media



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A general perspective

- One of the main conditions for the success of any initiative related to eGovernment is the guarantee of effective communication between all the parties concerned
- From the perspective of citizens, it is essential to be able to gain appropriate access to a range of electronic public service





Two initial conclusions

- This demand has created growing pressure for policies and actions that go more deeply into a citizen-focused approach to eGovernment developments
- Making a user-centred philosophy a more widespread eGovernment reality **MAY** require legal and institutional changes





Two main obstacles

- There is no a general right for citizens to use electronic means to access eGovernment services, especially those pan-European public services with a “high impact”
- A multi-channel approach is necessary to assure the access to public services by all citizens (inclusive perspective)





The need for an e-right to contact with PA

- Only a narrow range of predetermined and not very useful services are sometimes available
- Could help to overcome poor motivation and confidence to e-Gov
- eGov is not always a priority compared with other investments
- A democratic perspective: degree of satisfaction of e-citizens





European-level considerations

- Administrative services linked to the free movement of persons and the right of establishment
- They should be accessible through electronic means in order to allow their exercise in an effective way
- Very significant when a citizen must contact a public administration located in a different Member State
- Citizens mobility as a priority for eGov Action Plan i2010
- Increase democratic legitimacy of the EU





What can we do?

- Public reports ranking the level of ePublic Services supply across Europe are too limited
- The establishment of legal eRights obligations at the European level should be considered as the most effective way to solve this barrier
- A relevant example: Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18: compulsory use of electronic means in the field of public procurement
- Directive 2006/123 on services in the Internal Market





Recommended solution

- A new Directive on administrative services linked to free movement of persons and right of establishment (**not only services!!!**), following the model of Directive 123/2006
- Simplification of procedures
- Right to information
- Accessibility of procedures by e-means
- Harmonization of administrative documents





Inclusive perspective

- Multi-channel solutions: an Utopian objective for economic reasons?
- Efficiency requirements are leading to restrictions on access being applied to many eGovernment services (i.e. official journals)
- Is e-Government a right or an obligation?
- Promotion of electronic public services cannot be focused on compulsory use of ICT by citizens because that kind of measure may infringe the principle of equity in the access





The multi-channel approach

- Digital divides from several perspectives: social, cultural, economical, age...
- The use of at least two channels (one electronic, one more traditional) to gain access to public services should be guaranteed as a rule to avoid discrimination
- Only if no unjustifiable limitations are placed on the exercise of citizens' and companies' rights or the fulfilment of their obligations
- No citizens left behind!!!! (eGov Action Plan)





Solutions

- General and direct solutions at a European level cannot always be adopted since the practical conditions for the accessibility of ICT-enabled services are different in each Member State, and for each group of users
- Stricter respect in ePublic Services of the provisions in Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC referring to the inclusion of persons with disabilities and older people
- Recommend the use of alternative systems based on the collaboration of certain intermediaries who have a close relation with those social groups affected by digital divides





The role of intermediaries

- Social intermediaries, private sector, civil servants, NGOs...
- Member States should be urged to adapt their general legal framework governing citizens' representations to public administrations to include electronic requirements
- Key issues: the use of digital signatures; the conditions and limits of each sort of relationship; and proof of citizens' consent





Some other issues

- Simplification of procedures: not to go on doing the same with a different format
- Right not to address those documents already in the hands of PA: interconnections and interoperability
- Right to write an e-mail and obtain an answer
- Fear of e-participation?
- Automatization of administrative decisions
- Control on software used to exercise administrative competences
- Projects and leadership: ICT are only tools!!!





Thank you for your attention!!



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