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eGovernment: towards the future

Check Against Delivery
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort

Opening remarks at Meeting of eGovernment Expert Group,
CeBIT

Hannover, 6 March 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be here with you today. The role of this group is vital for the implementation of the eGovernment Action Plan, which in turn is essential for the successful completion of the Digital Agenda for Europe.

I know you have a packed agenda so I will try to be brief. Your discussions today centre on key issues for the development of the Digital Single Market.

Sustainability of Large Scale Pilots

Virtually all of you are involved in one or several of the Large Scale Pilots. One of you is even present in all five of them!

I greatly value this form of financial and political commitment. In Poznan I saw first-hand the strong political will to make sure that digital barriers to the Single Market become a thing of the past.

Let us not miss the opportunity. Let us agree on a list of key cross-border services to be made available on-line by 2015. From the discussions in Poznan I believe we are nearly there, but we must not be complacent.

We also need to make sure that all citizens and businesses can benefit from the work being done through the Large Scale Pilots.

We must guarantee their technical and financial sustainability. I simply cannot accept that all the efforts invested go to waste.

For this reason we are proposing to allocate over 9 billion Euros of the overall Connecting Europe Facility to the development of digital infrastructures. This includes super-fast broadband, but also interconnected, on-line public services such as eProcurement, eID, eHealth and eJustice.

This will affect all of you. As such you have a stake in ensuring that the final proposal adopted by Member States and Parliament provides the resources required to complete the Digital Single Market.

Benchmarking

Let me now turn to another topic on your agenda: Benchmarking progress in eGovernment.

We are moving in all areas towards more evidence-based policy making. In a time of intense pressure on public resources, it is important to be able to collect evidence that measures relevant phenomena.

We must keep pace with the evolution of policies and move on towards innovative approaches to monitoring and benchmarking, also in the context of the eGovernment Action Plan, as well as in all the areas of the Digital Agenda.

I urge Member States to collaborate in this effort and count on them to keep momentum and maximise impact.

Cloud Strategy and European Cloud Partnership

I would like to conclude with another topic which will also have an impact on your future work. The Cloud.

I have said several times that I want Europe to become "Cloud active". This means creating and strengthening Cloud providers that are able to meet European requirements and expectations.

To maximise the impact of their activities, we need a coherent strategy. This is why I will present an EU strategy for Cloud computing within the Digital Agenda for Europe, before the summer.

I want to highlight one element of the strategy that will have a direct impact on public bodies: The European Cloud Partnership (ECP)

It focuses on public IT procurement. IT procurement which represents around 20% of the market. But right now it is fragmented and with limited impact.

We can tie together this buying power through more harmonisation, convergence and integration. We can align public sector initiatives.

The aim is to work towards joint public procurement and more standardised services. But most importantly, we will obtain better offers against cheaper prices.

In the first phase, the Partnership will come up with common requirements for Cloud procurement. Much of this work will be done by Member State or regional procurement representatives.

In later phases, the Partnership should procure actual implementations of Cloud Computing for the public sector.

We need your countries on board for this! Together we can move the markets and bring new efficiencies to the public sector. My colleagues will go into more detail on this today.

Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Financial constraints and technological development force us to re-think the ways in which the public sector works.

The long term sustainability of the Large Scale Pilots, the Connecting Europe Facility and the European Cloud Partnership will provide us with key tools to do so.

This is an opportunity that cannot be missed. I encourage all of you to build, connect and grow, also in the Cloud.