Public Administration and Governance in the EU
Newsletter

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A message from
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Dear reader,

We live in the world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0, in which digitalisation is an essential pillar and moving at very fast speed. At the same time, we are on the verge of a green transition towards a decarbonised and environmentally friendly economy. We are transforming our society and I believe this dual transformation can only be achieved by uniting the forces of the public and private sectors through strong collaboration that is facilitated and supported by the European Commission.

Furthermore, I think that **the digitalisation of EU's public sector is key to boost EU's economic competitiveness**. This digital transformation will bring efficiency gains, transparency and simplification of now some burdensome procedures.

In the EU's ambitious Path to the Digital Decade, **businesses and citizens will be able to save time, costs, and energy on administration, while benefitting from public services that are easy-to-use and that have high security and privacy standards**.

In addition, the Commission adopted its proposal for the Interoperable Europe Act. This proposal reinforces the cooperation on interoperability of public services in the EU across all levels of government, with a strong co-ownership of the public administrations involved. It is my conviction that this reinforced interoperability cooperation is key to make the digital European market a success, and, in its turn, to make the EU economy more competitive.

The content you are going to discover in this newsletter is loaded with news and knowledge in support of that.

In "Towards Digital Government" you can notice the level of Member State's engagement in empowering their businesses and citizens by digitalising their public administrations. Other shining examples of this evolution can be seen in "Latest developments in Digital Public Administration from the Member States." There also many other good practices from Member States that I encourage you to learn about in the newsletter.

Happy reading,
Natalia Aristimuño-Perez
Director of Digital Services, DG DIGIT

Focus article: towards digital government

Digitalisation is so engrained in all aspects of public life that governments at any level place digital at the forefront of their thinking about strategy, operations and organisation. This is the essence of the Commission's policy orientation in "Supporting public administrations in EU Member States to deliver reforms and prepare for the future".

In practising what it preaches, the Commission has adopted a new internal strategy under the title "Next Generation Digital Commission", which sets out a vision for a digitally transformed, more agile administration that will contribute to the achievement of the EU's strategic priorities. These include Europe's Digital Decade for all sectors of society, oriented by a 'Digital Compass' with four cardinal points: infrastructures; skills; business; and government.

This message is also at the heart of the OECD's guidance, which contrasts e-government (substituting paper-based with computer-based systems through automation) with digital government that exploits technology and data to strengthen the culture, structures and capabilities of public administration, and create new ways to operate internally and externally. The Digital Government Policy Framework envisages government as: digital by design; data driven; acting as a platform; open by default; user-driven; and proactive. In the field of public services, this involves offering integrated, omnichannel solutions and ensuring delivery is digitally-assisted even if the interaction is face-to-face or call-based.

In signing up to the Tallinn Declaration, all EU and EFTA members recognised the role of digitalisation in strengthening trust in government, by increasing its "transparency, responsiveness, reliability, and integrity". This requires public administrations, through legislation and other actions, to lay the foundations of infrastructure, enablers, standards and tools, including electronic ID, authentication and trust services (e-signatures / digital signatures, electronic time stamps, electronic seals, etc.), digitalising base registries and ensuring interoperability in line with European Interoperability Framework. With this framework in place, governments can increasingly open up the benefits of digitalisation to citizens, businesses and other organisations, such as 'once-only' information provision and re-use, 'open by default' (automatic access to government data unless there is a specific public interest in restricting it, e.g. security or confidentiality), and seamless service delivery, including across national borders, taking advantage of the Single Digital Gateway. Such changes are not cost-free, and governments must be mindful of the environmental effects and energy intensity of digital technologies, the impact on the jobs and skills mix within and outside the administration, data protection, and avoiding digital exclusion of citizens who are unable or unwilling to access e-services.

In the last few years, Member States have engaged in measures to strengthen their connections with citizens and businesses. Several have introduced one-stop shops to access e-services (e.g. Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia), while others have upgraded existing portals and websites, including new e-services and/or new and more secure authentication methods (e.g. the Suomi.fi website in Finland, the e-gov websites in Greece and Hungary, Latvija.lv in Latvia, MyGuichet in Luxembourg, Servizz in Malta). Some tools were also developed to target enterprises specifically and reduce administrative demands, such as the E-Foundation Business and Start-up system in

> " *Public administrations must make organisational, technological and cultural transformations to move with the times* "
>
> Elisa Ferreira, EU Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, 2021.

> *Digital technologies affect the way in which every government function is carried out, from decision-making to delivering services, collecting and managing tax, communicating, managing projects, etc. Digitalisation goes beyond ... replicating bureaucracy electronically. Digital needs to be at the heart of administrative management as it presents new opportunities for the public administrations to rethink, simplify and streamline not only their working processes, but their purpose.*

Supporting public administrations in EU Member States to deliver reforms and prepare for the future.

Austria and the national Slovenian Business Point 'SPOT' in Slovenia. While the 2020 Act on the Right to Digital Services in Czechia set a 5-year deadline for more intensive digitalisation, Ireland has committed to provide 90% of applicable services online by 2030. The KrattAI strategy in Estonia will advance the take-up of artificial intelligence in both public and private sectors.

The ambitious plans of public administrations are often assisted by the Technical Support Instrument (TSI), complementing other EU initiatives such as the Connecting Europe Facility, Digital Europe , the Recovery and Resilience Facility, and of course, European Structural and Investment Funds. Between 2017 and 2022, the TSI has supported over 40 projects in 21 Member States focusing on different aspects of digitalisation. These include: digital transformation of the public administration in Romania; developing resilient, innovative and human-centric digital government services in Belgium and the Netherlands; the acceleration of digital transformation in Greece; and developing e-government and AI to support the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan in Slovakia. Digital is rapidly becoming integral to government!

A project in the spotlight: ICT strategy of the State Administration and modernisation plan for the public administrations

The importance of digitalisation for Spain's Public Administration

Digitalisation is one of the drivers for the lever policy of Spain's RRP entitled 'An Administration for the 21st century' and a key enabler to surmount the socio-economic crisis derived from the COVID-19 pandemic, boost productivity and enhance social and territorial cohesion. Besides fostering the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration, digital transformation is also contributing to eliminating bureaucracy by automating steps and increasing orientation towards service personalisation and the user experience, thus bringing the administration closer to citizens and to their specific needs.

The main stakeholders

At the national level, the General Secretariat of Digital Administration (SGAD) plays a key role as the coordinating authority of the State Administration and modernisation plan for the public administrations. Furthermore, through cross-cutting projects, the SGAD delivers enabling services and infrastructures to other public bodies, as well as new and improved digital public services to citizens. Other Ministries and public bodies of the General State Administration have the responsibility to implement other high-impact projects included in the Plan, while ensuring alignment with the technological guidelines issued by the SGAD. Local and regional governments will also implement projects in their scope of responsibility, in the strategic lines and following the strategic guidelines set by the SGAD.

The main challenges to digital transformation in Spain

The existing obstacles to digital transformation in different areas pose serious challenges for the governance of a coordinated digital transition, as well as for interoperability, which is imperative in order to ensure the effective implementation of the once-only-principle. These challenges include:

- Organisational obstacles linked to Spain's high level of decentralisation, with competences in digital government distributed at national, regional and local level.

- The heterogeneity of digital capabilities of public employees, as well as the different levels of supporting infrastructures across government levels pose a challenge for the adoption of emerging technologies in the public sector.

- Social challenges, like the digital divide at different levels and the depopulation of rural areas, as well as those posed by an ageing population.

The strategic pillars of the ICT strategy of the State Administration and modernisation plan for the public administrations

The activities of the projects are organised in 3 strategic pillars:

1. **Digital Transformation of the General State Administration (GSA)**, which aims at developing horizontal services that will be delivered centrally by the SGAD to the rest of Ministries and public bodies of the General State Administration. The specific will provide enabling services and infrastructures for the development of user-centric, accessible, secure and efficient public services that integrate emerging technologies.

2. **High-impact Projects for the Public Sector Digitalisation** in five specific fields, identified as having a critical importance not only for the digital transformation of the Central Administration, but also for the society and economy in general: health, justice, employment, social services and services to the citizens living abroad.

3. **Digital Transformation and Modernisation of the Regional and Local Administrations and of the Ministries of Territorial Policy and Public Function**, which includes projects carried out by regional and local administrations with the funding coming from the Plan. Projects under this pillar will also contribute to enhance administrative processes and procedures and the digital competencies and resources of the Ministries of Territorial Policy and Public Function. Due to the specific competences of these two Ministries, this will have an impact on all levels of government.

Early results, lessons learnt and next steps

Although it is still early to see the results of a Plan with such ambitious objectives and wide scope, tangible achievements can already be observed, such as the integration of the first Ministries in the new Cyber Security Operations Centre of the General State Administration. Moreover, the SGAD has put in place a centralised service of Robotic Process Automation 'as-a-service' (RPA aaS) and launched a one-stop-shop to access citizens' public records. Additionally, all Ministries involved in the execution of Pillar 2 of the Plan have already started the implementation of the high-impact projects. For example, in the field of Justice, more than 15 % of the existing judicial bodies have been equipped with the necessary infrastructure to be able to carry out judicial proceedings electronically. Regarding Pillar 3, a total of 447 million Euros have been transferred so far to regional and local administrations to fund their investments in digital transformation projects aligned with the strategic lines of pillar 1. Most projects are still in the planning or procurement phases.

While the plan is still in an early stage, some conclusions can already be derived from the elaboration phase. For instance, the importance of the coordination and the central provision of services, which constitutes also a key lever to integrate emerging technologies in the public sector, should be highlighted. Also, the key importance of encompassing the common transversal needs and the sectorial ones, with a focus on reuse and collaborative implementation.

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What's e-new in the Member States

EU: New Interoperable Europe Act – improved cooperation between national administrations on data exchanges and IT solutions

The European Commission has adopted the Interoperable Europe Act proposal, which aims at strengthening cross-border interoperability and cooperation in the public sector across the EU, helping the EU and its Member States to deliver better public services to citizens and businesses. The Act introduces the following elements: a structured EU cooperation; mandatory assessments to evaluate the impact of changes in the information technology systems on cross-border interoperability in the EU; the 'Interoperable Europe Portal' that will be used as a one-stop-shop for solutions and community cooperation; innovation and support measures, including regulatory sandboxes for policy experimentation, GovTech projects, solutions for reuse and training support..

Source

Italy: Statistical survey of the customer experience (cx) on digital services

The Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) launched a centralised system for the statistical survey of the customer experience on digital services provided to citizens by public bodies. The goal is to obtain a clear picture of the quality of the service perceived by the citizen. The service, which started in an experimental phase in September 2022 with the Italian National Institute of Social Security (INPS), the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work (INAIL) and the Municipality of Rome, will see a phase of monitoring and progressive adaptation of the infrastructure and application until June 2023, with the aim of reaching by 2026 the monitoring of at least 300 services of national PA websites and to involve at least 100 entities among Central PA, Regions, Metropolitan Cities and other local public administrations. In place until June 2023, the project will monitor at least 300 services of the sites of the national PA and involve at least 100 entities including central administrations, regions, and metropolitan cities.

Source

Slovakia: New network of regional centres gathering all information about European funds and subsidies

In Slovakia the Ministry of Investments created a network of Regional Centres where applicants for European funds and subsidies can find in one place all the information they might need. The network includes seven Regional Centres which, during the period 2021-2027, will become the main contact point for all entities interested in EU funds, networking, creating partnership and publicity. The network of Regional Centre is expected to make faster and more efficient the use of EU funds and other resources.

Source

Slovakia: the new 'Slovakia on mobile' application

The new the national project 'Slovakia on mobile' application, features a mobile key that simplifies logging into government's services. While the current way of logging in to government's services is safe, it is demanding and complicated for the users, as it requires to have an ID card reader available every time they log in, along with a specific software linked to the ID card reader. The objective of the 'Slovakia on mobile' application is to simplify the users' access to government's services.

Source

Spain: "My citizen folder" phone app

The Government launched the pilot phase of the mobile application 'My Citizen Folder' (*carpeta ciudadana*). This pilot phase represents an update of the current application folder that allows citizens to find out about the status of their files being processed and if there are pending notifications. This version includes a mobile application, a website, and a virtual assistant. This project aligns with the objective of making 50% of digital public services accessible via mobile devices by the end of 2025.

Source

Spain: Digitalisation of local entities

The Ministry of Territorial Policy published the call for subsidies (EUR 154 million) for the digitalisation of local entities (20 to 50 thousand inhabitants). Focus on improving accessibility of digital public services to citizens and businesses; reducing the digital gap; efficiency of public employees; developing new digital services (chatbots, automation, robotization, platforms, others).

Source

Expert Group on Public Administration and Governance

Second Technical Meeting on management of digital transformation

The second technical meeting of the Expert Group on Public Administration and Governance of the European Commission took place on 14 October 2022 in a hybrid format. The meeting, organised by DG REFORM with the active participation of several Commission services (e.g. DG DIGIT, Joint Research Centre, DG CNECT, DG HR) was hosted by the Slovenian authorities in Ljubljana. The meeting focused on managing the digital transition (in the public administration and for the whole society), one of the main challenges that the Member States face nowadays.

The meeting provided a comprehensive overview of all policy initiatives by the co-competent services of the European Commission, as well as an overview of all the tools and mechanisms that the Member States could use for promoting their national digital reforms, including knowledge sharing, opportunities for funding and innovation in the public sector. Moreover, representatives from national authorities agreed on the necessity of treating digital transformation horizontally in national strategies.

Regarding future steps, it was decided that the next High-Level meeting takes place in Brussels in February with view to finalising the work programme for 2023.

Third Technical Meeting on supporting and connecting science with policy-making

The third technical meeting of the Expert Group on Public Administration and Governance of the European Commission took place online on 16 November 2022. The meeting, organised by DG REFORM, brought together representatives of relevant Commission services, including the Joint Research Centre (JRC), the Directorate General for Research and Innovation (DG RTD) and the General Secretariat (SG), as well as Member States' authorities.

The objective of the meeting was to present the Commission Staff Working Document (SWD) on "Supporting and connecting policymaking in the Member States with scientific research" and discuss opportunities and challenges of evidence-informed policymaking in governance and public administration, including case studies across the EU Member States. During the meeting, participants agreed that anticipating challenges in fundamental when it comes to decision-making and that Member States should reflect and share inputs to continue working together on the support in terms of linking policy making and improving scientific advice.

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Spotlight on events

02 DEC

Science as an Instrument to Facilitate Policymaking in the Member States

Organiser: Competitiveness Council of the EU

Date: 2 December 2022

Where: Brussels (BE)

[EU-27 ministers debated how to better use science in policymaking | Knowledge for policy (europa.eu)](#)

07-14 DEC

Brussels Public Innovation Week

Organiser: Civic Hall Brussels, TOKVIL Public Innovation Network and Dreamocracy

Date: 7-14 December 2022

Where: Brussels / online

[Brussels Public Innovation Week](#)

14-15 DEC

OECD Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting

Organiser: OECD

Date: 14-15 December 2022

Where: Gran Canaria (ES), hybrid

[Digital Ministerial (oecd-events.org)](#)

16 DEC

Launch event of the Global report on the protection and promotion of civic space

Organiser: OECD / GOV

Date: 16 December 2022

Where: [online](#)

16-17 JAN

Democratic Public Planning Conference (in Portuguese)

Organiser: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation & Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra

Date: 16-17 January 2023

Where: Lisbon (PT)

[Democratic Public Planning (uc.pt)](#)

08-09 FEB

Meeting of the European Commission Expert group for public administration and governance

Organiser: European Commission

Date: 8-9 February 2023

Where: Brussels (BE)

06-09 FEB

IIAS-SEAPP Doha Conference 2023 on Developmental States and Professionalization of Public Administration and Public Policy

Organiser: UN Public Administration Network (UNPAN)

Date: 6-9 February 2023

Where: Doha (QA), hybrid

[United Nations Public Administration Network](#)

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