Workshop Report:

Second workshop on new EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016 - 2020

Brussels, 5 November 2015

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Preface

Following the success of the first workshop on the new EU eGovernment Action Plan on 1 July 2015, DG Connect organised a second workshop on 5 November 2015 at the Albert Borschette Congress Centre in Brussels.

The aim of this workshop was to collect best practices, ideas and feedback on how to engage with stakeholders online. At the workshop, participants looked at how the European Commission's platform could best help to crowdsource ideas for the next eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020 and how eGovernment communities can contribute to this process.

The discussions at the workshop were structured around:

- the Public consultation of the eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020;
- how to engage citizens online – examples and discussions.

Introduction

Mechthild ROHEN, Head of Unit Connect H3, Public Services

Opening the Workshop, Ms. Rohen noted that in preparation for the eGovernment Action Plan, a number of events and initiatives are being organised involving eGovernment stakeholders, so that the opinions of stakeholders can be taken into account during preparation of the Action Plan. This current workshop is the second in a series around the new eGovernment Action Plan and represents a commitment to engage with stakeholders from the very beginning. This stakeholder engagement is part of the European Commission's vision for an open, collaborative and digital public sector and it wants to lead by example. Setting the scene as regards preparation of the Action Plan, it was noted that the public sector in Europe represents a unique part of the economy and has a key responsibility for delivering citizens' quality of life and is a vital actor in the efficient and effective delivery of public services. The quality of public administration is an important driver of a country's competitiveness and repeated analysis by the Commission during the European Semester exercise has shown that the modernisation of public administration can contribute to tackling economic challenges. The Commission has long recognised eGovernment as a means for public sector modernisation, and public sector modernisation was included in the portfolio of the new Commission for the first time, which indicates that more importance is being given to this area.

The current eGovernment Action Plan was established in 2010 after the Malmö Declaration and has some 40 actions focused on four different political priorities: empowerment of citizens and businesses, mobility in the single market, efficiency and effectiveness of governments and administrations, and pre-conditions for enabling eGovernment. According to its mid-term evaluation, the main achievements of the current Action Plan relate to the development of technological enablers for the use of public services. Progress has also been made in other areas, but more can be done. This Action Plan ends at the end of this year and therefore, preparation of the next Action Plan began with the Member States a year ago. The Digital Single Market (DSM) Communication published by the Commission in May this year also makes a strong reference for a new eGovernment Action Plan, saying that the Commission aims to identify further initiatives needed to modernise public administrations, achieve cross-border interoperability and facilitate easy interaction with citizens and that there will be a new eGovernment Action Plan for 2016-2020. The DSM Communication also indicates four concrete actions that will be important elements of the Plan: making the interconnection of business registers a reality by 2017; launching an initiative with Member States to pilot the 'once-only' principle; extending and integrating European and national portals towards a 'Single Digital Gateway'; and accelerating Member States' transition towards full eProcurement and interoperable eSignatures.

A mid-term review of the current Action Plan was conducted last year, and recommended that the new Action Plan focus on a number of priority areas such as open data, collaborative services, interoperability and re-use of public sector information and also the once-only principle. The evaluation also recommended moving away from a static approach to the Action Plan setting out concrete actions for five years, some of which may become obsolete or have to be revised. The recommendation was to design

an Action Plan which is more flexible and allows for dynamic amendments and extensions, and this is the approach that is currently being adopted. To achieve this, the Action Plan will accommodate two different dimensions to identify and define these actions: one dimension is to implement actions agreed at EU level in order to implement EU legislation or identify where new legislation may be needed (the top-down dimension); and the second dimension is one that enables stakeholders and citizens to suggest actions to be taken by Member States and by the Commission (bottom-up dimension).

Plans are being made for a Communication for the new eGovernment Action Plan and to have this in place in the second quarter of 2016 at the latest. A questionnaire has been developed for an open consultation at this stage in order to get more input from outside. A Roadmap will also be published outlining political priorities, and there will be some important conferences in the future, one organised by the Luxembourg presidency where the Member State representatives are invited by the Luxembourg government. There will also be a second conference in June, organised by the Dutch presidency. It is hoped that the Action Plan will be adopted by then and can be launched at the conference.

Stakeholder engagement is an important element of the new Action Plan, both during the preparatory phase and also during the lifetime of the Action Plan. This will be discussed in more detail later in this workshop. The last workshop was held in July 2015 and collected input for the policy framework of the Action Plan, and the aim of the current workshop is to receive feedback on stakeholder experience regarding online public engagement. A third workshop is planned for December and a large stakeholder event is planned for early next year. Different aspects of the Action Plan and of stakeholder engagement will be discussed at all these events. Discussion at the large stakeholder event will focus on the results of the open consultation. It is also planned to establish a stakeholder engagement platform, which will also be discussed at the workshop. During the second part of the workshop, speakers will present their experience with stakeholder engagement in real practical cases.

The public consultation on the eGovernment Action Plan 2016 – 2020

Jean-François JUNGER, Deputy Head of Unit, DG CNECT H3 Public Services

Introduction

A new approach is being adopted for the preparation of the new eGovernment Action Plan. We are working to ensure that all stakeholders, including citizens, actively participate in the design of the Action Plan. The Digital Single Market (DSM) communication recognised that public administration had made a tremendous effort to modernise itself and to use new technology, but still there is far more that can be done to modernise public administration, to get the internal market to work and to facilitate interaction between citizens and business. This requires a new Action Plan, and the DSM has identified the four actions already mentioned, but the work to be done is not limited to these actions - and the whole point of the Action Plan is to define what the political priorities are and what other actions will be launched now, and in the future based on ongoing consultations. We need to move towards an open government attitude, where data and services and processes are open, facilitating interaction between citizens and public administration and allowing citizens to actively participate in the decision-making process. The online consultation is being conducted because it fits in with this vision. The consultation is also called for under the European Commission's new better regulation rules. It will also make it possible to move away from what has been done in the past - where Member State administrations were consulted, but not businesses and citizens. The online consultation is open to everybody: citizens and businesses should participate as users or beneficiaries of public services, and some businesses or NGOs and civil servants - as providers of public services. The questionnaire has been drafted with these three categories in mind.

Presentation of the online consultation

The online consultation is broken into nine sections:

- Section 1 - General Information
- Section 2 - Lessons learnt from the current eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015
- Section 3 - Factors hampering the use of digital public services
- Section 4 - Improving eGovernment services
- Section 5 - Mobility and cross-border public services in the EU
- Section 6 - Modernising eGovernment services in the EU
- Section 7 - The role of the European Commission
- Section 8 - The 2016 - 2020 eGovernment Action Plan, citizen involvement
- Section 9 - Policy principles.

Section 1 - General Information: The idea behind this section is to profile the person, to try to understand if they are citizens, businesses or civil servants. This section includes information on what their age category is, whether they are urban or rural dwellers, if they conduct cross-border activities. This is very useful for a later

analysis of why they answered the questions in the way that they did. The information provided here will also determine the set of questions asked - if a respondent identifies as a citizen, they will receive questions aimed at citizens, and so on.

Section 2 - Lessons learnt from the current eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015: This section aims to find out how much people know about the ongoing Action Plan. It is anticipated that very little will be known by citizens, that some businesses and NGOs will know about it, administrations at the national level should know and at the local level - they may not know. This section is important, because awareness levels will determine the approach to be taken in the new Action Plan.

Section 3 - Factors hampering the use of digital public services: This section should provide an understanding of why the current use of digital public services is not very high and why people are not using online services in their home country or in other Member States.

Section 4 - Improving eGovernment services: This section seeks to determine what needs to be done to improve the uptake of digital public services and increase trust in public administration. This section asks how users want to interact with public services and how they would like to see things happen at EU level to facilitate cross-border interaction.

Section 5 - Mobility and cross-border public services in the EU: This section specifically addresses the cross-border element. In particular, aims to gain an understanding of what people involved in cross-border activity would like to see, what their expectations are from their own or other administrations, and whether they have faced any difficulties arising from cross-border interaction.

Section 6 - Modernising eGovernment services in the EU: This is a very specific section - where the various actors are asked what should be done in concrete terms to modernise administration in the coming years to make lives easier for citizens and businesses.

Section 7 - The role of the European Commission: This is to determine what the actors want from the Commission. Perhaps they want nothing - or perhaps they want some specific activities. This section has been left completely open (not a multiple-choice question), so respondents can freely express what they expect from the European Commission.

Section 8 - The 2016 - 2020 eGovernment Action Plan, citizen involvement: This goes to the core of the new, consultative approach to the Action Plan. It asks the various actors how they want to be involved in the future of the Action Plan. The vision is to engage, citizens, businesses and administrations in the evolution of the Action Plan, and this section aims to determine how citizens would like to be involved.

Section 9 - Policy principles: This section aims to identify what underlying principles should govern the new Action Plan and be applied to any of the actions that will be implemented. Some possible principles include digital by default, serving everybody without expectation, cross-border implementation, the once-only principle and so on.

The information gathered in the public consultation will be an input, along with the input of the Commission as expressed in the DSM and the wishes of the Member States, which together will make it possible to define what the new Action Plan will be, in particular in terms of scope, in terms of concrete actions to be included, and in terms of governance of the Action Plan.

The Public Consultation can be accessed at: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/eGovernmentSurvey2015. The Consultation is available in 3 languages: English, German and French. The deadline for participation is 22 January 2016. The workshop participants were encouraged to play the role of ambassadors and encourage participation in the online survey.

Discussion

Following the presentation of the Online Consultation, there were some questions from the floor. The first question aimed to determine how it will be possible to establish from the Consultation whether citizens care or not, as participation in surveys of this nature is typically very low. If the results are based only on the citizens that have replied, it will not be representative. Because of the digital divide many citizens will not participate. So, are there any offline ways for people to participate? The question of the three languages was also raised as a potential barrier to a wider response to the consultation. It was also asked whether there is a big communications strategy planned to improve the response rate to the Consultation. In response, it was noted that the Consultation was published on Friday, October 30, and since then there has been active discussion on how to publicise it. The Member States and the European Commission believe that this participatory approach is the way to go and, unless there is extremely high resistance from citizens, this is the way it will be. As regards the languages - the three-language option is the best compromise between effectiveness and costs. However, this is recognised as being an issue and will be the subject of future discussion. A suggestion was made that, by increasing the languages from three to the six main European languages, this would enable 80% of Europe's citizens to respond in their native language.

A question was asked as to whether it would be possible to link the Public Consultation with the online engagement platform, thereby facilitating a dialogue about the Action Plan. In response, it was noted that the engagement process will take part in two stages, the first stage is the online consultation and the second will be the online engagement platform, which will come into play at a later stage, once there is an Action Plan that takes into account the current consultation phase.

A point was made that, in addition to the linguistic barrier to involvement, the type or style of language used could also be a barrier, if terms are used with which citizens are not familiar. It was also suggested that to increase the response rate, it will be important to involve national communities of public servants, as this will have a multiplier effect. Concerning general engagement, it is also important to show cases in order to generate discussion.

The issue of digital literacy was raised, and the question asked as to how the issue of digital literacy will be addressed in the Action Plan, as citizens cannot be expected to use eGovernment services if they are unable to use a computer. Who in the Commission is addressing this issue as part of the DSM strategy? In response it was noted that digital literacy is a fundamental issue. There are ways of addressing this issue via intermediaries, who can act on behalf of other citizens - particularly the elderly. There is an EC unit in Luxembourg that is very active in this area, as is DG Education and Culture. It is an important element for the Action Plan to address this issue and facilitate the lives of citizens, whatever their level of knowledge, their physical ability, or their economic situation. This issue is also covered by a point in the DSM strategy, which addresses the skills of all, and not just in a particular sector. This is why this has not been included in the questionnaire in relation to the public sector only, as it is covered by the more strategic overall action.

It was noted that scalability would drive significant efficiencies in the public sector. However, the suggestion of a public sector cloud in the past was met with significant resistance from the Member States. Within this context, a question was asked about feedback and reactions from the Member States regarding the cross-border elements of the Action Plan. In response, it was noted that on interoperability, the Member States are totally in favour of enabling cross-border services across the EU. As regards the cloud, there will be a Communication on the cloud element that will respond to some of the issues that have been raised. This Communication is currently being prepared and should be ready by the end of the year or early next year.

A question was asked about plans to involve the media in promoting the survey, in addition to engaging with citizens through the use of videos, infographics and so on. In response, it was noted that a press release has already been issued. However, this is a niche item that is not of great interest to the media at large. A series of infographics have been tweeted, explaining what the Action Plan will mean to the man in the street. The Commission has been active in disseminating information about the Action Plan, and the workshop participants were encouraged to contribute to this effort.

A concern was raised about the duplication of efforts between the eGovernment Action Plan and ISA - the programme on Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations. It was noted that the ISA and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) are two financial instruments - they are completely different from the Action plan, which has no money. However, the Action Plan will indeed steer the way the money is invested by the various programmes. That said, the ISA is an independent programme, so it will also finance a lot of things that are not covered by the Action Plan. The same is true for the CEF. DG Connect is actively cooperating with other services in the Commission. The ISA unit is the most frequent cooperation partner. Whenever an Action Plan is defined that has a focus on cross-border digital public services - this is highly relevant for several funding programmes. As a result, ISA funding may be used to fund actions resulting from this consultation or the ongoing stakeholder engagement initiatives.

The point was made that, when developing the Action Plan, there is a need to focus on the culture of the civil servant as well as the culture of the citizen and it was noted that the Action Plan does indeed address practices inside administrations and the way the administrations are working. If they continue to act in silos, this will result in failure, which is why open administration is being pushed, in an effort to improve efficiency, increase transparency and bolster public trust.

It was suggested that both digital and non-digital options be provided for accessing government services, to which the response was given that 'digital by default' does not mean exclusively digital - people will have a choice. However, digital by default means digital first.

A question was then asked about Section 6 of the Consultation - what should be done in concrete terms to modernise public administration. The question related to whether measures should be selected based on the policy in place in the region, and what has already been done, or on what is expected more generally - from the Commission, for example. In response, it was clarified that the question relates to what you want to see, or what should be done at your level. Some actions may not be EU-relevant, whereas some others may have a border applicability. Another question addressed whether there would be a specific part of the Action Plan dealing with SMEs. It was noted that the Action Plan does not specifically address SMEs but there may be activities related to SMEs. The eGovernment Action Plan will not be a specific plan to help SMEs to do business - its aim is to make administration business-friendly - for all business.

A question was asked about whether there are any bridges between traditional eGovernment and the solutions offered by Smart Cities and other smart solutions. In response, it was noted that eGovernment involves the modernisation of public administration at all levels - breaking silos at all levels to enable the emergence of more effective solutions. The Smart City is part of this transformation of the public sector - the transformation of the way administrations think and operate and deliver services.

eGovernment – Engaging citizens online

Andrea HALMOS, DG CNECT H3 Public Services

This section of the workshop reiterated the new approach being taken in terms of stakeholder input towards shaping the eGovernment Action Plan, and aimed to provide a more general overview of the steps for engagement. It is planned to have the Action Plan launched by the second quarter of 2016. The idea is that the Action Plan will define the overall political framework within which concrete actions will be defined. Unlike the previous Action Plan, preparation of the new Action Plan involves stakeholder engagement during the preparatory and later stages. As distinct from the online consultation discussed earlier, this section deals with engagement in the shaping of concrete actions through the online stakeholder engagement platform. The concept of citizen engagement in policy-making and in the area of eGovernment is not new - it has been dealt with in various EC communications and other documents. As regards eGovernment, in terms of ambition and the requirements of the Member States, the Malmö Declaration indicates that there is a clear need for better engagement and participation and being more open about the decision-making process. However, there was no public engagement for the previous Action Plan. After the last Action Plan was launched, there was a citizens' panel, which involved a bottom-up discussion and which resulted in a declaration of what they would like to see in the Action Plan. One of the pillars of the Action Plan focused on user empowerment, and in this Action Plan the aim is to launch the engagement process from the very beginning by co-creating part of the Action Plan. The European Commission would like to lead by example, by applying the principles of innovative, open and collaborative government both in terms of co-creating strategic initiatives and also by using the power of evidence to justify some of the actions and to monitor implementation and better identify how actions are implemented and what impact they could have. In terms of policy-making, there are a lot of different tools that can help identify issues and possible solutions, including co-creating solutions. As regards the Action Plan, the aim is as follows. It should set out a policy framework within which a number of actions will be identified from the beginning. It should be opened up for stakeholders to come forward with ideas that fit in with the overall policy framing - which is about modernising public administration at all levels, ensuring interoperability and the seamless cross-border flow of services and facilitating interaction with public administration. It is necessary to generate new ideas for actions through a stakeholder engagement platform within which ideas for concrete action would be collected. For ideas to result in concrete actions that might be included in the Action Plan, stakeholders will be consulted to modify and improve the ideas. Statistics and data will be used to visualise rationale, discover correlations and justify the proposed actions. It will be really important to be able to identify what kind of action can actually be considered as part of the European-level eGovernment Action Plan to be implemented as something that will have an impact at the larger scale. The four priority actions identified in the DSM strategy are very ambitious, so we need to be able to identify actions that will have an impact and an EU-rationale, and it will be necessary to work together with stakeholders and with Member States and with those who will implement the actions to identify the selection criteria. The actions should be impactful, and should be feasible within the timeframe (by 2020), they should fit in with the political priorities of the Member States and have critical mass. What is clear is that, for stakeholders to remain engaged and to see a point in participating,

the criteria need to be transparent from the beginning to help them understand what kind of actions will make it into the Action Plan. The stakeholder platform should also help monitor and evaluate implementation of actions using KPIs. This should also help with maintaining stakeholder interest - as they will be able to see what has happened to the ideas that were put forward. A mechanism should be put in place for this process to feed back into the policy-making cycle and iteratively improve the whole process and fine-tune actions, making the Action Plan less rigid. It would also be a good idea to have the opportunity to discuss and debate on various issues within the policy priority areas as part of a community management process.

Futurium: The online engagement platform

Franco ACCORDINO, DG CNECT R3.

As the concrete tool for stakeholder engagement, the purpose of the Futurium online engagement platform is to enable citizens to co-create ideas and share evidence in order to feed the public policy debate. In general, the platform is a type of social network and combines the function of a wiki, an ideation tool and a foresight platform. From the outset, the idea was to combine evidence with participation. The initial requirements from Futurium were to feed the reflections linked to the change of political context in spring 2014 as an input to the new College. It is open to participation by all and is consultative rather than deliberative. Another important aim was to combine aspirations with evidence, which means that the desire is to understand the aspirations of people and at the same time combine this with scientific evidence. Initially this was done internally and after this initial stage, when the requirements were understood, discussion began in the Agora with everybody - with students, scientists, policy-makers and so on. This process took about one and a half years and was conducted both online and in person. This engagement and co-creation phase was followed by a period of sense-making, during which all the thousands of comments and posts were processed and summarised and embedded in briefings that were prepared for the new College. In summary, the following outcomes were generated. On the content side there were what are called 'futures' which are special posts (visions or long-lasting trends), of which there were 210 co-created by different people. There were 1800 evidence items in a library that was used to support the ideas. These were summarised into 11 themes, which were very future-oriented, so not very relevant for current policy, but providing a vision of how things might unfold 20-30 years from now. On the people side, there was a lot of effort put into events and engaging with everybody - from students to scientists. In total there were 3500 participants in more than 120 events. In the end, the platform has 1900 members with a participation rate of under 15%, which is quite low - but in line with other similar platforms. As a bi-product of this, we had a software deliverable which was not initially planned. Before launching the platform, there was an exercise of modelling the platform using the basic principle of process and data modelling. When this exercise was completed, there was discussion about whether this tool could be used at the corporate level and it was agreed that there could be an ISA action to generalise the process and the data model, consolidate the platform's core and advanced features, and make it available to anyone via the ISA's Joinup. In the end it was planned that by March next year there would be three deliverables: a Drupal distribution and/or module, a technical manual and a user manual. The first generalisation step was the generalisation of the policy-making process. This was followed by the generalising of the data model. These two generalised levels were then translated into a more architectural level for the platform, in which the idea is to develop two components - the engagement tool, and the data analytics tool, required for making summaries. The idea is to have specific functionalities that are important for engagement, such as subscription, messaging and events - similar to a social network. Then there are other features such as data analytics, text processing tools (fact finding, keyword extraction, etc.) and so on.

It is planned to have a first release of the platform in March 2016, and then a second one in June and there is currently an idea of having, together with DG DIGIT, another wave to improve the data analytics part. What is happening at the moment is that we have a core tool (a common IT platform) that supports multiple real platforms. This makes it possible to avoid duplication/mushrooming of platforms and to share features, best practices and lessons learnt. It is also customisable (with some limitations) and scalable. There are a number

of lessons to be learnt from this exercise. The platform is secondary, more important are the lessons learnt on the stakeholder engagement process. The most important lesson learnt is that it is necessary to define an engagement strategy first - it is important to be clear on the targets and to set expectations regarding 'going viral'. It is also important to combine the online process with in-person conversations, to "go local", engage everybody and organise thematic events/webinars. It is important to be focused and to start simpler and gradually become more complex, if necessary. The rules of the game should be clear, and roles defined for community managers, content curators and so on. It is important to work with people, value their creativity, set incentives and reward contributors. Finally, feedback will be a key factor.

The challenge is not to develop a toolbox, but to design a possibly viral engagement process with a number of variables: political, communication- and engagement-related, cultural, content-based and technical. This is a long-term process. The technical solution should be there to serve political and business needs, and not the other way around.

Discussion

A question was asked from the floor about the level of satisfaction with the performance of the platform and whether it might be possible to cooperate with the national authorities on technical aspects and co-create a European platform that encompasses all 28 Member States. In response, it was felt that an entry-level platform is better than starting with a gigantic project. If the project is too big initially, it runs the risk of becoming unwieldly.

Another question addressed the possibility of creating a dialogue with some Member States about using the platform together, as it is a very promising tool with potential to become a European tool for policy-making. In response, it was stressed that the tool is essentially of secondary importance - it is the model that is important. For the tool, there is the ISA project, which welcomes collaboration and user take-up by Member States and local authorities, etc. If the wider community takes it up then this is all well and good.

There followed a more general question about the new Action Plan - specifically whether there will be a link between the new Action Plan and the Open Government Partnership. In response it was noted that when you look into the OGP details and their aims, and compare that with what is in the DG Connect vision paper on the future of public services, it can be seen that what is in the vision paper goes beyond what the OGP is aiming at, because the OGP looks into open data mainly, and looks into transparency. But what is missing in this context for the moment is how you can make use of the availability of open data and co-create new services and use the economic impact that this can have. Open government is more than open data only, and also includes open processes and open services.

A question was then asked regarding the mobile aspect of the platform, in response to which it was noted that the platform's design is responsive, as all the Commission sites are now responsive. However, there is no app, but this could be a possible future development.

As regards future possible add-ins to the data, it was asked how easy it would be for developers to create a new add-in. In response it was noted that there is currently a stream of data coming from the real world, which, once it is there, it is accessible by via a library of evidence islands and decisions are generated based on an algorithm. But the challenge is to combine the tool with the sentiment, so even if the algorithm suggests one course of action, other variables are considered before a decision is taken.

Case studies

The collaborative budget initiative

Charlotte LAMPRE, City of Paris

This section began with a presentation of the online platform "Madame la maire, j'ai une idée" (Madam Mayor, I have an idea). This platform was created with a specific aim - to have an easy and open platform for consultation, to allow citizens to submit their ideas with easy access to an online moderator. There have been six campaigns running on the platform, the Paris participatory budget was the first and the main one. There is currently one campaign, Faites Vos Jeux, dedicated to the Olympic Games 2024.

Citizens, individuals or collective groups, can propose projects on the online platform. They should provide a project name and state where it is located and also indicate whether they are an individual or a collective organisation. They should also state the aims of the project and provide a project description. People can also comment, suggest modifications and enrich projects.

Participatory budgeting in Paris is a democratic process based on a year-long schedule with 4 main stages: generating and collecting projects; feasibility studies and cost evaluation; voting by Parisian citizens; and finally - project implementation. Participatory projects are not new for Paris - there have already been lots of tools to enable participation and citizen involvement. With the election of the new Mayor Anne Hidalgo there has been a new push given to the process of empowering Parisians and including them in decision-making.

In total, the participatory budget has been allocated 5% of the city's investment budget, which comes to almost 500 million euros in 2014-2020. The Parisian participatory budget is actually 21 budgets - one for each of the 20 districts of Paris and one for the city as a whole. There are three criteria for participatory budget projects. They should involve discretionary funds, not functioning budget, invested in public spaces or municipal facilities. The project should fall within the city's purview and be of general interest to Parisians.

Incentive tools for participation include infographics that inform people about the costs of various items - from a tree to a lamppost to a park. Online information is also made available. An "Agora" is organised to present all projects submitted. Information and a participative kit are used to promote projects. There is an online vote, but also the possibility to vote at more than 120 physical ballot boxes in Paris, in addition to mobile ballot boxes. A 'University of active citizen program' is an important element - this is a series of training sessions organised by the city of Paris that are free and open to everyone.

Feedback from the last two participatory budget campaigns shows that participation has been high. There were around 40,000 voters in 2014 and 67,000 voters in 2015. This represents 3% of the Paris population: 60% voted online and 40% voted at physical ballot boxes. Some citizens experienced some difficulties in choosing from among the 77 Parisian projects and 547 districts ones. Among the 5,115 submitted proposals there were lots of ideas, but not enough projects, so sometimes it was difficult to figure out what specifically the people wanted. Another problem encountered was the fact that the process was too individualized and there was a lack of collective stakeholders: 2/3 of the projects were individual (1/3 was collective). A majority of the projects concern public spaces: 25% dealt with the living environment, 15% with the environment, and 13% with transportation and mobility.

There are five main challenges in the coming years. The first will be to strengthen pedagogy to improve project quality - a learning and assistance kit should be provided for citizens and district steering communities should be set up. There is also a need for more precision in the response to proposals that are not selected and a citizen survey to collect user feedback. The participatory budget will move to a single website next year, which will mean that all the stages of the participatory budget will be gathered on one site.

The second challenge will be to open the participatory budget to other populations and a larger variety of topics. Also included in this challenge is ensuring a diversity of themes promoted by citizens, to encourage participation by foreigners residing in Paris and by children and to focus more on underprivileged districts.

Third in the list of challenges will be to implement a new scheduled process which gives time for co-construction. This will involve a shorter consultation stage, a streamlining process for the submission of projects and a stage dedicated to co-construction.

The fourth challenge will be to improve co-construction, with fewer projects submitted for vote, increased professional training for public servants, and the development of digital and face to face meetings. Finally, the fifth challenge will be to implement the selected projects and to communicate on concrete results.

A question was asked about how to guarantee that people do not vote twice. In response it was noted that, while the voting process is not policed like in an election, in each ballot box you need to provide your name and address, which reduces the likelihood that people will vote twice. Online this is not the case, and people may vote multiple times, so there needs to be an element of trust.

Digital democracy

Elisa LIRONI, European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)

This presentation examined what future there might be for eParticipation in the EU. First of all, what does digital democracy mean? Digital democracy refers to the use of ICT in order to support democratic decision-making and enhance democratic processes and institutions. In digital democracy there are three perspectives. The two actors are the government and citizens. The first perspective on digital democracy is the bureaucratic perspective, which is basically the use of ICT in order to improve the delivery of services and the management of information. This is part of the eGovernment Action Plan as well. The second perspective is the transparency perspective, which involves the use of ICT to strengthen the openness of government. The third perspective is of particular relevance to the current workshop: participation. eParticipation involves the use of ICT by citizens in order to let their preference be known to the government and, in the best case scenario, to co-decide along with the government. This is what is currently missing from the eGovernment Action Plan - there is too little stress on eParticipation. Digital democracy is nothing new - it is simply democracy through a new medium - the Internet. The Internet has the potential to make democracy more widespread and more efficient. Digital democracy should not replace representative democracy; it should simply add elements of direct democracy to the existing system.

When we speak about digital democracy nowadays, a lot of people talk about crowdsourcing. This is also nothing new; it is simply a collaborative approach to problem solving. A case study presented during this

presentation involved the Open Ministry in Finland. Finland is one of the most digitised countries in Europe and, in light of this the Finnish Parliament adopted the New Citizens' Initiative Act which allows citizens to make a legislative proposal or legislative amendment. If they gather 50,000 signatures in six months then this proposal will be discussed in Parliament. This experiment in crowdsourcing has been a great success. Civil society has pushed for a centralised platform, called the Open Ministry Platform, which is a digital platform where citizens can make their proposal and collect the required signatures. Even more ground-breaking is the fact that, at a certain point, parliament decided to appeal to citizens through this platform to help them with what is called the 'Off-Road Traffic Act.' This Act is meant to regulate roads that are not regulated - for example snow roads in winter. The Ministry of the Environment asked citizens for ideas. In the first stage parliament asked for concrete examples of problems that people encountered when using these off-roads. In the second phase, parliament went back the citizens and asked for their ideas on how to resolve these problems. Finally, in the third phase there was a parliamentary evaluation and a legislative process and the fourth phase, which is currently underway, involves the passing of a legislative act. This is just one example of eParticipation at national level.

The Finnish experience showed that citizens are very willing to participate when they are asked for help. Another beneficial consequence is that this process teaches citizens about the law-making process. A third benefit is the fact that extreme opinions are neutralised during the course of constructive dialogue. At EU level, the current instruments of eParticipation are petitions to the European Parliament, the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) and the consultation processes carried out by the European Commission. There are ways in which these instruments could be improved. In the future of eParticipation at EU level we see two things, one of which is the revision of existing tools. There are little changes that could be made in the consultation processes of the European Commission which could already help. For example, the Your Voice in Europe Platform simply links to other DGs - an easy improvement would be to harmonise everything on one platform, without having to link to the other DGs. Another thing is that it is unclear to citizens how the input received in consultations is then integrated into legislation. It is hard to find information on participation levels and so on after the consultation has closed. There was a proposal in May 2015 to enable stakeholders to express their views on the entire lifecycle of a policy by providing additional feedback after the consultation had been closed. However, what ECAS is concentrating on is crowdsourcing at EU level. A number of things need to be done to organise crowdsourcing at EU level. First of all it is necessary to identify a suitable policy area. The wisdom of the crowd cannot be applied to issues that are too technical. It is also important to ensure multilingualism - there are 28 Member States and it is impossible to have maximum citizen involvement without translation. Unfortunately, technology, although improving, is not yet at a sufficiently high level to provide this. Thirdly, the involvement of citizens online through a deliberative-collaborative process needs to be ensured. It is also necessary to ensure the commitment of policy-makers. Finally, the EU policy process should be simplified.

The European Union is a sui generis mechanism, so proposals are made at Commission level because the Commission has legislative powers. In national cases it is parliament that has this initiative. So the question is whether crowdsourcing should be directed towards the Commission or if digital democracy should be about citizens trying to influence, for example, their MEPs. Would bypassing MEPs and going straight to the Commission strengthen or weaken the democratic process?

A question was asked from the floor about, when a consultation is being organised by the Commission, what is the checklist before the results are published to be as sure as possible that the consultation is a representative

one. In response, it was noted that in a consultation there are X number of replies but there is no identification mechanism, which means that people can express their opinion 20 times, if they want to. On the other hand, it has the advantage that you can answer as a citizen or as a professional actor, whatever your profession is. This provides input for thinking, but it will still be the Member States and the Commission at the end that decides what the Action Plan will contain. But one of the big questions of the public consultation is that if you get 1,000 or even 10,000 answers, does this represent half a billion citizens? Clearly, the answer is no. But it is an interesting input, and the higher the number the more interesting it is.

The same question was addressed to the ECAS representative. In response, the Finnish example was again cited. In the first mapping, when the problems were identified, there were 340 ideas, 2600 comments and 19,000 votes. This is considered to be a successful crowdsourcing experience, but it is clear that 19,000 people do not represent the entire population of Finland. The suggestion was made that the rules of statistics be applied to open consultations, so that they are statistically representative.

Policy debate across languages

Daniel VAN LERBERGHE Euractiv

This presentation dealt with stakeholder and citizen engagement in the European context. There is a tendency to look at citizens as a single mass - but they all fall into different groups, with different interests and different needs. As such, citizens are not engaged directly, especially in the European context, there are stakeholders who act as intermediaries, bodies that represent the interests of the citizens. These bodies have a significant contribution to make, especially for a high-level topic like eGovernment, and act as a sort of bridge between the citizen and the policy-maker.

It is important to look at the representative democracy ecosystem and at the different actors involved. One of these actors is the elected decision-maker, who also contributes to the debate and should not be excluded from the consultation. Then there are the civil servants, the public administration, and finally there are active citizens and stakeholders. There are various ways of engaging with stakeholders. Local eParticipation has been very successful, because people are engaging on issues that are close to them. Engagement on European issues is more problematic, because in the minds of citizens it is more remote. This is where stakeholders as intermediaries come into play - there are more than 500,000 stakeholders in the EU. These can be regional or city representatives, for example. In Brussels there are about 300,000 people involved in policy-shaping and there are about 200,000-250,000 active in other EU capitals. These have a multiplying effect - empowering and partnering with national and local stakeholders. These convey the message in the language of the citizens. The languages of the big six (UK, France, Germany, Poland Italy and Spain) reach 80% of EU citizens in their national languages. It is also important to understand the difference between cross-lingual and multilingual - for example the French are not interested in the same topics and issues as the Estonians, so it is necessary to target engagement accordingly.

The multi-channel aspect is also very important - engagement with citizens both online and offline, using their preferred channels and devices. It is also necessary to know your social media and combine the tools on offer.

It is necessary to engage with people using their preferred device and their preferred social media tool. Facebook reaches private individuals, LinkedIn – the business community, and so. It is necessary to

generate critical mass by using multipliers. It is also necessary to use one simple message at a time, and to use infographics, video – all the tools at your disposal to engage. There are also specific media that can be used. Engagement campaigns should be co-designed and co-created with the people that are targeted. One tool that is currently popular is the hackathon and these can be used to create a campaign. Some examples of best practice include OurSpace, the EU Community and My Neighbourhood.

Discussion on how to engage citizens online in the development of the new eGovernment Action Plan

The final discussion took place around two questions:

Q. 1 What are the dos and don'ts?
Q. 2 How to make the platform a success, to engage participants on an EU-level topic?

The meeting participants were broken into four groups to discuss these questions and then provide feedback from these breakout discussions.

Group 1. Q. 1

Try to mix offline and online tools. Use various channels to raise awareness. TV was one channel that was discussed as having potential. Involve all kinds of multipliers. It is also important to use simple language and a clear process so that people do not get discouraged. Try to use tools that bring people with a particular problem together with people that offer solutions, and see if this solution can be replicated in other contexts. It might also be an idea to create working groups around each project idea or idea for action that will work to co-create solutions. It might also be possible to have two ways of submitting ideas – one is the Finnish model, where lots of ideas are submitted, followed by some sort of sense-making exercise, grouping them into clusters. A dedicated expert group could create an implementable action based on these ideas. Success stories should be highlighted, showing what the previous Action Plan has achieved. The discussion participants warned that silos should be avoided.

Group 1. Q. 2

Here again awareness-raising was a central topic. The role of multipliers was again emphasised: not just civil society, but also universities, administrations and MEPs, who can represent people's concerns. Commission faces going local could also help raise awareness. Any communication and marketing campaign should show what's in it for the citizen. Another idea was to create an exchange programme for civil servants, allowing them to exchange experience. We should also think about digital municipality champions, who have done something successful that can be replicated in other Member States.

Group 2. Q. 1

Use only one tool, where everything is visible and transparent. Continuous strong political support is needed throughout the process. It is also necessary to ensure a continuous dialogue throughout the process, it is not just a question of gathering and processing ideas. The dialogue should be moderated – this can be done electronically or by a moderator. The collection of unnecessary data should be avoided and data should be useful and as simple as possible. Face-to-face events should be organised – these can be organised digitally, through Skype and so on. These should involve the three main stakeholders – policy-makers, civil servants and citizens. A back office will also be required to process the information received. This should be staffed by people who can explain issues to the public. The platform should be made visible to citizens, through branding. The dialogue should be human rather than anonymous and remote.

Group 2. Q. 2

Increase the number of languages as much as possible –by using auto-translate software if necessary, even if

this is imperfect. Use incentives to attract people to the platform. Use simple language, rather than EU jargon to help create a citizen-friendly platform. Use active social media champions. Clearly show the added value offered by the Action Plan – the link between the Action Plan and the citizen. Leverage local success at EU level. Be transparent about the rules of the game. Use responsive design to allow citizens to use their preferred device. Ensure follow up work and reporting. Use branding and logos to increase awareness.

Group 3. Q. 1.

Go as close as possible to the citizens. To achieve this, the EU should work with local governments to promote the survey, the Futurium and the platform. Simplify the language used as much as possible. Use existing platforms to approach citizens. Ensure ongoing participation allowing citizens to have a continuous say. Make participation fun and interesting. Offer incentives – monetary or other. Focus on big groups – rather than small fragmented groups. Co-promote at physical events and with other online consultations. Organise offline discussions also. Include a sharing tool on the consultation, so people can share with friends when they have completed the consultation.

Group 3. Q. 2

One suggestion was to think about the right security level – can it be made completely open? Create a link with political hot topics, when appropriate. The possibility of having a participatory budget at EU level was also discussed. The possibility was also discussed of linking other EU-funded tools to the platform. Create a 'Share on Futurium' icon to be embedded on the Europe site. Brand Futurium as the engagement tool of the EU. Open Futurium to developers, allowing them to add tools. Link Futurium to physical events. Streamline the participatory channels that exist in the EU. Link the platform to civil society multipliers and enter the transparency register.

Group 4. Q. 1

Control expectations from the platform, so that users are not disappointed. Moderation of the platform is necessary, but this should be constructive and encourage people to develop ideas. Different threads should be moderated into individual thematic threads. Make the platform accessible, allowing everybody to feel at home and express ideas. A dialogue mechanism should be anticipated, to develop ideas. The subsidiarity principle should be respected, but at the same time the platform should be seen as an aggregator of the different issues where not only high-level EU issues are addressed, but also issues of regional or local importance. If the platform deals with high-level EU issues only, then engagement might be low. The language issue also needs to be addressed.

Group 4. Q. 2

There is a need to recognise that people may come to the platform with different interests – some might come because they have an idea, while others might be willing to work on existing ideas. The vast majority may just we willing to vote on ideas. One way to attract people may be to have an award / reward system, with an award ceremony for the best ideas. In order to maintain interest in the platform, a feedback system should be set up, so that people know that their ideas are being listened to. The platform should be open to all kind of issues – from top-level to local. These issues can then be directed to the correct channel to deal with them. People often do not know who approach to resolve their particular problem – the platform can also have an added value in this regard.

Closing remarks

Jean-François JUNGER, Deputy Head of Unit, DG CNECT H3 Public Services

In conclusion, Mr. Junger thanked the participants noted that there were some commonalities between the discussions, some of which went beyond the content of the presentation. He said that all the workshop presentations are online and can be shared. He then proceeded to outline the next steps to be taken. The next eGovernment workshop is planned for 15 December, 2015. One of the main purposes of this meeting will be to present the platform. We have already seen what Futurium has in terms of capacity, now the idea is to present what it involves in reality. This will be a more hands-on activity, where participants can see the functionalities and provide feedback. This will be on the first phase of the platform. The next steps (back office, etc.) will be dealt with at a later date. In February there will be a large stakeholder event, where the results of the online consultation will be presented, along with the conclusion on the three workshops. This will not be a Communication (the Communication will be presented in May) but it will present everything that is currently on the table, allowing people to have a clear understanding of what will be behind the Communication and how the comments of stakeholders have been taken on board.

Annex I: Agenda

Workshop towards a new dynamic eGovernment Action Plan

Online public engagement

Date: Thursday, 5 November 2015

Location: 36 Albert Borschette, salle AB 3C

DRAFT AGENDA

09:45- 10:00	**Welcome/Registration**	
10:00- 10:15	**Opening**	Mechthild ROHEN
		Head of Unit Connect H3, Public Services
10:15- 11:30	**The public consultation on the eGovernment Action Plan 2016 – 2020**	
10:15- 10:30	• Introduction	Jean-François JUNGER, Deputy Head of Unit, DG CNECT H3 Public Services
10:30- 11:00	• Presentation of the online consultation	Jean-François JUNGER, Deputy Head of Unit, DG CNECT H3 Public Services
11:00- 11:30	• Discussion on the public consultation	All participants
11:30- 16:00	**eGovernment – Engaging citizens online**	
	• Introduction	Andrea HALMOS, DG CNECT H3 Public Services
	• The Futurium: state of play and lesson learnt	Franco ACCORDINO, DG CNECT R3, Support Systems & Tools
12:15- 13:15	*Lunch*	
13:15- 14:15	Case studies	
	• The Collaborative budget initiative	Charlotte LAMPRE, City of Paris
	• Digital Democracy	Elisa LIRONI, European Citizen Action Service (ECAS)
	• Policy debate across languages	Daniel VAN LERBERGHE Euractiv
14:15- 15:45	Discussion on how to engage citizens online in the development of the new eGovernment Action Plan	All participants
15:45- 16:00	**Closing remarks**	Jean-François JUNGER, Deputy Head of Unit, DG CNECT H3 Public Services