Conclusions Conference Digital and Open Government

On June 2nd and 3rd 2016 the conference '**Digital Open Government: next step to maturity'**, organised by the Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the EU, took place in Amsterdam.

More than 200 digital government decision makers and senior policy makers from28 European countries discussed common strategic issues connected to further digitalisation and transformation of governments, with the purpose of improved government performance, better services for citizens and good governance.
The conference provided an inspirational setting in which the participants actively shared their experiences and formed new cooperations on joint questions regarding the next step to maturity.

The conference observed that:
- irreversible steps towards digital government have been set, which is demonstrated by new eGovernment benchmark data;
- Progress has been made in the last years. However for full implementation of the digital and open government further steps need to be set;
- the stage of maturity in digital government differs within the European Union and associated countries;
- ongoing developments in the information society with new technologies and ever-growing expectations from society, challenge governments to deliver more public value in terms of better services with less administrative burdens, more involvement of citizens, increasing transparency, and efficient and effective use of tax payers' money;
- the digital single market objectives create new economic value and pose additional cross-border interoperability requirements to the systems in the Member States;
- governments in Europe have their country specific arrangements, in order to shape best the relationship with the citizens and the businesses; these arrangements should be respected. There is also a need for a joint approach and further cooperation in the light of the digital single market, and a need for shared principles and interoperability solutions connected to this cooperation.

The conference discussed elements of a joint approach as next steps to maturity of the digital government
- a new relationship between governments and citizens/businesses is developing:
- increasingly digital by default, realising at the same time that not all services are suitable for digital service, and that not all citizens know how to use the digital services, while they not can be excluded from public services;

- increasingly open by default, which means unlocking public information, e.g. to increase accountability and better involvement of citizens in government (policy) processes and co-creation. Openness by default can strengthen participation, empowerment and trust in governments, but with due attention for the risks, as openness can be conditioned for privacy, commercial or security reasons;

- more user centred and user driven; public services (including platforms, authentication) should be developed from the logic of the user experience. Digital government services should be convenient and accessible and users should not be faced with cumbersome processes.

The conference is in favour of an approach to

- <u>better (re)use of available data</u>, both where it comes to re-use of public data within in the governments, and to re-use of open government data by society , and use of data in the public domain . Common conditions and shared principles are needed to facilitate cross border application of the reuse.

- <u>implement 'once only'</u> as a useful principle which supports administrative burden reduction given that data protection rules are respected. Focus should be on relevant use cases. And conditional for re-use of data is the quality of the data, including clarity about the meaning of data. Common quality criteria are needed to facilitate cross border reuse.

- The focus of open data policies is moving from supply to demand. Important aspect for this movement is to show the value and possibilities.

- <u>a data driven government</u> should explore further possibilities to analyse new sources of data, both public and private, for the sake of better policy making and to support new cooperation arrangements. New checks and balances are needed for the sake of the information position of citizens.

The conference underlines the importance that

- <u>users have trust in the digital government services which should be easy to use and secure.</u> Emphasis is needed on how to increase trust.

- governments must have clarity about the identity of persons, in order to act lawfully.

- citizens and business must be able to trust the digital services, in particular the digital access to the services, and how governments use their data in accordance with standards of privacy and security.

- checks and balances are needed to position citizens in relation with the digital government. Providing digital access to the citizen's own personal data is one of these checks in order to gain mutual transparency. In addition new concepts of personal data management, where citizens are more in control should be further explored and experienced.

- <u>cooperation within the EU and associated countries is needed</u> in order to tackle the existing barriers, both domestic and cross border, for setting significant next steps to further a higher level of maturity of the digital government.
- to seek to a joint approach in which principles are shared and elaborated, with due respect for the country specific situation, in order to have a user-centric approach to the delivery of public services, also in cross border setting.
- to organise interoperability between countries and domains where needed, while using open standards and specifications

The conference welcomes

- the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020, considered as a meaningful instrument for this endeavour. This Action Plan strengthens cooperation through active participation in the supporting EU programmes including ISA2 and CEF, that will help realising the ambitions of the EU Member States and improving cross border digital public services.
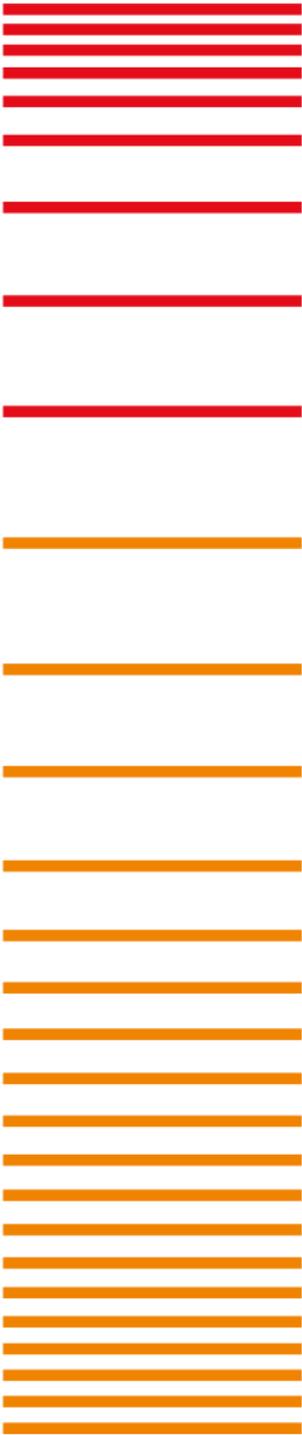
The conference underlines as important next steps:

- ambitious goals should be set by Member States, Commission and associated countries to set the next step to maturity for digital government and to cooperate both domestic and cross border to fully exploit the potential.
- About adopting a digital by default, and open by default approach with sincere attention for risks, like exclusion, privacy and security. In that endeavour a more user centred and user driven agile approach by government is expected, with active involvement of users.
- About reuse of data, allowing administrations to use information for different public tasks, where relevant with due respect to data protection rules; opening up public data for commercial and democratic values, with increasing attention for the demand for these data; developing an increasingly data driven policy with due attention for concerns of citizens information positions, which should be more reciprocal.
- About trust in digital government, by organising secure and convenient access, putting necessary yet proportional security measures in place and putting in practice arrangements so that citizens can better control the data government holds on them.
- Further coordination is needed on the shared principles, and the way they are elaborated.
- In addition to domestic interoperability, cross border interoperability should be strengthened, starting with high value use cases.
- An innovation culture should be further encouraged, allowing more room for experiments and an agile approach with strong involvement of users and development communities, that should not be hindered by too strict procurement rules.