

Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	2011/2178(INI)	Procedure completed
Competitive digital single market - eGovernment as a spearhead		
Subject		
2.40.02 Public services, of general interest, universal service		
3.30.06 Information and communication technologies, digital technologies		
3.30.25 International information networks and society, internet		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		31/05/2011
		S&D ICĂU Silvia-Adriana	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		PPE TSOUKALAS Ioannis A.	
		ALDE ROHDE Jens	
		Verts/ALE ANDERSDOTTER Amelia	
		ECR SZYMAŃSKI Konrad	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
ENVI Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
IMCO Internal Market and Consumer Protection		05/09/2011	
	S&D PITTELLA Gianni		
REGI Regional Development	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
CULT Culture and Education		24/01/2011	
	ALDE SCHAAKE Marietje		
JURI Legal Affairs		11/10/2011	
	PPE CAVADA Jean-Marie		
LIBE Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.		
European Commission	Commission DG Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union	Commissioner KROES Neelie	

Key events

15/12/2010	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2010)0743	Summary
15/09/2011	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/03/2012	Vote in committee		
04/04/2012	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0083/2012	
19/04/2012	Debate in Parliament		
20/04/2012	Results of vote in Parliament		
20/04/2012	Decision by Parliament	T7-0140/2012	Summary
20/04/2012	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2011/2178(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/7/06158

Documentation gateway

Document attached to the procedure		COM(2010)0712	02/12/2010	EC	Summary
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2010)0743	15/12/2010	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		COM(2010)0744	16/12/2010	EC	Summary
Committee opinion	CULT	PE472.190	18/11/2011	EP	
Committee opinion	IMCO	PE473.731	22/11/2011	EP	
Committee draft report		PE478.465	18/01/2012	EP	
Committee opinion	JURI	PE475.878	26/01/2012	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE483.488	16/02/2012	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0083/2012	04/04/2012	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0140/2012	20/04/2012	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2012)487	19/09/2012	EC	

Competitive digital single market - eGovernment as a spearhead

PURPOSE: Communication and Action Plan on reaping the benefits of electronic invoicing for Europe.

CONTENT: the Commission wants to see e-invoicing become the predominant method of invoicing by 2020 in Europe, and it is committed to working in close cooperation with Member States and all other stakeholders who will need to play their part to achieve this target and create the right environment for the widespread deployment of e-invoicing. The Communication notes that electronic invoicing (e-invoicing) is part of

the Commission's flagship initiative [A Digital Agenda for Europe](#) which calls for removal of the regulatory and technical barriers that prevent mass adoption of e-invoicing.

To the detriment of consumers and enterprises alike, the existing rules that govern e-invoicing in Europe are still fragmented along national lines and most of the potential of e-invoicing is still untapped. Exchanging e-invoices is still too complex and costly, in particular for SMEs. While 42 % of large enterprises say they receive or send e-invoices, adoption rate among SMEs remain at a lower level (22 %). As a result the average market penetration of e-invoicing remains rather low in Europe and is currently estimated at around 5 % of all invoices annually exchanged for Business to Business relations.

The mass adoption of e-invoicing within the EU would lead to significant benefits:

- it is estimated that moving from paper to e-invoices will generate savings of around EUR 240 billion over a six-year period;
- due to the close link between invoicing and payment processes, the creation of the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA) offers a launch pad for interoperable European e-invoicing schemes;
- the environmental benefits of e-invoicing in terms of reducing paper consumption and energy costs for transportation are also significant, generating carbon savings which could amount to reductions in CO2 emissions of 1 million tonnes per annum for the EU.

Key priorities to promote e-invoicing within the EU: the Commission proposes to support the mass uptake of e-invoicing by focusing on the following four key priorities.

Ensure a consistent legal environment for e-invoicing: as of 1 January 2013, new VAT rules on e-invoicing provided for by Council Directive 2010/45/EU will require Member States to adhere to the principle of equal treatment between paper and e-invoices. Member States will no longer be allowed to add specific requirements such as insisting that e-invoices be based on advanced electronic signatures or EDI. Instead these technological choices will become options which can still be used, as can business controls, by businesses to guarantee the 'authenticity of the origin' and the 'integrity of the content' of e-invoices.

Any differences in the interpretation and subsequent transposition of the rules by Member States could present practical difficulties for the use of e-invoices. This could increase burdens and compliance costs on business, thereby restricting the uptake of e-invoicing. Therefore, the Commission will work closely with the Member States to ensure a common understanding of the new e-invoicing rules to help achieve a consistent and coherent transposition of the Directive 2010/45/EU.

The Commission proposes several action, amongst which:

- an external study is looking at alternative VAT collection methods including the role of e-invoicing. The Commission will present these findings and publish before the end of 2010 a [Green Paper on the future of VAT](#) to stimulate debate on issues such as how the new developments in IT technologies could facilitate VAT collection;
- it will propose in 2011 a revision of the Directive 1999/93/EC on e-signatures with a view to providing a legal framework for cross-border recognition

and interoperability of secure e-authentication systems.

Achieve mass market adoption by reaching SMEs: the objective of fostering the uptake of e-invoicing in the EU cannot be achieved without SMEs which represent more than 99 % of European businesses. While many large enterprises already use e-invoices, the adoption level by SMEs remains relatively low.

The Commission proposes to:

- assess the effect of any future technical and legal requirements for e-invoicing on SMEs by applying the 'Think Small First' principle and the 'SME test' and expects Member States and standardisation organisations to do the same;
- organise awareness-raising activities to inform SMEs about the potential of e-invoicing;
- expand initiatives that promote the participation of SMEs in digital supply chains. In 2011, two new actions will be launched in the framework of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP).

Stimulate an environment that creates maximum reach: the following actions are required to ensure that over time, trading parties can connect and create an EU or even wider network delivering mass adoption of e-invoicing:

- CEN should develop by end of 2011, a Code of Practice to be adopted by trading parties, services providers and public authorities, which should include a consistent terminology and a definition of roles and responsibilities of the distinct actors within the e-invoicing process;
- CEN should analyse by end of 2011 the need and propose actions for the adoption of interoperable addressing and routing procedures by the e-invoicing industry participants.

Promote an e-invoice standard data model: one of the key challenges for e-invoicing deployment is to define a single and clear semantic data model describing the information elements required for e-invoices. One common data model will facilitate semantic interoperability and ensure technology neutrality.

- In 2011, CEN will design implementation guidelines for the CII v.2 data model. These guidelines should be based on the core invoice data set proposed by the Expert Group on e-invoicing and take into account the ISO 20022 Invoice message, the work of the CEN e-Invoicing, BII and EBES workshops, and other initiatives such as the PEPPOL project. Depending on market demand, the development of further guidelines covering other domains/business processes should be envisaged.
- CEN will work with international standards organisations, such as UN/CEFACT and ISO, and communicate specific requirements for further development of the CII data model.
- UN/CEFACT is invited to pursue the fast development of e-business messages that are complementary to the e-invoice, and will improve the ability of businesses, trade and administrative organisations to exchange products and relevant services effectively.

Member States should put in place national multi-stakeholder e-invoicing fora by June 2011, which should ensure a balanced representation of stakeholders, with sufficient participation of public authorities and users of e-invoicing services including consumers, SMEs and large businesses.

The Commission will establish for 3 years the European E-invoicing Forum, composed of delegates from national fora and representatives of

relevant European associations from the users? community, CEN, the European Central Bank and the Article 29 Data Protection Working Party. The Forum?s main tasks will be to assist the Commission in bringing about an exchange of experience and good practice that facilitates the emergence of inter-operable e-invoicing solutions, and monitor work leading to the adoption of a e-invoice standard data model.

Member States and stakeholders are invited to endorse the proposed key priorities and actions to achieve the objective of mass adoption of e-invoicing. The Commission will monitor closely all actions and the uptake of e-invoicing and will, by end of 2013, present a progress report to the Council and the European Parliament.

Competitive digital single market - eGovernment as a spearhead

PURPOSE: The European eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015.

BACKGROUND: the implementation of the [first European eGovernment Action Plan](#) has seen governments across all Member States exchange good practice, and resulted in a number of large-scale pilot projects which are developing concrete solutions for rolling out cross-border eGovernment services. An online community of practitioners, established in 2002, has provided a focus for debate on the potential to provide innovative solutions in areas such as eGovernment, health services, and inclusion. Progress has also been made in the re-use of public sector information, and an electronic public procurement platform has been developed. However, cross-border eGovernment services are few and, even where eGovernment services are offered, the majority of EU citizens are reluctant to use them. There is clearly a need to move towards a more open model of design, production and delivery of online services, taking advantage of the possibility offered by collaboration between citizens, entrepreneurs and civil society.

[The Digital Agenda for Europe](#) sets eGovernment within a comprehensive set of measures aimed at exploiting the benefits of information and communication technologies (ICT) across Europe. The Commission is therefore proposing a second eGovernment Action Plan which aims to realise the ambitious vision contained in the Declaration made at the 5th Ministerial eGovernment Conference (the ?Malmö Declaration?), which was also supported by industry and by a citizens? panel.

According to this ambitious vision, by 2015 European public administrations will be "recognised for being open, flexible and collaborative in their relations with citizens and businesses. They use eGovernment to increase their efficiency and effectiveness and to constantly improve public services in a way that caters for user's different needs and maximises public value, thus supporting the transition of Europe to a leading knowledge based economy."

CONTENT : as part of the Commission-wide effort to promote a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy for the EU, as outlined in the Europe 2020 Strategy, this Action Plan contributes towards fulfilling two key objectives of the Digital Agenda for Europe, in particular :

- By 2015, a number of key cross-border services will be available on line ? enabling entrepreneurs to set up and run a business anywhere in Europe independently of their original location, and allowing citizens to study, work, reside and retire anywhere in the European Union.
- By 2015, 50% of EU citizens will have used eGovernment services.

The Action Plan also aims for 80% of enterprises to have used eGovernment by 2015.

SCOPE OF THE ACTION PLAN: the Action Plan aims at maximising the complementary nature of national and European policy instruments. It supports the transition from current eGovernment to a new generation of open, flexible and collaborative seamless eGovernment services at local, regional, national and European levels that will empower citizens and businesses.

Given the central role of national governments in the implementation of the Action Plan the European Commission?s main responsibility is to improve the conditions for development of cross-border eGovernment services provided to citizens and businesses regardless of their country of origin. This includes establishing pre-conditions, such as interoperability, eSignatures and eIdentification.

PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS : various actions related to the four political priorities identified are proposed:

1) User empowerment :

- services are designed around users? needs and provide flexible and personalised ways of interacting and performing transactions with public administrations ;
- collaborative production of services, where collaborative tools (e.g. Web 2.0 technologies) enable users to play an active role in the design and production of public services ;
- re-use of public sector information e.g. by making raw data and documents available for re-use in a wide variety of formats (including machine-readable ones) and languages and by setting up PSI portals (review of Directive 2003/98/EC);
- improvement transparency : set common voluntary transparency targets and exchange available experiences ; provide online access to information on government laws and regulations, policies and finance; enable citizens to have electronic access to personal data that are held on them;
- involvement of citizens and businesses in policy-making processes (for example, the Commission will collaborate with Member States on developing the electronic service to support citizens initiatives.

2) Internal market :

- seamless services for businesses : supporting the implementation of next generation points of single contact and the associated eProcedures; and PEPPOL aims to pilot an EU-wide interoperable public eProcurement solution allowing entrepreneurs to perform the full public procurement cycle online;
- personal mobility : ensure the development of interoperable services enabling citizens to communicate, perform transactions, and send and receive electronic documents and information to and from public administrations across the EU;
- EU-wide implementation of cross-border services: the Commission and the Member States will jointly share results on successful experiences gained in the large-scale pilot projects to determine and agree on key cross-border services ready for sustainable implementation throughout the EU.

3) Efficiency and effectiveness of governments and administrations :

- improve organisational processes : (for example : the cost of invoicing can be decreased in electronic public procurement processes, while increasing effectiveness; the eCommission 2011-2015 Action Plan will support streamlined administrative processes, facilitate information sharing and simplify interaction with the Commission.
- reduction of administrative burdens through the implementation of the 'once-only' registration principle whereby the information needed from citizens is only collected once, on condition that data and privacy protection requirements are met;
- Green Government (for example by implementing electronic archiving, using videoconferences instead of travelling, etc

4) Pre-conditions for developing eGovernment :

- open specifications and interoperability (implementation of activities to put into action the European Interoperability Framework, for example);
- key enablers (revision of the eSignature Directive, proposal for a decision to ensure mutual recognition of identification and eAuthentication across the EU) ;
- Innovative eGovernment: the new generation of eGovernment services will need to rely on innovative technical approaches, such as clouds of public services and service-oriented architecture (SOA) to build open, flexible and collaborative eGovernment services while at the same time lowering ICT costs. Pilot projects will be launched.

GOVERNANCE: the European Commission will set up and chair a High-Level Expert Group of Member States' representatives responsible for the national eGovernment strategies. This High-Level Expert Group will inform the High-Level Group for the Digital Agenda and will coordinate with the [ISA Programme Committee](#).

A mid-term evaluation of implementation of this Action Plan will be conducted in 2013. Depending on the results of the mid-term evaluation, any necessary adjustments to the objectives and activities of the Action Plan will be reviewed with the proposed High-Level Expert Group.

The overall progress made on the Action Plan and on eGovernment in general will be measured annually. Member States will share relevant benchmarking initiatives with the European Commission and other Member States in order to allow development of common measurement exercises among interested parties.

Competitive digital single market - eGovernment as a spearhead

This Communication introduces the European Interoperability Strategy (EIS) and the European Interoperability Framework (EIF) for European public services, two key elements in the Digital Agenda, which stresses the need for European public administrations to provide efficient, effective cross-border eGovernment services. Together, the Framework and the Strategy promote interoperability among public administrations.

The Communication lays out the challenges to be met, noting that Member States setting up ICT-supported national public services need to be more aware of the risk of creating new electronic barriers if they opt for solutions that are not interoperable. Such barriers fragment the internal market and hinder it from functioning properly. Without ICT-supported European public services and collaboration among public administrations, citizens are obliged to contact, or even to travel to, public administrations abroad to deliver or collect information or documents they need to work, study or travel within the EU. The same applies to businesses that want to establish themselves in more than one Member State. Delivering European public services to European citizens and businesses will be difficult, if not impossible, without interoperability among European public administrations.

The Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens (IDABC) established by Decision No 2004/387/EC, has achieved significant results. The [final evaluation of the IDABC programme](#) concluded that a coordinated approach can contribute to delivering better results by means of shared solutions operated in cooperation with Member States. The Interoperability Solutions for European Public Administrations (ISA) programme ([Decision No 922/2009/EC](#)), which succeeds the IDABC programme that came to an end in 2009, lays even more emphasis on the relevance of interoperability and collaboration to implement EU legislation successfully.

Proposed Actions

The European Interoperability Strategy (EIS) for European public services sets out a common approach to interoperability, aiming to foster European public service delivery by 2015 through:

- appropriate governance organisation and processes in line with EU policies and objectives;
- trusted information exchange enabled by commonly agreed interoperability initiatives, including completion of the legal environment, development of interoperability frameworks, and agreements on interoperability standards and rules.

To achieve this, activities at EU and Member State level should be coordinated and interoperability governance at EU level should be established.

The strategy clusters future interoperability activities under three headings: (i) trusted information exchange; (ii) interoperability architecture; (iii) assessment of the ICT implications of new EU legislation.

These activities are to be supported by accompanying measures on awareness-raising and sharing of best practice.

The European Interoperability Framework (EIF) for European public services specifies common elements such as vocabulary, concepts, principles, policies, guidelines, recommendations, standards, specifications and practices. It is conceptual model for developing European public services, presenting a building block approach to constructing them, allowing service components to be interconnected, and promoting the reuse of information, concepts, patterns, solutions, and specifications in Member States and at European level. It introduces:

- 12 underlying principles summarising the expectations of public administrations, business and citizens regarding the delivery of public services;
- a conceptual model for public services, structuring the design of European public services and highlighting why and where interoperability is necessary;
- four levels of interoperability: legal, organisational, semantic and technical;

- the concept of interoperability agreements, based on standards and open platforms.

Lastly, the EIF stresses the importance of interoperability governance and the need for coordination across administrative levels.

The EIS and the EIF will be maintained under the ISA Programme and kept in line with the results of other relevant Digital Agenda actions on interoperability.

In parallel, the Commission is preparing the eCommission 2011-2015 initiative. Its overarching objective is to evolve from today's Integrated Commission to tomorrow's Transformed Commission.

Planned actions: the Commission will implement the EIS through the ISA programme and through activities planned in the ICT-PSP programme, which is part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP), established by Decision No 1639/2006/EC. The CIP ICT-PSP programme supports a multitude of policy areas, but a number of its large-scale projects are directly linked to improving interoperability for delivering European public services.

Member State administrations and Commission services are encouraged to take the EIF into account in all activities related to setting up European public services.

Implementing the EIS

- **Trusted Information Exchange:** Member States taking part in large-scale pilots supported by the CIP ICT-PSP programme are gaining experience in cross-border interactions. Other Member States are invited to join existing pilots, and new pilots are being proposed. The first large-scale pilots will end in 2011. Reflections are already underway on how best to give further support to the results, and on how the ISA programme can help to convert results into operational services. Where relevant, the Commission takes part in ongoing pilots, such as those on eProcurement and on interoperable identities. This ensures that the Commission's infrastructure is interoperable with the results of these pilots.
- **Interoperability Architecture:** the Commission will work with Member States towards a common vision for European interoperability architecture and, if needed, will support such architecture by setting up common infrastructures and by developing common services.
- **Assessment of the ICT implications of new EU legislation:** the Commission is developing a method that could be used in preparing legislative acts with a view to achieving a better understanding of how ICT can support the effective implementation of such legislation.

The EIF should be taken into account when public administrations set up European public services and during the development of ICT systems to support the implementation of EU policy.

In summary, the Commission will:

- implement the EIS through appropriate instruments such as the ISA programme and the CIP ICT-PSP programme, in close cooperation with Member States and other stakeholders;
- align its internal interoperability strategy with the EIS through the eCommission initiative;
- ensure that the EIF is applied when implementing new legislation and establishing new European public services;
- ensure the governance of the EIS and related global and sectoral interoperability activities, in close coordination with Member States.

Member States should:

- align national interoperability strategies with the EIS and national initiatives and actions with corresponding initiatives and actions at EU level;
- work with each other and with the Commission on implementing the EIS, while monitoring the progress and impact of related actions at national level;
- align their national interoperability frameworks with the EIF;
- take into account the European dimension at an early stage in the development of any public service that might become part of European public services in future;

Lastly, they should contribute to the governance of the EIS and related interoperability activities.

Competitive digital single market - eGovernment as a spearhead

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the own-initiative report drafted by Silvia-Adriana Ţicău (S&D, RO) in response to the Commission communication on a competitive digital single market eGovernment as a spearhead.

The report is aware of the major contribution made by the ICT sector to the EU's industrial policy, innovation, growth, competitiveness and the trade balance. It underlines that the creation of a European eGovernment Area has the potential to be an essential part of the Horizon 2020 agenda, boosting the promotion of economic and social growth, stimulating innovation and human capital development, and helping meet the societal and political challenges faced by the EU.

eGovernment Action Plan: Members welcome the adoption of the European eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015, the European Interoperability Strategy (EIS) and the European Interoperability Framework (EIF) for European public services (EPS). They call on the Member States to take rapid action to align their national strategies to these overarching policies.

The report supports the overall targets for increased use of eGovernment services in 2015, i.e. 50 % of citizens (up from 41 %) and 80 % of businesses (up from 75 %), but calls on the Commission and Member States to consider these targets as minimum thresholds. It calls for the special programmes and eGovernment platforms to be developed with the aim of protecting and promoting local, regional, ethnic and linguistic diversity.

Members consider that in order to ensure effective EU-wide crossborder eGovernment services providing two-way and/or automated interaction between administrations and citizens and/or businesses, there needs to be a clear and coherent EU legal framework for the mutual recognition of eAuthentication, identification and eSignatures. They point out that there is still no clear definition of the term public

administrative data and that, with a view to clarifying its precise meaning, a common understanding must be reached by means of public discussion. They call for adequate measures to be put in place to ensure data and privacy protection and minimise vulnerability to cyber-attacks.

Member States are called upon to:

- continuously inform citizens about the existing EU portals, such as SOLVIT and Your Europe, as the current lack of information is delaying further development of the business environment and consumer protection arrangements, especially in cross-border areas;
- develop open educational software at European educational institutions, to exchange best practice, and to develop online platforms for collaboration on educational materials and resources that are free for students and take due account of data protection and copyright rules;
- make use of ICT tools to improve transparency, accountability and citizen involvement, increase efficiency and competitiveness, reduce administrative burdens, time and costs, improve administrative processes, reduce carbon emissions, save public resources, and contribute to a more participatory democracy while building up trust and confidence;
- oblige public entities to make data available by maintaining repositories and catalogues of public data and ensuring that rules for disclosure and reuse are established, taking due account of copyright law and the law on the protection of databases;
- implement one-stop shops and make use of intermediary actors, with a view to providing a seamless, integrated and easily accessible system of contact points for users, for both domestic and crossborder eGovernment services.

The report recognises the major potential of cloud computing, for businesses and private citizens alike. However, Members stress that with the increased use of cloud services, supervision of the relocation of IT resources and strict control of access to servers and data are required, inter alia in order to prevent unauthorised commercial use by other parties, and that as a consequence these issues should be dealt with in the reform of the EU data protection rules as proposed by the Commission.

Recalling the key commitment to reduce both digital literacy gaps and competence gaps by half by 2015, Members call on the Commission and the Member States to launch digital training programmes to promote the full use of eGovernment services, reinforce digital literacy and overcome the e-barriers affecting SMEs and disadvantaged sectors of the population such as older people, persons with disabilities, minorities, immigrants, the unemployed and those living in remote areas of the Union. To this extent, e-learning should be incorporated into national education and training policies.

eProcurement: the report emphasises that in the EU-27 public expenditure represents 16 % of GDP, and urges the use of eProcurement for all public procurement by 2015. It calls for the use of eProcurement also for concessions. Members regret the fact that in 2010 only 13 % of EU enterprises used the internet to submit a proposal to public authorities through a public electronic tender system. They call on the Member States to encourage the participation of SMEs in eProcurement.

The Commission is called upon to: (i) submit the White Paper on interconnecting eProcurement capacity in the EU A strategy for eProcurement; (ii) introduce an implementation monitoring mechanism to review progress, barriers, corrective action, etc, in the context of the introduction of eProcurement in the Member States ; (iii) set an example to all by implementing the eProcurement system in all its organs.

eInvoicing: underlining the substantial benefits offered by eInvoicing, the report welcomes the eInvoicing Initiative, which aims to make eInvoicing the predominant method of invoicing in the EU by 2020. It stresses the importance of legal certainty, a clear technical environment and open and interoperable eInvoicing solutions, based on common legal requirements, business processes and technical standards in order to facilitate mass adoption. It invites industry and the European standardisation organisations to continue their efforts to promote convergence towards a common eInvoicing data model.

Members underline the importance of one-stop-shops for VAT in order to facilitate cross-border e-commerce for SMEs and promote e-invoicing and welcome the new VAT rules as regards eInvoicing, which introduce equal treatment as between paper and eInvoices. They consider that consumers with limited access to the internet or none at all should not be left behind, and that consumers should always be allowed to receive paper invoices.

Competitive digital single market - eGovernment as a spearhead

The European Parliament adopted a resolution in response to the Commission communication on a competitive digital single market eGovernment as a spearhead.

Recognising the contribution and overarching role of the [ISA programme](#) in defining, promoting and supporting the implementation of interoperability solutions and frameworks for European public administrations, the resolution Stresses that the European eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015 represents a unique opportunity to modernise and reduce the costs of European and national public administrations. It underlines the importance of public-private partnerships and the role of the private sector in providing innovative solutions, applications and services for the development of interoperable e-Government infrastructure in the EU and in leveraging the available resources.

Parliament underlines the importance of R&D and innovation in developing and improving crossborder services and calls for support for light and fast access to EU R&D funds for ICT, as well as for an increase in the financial allocations for crossborder eGovernment services and infrastructure for 2014-2020.

(1) eGovernment Action Plan: Parliament welcomes the adoption of the European eGovernment Action Plan 2011-2015, the [European Interoperability Strategy \(EIS\)](#) and the European Interoperability Framework (EIF) for European public services (EPS). It calls on the Member States to take rapid action to align their national strategies to these overarching policies.

The resolution supports the overall targets for increased use of eGovernment services in 2015, i.e. 50 % of citizens (up from 41 %) and 80 % of businesses (up from 75 %), but calls on the Commission and Member States to consider these targets as minimum thresholds. It calls for the special programmes and eGovernment platforms to be developed with the aim of protecting and promoting local, regional, ethnic and linguistic diversity. Parliament underlines that the internet is increasingly used on mobile devices by both citizens and enterprises, and calls for action to ensure that eGovernment services are accessible and adapted to multiple channels of delivery, including call centres and the mobile internet (m-government).

Parliament considers that in order to ensure effective EU-wide crossborder eGovernment services providing two-way and/or automated

interaction between administrations and citizens and/or businesses, there needs to be a clear and coherent EU legal framework for the mutual recognition of eAuthentication, eIdentification and eSignatures. It points out that there is still no clear definition of the term public administrative data and that, with a view to clarifying its precise meaning, a common understanding must be reached by means of public discussion. It calls for adequate measures to be put in place to ensure data and privacy protection and minimise vulnerability to cyber-attacks.

Member States are called upon to:

- continuously inform citizens about the existing EU portals, such as SOLVIT and Your Europe, as the current lack of information is delaying further development of the business environment and consumer protection arrangements, especially in cross-border areas;
- develop open educational software at European educational institutions, to exchange best practice, and to develop online platforms for collaboration on educational materials and resources that are free for students and take due account of data protection and copyright rules;
- make use of ICT tools to improve transparency, accountability and citizen involvement, increase efficiency and competitiveness, reduce administrative burdens, time and costs, improve administrative processes, reduce carbon emissions, save public resources, and contribute to a more participatory democracy while building up trust and confidence;
- oblige public entities to make data available by maintaining repositories and catalogues of public data and ensuring that rules for disclosure and reuse are established, taking due account of copyright law and the law on the protection of databases;
- implement one-stop shops and make use of intermediary actors, with a view to providing a seamless, integrated and easily accessible system of contact points for users, for both domestic and cross-border eGovernment services.

Parliament recognises the major potential of cloud computing, for businesses and private citizens alike. However, it stresses that with the increased use of cloud services, supervision of the relocation of IT resources and strict control of access to servers and data are required, inter alia in order to prevent unauthorised commercial use by other parties, and that as a consequence these issues should be dealt with in the reform of the EU data protection rules as proposed by the Commission ([COM\(2012\)0011](#) and [COM\(2012\)0010](#)).

Recalling the key commitment to reduce both digital literacy gaps and competence gaps by half by 2015, Parliament calls on the Commission and the Member States to launch digital training programmes to promote the full use of eGovernment services, reinforce digital literacy and overcome the e-barriers affecting SMEs and disadvantaged sectors of the population such as older people, persons with disabilities, minorities, immigrants, the unemployed and those living in remote areas of the Union. To this extent, e-learning should be incorporated into national education and training policies.

(2) eProcurement: the resolution emphasises that in the EU-27 public expenditure represents 16 % of GDP, and urges the use of eProcurement for all public procurement by 2015. It calls for the use of eProcurement also for concessions. Members regret the fact that in 2010 only 13 % of EU enterprises used the internet to submit a proposal to public authorities through a public electronic tender system. They call on the Member States to encourage the participation of SMEs in eProcurement.

The Commission is called upon to: (i) submit the White Paper on interconnecting eProcurement capacity in the EU A strategy for eProcurement; (ii) introduce an implementation monitoring mechanism to review progress, barriers, corrective action, etc, in the context of the introduction of eProcurement in the Member States; (iii) set an example to all by implementing the eProcurement system in all its organs.

(3) eInvoicing: underlining the substantial benefits offered by eInvoicing, Parliament welcomes the [eInvoicing Initiative](#), which aims to make eInvoicing the predominant method of invoicing in the EU by 2020. It stresses the importance of legal certainty, a clear technical environment and open and interoperable eInvoicing solutions, based on common legal requirements, business processes and technical standards in order to facilitate mass adoption. It invites industry and the European standardisation organisations to continue their efforts to promote convergence towards a common eInvoice data model.

Members underline the importance of one-stop-shops for VAT in order to facilitate cross-border e-commerce for SMEs and promote e-invoicing and welcome the new VAT rules as regards eInvoicing, which introduce equal treatment as between paper and eInvoices. They consider that consumers with limited access to the internet or none at all should not be left behind, and that consumers should always be allowed to receive paper invoices.

The Commission called upon to undertake an annual assessment of the goals of the [Digital Agenda](#), especially those related to the eGovernment Action Plan, and to report to Parliament on a yearly basis.