<u>**Interview EU Commission – DG Connect – Person 1**</u>

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<u>**Role of the Unit**</u>
Has a political role: vision/action plan both inside and outside of the EU Commission. They also work with other DGs with DG DIGIT (IT department of the department), policy digits (such as health,…), financial resources and DG related to INSPIRE directive.
eGov Action Plan (2016-2020): "*(i) modernise public administrations with ICT, using key digital enablers, (ii) enable cross-border mobility with interoperable digital public services and (iii) facilitate digital interaction with administrations for high-quality public services".*
The unit promotes "building blocks". Do not do technical development. No legal basis to compel Member States (MS), so simply push MS to create solutions in order for the internal market to work. Create an additional layer via "landscape pilots": identify specific issues and ask MS to work on solution that suits their need. So they give MS money to find solution themselves. MS should not destroy what already exists at national level but should find a way to connect to the additional EU layer.
Private actors or regions within MS can also connect to the landscape pilot. Projects about eID, eHealth, eInvoicing, eDelivery mechanisms (services directive), judicial system connection…all these projects are based on common needs for all MS but the solutions developed were based on their own specificity so eSense was launched to identify the particularities and to transform them in "building blocks" usable for everyone.
New H2020 program: TOOP = application of "The Only Once Principle" within the EU administration. Idea of then sharing information between administrations without having to re-ask it to the citizens.
All the DGs have agreed to re-use these building blocks components and incentive for MS to use it as well. So eGov action plan policy aims at pushing MS and Commission to go towards a more rational approach. So increase interoperability in order to create the single market. So strong will to favour "open governments".

<u>**Vision of the Unit**</u>
eGov Action Plan contains the underlying vision that they want to feed to the other DGs and to MS, Regions and third parties (NGOs, private sector). Want public services to go towards agile model: decompose public services in smaller elements that reappear in other public services. So lots of commonalities that reappear all the time and reflexion needed in order to identify these common building blocks. Then, next step is that those responsible for the core data contained in the "building block" ensure high quality data and focus only on this so that the others can re-use this and focus on their own specific missions, via the creation of a service based on this building block, with having to worry about the quality of the building block (such a building block could be, for example, a GIS created and managed by the NGI which all other federal administrations would use). Also should be opened to third parties (private + NGOs) to re-use.
See in this regard Article 8 of the Service Directive[1] states that:
"1. *Member States shall ensure that all procedures and formalities relating to access to a service activity and to the exercise thereof may be easily completed, at a distance and by electronic means, through the relevant point of single contact and with the relevant competent authorities.*
2. (…)

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[1] Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on services in the internal market.

3. The Commission shall, in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 40(2), adopt detailed rules for the implementation of paragraph 1 of this Article with a view to facilitating the interoperability of information systems and use of procedures by electronic means between Member States, taking into account common standards developed at Community level".

Administrative procedure and single point of contact to set up companies. Should be extended not only to administrative procedures but also for other things = idea to enable the third parties to build on public sector. Then it is a political decision for each MS to decide how far they want to go. This gives agility to create new services that take care of administrative burdens for you.

Now vision is clearly laid down in the action plan and their mission is to diffuse it through any "silo" (MS, region, private companies…). But not easy to convince the stakeholders to create flexibility and opportunity as they often see it as a threat to their core activity and to the "former Napoleon culture", namely that it is the citizens and business that have to prove/make the effort, which is irrational as it is the public services that are the ones that have the information that could be used for building blocks (=migration is needed from a self-centred vision to a user-centric vision).

They discuss the use case of the venice municipality that implemented these principles to set up an e-service by picking up different registries, google map, facebook … They created in three months a tool where parents can log in and find the best school in their neighbourhood.

(Location-based) Data
Other DGs and Units of the Commission work on the Data side and how to help the MS/Regions to use these data, how to open up Public Sector Information and Copernicus data (=satellite images), how to implement INSPIRE Directive….

Importance of location and location-based data as some of your needs are based on your location, and not necessarily on your life-events. Yet, for the moment, most of the e-services are based on life-events and not on location. According to respondent 2, the latter type of e-services should be developed, as it could be very useful. For example NGOs would be interested in re-using all these location-based data. In that regard, they are looking for use cases that use location-based data (such as Fixmystreets in Brussels).

European Cloud Initiative: purpose is to connect all the other cloud infrastructures in Europe to improve their capacity and to put science data in it. This infrastructure will then be opened to public sector so they can have access to data and are provided the necessary data to crunch/analyse the data to develop better policy. So goal is to provide the tools so that they can benefit from it, as they would not have the mean to create these tools themselves. So they are also pushing their policy in this regard around the role of governments.

Responses to their eGov Action Plan
Already have positive conclusions from Council of Ministers, Comity of Regions, Economic and Social Comity on their Action Plan. The latter however pointed out the need to avoid Digital divide. JURI – ITRE – IMCO – all three positive – in april final vote

This Action Plan contains 20 actions that go across various policy areas and covers the policy areas of 10 different DGs. So Parliament, in order to respond to this Action Plan, has created three Committees (encompassing all of the 10 DGs policy area) working on this.

Results of their "building blocks"
Their building blocks are working better then expected but the MS have to finalize their own work around this (has to be done before September 2018). Here the "Connecting Europe

Facility" (CEF)[2] is providing a full service = help to integrate the building blocks in the MS's solutions, help the testing of the MS's solutions, provides open-source solutions. So not just a software but also a full service in order for the MS to be in a better position and capacity to integrate it. They also identify the bottlenecks, especially at local and regional level, where it makes even more sense to have a common infrastructure and sharing platform of data. Once it will become a *de facto* standard, they might reduce this support of actual implementation. They do eGov benchmarking every year based on life events and compare how well each MS does (last report published in November 2016).

Transition in public service delivery
The key to this transition is that the MS must rethink their processes! This implies much more than to just "do digitally what was done in paper". You first need to rethink your whole system delivery before doing. If you just "do" the ICT system without "re-thinking" the processes, it is a guaranteed failure.
More and more criticism on Public-Private partnerships (PPP), but it is a misconception as PPP is an investment issue and not an issue of public service delivery. The conception about PPP depends on the member states (strong public sector in Denmark, Sweden and delegation for private sector in UK). When you see UK that have delegated public services to private sector, there are a lot of complaints. They take the example of public service for disabled people. However, they realize that private sector is far more strict in a bureaucratic way to estimate who is disabled or not.
How far each MS wants to go in the possibility for private operators to deliver public services is a political choice, but they should not prevent third parties to build on these building blocks for additional features.
For example test all of this in Living Labs/Innovation ecosystems to bring together different stakeholders (citizens, public, private,…), look into different sustainability models for these new types of services.

Privacy
The Unit's vision on Privacy is that everything should be done with consent, limitation of the data to what is strictly needed, and deletion of the data once it is no longer needed, all this being in line with the core principles of the General Data Protection Regulation[3]. They believe that the "only once principle" could guarantee the data protection by only providing the necessary data. This is because they need to build trust of the citizens. They state that things should always be done with the consent of the person. Otherwise, the citizens will not trust or use it and building the trust is essential to improve online service take-up. However, there is a contradiction in citizens that want more effective service delivery but also want to protect their data.

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[2] "*The CEF is a key EU funding instrument to promote growth, jobs and competitiveness through targeted infrastructure investment at European level. It supports the development of high performing, sustainable and efficiently interconnected trans-European networks in the fields of transport, energy and digital services. CEF investments fill the missing links in Europe's energy, transport and digital backbone. The CEF benefits people across all Member States, as it makes travel easier and more sustainable, it enhances Europe's energy security while enabling wider use of renewables, and it facilitates cross-border interaction between public administrations, businesses and citizens. In addition to grants, the CEF offers financial support to projects through innovative financial instruments such as guarantees and project bonds. These instruments create significant leverage in their use of EU budget and act as a catalyst to attract further funding from the private sector and other public sector actors*" (https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility).
[3] Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC.

So no exchange spontaneously but only on the citizens' request. Want public services to become the role models = charter of good administration online, to set up the rules in order for the citizens to then ask the private sector to function in the same way.

In this regard, there is a need for central data management organism, which would decide to which specific and limited data the administrations should have access in order to deliver their service. This should not be constructed as a central database containing all the data, as it would be a single point of failure. Rather, it should function as a "Service Bus".

ISA^2

ISA^2 is a funding instrument to finance the creation of interoperability solutions[4]. Problem according to eGov ant Trust unit is that it is built top-down while the take-up from the MS is much higher when built in a bottom-up manner, even if it is much more time consuming to do so.

ISA^2 develop solutions but do not operate things >< CEF, which deploys (finances) and operates. But both programs address the Public Sector.

Benchmarking & indicators

Monitoring was always done, but the question is if it still fitted for the current reality. The indicators are now developed, and will be developed. Not an indicator for each activity that is in the action plan – the idea is to work via the pillars, it would become a machinery that has not a lot of impact. Do not put an extra administrative burden on it – Unit just wants to be a catalyst. No benchmarks for each action, because too much of a burden and too much top-down.

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[4] The ISA^2 programme supports the development of digital solutions that enable public administrations, businesses and citizens in Europe to benefit from interoperable cross-border and cross-sector public services (https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/isa2_en).