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European Association of Public IT Service Providers

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SINGLE DIGITAL GATEWAY REGULATION: A EURITAS PERSPECTIVE

With the Single Digital Gateway Regulation (SDGR), the European Union wants to simplify access to cross-border administrative services for citizens and companies. Documents should no longer be provided by the applicant, but should, if possible, be obtained by the authorities themselves, also across borders. The SDGR thus follows the basic principle of one-off provision and recording of data according to the Once Only Principle. The applicant should be at the centre of consideration and perceive the administration as a service provider. This is additionally reflected in the multilingual nature of the descriptions and services.

From EURITAS point of view, public administration service providers play a special role in the implementation of the SDGR due to their experience in the conception, development and operation of online services as well as the resulting contact with users.

In order to make the implementation of SDGR a success, the public IT service providers can contribute the following competencies and experience to the implementation of SDGR:

> Findings on the user-centred design of services.

> Experience of online services, from conception to operation.

> Practical experience in cross-border communication between systems.

> Consulting on the standardisation and reusability of components and architectures with the goal of technical interoperability.

> Experience, in order to combine the offered services end-to-end in such a way that the user is the focus and perceives the administration as a service provider.

The EU sees the administration as a digital service provider in the European internal market. The SDGR is intended to implement a cross-border, user-centred approach to the provision of administrative services.

If one takes a broad view and considers what digital services outside the administration look like today, one may think of large online department stores, portals for booking holidays and flights or buying cars. There are no limits to the imagination. With all these services, national borders are no barriers, the times of day play no role and the needs of customers are the focus.

This paper aims to highlight the benefits of the SDGR for applicants and administrations and to show how public administration service providers can make a valuable contribution to the implementation with their experience.

The applicant is undisputedly the central figure here. The perception of services being provided across borders should be conveyed. However, the user's point of view is only one perspective. Furthermore, one has to look at the administrative processes over which the SDGR has a strong influence. This is the only way to obtain a technically holistic view of a service.

In the following, the advantages of the SDGR for applicants as well as for authorities are considered.

BENEFITS FOR THE APPLICANTS
> **Benefits can be claimed from anywhere in Europe at any time.**
Regardless of whether a citizen or a business, it should no longer be necessary to personally visit the authorities for administrative services. Applications can be made from the comfort of a sofa or workplace. It doesn't matter whether it's a working day or a public holiday, a day or the middle of the night.

> ### Multilingual Services

Applicants can search for services in the Your Europe portal in any EU language. In addition to the national official language, at least one further language is available to them during the application process. The translation is co-financed by the EU.

> ### Official documents do not have to be provided by the applicant.

It is a basic principle of the SDGR that, according to the Once Only principle, the applicant does not have to supply data that is already available to the authorities again. This results in enormous time savings for the applicant.

> ### Shorten application times

Many time-consuming steps on the part of the applicants and the administration are eliminated. Through user-oriented approaches in the supply of the information and documents as well as the digitalisation and automation of administrative processes the processing time is enormously reduced.

> ### The focus is on the applicant

It should be made easier for the applicant to find cross-border services and the right contact person. To this end, help and problem-solving services are provided to help applicants solve their problems quickly. Applicants are also asked for feedback on the service in order to improve it in the future.

BENEFITS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION
> ### Valid identity check

Through the use of modern signatures and eIDs, the applicant can be uniquely identified for administration purposes. In many cases, the applicant no longer needs to visit the administration in person.

> ### Consistent administration processes without media discontinuity

Electronic cross-border application makes it possible to process applications electronically. Individual steps can be automated. The processing time of an application and the administrative burden can be greatly reduced.

> ### Increasing the quality of data

Obtaining the necessary information from official sources rather than from the applicant ensures that the information is valid and up to date.

Online services for citizens and businesses as well as internal administrative IT are planned, developed and permanently operated by IT service providers in public administration. In addition to their experience with the IT infrastructure of public administration, the service providers can evaluate user behaviour, derive requirements for services and implement these together with the administration. In order to bundle these experiences and make them usable for other administrations in the EU, various European public administration service providers have joined forces in the network EURITAS.

This knowledge, which goes beyond national borders, can also be helpful for the implementation of the SDGR in order to involve users and the administration. The service providers can contribute their findings to the processes for implementing the SDGR and its further development in an advisory capacity in order to create user-oriented and legally compliant solutions.
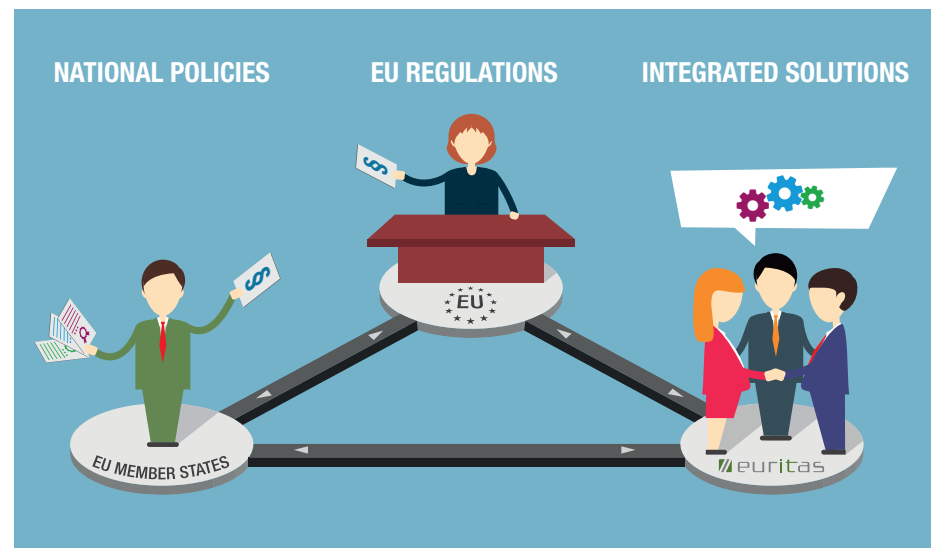

Figure 1 Role of service providers in the implementation of the SDGR for the integration of users and administration

STRENGTHS OF THE SERVICE PROVIDERS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGR

In the following, individual areas of the SGDR will be presented in which EURITAS can contribute its expertise as a network of IT service provider.

> User-centric services

With the implementation and operation of services, the service providers are close to the user. Access figures, as well as user reports on errors, provide feedback on the services provided as well as wishes and expectations. These are implemented in coordination with the administration to improve the services.

Furthermore, members of EURITAS User-Experience-Labs are already conducting user experience tests in order to incorporate the needs of users in the creation and modernisation of services.

> Cross-border communication

The implementation of eIDAS has shown that the foundations of cross-border communication are in place. Here there was an exchange between the service providers in order to ensure smooth operation.

This cooperation can also be helpful for the successful implementation of the Once Only Principle of the SDGR. At the individual national levels, the principle is anchored in law to varying degrees and is already being applied. For example, some data is no longer supplied by the user, but is obtained from existing registers.

> Standardisation and re-use of solutions

In order to make services future-proof, the use of common standards and a modular structure of solutions are taken into account during their creation.

This is where competencies and the implementation of the EU Service Directive and eIDAS have been developed, which can be incorporated into the implementation of the SDGR.

> Consulting in the field of e-government

The individual service providers provide the individual administrations with competent advice. The consultation goes beyond the technical aspects. The IT service providers also advise on the standardisation of service descriptions, processes, online services and data.

The idea of creating a central point of entry for cross-border administrative services is a step in the right direction and is a great relief for many EU citizens but even more so for businesses.

Now it is time to implement the principles of the SDGR. Here, the recourse to the experience of IT service providers in public administration is a benefit, particularly in the following points:

> How can information about the needs of users be obtained effectively and efficiently and consolidated in a meaningful way?

> Public IT service providers can play an important role in the design and implementation of cross-border communication, especially when it comes to communication across administrative and national borders.

> EURITAS can draw on the experience of national e-government in this area.

> Methods for the standardised description of services and processes as well as forms and data

AND WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

EURITAS would like to participate in the further development.

The following thoughts are worth considering here:

> How can real end-to-end services be produced?

> Each user should only need a single access account for national and cross-border administrative services. It should not matter whether the service is national or European.

> As already implemented in individual EU countries, all users should have an overview of the current status of their applications and services at all times.

> Users have an overview of all submitted and completed applications with correspondence and resulting documents. Users decides on the deletion of the data.

Let us tackle the implementation together and make SDGR a successful model!

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