



2022/2036(INI)

1.12.2022

OPINION

of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

for the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

on eGovernment accelerating digital public services that support the
functioning of the single market
(2022/2036(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Maria Grapini

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs calls on the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Notes that eGovernment has the potential to improve the quality, efficiency and accessibility of public services and public administration and, at the same time, to increase the degree of public participation; considers it important to carry out a digital transformation that increases the availability of online public services in order to facilitate and reinforce relationships with citizens, businesses, employees and governments, while ensuring their security;
2. Strongly believes that eGovernment should be compliant with fundamental rights, in particular the rights to non-discrimination, privacy and data protection, while ensuring that citizens are in control of their personal data; calls for rigorous oversight by data protection authorities and for proper training of public officials; emphasises that governments that make use of personal data in fulfilling their eGovernment commitments should set a good example by promoting a data protection culture within their various departments, in order to build trust among citizens and encourage them to use the eGovernment services and tools provided; calls, therefore, on public authorities to support their data protection officers properly by providing clear and complete information on their websites and investing in secure information and communication technologies (ICTs);
3. Points out that there have been substantial technological transformations in public services with an increase in direct online communications with citizens and the use of new ICT tools aimed at improving the quality and range of services offered to the public; calls for a modernisation of public administration with a focus on improving the efficiency, effectiveness, speed and quality of the services provided to citizens; calls on the Commission to enable the exchange of best practice and success stories to promote the introduction of eGovernment tools by the Member States;
4. Believes that the European Digital Identity could be a tool to facilitate eGovernment services; believes that the European Digital Identity Wallet should be based on principles such as data minimisation and purpose limitation to enable citizens to rely on eGovernment services with full protection of their fundamental rights and their data; calls, therefore, on the Member States to make provisions for the European Digital Identity Wallet once the relevant framework has been adopted and to raise awareness among their citizens;
5. Underlines that digital public administration should be transparent, responsible, inclusive and easily accessible for people with different needs; recalls that in-person services should always be available as an alternative to access public services, in particular for persons with disabilities and elderly people, but also to mitigate low levels of digital literacy and poor internet coverage; stresses that access to governmental or other essential services should not be restricted or hindered for people who do not use eGovernment services;

6. Recalls that the digitalisation of public services goes hand in hand with the guarantee of stable and high-quality network coverage for all EU citizens; calls on the Member States to pay particular attention to the quality of networks, especially in rural areas;
7. Notes that, according to the Digital Economy and Society Index 2022, only 54 % of EU citizens aged 16-74 have basic digital skills¹; recalls, nevertheless, that the automation of administrative procedures could facilitate significant improvements for citizens and businesses;
8. Underlines that the development and use of artificial intelligence (AI) in eGovernment may come with risks as well as advantages; considers AI techniques an option to improve the accessibility of public services, such as through sophisticated chatbots, or by providing solutions to threats such as cyberattacks, for example by detecting anomalies and securing citizens' data; is concerned that AI could reinforce existing discrimination, inequalities and social exclusion and misidentify or incorrectly classify individuals belonging to certain groups; calls, therefore, for effective remedies to be put in place, in line with the upcoming AI Act, including human checks and effective complaint mechanisms, as well as transparency regarding the use of AI in eGovernment, while preventing discrimination due to automation and improving the quality and design of datasets; emphasises that more diversity in the coding profession would allow for greater inclusiveness and the better representation of individuals in the algorithms written by coders; points out that, according to data from 2017, only 12 % of AI researchers in the world are women²;
9. Calls for eGovernment services to be reliable and to have very high standards of security with human oversight in order to prevent data leaks, data security breaches, and unauthorised and disproportionate access to personal data; stresses that citizens' trust in eGovernment will only be built if the EU and the Member States can guarantee the security of data processing and storage; recalls the importance of transparency regarding any breaches of data security, while taking into account national security and public order requirements, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679;
10. Reminds the Member States and the Commission to only use eGovernment systems that process personal data in compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 and Directive 2002/58/EC, where relevant, paying particular attention to the principles of data minimisation, purpose limitation, and data protection by design and by default;
11. Emphasises the importance of continuing to pursue European eGovernment policies; calls on the Commission to consider the full range of challenges with regard to data protection and discrimination when proposing a new long-term action plan for eGovernment and in the implementation of the European Digital Compass, in order to ensure that modern public administration is fit for the digital age and that, by 2030, all

¹ Digital Economy and Society Index 2022, Full European Analysis, European Commission, p. 20:

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/desi>

² Report – 'Algorithmic discrimination in Europe: Challenges and opportunities for gender equality and non-discrimination law', European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers and European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination, 10 March 2021, p. 88:

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/082f1dbc-821d-11eb-9ac9-01aa75ed71a1>

key public services will be available online in the EU in a secure, safe and non-discriminatory environment.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	1.12.2022
Result of final vote	+: 57 -: 4 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Abir Al-Sahlani, Konstantinos Arvanitis, Malik Azmani, Katarina Barley, Pietro Bartolo, Vladimír Bilčík, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Patrick Breyer, Saskia Bricmont, Joachim Stanisław Brudziński, Patricia Chagnon, Caterina Chinnici, Clare Daly, Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Cornelia Ernst, Nicolaus Fest, Sylvie Guillaume, Andrzej Halicki, Evin Incir, Sophia in 't Veld, Patryk Jaki, Marina Kaljurand, Moritz Körner, Alice Kuhnke, Jeroen Lenaers, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Erik Marquardt, Nadine Morano, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Theresa Muigg, Maite Pagazaurtundúa, Paulo Rangel, Isabel Santos, Birgit Sippel, Vincenzo Sofo, Ramona Strugariu, Yana Toom, Milan Uhrík, Tom Vandendriessche, Jadwiga Wiśniewska, Javier Zarzalejos
Substitutes present for the final vote	Daniel Freund, Alessandra Mussolini, Róza Thun und Hohenstein, Romana Tomc, Dragoş Tudorache, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Loránt Vincze
Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote	Pablo Arias Echeverría, Jarosław Duda, Laura Ferrara, Emmanouil Fragkos, Krzysztof Hetman, Eva Kaili, Ska Keller, Alessandra Moretti, Ljudmila Novak, Andrey Novakov, Christine Schneider, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Marc Tarabella

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

57	+
ECR	Joachim Stanisław Brudziński, Emmanouil Fragkos, Patryk Jaki, Vincenzo Sofo, Jadwiga Wiśniewska
NI	Laura Ferrara
PPE	Pablo Arias Echeverría, Vladimír Bilčík, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Jarosław Duda, Andrzej Halicki, Krzysztof Hetman, Jeroen Lenaers, Nadine Morano, Alessandra Mussolini, Ljudmila Novak, Andrey Novakov, Paulo Rangel, Christine Schneider, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Romana Tomc, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Loránt Vincze, Javier Zarzalejos
RENEW	Abir Al-Sahlani, Malik Azmani, Lucia Ďuriš Nicholsonová, Sophia in 't Veld, Moritz Körner, Maite Pagazaurtundúa, Ramona Strugariu, Róza Thun und Hohenstein, Yana Toom, Dragoș Tudorache
S&D	Katarina Barley, Pietro Bartolo, Caterina Chinnici, Sylvie Guillaume, Evin Incir, Eva Kaili, Marina Kaljurand, Juan Fernando López Aguilar, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Alessandra Moretti, Theresa Muigg, Isabel Santos, Birgit Sippel, Marc Tarabella
THE LEFT	Konstantinos Arvanitis, Clare Daly, Cornelia Ernst
VERTS/ALE	Patrick Breyer, Saskia Bricmont, Daniel Freund, Ska Keller, Alice Kuhnke, Erik Marquardt

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ID	Patricia Chagnon, Nicolaus Fest, Tom Vandendriessche
NI	Milan Uhrík

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Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention