



Press Release

Luxembourg, 6 December 2022

Auditors find unequal availability of digital public services across the EU

Although the European Commission has completed its EU Action Plan to modernise the public sector and foster e-Government – providing public services to citizens and businesses via the internet – not all newly developed digital public services are available across the EU. This is mainly due to implementation delays in some Member States. This is the conclusion of a report published today by the European Court of Auditors. Among other things, the auditors recommend that action be taken if there are delays in attaining digital targets at national level, and further promote e-Government services among users.

“Digital public services reduce administrative burdens on citizens and businesses by making their interactions with authorities faster, easier and less costly,” said Ivana Maletić, the ECA member who led the audit. *“Actions started by the Commission, such as electronic identification, the Single Digital Gateway and the interconnection of Member States’ business registers, not only help Member States to connect their systems and exchange information, but also encourage them to accelerate changes and digitise their public services.”*

The vision of the e-Government Action Plan was to have open, efficient and inclusive public administrations and public institutions across the EU by 2020. The European Commission supported the implementation of e-Government solutions by Member States through EU-financed projects, by providing technical support to national authorities and by fostering collaboration between them. However, the Action Plan only included actions to be implemented by the Commission. There was no obligation for Member States to implement and take up e-Government solutions developed by the Commission, even though the voluntary nature of actions by Member States had already been flagged up as a significant shortcoming in a previous e-Government initiative. According to the auditors, this is one of the reasons why the plan had difficulties in fully living up to expectations. The Commission should strengthen the implementation framework to urge Member States to further develop e-Government services, they recommend.

Some countries had advanced significantly more in the delivery of digital public services than others. However, it was impossible to determine whether progress was linked to the Action Plan or to other factors, as the existing monitoring indicators used by the Commission were not directly linked to any of the actions implemented under the Action Plan. The auditors note that the

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors’ special report. The full report is available at eca.europa.eu.

ECA Press

12, rue Alcide De Gasperi – L-1615 Luxembourg

E: press@eca.europa.eu @EUAuditors eca.europa.eu

Commission's 2021 "Path to the Digital Decade" proposal makes provision for a monitoring system requiring Member States to report on progress in good time.

The auditors' analysis of the 2017 and 2020 e-Government Benchmarks showed that digital public services for business are more mature than those offered to citizens. This evolution was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To enhance awareness of businesses and citizens of digital public services available at EU level, the auditors recommend the development of a comprehensive promotional strategy, taking into account activities undertaken by the Member States in this respect.

Special report 24/2022, "*e-Government actions targeting businesses – Commission's actions implemented, but availability of e-services still varies across the EU*", is available on the [ECA website](#).

Press contact

ECA press office: press@eca.europa.eu

- Claudia Spiti: claudia.spiti@eca.europa.eu - M: (+352) 691 553 547
- Damijan Fišer: damijan.fiser@eca.europa.eu - M: (+352) 621 552 224
- Vincent Bourgeois: vincent.bourgeois@eca.europa.eu - M: (+352) 691 551 502