

# Cross-Border E-Government Services

## Building Europe Through the Use of Technology

The **Malmö Ministerial Declaration on E-Government (2009)** set as one of its shared objectives that **‘Mobility in the Single Market is reinforced by seamless E-Government services** for the setting up and running of a business and for studying, working, residing and retiring anywhere in the European Union.’ This point of agreement between the heads of E-Government in member States gave a final boost to cross-border E-Government services. The boost translated into the **‘Digital Agenda for Europe’<sup>1</sup>** and the **‘EU E-Government Action Plan 2011-2015’<sup>2</sup>**. Both documents included the **availability of a series of key cross-border services by 2015** as one of their goals.

However, the concept of cross-border E-Government services was not new. **A series of programmes for the promotion of interoperability between Public Administrations in Europe (IDA, IDA II<sup>3</sup>, IDABC<sup>4</sup>)** had already made headway in the development of cross-border services and the horizontal infrastructure required to provide them. The TESTA network, for instance, connecting the Public Administrations in Europe, and EURES, the European job mobility portal, are among the most remarkable developments since 1995.<sup>5</sup> Even when it has the legal form of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/digital-agenda/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/digital-agenda/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/egovernment/action\\_plan\\_2011\\_2015/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/egovernment/action_plan_2011_2015/index_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Data Exchange between Public Administrations, Decisions of the European Parliament and the Council 1719/1999/EC and 1720/1999/EC, amended by Decisions 2046/2002/EC and 2045/2002/EC.

<sup>4</sup> Data Exchange between Public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens, Decision 2004/387/EC.

<sup>5</sup> For a full report on programme status and Spanish participation, cf. ‘Los servicios públicos europeos de Administración electrónica: Programa ISA y estado de situación de la integración de la Administración’ [http://administracionelectronica.gob.es/recursos/pae\\_020002227.pdf](http://administracionelectronica.gob.es/recursos/pae_020002227.pdf)

an EC communication, the **European Interoperability Framework**,<sup>6</sup> **developed by the work groups in the more recent ISA programme**,<sup>7</sup> is the most important technical agreement in this regard.

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<sup>6</sup> Available online at [http://administracionelectronica.gob.es/recursos/pae\\_000006268.pdf](http://administracionelectronica.gob.es/recursos/pae_000006268.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Interoperability Solutions for Public Administrations, Decision 922/2009/EC.

However, the framework for interoperability promotion programmes was oriented toward the creation of the services and the infrastructure required for (1) the application of European policies and acts, i.e. those with a legal basis; (2) inter-institutional communication in the EU and (3) decision making processes in Europe. Therefore, its legal basis did not include the mechanisms to identify, prioritise and promote cross-border services requiring commitment from the stakeholders and multilateral efforts from member States. The need to urge member States to make more determined moves and contribute financing tools for this end led the EC to establish the **CIP mechanism**<sup>8</sup>. CIP includes a line to support public policies through ICTs (ICT PSP), under which **pilot cross-border services are being developed outside EU competencies**.

The list of projects financed with ICT PSP funds is now long.<sup>9</sup> Many Spanish businesses and Public Administration agencies participated in them. In fact, **Spain is the second country in terms of participation in CIP - ICT PSP** (the first is Italy), with an 11% economic share.<sup>10</sup> The financed projects include large-scale pilots (LSPs), seeking to get stakeholders – authorities, service providers and research centres across the EU – involved in the implementation of common solutions for the provision and availability of online public services across Europe. The **five LSPs currently being developed** are:

- **E-CODEX**:<sup>11</sup> A project aimed at improving citizens' and businesses' access to **legal services** in Europe and interoperability between legal authorities in the EU.

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<sup>8</sup> Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme, Decision 1639/2006/EC.

<sup>9</sup> Full list of CIP – ICT PSP financed projects available online at [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/apps/projects/index.cfm?menu=secondary&prog\\_id=IPSP](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/apps/projects/index.cfm?menu=secondary&prog_id=IPSP)

<sup>10</sup> Data based on the EC report on the implementation of the CIP – ICT PSP programme, available online at [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/ict\\_psp/documents/ict\\_psp\\_implementation\\_report\\_2010.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/ict_psp/documents/ict_psp_implementation_report_2010.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Project website: <http://www.e-codex.eu/>

- **epSOS:**<sup>12</sup> Its goal is to design, develop and evaluate a service infrastructure showing cross-border interoperability between **e-medical record systems** in Europe.
- **PEPPOL:**<sup>13</sup> A project that seeks to achieve seamless cross-border **e-procurement**, connecting communities through standards-based solutions.
- **SPOCS:**<sup>14</sup> A project to build the next-generation Points of Single Contact in the **Services Directive** through the availability of high impact electronic procedures.
- **STORK:**<sup>15</sup> A project aimed at establishing a European **e-ID** interoperability platform that will allow citizens to establish new e-relations across borders, just by presenting their national e-ID.

**Spain participates in three of these five projects**, namely, E-CODEX (Ministry of Justice), epSOS (Ministry of Health and Autonomous Communities) and STORK (Ministry of the Treasury and Public Administration, and Jaume I University). epSOS and STORK, which began in 2009, are beginning to bear fruit and the benefits have reached our country. Over 5 million medical records in the National Health System will be available through electronic means in the epSOS pilot, and the e-ID can now be used in change of address and university registration procedures in other member States thanks to the test benches developed in the context of STORK.

The building of cross-border E-Government services is more evidence that ‘Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through

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<sup>12</sup> Project website: <http://www.epsos.eu/>

<sup>13</sup> Project website: <http://www.peppol.eu/>

<sup>14</sup> Project website: <http://www.eu-spocs.eu/index.php>

<sup>15</sup> Project website: <https://www.eid-stork.eu/>

concrete achievements which first create a *de facto* solidarity.<sup>16</sup> The **LSPs developed within the framework of the CIP programme are the first steps in multilateral cooperation between member States to build digital Europe**, an entity of variable geometry that will converge in the key services strengthening the single market and citizens' mobility.

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<sup>16</sup> Schuman Declaration, 9 May 1950.