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Compliance Package

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Implementation plan

Accompanying the document

**Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
on establishing a single digital gateway to provide information, procedures, assistance
and problem solving services and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012**

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This Implementation Plan is provided for information purposes only. It does not legally bind the Commission on whether the identified actions will be pursued or on the form in which they will be pursued.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR THE PROPOSAL FOR A REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON ESTABLISHING A SINGLE DIGITAL GATEWAY TO PROVIDE INFORMATION, PROCEDURES, ASSISTANCE AND PROBLEM SOLVING SERVICES AND AMENDING REGULATION (EU) No 1024/2012

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2. CONTEXT

The single digital gateway aims to address the current fragmentation and information gaps by completing, improving and linking up relevant EU and national-level online information, assistance services and procedures in a user-friendly way. The vision is to provide businesses and citizens with high quality, comprehensive information, effective assistance and problem solving services and efficient compliance procedures regarding EU and national rules applicable to citizens and businesses when they want to do business and/or to travel to, buy from, work, study or reside in another Member State.

3. MAIN DELIVERABLES

3.1 Broad information coverage

To achieve our aim of providing businesses and citizens with "all they need to know" to benefit from their Single Market rights. We are focusing on 17 areas (9 for citizens and 8 for businesses). Member States and the Commission are responsible for providing information on their respective websites on national and EU rules and requirements, applicable to citizens and businesses, in these areas.

3.2 Key procedures fully online

Member States would have to make sure that for a defined list of key procedures, the entire procedure can be completed online, also by non-residents and companies established in other Member States. Further roll-out of online procedures would be based on an annual work programme.

3.3 Quality requirements

Clear, operational quality criteria for information, assistance services and online procedures will be defined. Monitoring mechanisms would be set up to ensure that each website in the single digital gateway network provides sufficient, user-friendly and clear information/procedures/assistance services. As part of this process, a quality label based on

precise quality criteria would be developed, and users' feedback would be requested systemically.

3.4 Findability

The single digital gateway is about making existing information and assistance services not only much better, but also much easier for citizens and businesses to find. A user interface should allow the search for the best service package in response to any query a user may have.

3.5 Governance

The effective implementation of the single digital gateway requires a solid governance structure with an annual work programme as a backbone for the implementation actions and future development of the single digital gateway. The Coordination Group will be a forum for co-operation between Member States and the Commission replacing several structures created for the specific service or tool.

3.6 Language

A shared objective of the Commission and Member States is the need to make the gateway and its functionalities as accessible as possible for the widest range of users. For this purpose the proposed Regulation foresees that information would be provided on national websites in at least one other official EU language in addition to the national language(s).

3.7 Single Market user feedback

The proposed Regulation foresees the collection of feedback from users of the gateway on the problems encountered by them in the Single Market. This feedback, combined with input from the different assistance services will feed into a regular report about the state of the Single Market. This report will provide a substantial input for the priority settings regarding infringement procedures and policy decisions on further development of Single Market rules.

4. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

4.1 Technical challenges

The gateway will be based on a user interface that would search the best service package for any query a user may have. To make this work, substantial effort is required from the Commission and Member States relating to the IT applications and technical functionalities:

The Commission's tasks:

- Investigate the technical solutions for the user interface and how to link with national portals;
 - Create or adjust existing tools which could serve as a repository for links that Member States will need to provide;
 - Devise technical functionality which could be used by the users of the gateway to provide evidence in electronic format to authorities requesting such evidence in an administrative procedure;
- Develop a specific IT tool which would allow citizens and businesses to signal any difficulty or obstacle they meet in navigating the Single Market.

Member States' tasks:

- Depending on the functionalities of the interface, Member States will need to structure or tag the information published on their websites so that the search facility can easily find and present the information or service the user is looking for;
- Adjust their online procedures to make sure that users can effectively use the technical functionality for the re-use of evidence;
- Make 20 procedures available for users fully online and make necessary adjustments in other procedures so that they can be fully accessible for users from other Member States.

4.2 Compliance and timing challenges

The compliance and timing challenges are very much linked to the technical challenges described above. Their significance will depend on the Commission's ability to come up with the technical solutions in time, the ability and readiness of Member States to make necessary adjustments and on the level of Member States' advancement in the uptake of online solutions. These challenges will be overcome:

- Comprehensive and well-planned support from the Commission, including financial support;
- Annual work programme with detailed actions per Member State ensuring the gradual rolling out of all requirements;
- Strong co-operation between Member States and between them and the Commission through a clear governance structure.

Member States may need to devote appropriate human and financial resources in the initial phase of the establishment of the gateway. These efforts will be compensated by savings in the long term. The Commission will need additional resources in order to be able to appropriately manage and monitor the compliance with the quality requirements.

5. SUPPORT ACTIONS

The support actions aim at ensuring that the Regulation can apply from the date established in the legal act and that any delays are avoided. The timetable below shows the different steps in the development of the single digital gateway.

Foreseen timeline:

Adoption of the Commission Proposal:	April 2017
Adoption of Regulation:	Q3 2018
Regulation applies from:	Q3 2020

Timing	Commission actions	Member States' actions
<i>Pre-adoption stage</i>		
Q1/2018	Work with Member States on further convergence of information and assistance services towards the objectives of the single digital gateway	Work with the Commission on further convergence of information and assistance services towards the objectives of the single digital gateway
Q1/2018	Analyses different options related to the IT tools and applications listed in the Commission proposal. Incorporate IT security risk assessment and IT security plans.	Analyse the needs and efforts which have to be done to ensure full compliance with the Regulation
Q2/2018	Establish a network of stakeholders (chambers of commerce, etc.) to discuss with them ideas related to the practical implementation of the single digital gateway	
Q2/2018	Prepares the draft annual work programme (e.g. to clarify detailed implementation steps per Member State)	
<i>Q3/2018</i>	<i>Adoption of the Regulation</i>	
Q3/2018	Convenes the first meeting of the single digital gateway coordination group to discuss the first annual work programme	Appoint national co-ordinators and notify their names to the Commission
Q3/2018	Sets up internal governance structure to manage and coordinate all EU level services and portals that are part of the single digital gateway	Ensure that sufficient resources are made available at national level. Put in place the internal structure of co-ordination and monitoring
Q1/2019	Submits the first annual work programme to the gateway coordination group	Discuss the first annual work programme
Q1/2019	Adopts implementing acts	Discuss the draft implementing acts in the single digital gateway committee
Q1/2019	Start developing the IT tools required for supporting the single digital gateway	Start working on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - filling the online information coverage gaps - getting the missing procedures online - ensuring that existing online procedures are accessible for foreign users

Timing	Commission actions	Member States' actions
Q2/2019	Organises training, workshops, visits in Member States to discuss/advise Member States as regard the use of the ESF, ERDF and other sources of financing, managed by the Commission	Re-structuring, tagging of information on their websites
Q2/2019	Issues interpretative/guidance documents or recommendations, if needed	
Q3/2019	Prepares promotion campaigns and discussion within the gateway coordination group	
Q3/2019	Finalises work on the IT tools, including a review of IT security plan and measures to cover risks.	Notification of links to the national services to the repository of links
Q4/2019	Beta-version of the single digital gateway to be put online and tested	Testing together with the Commission the tools and applications to ensure that they are ready to use as from Q3 2020
Q3/2020	All agreed information is offered online User feedback tools deployed on all single digital gateway related webpages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All agreed information is offered online - Member States provide agreed procedures online - User feedback tools deployed on all single digital gateway related webpages
Q3/2020	IT solutions for exchange of evidence (once-only) are ready for use	Competent authorities integrate IT solutions for exchange of evidence (once-only) into relevant national procedures
Q3 2020	<i>Launch of the Single Digital Gateway</i>	
Q4/2022	First report on obstacles in the Single Market based on data gathered through all services within the single digital gateway and the user feedback tool	
Q4/2022	First report on the functioning of the single digital gateway	
Q1/2024	Second report on obstacles in the Single Market	
Q3/2024	Second report on the functioning of the single digital gateway and, if needed, recommendations for improvement	