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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council
Subject: The Single Digital Gateway
- *Information from the Commission*

Delegations will find attached a note from the Commission on the Single Digital Gateway with a view to the AOB items at the meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 7 December 2023.

The Single Digital Gateway

- Information from the Commission -

1. The Single Digital Gateway

On 12 December 2023, the Single Digital Gateway¹ (SDG), the most ambitious EU eGovernment initiative, will reach its last legal milestone. The SDG was launched in 2020 as a joint effort of Member States and the Commission to **ensure a better functioning and more competitive Single Market.**

A one-stop shop for information and administrative procedures, under the Your Europe web portal, the SDG covers many “life events” such as starting, running and closing a business, or moving, studying and retiring. The SDG **radically improves the European business environment by cutting red tape and facilitates the free movement of citizens and businesses**, including SMEs, active in the Single Market.

A lot has already been achieved and the SDG had a promising start²: Your Europe is increasingly trusted and visited and information about rules and procedures in the Single Market, at all levels of government, has become ever more accessible; the individualised assistance and problem-solving services, provided by for e.g. national centres for professional qualifications or the European network of employment services (EURES), are widely used and considered effective, while the offer of services is broadening. Users reported 1097 regulatory or administrative obstacles in the Single Market during the first year of operation of the Single Market Obstacle Tool (SMOT). The Commission **will continue improving the tools**, with for e.g. AI-powered developments, **and invites Member States to ensure quality of information and a swift handling of the reported obstacles to the Single Market.**

¹ Regulation (EU) 2018/1724 of the European Parliament and Council, OJ, L 295/1, 21.11.2018

² COM (2023) 534 final, First implementation report on the Single Digital Gateway, 12.09.2023

By 12 December 2023, a new step has to be achieved to make handling of administrative tasks for businesses and citizens more efficient and simpler. First, Member States shall ensure that 21 procedure-types can be accessed and completed online by national and cross-border users in a non-discriminatory way. These procedures include requests for a permit for a business activity or changes of business activities, or a decision on the applicable social security legislation for workers. **The Commission urges Member States to notify the digitisation of national procedures** so that they can be linked to Your Europe.

Second, by this date, **the Once-only technical system (OOTS)** that will allow the automated and cross-border exchange between public authorities of evidence needed to complete administrative procedures has to be established, so that public authorities can start connecting to it. Upon the request of businesses or citizens, the OOTS will enable public authorities to get the required evidence (e.g. absence of an insolvency procedure) directly from the official registries. Once-Only replaces the need to search and download evidence for the sole purpose of re-uploading it in another governmental website. This is a major source of costs savings for businesses and citizens.

The common services (i.e. the relevant repositories) **of the OOTS that the Commission had to deliver will go live on 12 December 2023**, as required. To facilitate the national activities on the OOTS, the Commission organised in 2023 four major events to allow Member States to test their connections and systems. These events showed very good results and progress. The Commission urges Member States to **finalise the establishment of the OOTS** and to notify **their national electronic identification and authentication schemes for legal persons**. This will allow these persons to connect to these procedures and request the exchange of evidence.

The Commission also calls on the Member States to work actively on onboarding the public authorities and their registries (local authorities, ministries, social security entities, universities...) **to the OOTS** so that users can benefit from this major simplification as soon as possible. The Commission will continue in 2024 to provide technical support to Member States to facilitate the onboarding process.

In order to maximise the benefits of the SDG and its OOTS and achieve greater simplification, the Commission will continue reflecting on future developments of the SDG and OOTS. It will work on complementarities with other systems or initiatives, such as the upcoming **EU Digital Identity (EUDI) Wallet** initiative that will bring additional options to users.
