

Towards Accessibility and Transparency in Public Administrations: A short report from the European Level

Dr. Barbara Held
IDABC Programme (European eGovernment Services)
Directorate-General for Informatics
European Commission



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... in a few words

IDABC
stands for:

Interoperable **D**elivery
of pan-European e**G**overnment Services
to Public **A**dministrations,
Businesses and **C**itizens



... in a few words

IDABC is a programme of the European Commission:

- Objectives/Activities
 - Funding European eGovernment projects in the Commission services
 - Supporting the implementation of pan-European services by **promoting interoperability** based on coordination, common specifications and infrastructures.
 - **European Interoperability Framework** (EIF v 1.0)
<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/6227>
- Budget: 148 Mio Euro in total / Duration: 2005 - 2009
- Managed by the IDABC unit in Directorate General for Informatics
- IDABC Management Committee **PEGSCO**: Member State representatives discuss and approve the IDABC work programme. They also endorse guidelines.



The Commission's view on standards

- ▶ **Definition of “standards”:** Directive 98/34 recognises as norms (“standards”) only such specifications that are produced by public standardisation bodies (national, European, international).
- ▶ **New Approach:** The European Commission politically supports and even initiates normalisation efforts in different policy areas. However, the concrete standardisation process is left to industry and other stakeholders. The Commission will stay neutral.
- ▶ **Consequences:**
 - The Commission does not reference “standards” of industry consortia (html, OASIS odf) in its legal documents.
 - The Commission is not a member of ISO.
 - The Commission stays neutral towards on-going ISO standardisation processes.



European public administrations on Open Standards

According to IDABC's EIF v 1.0 (2004) Open Standards for public administrations are ...

- ▶ adopted and managed by a non-profit organisation and open to all interested parties;
- ▶ fully published, and specifications are available without or for a nominal charge.
- ▶ Intellectual property is irrevocably made available on a royalty free basis.
- ▶ There are no constraints on the re-use of the standard.

For Information on the current EIF revision project see
<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/6227>



Accessibility and Transparency as policy goals

► **i2010 Initiative (2005):** As the use of ICT grows, so does its impact on society. i2010 recognises this in three ways: making sure that ICT benefit all citizens; making public services better, more cost effective **and more accessible**; and improving quality of life. (..) The Commission intends to promote ICT-enabled public services, (...) , that are **more transparent, accessible** and cost-effective.

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm

► **Manchester Ministerial Declaration (2005):** “The focus for eGovernment Ministers should be on the use of ICT in order to achieve better and more inclusive government. This could include improved services and policies with outcomes such as increased **transparency, inclusion, accessibility and accountability or greater participation in decision-making**, all built into their design from the outset”

<http://archive.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/egov2005conference/documents/proceedings/pdf/051124declaration.pdf>



Accessibility and Transparency in the IDABC decision (2004)

8. Projects of common interest or horizontal measures shall be technically specified **with reference to European standards or publicly available specifications or open specifications** for information exchange and service integration and shall comply with the infrastructure services, as appropriate, in order **to ensure interoperability and accessibility between national and Community systems within and across administrative sectors and with businesses and citizens.**

<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/3430/3>

TAC recommendations (2004)

At its meeting of 25 May 2004, **the TAC (Telematics between Administrations Committee)**

- **recognising the special responsibility of the European public sector to ensure the accessibility of its information,**
- **with a view to rationalising and improving the interactions with citizens and enterprises,**
- **taking into account the importance of the public sector as buyer of IT services and products,**

endorsed the following recommendations established by the IDA expert group on **open document formats.**

<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/2592/5588>



PEGSCO recommendations (December 2006)

- Communications between the public sector and citizens, businesses and other administrations are frequently document-based. Being able to exchange documents electronically between independent communication partners is therefore of paramount importance for European public administrations. **Because of its special role in society the public sector must avoid to impose upon its communication partners the use of specific products, thus allowing these partners the freedom of choice.**
- As public administrations also have an obligation to maintain archives for future use, **access to the information contained in documents must be ensured over long periods of time.**
- Therefore, there is a common understanding among public administrations in Europe that **electronic document exchange and storage should rely on open document formats.**

<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/servlets/Doc?id=26971>



Conclusions of the International eGov Conference of the German Presidency (01/03/2007)

1. "For all parties involved, the exchange of documents and data between authorities, businesses and citizens must be possible without technical barriers. **The public administration must not exclude anyone from participating in an electronic procedure owing to the use of a specific product.** The Member States are agreed that in the future electronic documents should be exchanged fully on the basis of open document exchange formats."

Activities in Member States

- ▶ Belgian government as early adopter of ODF/ISO 26300
- ▶ Netherlands: National ODEF policy approved
- ▶ Denmark: National Open Standards policy approved
- ▶ Germany: towards a common strategy
- ▶ France: large scale migrations and discussion about inclusion of ODEF in national interoperability framework
- ▶ Spain: approved strategies and large-scale migrations at the regional level
- ▶ “New” Member States: growing awareness of ODEF, first strategic documents (CZ, SI, SVK)
- ▶ Member States urge the Commission to continue its coordination activities in the area of ODEF
- ▶ **On request of the Member States IDABC has started a survey on ongoing ODEF initiatives, studies and migrations in Europe**

Contact:

Dr. Barbara Held

IDABC

DG for Informatics

European Commission

barbara.held@ec.europa.eu

www.ec.europa.eu/idabc