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Doing business in other EU countries is getting simpler

Businesses seeking to expand into other countries often struggle to comply with all the regulations they need to follow. Applying for licenses, permits and completing other administrative procedures in another country can be very complicated.

SPOCS (www.eu-spocs.eu) is a large-scale pilot project launched by the European Commission in May 2009 that aims to overcome these obstacles.

At a glance

Project
Simple Procedures Online for Cross-border Services (SPOCS)

Project Coordinator
Capgemini Netherlands (CNB)

Participants
Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom

Duration
3 years (2009-2012)

Total cost after project enlargement
€24 million (€12 million funded by the European Commission)

Programme
ICT Policy Support Programme under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)

What is the Services Directive?

The EU Services Directive already requires all procedures involved in establishing a business and providing services in another EU country to be fully online. The deadline for Member States to implement the Services Directive was end 2009.
The SPOCS project is now taking things a step further by streamlining those procedures and offering seamless cross-border technology.

What are the Points of Single Contact?

Implementing the Services Directive calls for setting up Points of Single Contact (PSC). The PSCs are acting as intermediaries between service providers and the national public administrations. The goal of these "one-stop shops" is essentially to fulfil the two following functions: information dissemination and case management/processing.

SPOCS aims to build the next generation of online portals Point of Single Contact (or PSC), that every European country now has in place, through the availability of high impact cross- border electronic procedures.

What is SPOCS?

SPOCS will provide seamless electronic procedures by building cross- border solutions based on your country's existing systems.
For example: An Italian real estate agent wants to expand his business to Bremen, Germany. The information provided by the Bremen PSC does not currently specify the Italian documents required. Will he be able to find his way through, including the information from his own home office? Will the transaction be secure? Yes, SPOCS will allow him to do all the administrative procedures online and cross-border via the Point of Single Contact!

Why is SPOCS important for you?

- Administrative simplification and modernization
- Less red-tape
- Increased transparency
- Better online services
- Greater business opportunities in the public sector
- Product innovation based on open specifications and software
- Stimulating demand for IT products and services

SPOCS went live July 1st!

The live pilots will run for at least 12 months, including extra pilots for a duration of 8 months.

Pilot means to try out a new technology. Therefore, the SPOCS pilots are using the SPOCS building blocks for Syndication, eDocuments, eDelivery, eSafe and eServices in the national production environment of the Points of Single Contacts in Member States.

What is the exact process?

The aim of SPOCS is to develop an interoperability layer to foster the services economy in Europe by facilitating the Service Providers to apply via the Points of Single Contact for businesses the EU Member States have set up. Therefore, the aim of our pilot is to show that the building blocks developed within SPOCS composing this interoperability layer indeed do function in a real life environment. The process followed within the SPOCS to reach live testing consisted in:

1. Specifying the SPOCS building blocks (Syndication, eDocuments, eDelivery, eSafe and eServices)
2. Developing the SPOCS building blocks based on their specifications
3. Deploying them in the SPOCS piloting countries
4. Assessing the results and iteratively adapting the specifications and modules as needed
5. Scaling and Sustaining the SPOCS building blocks.

What is the time frame?

The process has two main waves.

● The first wave of pilots includes Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy and Poland. The pilots in these countries went live in July with the professions of Travel Agent, Real Estate Agent and Master Builder.

● The second wave encompasses the countries that joined SPOCS during the extension process: Lithuania, Portugal and Slovenia. The second wave will go live in 2012 with the additional professions of Architect Travel Agent and Tourist Entertainment Companies.

How SPOCS makes sure its solutions are usable and portable?

● The SPOCS solutions are built on the basis of existing solutions and services in Member States. SPOCS also benefits from the first experiences in EU Member States with a specific focus on interoperability, as well as on legal and practical issues arising when implementing cross-border services.

● The work achieved within SPOCS aims at elaborating common specifications, open modules and organizational solutions relying upon open standards, thus ensuring these are portable and reusable by all Member States. In particular, building blocks will be published under a license compatible with the EU Public License.

● The technical specifications on eDocuments, Content Syndication, eDelivery, eSafe, eService Directories have been subject to an open consultation among other stakeholders- both the Member States and companies providing IT solutions.

● The SPOCS project will provide ready to use and tested solutions. The products of SPOCS projects will be available for everyone without any charge. Every country will be able to implement either all or just chosen modules and provide new functionalities for the service providers on the PSCs.

Interested in SPOCS? How can you participate?
All interested parties have the opportunity to influence developments, provide feedback and make proposals by participating in one of the following groups while registering to the **SPOCS site | www.eu-spocs.eu:**

● Member States - PSCs
● IT Industry and Standards Bodies
● Local Government

● Large Scale Pilots
● Business Representatives and End Users

Further information
SPOCS Pilots website: http://www.eu-spocs.eu/pilots

For further questions please contact us at communication@eu-spocs.eu