European Commission on e-government

The European Commission has published a new report on e-government effectiveness in the EU Member States in 2010. Poland was ranked as 19 among the countries offering a full range of public e-services, which is higher by 6 spots in comparison with the year 2009. A total of 32 countries took part in the study.

The European average online availability rate of most important public administration services (such as vehicle registration, submitting information to a statistical office, enrolment into a higher school) was 82%, with a 79% rate in Poland. Currently, Poland is ranked 19 on the list. In comparison with 2009 Poland showed progress in the online availability of public administration services. The report published by the European Commission reveals that only in six countries, i.e. Ireland, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Denmark and Malta offer all 20 e-government services.

According to the authors of the report Determining the level of availability of on-line services is only a beginning of the e-government evaluation process. It is equally important to check whether services are fully automated, personalized and adjusted to the needs of the client.

Also the quality of last year's public administration online services was evaluated Poland was ranked 20, behind Turkey, as well as Norway and Belgium taking higher places. Austria, Ireland, Malta and Portugal were ranked the highest. In Europe, just like in Poland, services for businesses are more advanced than those for individuals. Their level in Poland was ranked 2 percentage points lower than the average European Economic Area level.

Apart from the availability of 20 basic e-government services, also the experience of users was evaluated in the following respect:

- transparency of service delivery is it possible to follow and keep track of the progress of service delivery or receive information on the duration of service delivery;
- multi-channel service delivery is it possible for the user to receive access to services by means of electronic channels other than the Internet (e.g. through a call centre or e-mail);
- personal data protection does the Internet website offer the user information that their personal data are protected according to the law.
- easy use of services has the user received assistance (such as FAQ, demo, real-life assistance); is it possible to upload additional documents to applications or requests;
• customer satisfaction survey is there any way of verification of customer satisfaction level; is the user able to express their opinion or submit a complaint.

The overall “user experience” rate with respect to 20 e-government services was high in Poland amounting to 91%, with an average of 79% among 32 countries. The Polish user satisfaction monitoring was rated at 95% in comparison with the 80% European average. The remaining satisfaction categories were also high in Poland, with 63% for service transparency (mean 52%), 100% for multiple channels of service delivery (mean 88%), 100% for data protection (mean 90%). At the same time the ease of use of online services was ranked higher in other EU Member States and European Economic Area countries (80%) than in Poland (56%).

Poland also showed 75% e-procurement availability, which is higher than the European Economic Area average of 71%. The examined categories included online publication of public procurement information, online services to submit a tender, final choice of the supplier. In the case of the latter two, the indicators exceed 20% and 36%, respectively. Simultaneously, the online publication of tender information was ranked 36% lower than the EU Member States average. Estonia, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta and Slovenia showed highest figures in this respect.

The study also examined the procedure for launching a business in terms of cutting bureaucracy and reducing the obstacles to entrepreneurship in Europe. The 21 steps in the procedure for setting up a business that an entrepreneur needs to take were examined, i.e. applying for tax identification number (NIP), business registration, etc. Each of the steps was examined in terms of its online availability, preferably on a special portal for people launching a business, online availability of information on procedures and its quality.

Only a few European countries offer all 21 online services, whereas in most states, including Poland it is currently not possible to set up a business using only one channel. For example, some steps of the procedure for setting up a business can be carried out through only one portal. However, other are offered by various public websites, with many still only available traditionally at the seat of the office, where paper documents need to be submitted. Only 20% of business setting up services are offered only in Poland, with the remaining 80% limited only to information published online.

A total of 32 European Economic Area countries, including 27 EU Member States, Croatia, Island, Norway, Switzerland, and Turkey took part in the study. The “eGovernment Benchmark” Report was drafted at the request of Directorate General for Information Society at the European Commission. “eGovernment Benchmark” is one of the main studies to verify the effectiveness of public sector in the European Union.