

Ministerial Declaration of the Visegrad 4 Alliance

on the Mutual eGovernment Cooperation

Preamble

Development of eGovernment in the V4 countries is entering a new stage, encouraged by a stronger focus on cross-border services. This shift is to a great extent driven by new EU legislative and initiatives; it brings unprecedented challenges, but also opportunities. They can be effectively addressed only if powered by a mutual co-operation.

V4 alliance provides an advantageous platform for fostering potential of working together, achieving results and ultimately present them to citizens and businesses of the region.

Every V4 country has come a long way in building its own eGovernment infrastructure and services. Our countries share much of the internal and external drivers as well as the limiting factors. Nevertheless, each of them has taken slightly different approaches to tackle the new legislative initiatives of the EU, setting up the shared functions such as provision of data between the government agencies (once-only principle) or application of the new technologies (e.g. blockchain or artificial intelligence driven applications). The differences in development provide for opportunities to learn from each other, which has not been yet fully embraced.

In the current EU legislative framework, there is a clear direction provided how the new cross-border electronic services will be developed and how they will operate, which is already demonstrated by adoption of regulations on eIDAS¹ or on Single Digital Gateway². These steps may be also accompanied by supporting actions of the shared management (ERDF) or directly managed programmes (CEF Telecom, ISA2, H2020).

The logic of these interventions is clearly to help to close the digital gap. Unfortunately, free movements (persons, goods, services and capital) fostered by lifting barriers for businesses have not been so far followed by adequately modern and easy-to-use cross-border digital services of public administrations. Though, citizens and businesses broadly exercise their rights to undertake, study, travel or reside regardless of the borders, we have not been substantially supporting them in carrying out all accompanying administrative procedures online with some exceptions limited to national levels.

The expected delivery, which is a successful implementation of digital services, which connect users and public administrations across borders, is not feasible without very close co-operation. There is still a considerable disparity between the aims of the EU legislative framework including its technical part and the challenges of real implementation, occurred due to the compromises among the all Member States and the EU institutions. Closer cooperation of natural partnerships such as V4 Alliance is therefore more than necessary to advance towards the workable solutions respecting our regional aspects.

1 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.257.01.0073.01.ENG

2 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017PC0256>

Ministers of the V4 countries acknowledge the above said and declare to intensify their cooperation, notably on the following objectives:

- Identification of the needs for development of national eGovernment frameworks and policies in order to better suit for the provision of cross-border digital services. The elements such as identification of users, access to base registries data, electronic delivery and others should be evaluated especially when considering the needs of users and partners from other EU countries. Exploration of the possible regional synergies between the national eGovernment strategies and action plans.
- Prioritisation in terms of development of the new digital services and/or adjustment of the already functional digital services, as these are governed by the EU legislation, most notably by the Single Digital Gateway Regulation. Additional V4 priorities must complement those established priorities and properly reflect needs of the users in our region. Common approach may provide space for consideration of relevant drivers and potential obstacles in order to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our efforts.

Ministers also agree with regular meetings of their mandated representatives of the alliance, who will further work out the defined objectives and other initiatives, where relevant.

Ministers confirm that whereas a particular project is agreed, the legal, organisational, financial and technical aspects may be a subject of the separate agreements.

Ministers emphasize that the benefits of closer cooperation could be reflected in more aligned positions of our countries on EU level. The shared positions based on real experience with active approach to cross-border services may be a strong argument in all future discussions shaping the new respective legislation in the next years.

In Brussels, on 9 April 2019

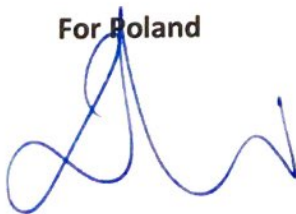


For the Czech Republic



For Hungary

For Poland



For the Slovak Republic