

(English version)

Question for written answer E-002170/17
to the Commission
Victor Negrescu (S&D)
(28 March 2017)

Subject: European data economy

On 10 January 2017, the Commission outlined the next steps towards a European data economy. Currently, the kinds of data transfer technologies used by EU citizens, ranging from broadband to dial-up, tend to vary.

Given that processing speeds can affect the level of access and the right to equal access, how is the EU planning to improve access to European public data?

In view of the fact that the right to education has already been recognised, can we also push for the right to the access of public data at EU level?

Answer given by Vice-President Ansip on behalf of the Commission
(24 May 2017)

The objective of a wide re-use of data held by public sector bodies of the EU Member States is at the heart of the Commission's Open Data policy, which includes a legal instrument in the form of a directive on the re-use of public sector information (2003/98/EC) ⁽¹⁾.

The directive has introduced an EU-wide 'right to re-use' (Art. 3) which means that all generally accessible public sector information has to be made reusable for commercial or non-commercial purposes upon request, leaving the public sector bodies no discretion in this regard.

The opening of public sector data for re-use is one of the preconditions for developing the European data economy and constitutes one of the actions included in the Digital Single Market Strategy. To this end, based on an evaluation of existing legislation and subject to an Impact Assessment, the Commission will prepare, in the spring of 2018, an initiative on accessibility and re-use of public and publicly funded data and further explore the issue of privately held data which are of public interest ⁽²⁾.

In parallel to updating the legal framework, the Commission continues to provide support to various initiatives aiming at facilitating access and discoverability of public data, in particular via the establishment of the European Data Portal ⁽³⁾ and the EU Open Data Portal ⁽⁴⁾, as well as by setting up an EU Open Data Incubator and the promotion of best practices in the field of re-use.

⁽¹⁾ As amended by Directive 2013/37/EU and complemented by Commission Notice 2014/C 240/01.

⁽²⁾ Communication on the Mid-Term Review on the implementation of the Digital Single Market Strategy COM(2017) 228 final.

⁽³⁾ <https://www.europeandataportal.eu/>

⁽⁴⁾ <https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/>