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Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
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Data can give insights that help combat emergencies, such as floods and wildfires, make our cities greener and help people live healthier lives. The existing Open Data Directive¹ already makes vast amounts of public sector data available for reuse for the benefit of society. Companies such as telecoms, social media companies or other online platforms, collect huge amounts of data in the context of their commercial activities that can also be very useful to public authorities to tackle societal challenges and to improve public services.

The high-level Expert Group on business-to-government (B2G) data sharing for the public interest was set up in 2018 to identify good practices on private-sector data sharing in B2G contexts and assess the obstacles preventing B2G data sharing. The report of this expert group was published on 19 February 2020, together with the European Strategy for Data. It contains a set of policy, legal and funding recommendations.

In its European strategy for data, the Commission announces a cross-sectoral governance framework for data access and use, in full respect of data protection legislation. B2G data sharing for the public interest is one of the issues that could be taken forward in a Data Act (2021), and this strand will also look at the availability of data collected by online platforms for use by public sector bodies for public interest reasons. Other specific issues concerning the availability and disclosure of data collected by platforms will be considered in the context of the Digital Services Act.

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/european-legislation-reuse-public-sector-information>