

Making it easier for citizens and businesses to do their paperwork online

- Key administrative procedures to be fully accessible online to all Europeans
- Examples include: birth certificates, car registration, permits for business activity and registering social security benefits
- Time and money saved for citizens and companies

A single digital gateway would help citizens and firms to access information and administrative procedures online, e.g. to request a birth certificate or register a car.

The proposal sets up a single digital entry point, available in all EU languages and to be integrated in the “[Your Europe](#)” portal. It would provide access and links to relevant national and EU websites and webpages, making it easier to find information, forms and assistance for people moving to or doing business in another EU country, but also for those staying at home.

Key procedures to be fully accessible online

Member states would be required to grant online access to the most important and frequently used procedures, such as requests for a birth certificate, car registration, permits for business activity or registering for social security benefits. The information would be available in at least one additional EU language, “broadly understood by the largest possible number of users”.

MEPs added new procedures to the 13 proposed by the EU Commission, including requesting a residence certificate, enrolling in a public university, requesting recognition of professional qualification, declaring income taxes, and also VAT registration for companies.

In “justified exceptional cases, of general security, public health or the fight against fraud”, member states could require the user to appear in person for a “procedural step” related, for instance, to the request or renew of a biometric passport or identity card.

User-friendly information

MEPs amended the proposal to make sure that the information, online procedures and assistance services provided are of high quality standards and accessible to users with disabilities. A user feedback tool would also be available.

“Once only” principle and data protection

The “once only” principle aims to ensure that citizens and businesses are asked to submit information only once to a public administration, which can then be re-used in other procedures, upon the user’s request. MEPs approved provisions to make sure that this principle is implemented in line with the new data protection rules.

Quote

[Marlene Mizzi](#) (S&D, MT), lead MEP on this file, said: “Easy access to improved online information, administrative procedures and problem-solving solutions are key elements for the success of the digital single market. People and companies often waste precious time and money tangled up in red tape, with information and procedures that are often scattered, incomplete and not transparent”.

“The gateway will be paramount when starting a business, accessing finances, taxation rules, accessing pensions’ rights and social benefits, as well as other information which citizens may need to access for their cross-border activities. It will also provide access to assistance and problem-solving services in case further help is needed. This is a new important step towards providing responsive, inclusive, border-less, user-friendly digital public services to citizens and businesses at national and European level”, she added.

Next steps

The committee's vote gives its negotiating team, led by Ms Mizzi, a mandate to start talks with EU Ministers in order to reach an agreement on the final law. The mandate was approved by 32 votes to three, with no abstentions.

Background

The single digital gateway proposal is part of the “compliance package”, aimed at enhancing the practical functioning of the EU single market. It builds on several existing schemes, which cover only a few fields, are not always interconnected, suffer from not being well known and are therefore underused.

This initiative would also incentivise EU countries to adopt e-government strategies to offer modern and efficient public services.

According to the European Commission, the proposal could help EU citizens save up to 855 000 hours of their time annually and companies could save more than EUR 11 billion per year.

Further information

[Procedure file: Single digital gateway](#)

[EP Research briefing](#)

[Your Europe portal](#)

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This initiative could help EU citizens save up to 855 000 hours of their time annually ©AP Images/European Union-EP