



eGovernment Benchmark 2022

Synchronising Digital Governments

INSIGHT REPORT

Written by Capgemini, Sogeti, IDC and Politecnico di Milano
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Networks, Content and Technology
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eGovernment Benchmark 2022 Insight Report

Synchronising Digital Governments

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Executive summary

The eGovernment Benchmark: Europe's Comparative Study into Digital Governments

Boosting the digital transformation of governments remains a top priority for the European Union. In pursuit of the [EU Digital Decade ambition](#), Europe aims to provide all key public services online by 2030. Investments and cornerstone policies are being put in place to make this happen. For example, Member States succeeded in allocating more than 26% of the spending under the [EU Recovery and Resilience Facility \(RRF\)](#) to the digital transition. Moreover, Europe has established the foundations for more human-centric digital initiatives, respecting European values, via the (proposed) [Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles](#).

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has put citizens, businesses and governments to the test. It has prompted Europe to rethink the value of digitalisation and how government services are delivered. Have governments been able to adapt and become more digitalised? The [eGovernment Benchmark](#) answers this question and compares how governments deliver digital public services. As an internationally recognised study, it looks at how government websites and portals for citizens and businesses continue to improve across Europe. This edition captures the digital transformation of governments in 2021 and 2020, during historical times of societal and economic resilience.

Analysing Digital Governments Through the Eyes of Citizens and Entrepreneurs

- The eGovernment Benchmark sheds light on eGovernment in [35 European countries](#), referred to as 'Europe' or the 'EU27+': the 27 European Union Member States , Iceland , Norway , Switzerland , Albania , Montenegro , North Macedonia , Serbia  and Türkiye .
- Citizens from the participating countries assessed digital government services. They visited and evaluated 14,252 websites between July and August 2021 and in October 2020, across [9 life events](#), related to key government domains.
- This study evaluates online public services on [four dimensions](#), which consist of 14 underlying indicators, broken down into 48 survey questions. The four dimensions can be described by the following key questions:

1. **User Centricity** – To what extent are services provided online? How mobile friendly are they? And what online support and feedback mechanisms are in place?
2. **Transparency** – Are public administrations providing clear, openly communicated information about how their services are delivered? Are they transparent about policy making and digital service design processes, as well as about the way people's personal data is being processed?
3. **Key Enablers** – What technological enablers are in place for the delivery of eGovernment services?
4. **Cross-Border Services** – How easily are citizens from abroad able to access and use the online services? And what online support and feedback mechanisms are in place for cross-border users?

Note that the method update of 2020 has led to a break in the series, which makes one-to-one comparisons with earlier reports impossible.

European Digital Governments at a Glance

1. For **User Centricity**, it is promising that more than eight out of ten government services, 81%, are now available online. By reusing data, 6% of the services are even delivered proactively, with no user effort required. Furthermore, 92% of government websites present information in a mobile-friendly way and 87% have a feedback function.
2. For **Transparency**, 58% of government portals inform users on whether and which of their personal data has been consulted and processed by public administrations, for example to verify whether a person is eligible for a public sector service. Further, less than half of the services, 43%, indicate how long it will take to complete an online procedure. Only one third of administrations actively invite users to have a say in digital service design.
3. For **Key Enablers**, two thirds of all services enable users to identify themselves online with the use of an official electronic identification solution (eID). Similarly, interoperable data systems help governments to pre-fill 67% of online application forms with information already known. More than three quarters of governments have implemented a digital mailbox solution and offer services where users can upload or obtain online documentation.
4. For **Cross-Border Services**, close to half of the services, 46%, can be completed online by non-nationals. Key obstacles are linguistic issues and the fact that only a quarter of the services accept eIDs from other European countries.

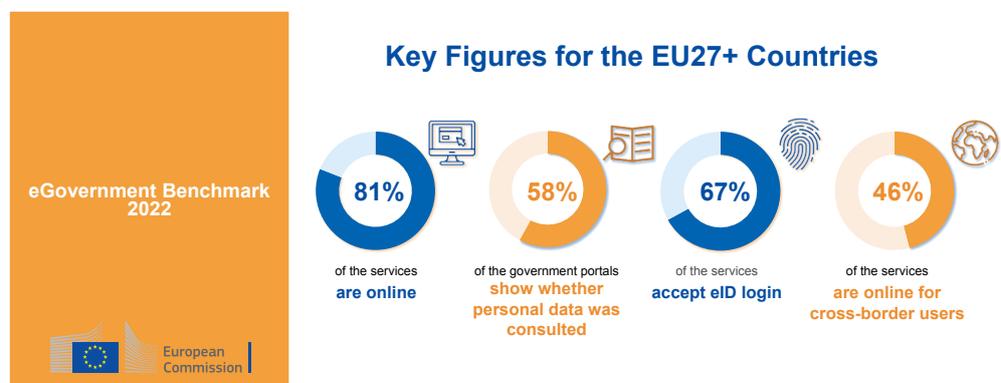


Figure 1: Overview of key figures (EU27+ biennial average)

Based on the four dimensions and 48 underlying survey questions, countries receive an **overall eGovernment maturity** score. This composite score ranges from 0% to 100%.

The European leaders are Malta  (96%) and Estonia  (90%). Their digital governments are the most user-centric, transparent, technologically enabled and open to users from other European countries. Other frontrunners are Luxembourg  (87%), Iceland  (86%), the Netherlands  (85%), Finland  (85%), Denmark  (84%), Lithuania  (83%), Latvia  (80%), Norway  (79%), Spain  (79%) and Portugal  (78%). The EU27+ overall performance averages 68%.

Key Policy Takeaways

European administrations have continued their digital service transformation during the coronavirus pandemic. However, public administrations cannot succeed alone. They need each other and their users, while **synchronising the digitalisation of public services**. Given Europe's strengths and weaknesses, three main challenges lie ahead:

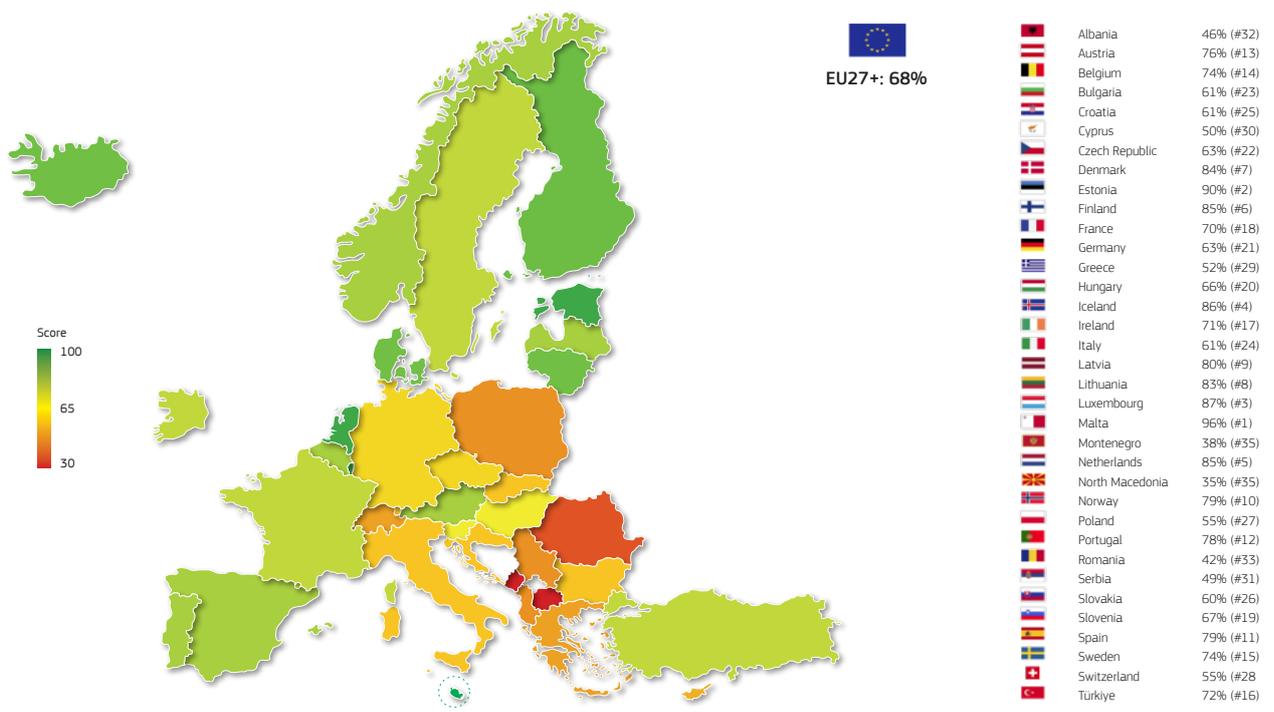


Figure 2 : Country overall eGovernment maturity (EU27+ biennial average)*

1. Rethink the user: with many different types of user to serve, user-centric design must meet each person's needs, including those with certain disabilities or with low digital skills. This study shows that governments can improve their provision of inclusive eGovernment services. Together, governments should:

- consider the needs of both **citizens and businesses**, for which currently 77% and 91%, respectively, of services are online;
- tailor services for **nationals as well as cross-border users**, who can complete 81% versus 46% of services digitally;
- ensure perceivable, operable, understandable and robust websites for **persons with disabilities**, as only 16% of the websites currently meet selected web accessibility criteria;
- serve users with **different devices**, as 77% of selected services are accessible online via desktop computers, while only 62% are accessible via smartphones and tablets, with lower eID, eDocuments, and Authentic Sources integration for mobile users;
- **co-create services** with users, currently done by one third of the governments, as well as raise awareness, simplify services, offer support and provide alternative channels to embrace eGovernment diversity, guided by European values and principles.

2. Realign the user journey: citizen and business life events often involve services from multiple government entities. Well-orchestrated government networks are needed to serve users along their entire journey. Joint next steps include:

- overcome service gaps across **multiple layers of government**. In Europe, 84% of all services provided by central government organisations are available online, while 71% of regional services and only 60% of local services can be completed digitally;
- leverage the **role of government** portals, through which 93% of all services can be found. This will enable users to complete all services related to their life event via single one-stop-shops. Breaking down departmental silos where possible and acting as one government with clear governance will ease end-to-end service delivery and ensure user journeys can be completed in full and all in one interaction.

* The method update of 2020 has led to a break in the series, which makes one-to-one comparisons with earlier reports impossible.

3. Reinforce the interoperability ambition: well-implemented and interoperable key enabling technologies build the foundations for the next generation of eGovernment. Public administrations, established IT providers, innovative start-ups and other innovators are urged to:

- promote **interoperable data exchange** to deliver more services proactively and increase the current level of just 6%. Connected and consistent systems also enable governments to pre-fill more online application forms with information already known, currently at 67%. Whenever personal data is reused in forms, this should be visible in more personal data monitoring solutions, currently available with 58% of governments.
- pave the way for **future eIDs**, for example by resolving login issues, as currently less than half, 46%, of the services allow a single sign-on. Moreover, users can login with their eID for three quarters of central government services, but only for about one third of regional and local administrations. Wider implementation of interoperable solutions will create a more consistent eGovernment experience for different users, different services providers, and across European countries.

Glossary of Key Terminology

eGovernment: electronic government (also digital government).

Dimensions: the four pillars against which indicators for eGovernment are aggregated and measured.

- 1. User Centricity:** the extent to which information and services are available online, supported online, and compatible with mobile devices.
- 2. Transparency:** the extent to which service processes are transparent, services are designed with user involvement, and users can manage their personal data.
- 3. Key Enablers:** the extent to which digital, tools such as electronic identification (eID), eDocuments, Authentic Sources and Digital Post solutions, enable identification and communication between a user and a government service.
- 4. Cross-Border Services:** the extent to which citizens and entrepreneurs from other European countries can access online information and services in a usable and integrated way through electronic identification and eDocuments.

Life event: a package of government services, usually provided by multiple agencies, that support citizens or entrepreneurs through key points of their lives, such as the birth of a child or starting of a business. The eGovernment Benchmark covers nine life events (government domains):

- Assessed in 2021: *Regular Business Operations, Health, Moving, Transport, Starting a Small Claims Procedure.*
- Assessed in 2020: *Business Start-Up, Career, Studying and Family.*

Life event services: services within a user journey for national and cross-border users.

- **Informational services:** services and procedures that provide users with adequate and personalised insight into their situation.
- **Transactional services:** services and procedures needed to fulfil the essential requirements of a life event, such as registration.
- **Portal websites:** eGovernment websites that gather and provide information and services from multiple public administrations, also known as one-stop-shops.
- **National users:** citizens and entrepreneurs that seek information and services in their own country.
- **Cross-border users:** citizens or entrepreneurs that seek information and services in a European country other than their own.

Method: the way in which we collected the data.

- **Mystery Shopping:** the primary type of data collection in the eGovernment Benchmark – a proven evaluation method that makes the user journey and experience the primary focus of attention.
- **Automated tools:** online tests through which websites are entered and assessed on a number of criteria.

1. Introducing the eGovernment Benchmark

*“The eGovernment Benchmark is key to **tracking continued improvements** in online public services.”*

European Commission, Directorate-General for
Communications Networks, Content and Technology



1. Introducing the eGovernment Benchmark

1.1. Resilient eGovernment

Coronavirus (COVID-19) has put citizens, businesses and governments to the test. It has prompted Europe to rethink the value of digitalisation and how government services are delivered. This study captures the **digital transformation of governments** in 2021 and 2020, during a crucial time of societal and economic resilience.

1.2. The eGovernment Benchmark: Europe's Comparative Study into Digital Governments

The **eGovernment Benchmark** compares how governments deliver digital public services across Europe. It has become an internationally recognised study that looks at how platforms for citizens, businesses, tourists and expat communities continue to improve.

This study evaluates online public services on four dimensions, with 14 underlying indicators and 48 related survey questions. The four dimensions can be described by the following key questions:

User Centricity – To what extent are services provided online? How mobile friendly are they? And what online support and feedback mechanisms are in place?

Transparency – Are public administrations clear about how their services are delivered? Are they transparent about policy making and digital service design, as well as the way people's personal data is being processed?

Key Enablers – What technological enablers support delivery of eGovernment services?

Cross-Border Services – How easily can citizens and entrepreneurs from abroad access and use the online services? And what online support and feedback mechanisms are in place for cross-border users?

Cross-Border Services – How easily can citizens and entrepreneurs from abroad access and use the online services? And what online support and feedback mechanisms are in place for cross-border users?

35 countries participated in the study. Throughout the report, these countries will be referred to as 'Europe' or the 'EU27+'. These countries are:

- The 27 European Union (EU) Member States 
- The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries: Iceland , Norway  and Switzerland 
- The European Union candidate countries: Albania , Montenegro , North Macedonia , Serbia  and Türkiye 

1.3. Analysing Performance in the Light of Policy Priorities

The eGovernment Benchmark methodology is linked to **European policy plans and actions**, which aim to further the EU's vision for a better digital future. These include:

- The [European Union's Digital Compass](#), which is part of the Digital Decade ambition and aims at 100% online provision of key public services by 2030.
- The [ministerial Berlin Declaration on Digital Society and Value-based Digital Government](#), which was signed by the ministers responsible for digital transformation in the public administration of the European Union Member States.
- The European Commission (proposed) [Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles](#), which empowers Europeans to fully enjoy the opportunities that the digital decade brings, driven by common European values.
- The [European Union Recovery and Resilience Facility](#), which mitigates the economic and social damage of the coronavirus pandemic by allocating more than 26% of the spending in recovery plans on the digital transition.

The eGovernment Benchmark Methodology in a Nutshell

To present an in-depth view on eGovernment performance, the analysis covers **95 services across nine life events** – sequences of digital services that the average citizen and business are likely to require.

Services around *Regular Business Operations, Health, Moving, Starting a Small Claims Procedure and Transport* were assessed in July and August 2021. Services related to *Business Start-Up, Career, Family and Studying* were analysed in August and September 2020. This report presents biennial findings, for **2021 and 2020**, which is the average of all nine life events.

Well-trained **Mystery Shoppers** – citizens from the participating countries – evaluated the life events by visiting and assessing government websites using a standardised survey with 48 questions.

Mystery Shoppers assessed **14,252 websites**: 8,491 websites and 804 portals from their own governments, as well as 4,155 cross-border websites and 802 portals from other European countries. Additional automated open tools shed light on *Mobile Friendliness, Findability, Accessibility Foundations and Cybersecurity*.

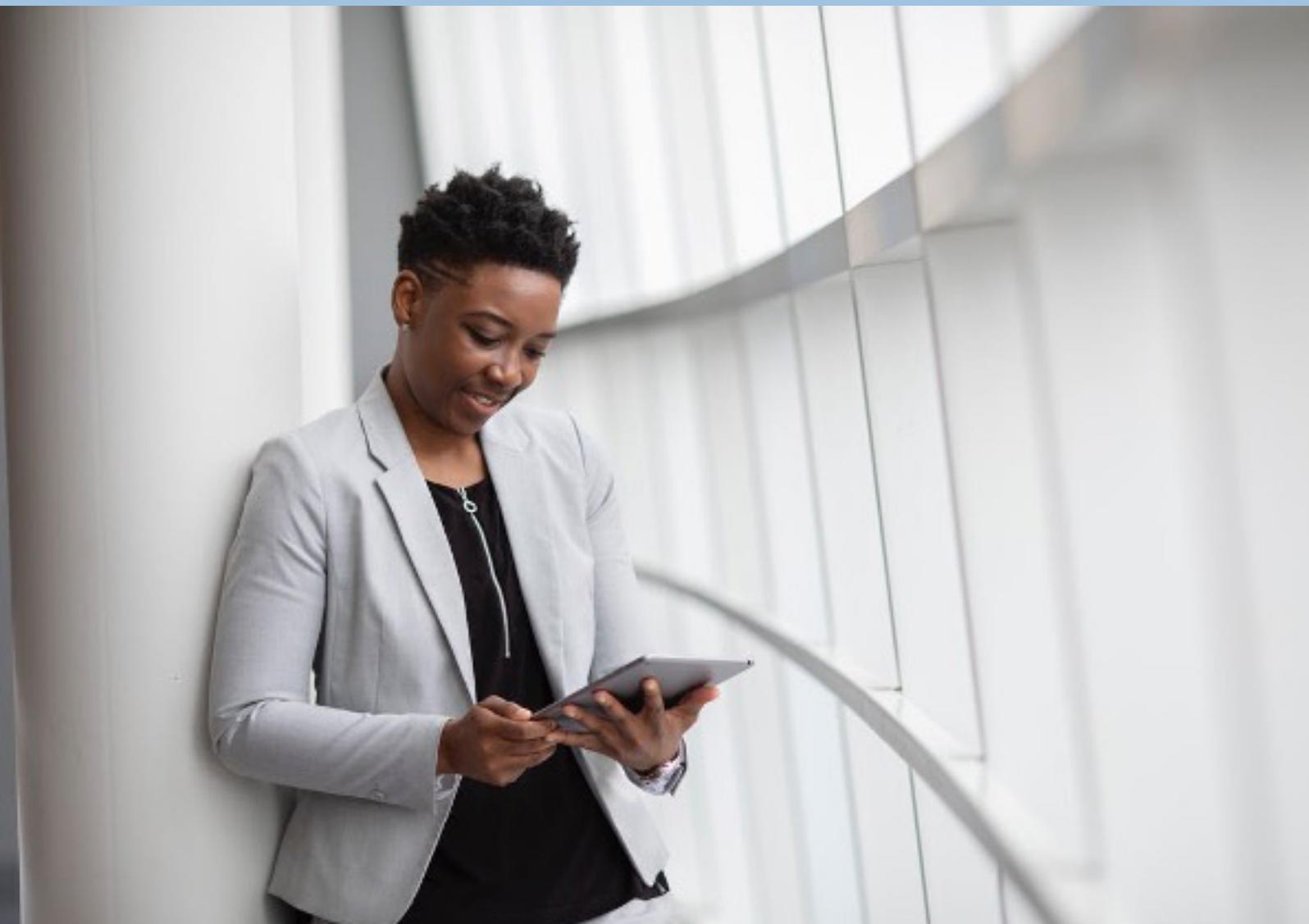
The study covers **2,852 public administrations**: 1,188 central, 426 regional and 1,238 local government bodies.

Importantly, method changes make a one-to-one comparison with results from earlier years impossible. The type and number of life event services changed and Transparency of Service Design questions were replaced with Transparency of Public Organisations questions. A full method description and a list of all services can be found in the separately published Method Paper.

2. Europe's State of Play

*"We want Europeans to know: living, studying, working, doing business in Europe, you can count on top class connectivity, **seamless access to public services**, a safe and fair digital space."*

Commissioner for the Internal Market, Thierry Breton



2. Europe's State of Play

2.1. Overall Maturity Driven by User Centricity

Where do European digital governments stand? The **overall eGovernment maturity** score averages the *User Centricity*, *Transparency*, *Key Enablers* and *Cross-Border Services* dimension scores. This composite score ranges from 0% to 100%.

As shown in figure 3, the European leaders are Malta 🇲🇹 (96%) and Estonia 🇪🇪 (90%). Their digital governments are the most user-centric, transparent, technologically enabled and open to users from other European countries. Other frontrunners are Luxembourg 🇱🇺 (87%), Iceland 🇮🇸 (86%), the Netherlands 🇳🇱 (85%), Finland 🇫🇮 (85%), Denmark 🇩🇰 (84%), Lithuania 🇱🇹 (83%), Latvia 🇱🇻 (80%), Norway 🇳🇴 (79%), Spain 🇪🇸 (79%) and Portugal 🇵🇹 (78%). The EU27+ overall performance averages at 68%.

The **User Centricity** dimension scores best. Its indicators of Online Availability, User Support and Mobile Friendliness (section 2.2), with 11

survey questions, score an average of 88%. Governments clearly put people at the centre of their digital transformations and successfully moved offline procedures online. The **Cross-Border Services** dimension lags behind the other dimensions. Its indicators of *Cross-Border Online Availability*, *Cross-Border User Support*, *Cross-Border eID* and *Cross-Border eDocuments* (section 2.5), with 10 survey questions, score an average of 54%. Governments do not yet offer seamless services to non-national users. The **Transparency** and **Key Enablers** dimensions sit in between, averaging 60% and 69%. The *Transparency* dimension covers the indicators of *Transparency of Service Delivery*, *Transparency of Personal Data* and *Transparency of Service Design* (section 2.3), with 16 survey questions. Transparency initiatives, such as service process descriptions, personal data monitoring tools and online user consultations are not yet widely available. The *Key Enablers* dimension consists of the indicators *eID*, *eDocuments*, *Authentic Sources* and *Digital Post* (section 2.4), with 11 survey questions. Users await progress in this

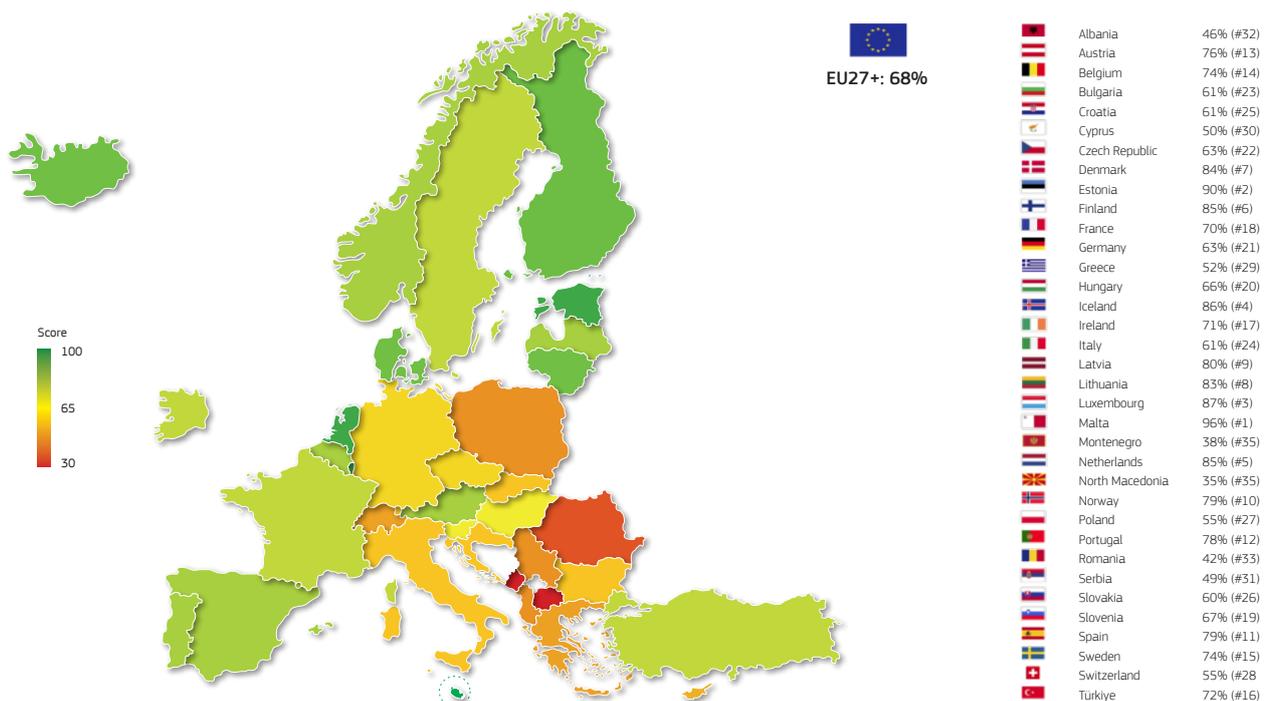


Figure 3 : Country overall eGovernment maturity (EU27+ biennial average)*

* The method update of 2020 has led to a break in the series, which makes one-to-one comparisons with earlier reports impossible.

2

The EU27 Member States Make Their Mark on the EU27+ Country Figures

- This report shows the findings of 35 countries, known as the EU27+: the EU27 Member States as well the European Free Trade Association countries Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, and the EU candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye. Whereas the EU27+ countries reach an overall eGovernment maturity score of 68%, the Member States are slightly ahead with 71%.
- Member States especially perform higher for *Cross-Border Services* than the full group of EU27+ countries (59% versus 54%). For example, *Cross-Border User Support* levels are 71% for the EU27 while 66% for the EU27+ countries, providing fewer help channels for international citizens and businesses. Also, the level of *Key Enablers* is higher for Member States than Europe as a whole (72% versus 69%). *Digital Post* solutions are available for 81% of the EU administrations and 76% for the EU27+ administrations, while other key enablers score comparably. The same goes for *Transparency* (63% and 60%), for which *Transparency of Personal Data* solutions in particular diverge (73% versus 69%). The *User Centricity* dimension is most widely matured, in the EU27 as well as the EU27+ countries (90% and 88%), especially visible with *Mobile Friendliness* (92% of websites adapt to mobile screens, in both geographies).

area to securely login, share documentation, fill in forms and communicate with their government, all digitally. **High-ranking** countries outperform the rest of Europe most notably in *Transparency* and *Cross-Border Services*. European countries display more similar results for *User Centricity* and *Key Enablers*.

2.2 User Centricity Excels

Government Portals: A Single Gateway.

Where do users start their eGovernment journey? They often visit an overarching government portal to find out how to obtain their service and whether they are eligible. Portal websites combine information on different types of services from multiple public organisations, also known as one-stop-shops.

Examples of portal websites in Europe

- Albania: e-albania.al
- Austria: oesterreich.gv.at
- Bulgaria: egov.bg
- Greece: gov.gr
- Luxembourg: guichet.lu
- Montenegro: euprava.me
- Poland: gov.pl
- Serbia: euprava.gov.rs
- Slovenia: https://www.gov.si/
- Turkey: turkiye.gov.tr

More than nine out of ten services can be found via a government portal (93%). In Estonia, Finland, Malta and Luxembourg all evaluated services can be reached via portal websites.

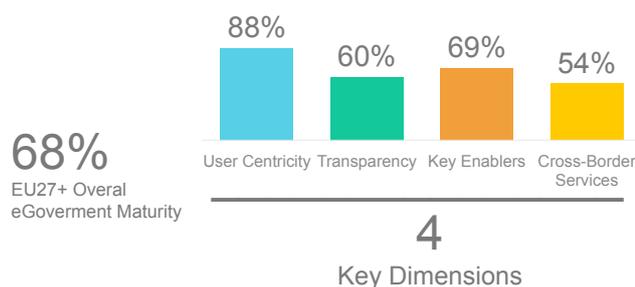


Figure 4 : Breakdown of overall eGovernment maturity into four dimensions (EU27+ biennial average)

Online Availability: Accessing Services 24/7

In Europe, **eight out of ten government services can be completed online (81%)**. Users obtain these services fully digitally, without the need to print application forms or visit a government service desk in person. In Malta , Denmark , Finland , Estonia  and Norway  citizens and businesses can complete more than 95% of the services online.

Governments could also provide services proactively. Proactive services require no action by users, rather governments anticipate user needs and deliver services to eligible persons before they are requested to do so. Proactive services are effortless for users and improve their experience. **Currently, 6% of the examined government services are delivered proactively.** In Croatia , the Netherlands , Austria  and Luxembourg  twice as many of the services are proactively delivered (11%, 13%, 14% and 16%).

User Support: Providing Online Help

When users need help to complete a service or want to provide feedback, they would benefit from user support channels.

Almost all government portals (97%) list the contact details of the responsible department,

Examples of proactive services in Europe

 Bulgaria: automatically sign out from previous municipality when moving places.

 Luxembourg: proactively deduct social contributions from business taxes.

 Greece: automatically forward electronic prescriptions from doctors to pharmacists.

such as a phone number or email address. Demonstration videos or live chat functionalities are also widely available (88%) so that users can help themselves or get a direct response from a web agent.

Feedback helps governments to find out what users like and want. Almost nine out of ten of the portals (87%) have a feedback function, allowing users to share their experiences. For more negative encounters, such as poorly functioning services or exceeded service delivery deadlines, users may want to file a complaint. A slightly lower number of government portals in Europe (83%) have an online complaint form.

A Strong Need for More Accessible Public Sector Websites

- Ensuring that all users can benefit from digital government solutions is at the heart of public sector service delivery nowadays. Using the **axe browser extension**, all 14,000 eGovernment websites of 2021 and 2020 were assessed on 8 of the 50 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 success criteria.
- Disappointingly, a vast majority (84%) of public sector websites are not compliant and violate one or more WCAG 2.1 criteria. Only 16% of the websites pass all 8 criteria and at least comply with part of the 50 criteria, with additional manual evaluations needed to verify full compliance. Websites often only achieve limited compliance with the perceivable criterion, for example because alternative texts for pictures are missing and colours lack contrast. This harms all users, especially those with visual disabilities. The websites are slightly more operable, understandable and robust than they are perceivable.
- Findings are relatively similar across the nine life events as well as across central, regional and local government levels. Country differences exist: about half of the websites in Denmark (53%), the Netherlands (44%) and Austria (44%) meet these 8 criteria.

2

Mobile Apps and Services Less Functional than Desktop Services

- 18 services from the nine life events were piloted on a mobile device to assess mobile service delivery and make a comparison with the performance of the same services on computers. This analysis covered 2,068 mobile apps / mobile-responsive websites.
- 92% of government websites adapt static content to mobile devices. However, underlying dynamic service modules and native mobile applications do not offer the same desktop functionalities.
- Across Europe, only 62% of the services can be fully completed on a mobile device, compared to 77% for computer users accessing the same selection of 18 services. The mobile journey is limited due to lower eID integration (60% on mobile devices versus 66% on computers), poor ability for eDocuments to be uploaded or obtained (69% versus 75% on computers) and fewer online application forms containing pre-filled personal data (57% versus 64%), especially relevant for mobile users, where small touchscreens make repeatedly entering information inconvenient.

Mobile Friendliness: Offering Portable eGovernment

Some users prefer a desktop; others prefer their mobile device, such as smartphones and tablets. Portable devices promote flexibility and allow users to interact with their government while out and about.

The font size and lay-out of almost all websites adjust to mobile screens so that information is easy to read (92%, risen from 68% three years ago). This shows that mobile has become a default. In Sweden  all government websites are mobile compatible.

2.3. Transparency Remains a Missed Opportunity for Building Trust

Transparency of Service Delivery: Managing User Expectations

What can users expect from their government when requesting a service and what do governments expect from their users? A clearly described service process promotes eGovernment that everyone can understand.

Knowing how long an application process will take helps users to plan and complete their applications. Despite the importance, less than half of the services indicate how long it will

take the users to fill in the application form (43%). Delivery timelines could be clearer too: for 57% of services, the expected day to receive an outcome is indicated. Even fewer services indicate user satisfaction levels, completion rates or other performance statistics (34%).

Transparency of Personal Data: Keep the User in Control

Personal data, such as date of birth and address, build a user's digital fingerprint. This data is confidential and users should know what personal information the government holds on them and when their data is used in the provision of a service.

Currently, 18% of European government portals provide no information whatsoever about the use of personal data by the government. 24% explain in general terms who is authorised to use personal data and for which purposes. A slight majority of government platforms offer more specific personal data monitoring options (58%): 18% of governments inform users whether their data has been consulted, 16% display whether and when data was consulted, 16% whether, when and by whom data was retrieved and 8% specify whether, when and by whom their personal data was consulted and for which purpose.

Transparency of Service Design: Co-creating Digital Services

Citizen consultation and participation channels help users to understand policy as well as digital service design. Based on this, they can choose to have their say, if they wish to.

Almost all public organisations (96%) are transparent about how policy is being made and half (52%) engage with citizens in these policy-making processes via public consultations. Clarity on how digital public services are being designed is often missing. Only half (54%) of administrations provide information about how they design digital services and explain what processes, panels, expert groups and stakeholders are involved. Only one third (33%) of administrations actively invite users to have a say in digital service design by organising online workshops, brainstorming at service-design events or conducting usability surveys.

In contrast to the low European levels of policy and service design, Ireland , Iceland , Luxembourg , Malta  and the Netherlands  offer service design participation options throughout all nine life events. These countries manage to use digital technologies to stimulate citizen engagement and policy participation.

2.4. Key Enablers Becoming Mainstream

When citizens interact digitally with their government, they need to prove their identity in a secure manner, provide authenticated documentation, fill in forms, and receive notifications. *Key Enablers* – eIDs, eDocuments, Authentic Sources and Digital Post – ease this process.

eID: The Key to Accessing Digital Government Services

eIDs, or electronic identification solutions, are like online passports. People use their eID to prove who they are online. With electronic identification, users no longer need to physically present themselves at government service desks to verify their identity. Moreover, authorised eIDs are considered more secure than a basic online username and password.

Examples of national eID solutions across Europe

-  France: [France Connect](#)
-  Italy: [Public Digital Identity System \(SPID\)](#)
-  Slovenia: [Mobile Identity smsPASS](#)
-  Switzerland: [Swiss ID](#)

Out of the services that require identification, **67% allow for online identification with an official national eID**. These trusted digital identities could give access to an additional one third of online services. Besides national eIDs, 11% of the services require logins via other online government mechanisms (e.g. organisation-specific account and password,

Time to Turn Website Security into a Trust Enabler

- Governments are expected to protect the interests of citizens and businesses against data breaches and cybersecurity threats. Using the [Internet.nl test](#) and the [Mozilla Observatory test](#), government websites were assessed on 14 cybersecurity criteria.
- Worryingly, less than 1% of the tested government websites pass all 14 security criteria. In particular, only 2% of websites prevent a wide range of cross-site scripting and clickjacking attacks (Content Security Policy) and only 3% ensure a secure HTTPS connection to prevent third parties from reading or changing content sent between the user and the website. Fortunately, almost all websites, above 95%, prevent foreign sites from reading the site's content and accessing private user information (Cross-origin Resource Sharing), protecting against unauthorised issuance of certificates (HTTP Public Key Pinning) and minimising privacy risks (Referrer Policy).

2

national registration or tax number), 1% allow private sector mechanisms (e.g. eBanking token). One fifth (21%) of the services require offline identification, for which users need to show their identity card in person.

Europe's eID frontrunners are Iceland 🇮🇸, Denmark 🇩🇰, Estonia 🇪🇪, Finland 🇫🇮, Norway 🇳🇴, Malta 🇲🇹 and Lithuania 🇱🇹, where more than 90% of the services can be accessed using the national eID.

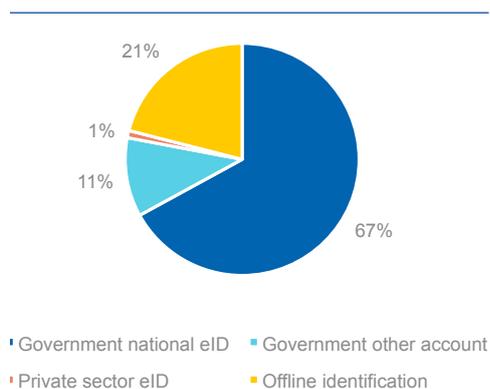


Figure 5: Percentage of identification modes (EU27+ biennial averages)

When logged in online, **less than half of the services (46%) allow a single sign-on**. Without it, users need to re-authenticate when switching between websites of different authorities within one life event journey. This hampers seamless, secure and interoperable access across different government service providers.

eDocuments: Uploading and Obtaining Digital Files

eDocuments, or electronic documents, are official government forms and certificates. Some services require users to upload a document, such as legal evidence. Other services result in the receipt of an official document, such as a diploma or proof of residence that users wish to obtain in a digital format. Uploading and obtaining documentation online saves time and money on printing and mailing paper documentation, while contributing to more sustainable public administrations.

Currently, nearly eight out of ten services (77%) allow for uploading or obtaining online documentation. In Iceland 🇮🇸 online documentation can be uploaded or obtained for all relevant services.

Authentic Sources: Pre-filling Data to Ease Online Form Applications

Every time citizens and entrepreneurs fill in an online government form, they provide information. A full name, address and contact details are commonly requested. Users expect that this personal information will not need to be collected multiple times. Governments can reuse data stored in Authentic Sources or base registries to meet this expectation.

Two thirds of the online forms in Europe are pre-filled with information from Authentic Sources (67%). In Lithuania 🇱🇹 and the Netherlands 🇳🇱, more than nine out of ten online forms contain prepopulated data, which reduces the time to complete the form and minimises typing errors. Proactively delivered services are also candidates for pre-fill information, albeit via back-end systems, removing the need for the user to fill in forms.

Digital Post: Communicate Faster in One Place

Communication is key for effective eGovernment. Users want to be informed, for example, about the latest status of a service request. Governments can use Digital Post solutions as a digital enabler to communicate with their users. This ensures all government letters are available in a single online environment. This paperless solution also supports governments' sustainability commitments.

Examples of Digital Post solutions in Europe

-  Belgium: [My eBox](#)
-  Ireland: [Digital Postbox](#)
-  Norway: [e-Boks and Digipost](#)
-  Slovakia: [Slovensko Electronic Mailbox](#)
-  Sweden: [Digimail, e-Boks, Kivra and Min myndighetspost](#)
-  The Netherlands: [Berichtenbox](#)

Today, more than three quarters of government organisations allow their users to receive letters via email rather than post (76%). Austria , Czech Republic , Denmark , Estonia , Finland , Hungary , Iceland , Latvia , Lithuania , Luxembourg , Malta , the Netherlands , Norway , and Türkiye  have implemented a digital post-box across all nine life events.

2.5. Cross-Border Services Are Overlooked

Cross-Border Online Availability: Accessing Services across Europe

In addition to services for nationals, European governments provide services to cross-border users, people with other nationalities who want to live, work, study or enjoy a vacation abroad. Cross-border users may prefer to access foreign government systems in another language, with their own eID and online if they still reside across the border. In Europe, less than half (46%) of services are accessible for international users.

Examples of cross-border service provision in Europe

-  Estonia: both Estonian commuters and tourists from other countries can file a public transport refund online in the event of delays.
-  Malta: as well as Maltese entrepreneurs being able to register address changes, international businesses can notify the Maltese government online whenever relocating to a new office.

Cross-Border User Support: Assisting International Users

Users interacting with a foreign government may face unfamiliar languages and need special support. **User support functionalities** help cross-border users to get the help they need. 83% of portal websites have a help functionality for international users in place. However, complaint procedures are only available on half of the portals (53%).

Cross-Border eID: Borderless Online Identification

Ideally, national eIDs should give access to online services in both someone's own country and any other European Union Member State, just like a physical passport.

Since 29 September 2018, all EU citizens with notified eIDs, according to the [eIDAS Regulation rules](#), should be able to use their national eID for accessing online public services in other Member States. Currently, 14 Member States have one or multiple notified eIDs, which should be accepted elsewhere.

Currently, only a quarter of the services (24%) provide access with **eIDs from multiple European countries**. More promisingly, in Lithuania  and Luxembourg , more than two thirds of the services (68% and 72%) accept foreign eIDs, for instance, from Latvian and German citizens.

Cross-Border eDocuments: Online Files across Borders

Document requirements can also differ for international users. For cross-border users, submitting and obtaining relevant documentation is possible for half of the services (48%). In other cases, users need to submit or obtain paper documentation or first need to translate their certificates, diplomas or proof of residence before they are accepted by the foreign government.

Three eGovernment Components Are Covered in the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI)

A selection of eGovernment Benchmark numbers feed into the European Commission's [Digital Economy and Society Index \(DESI\)](#).

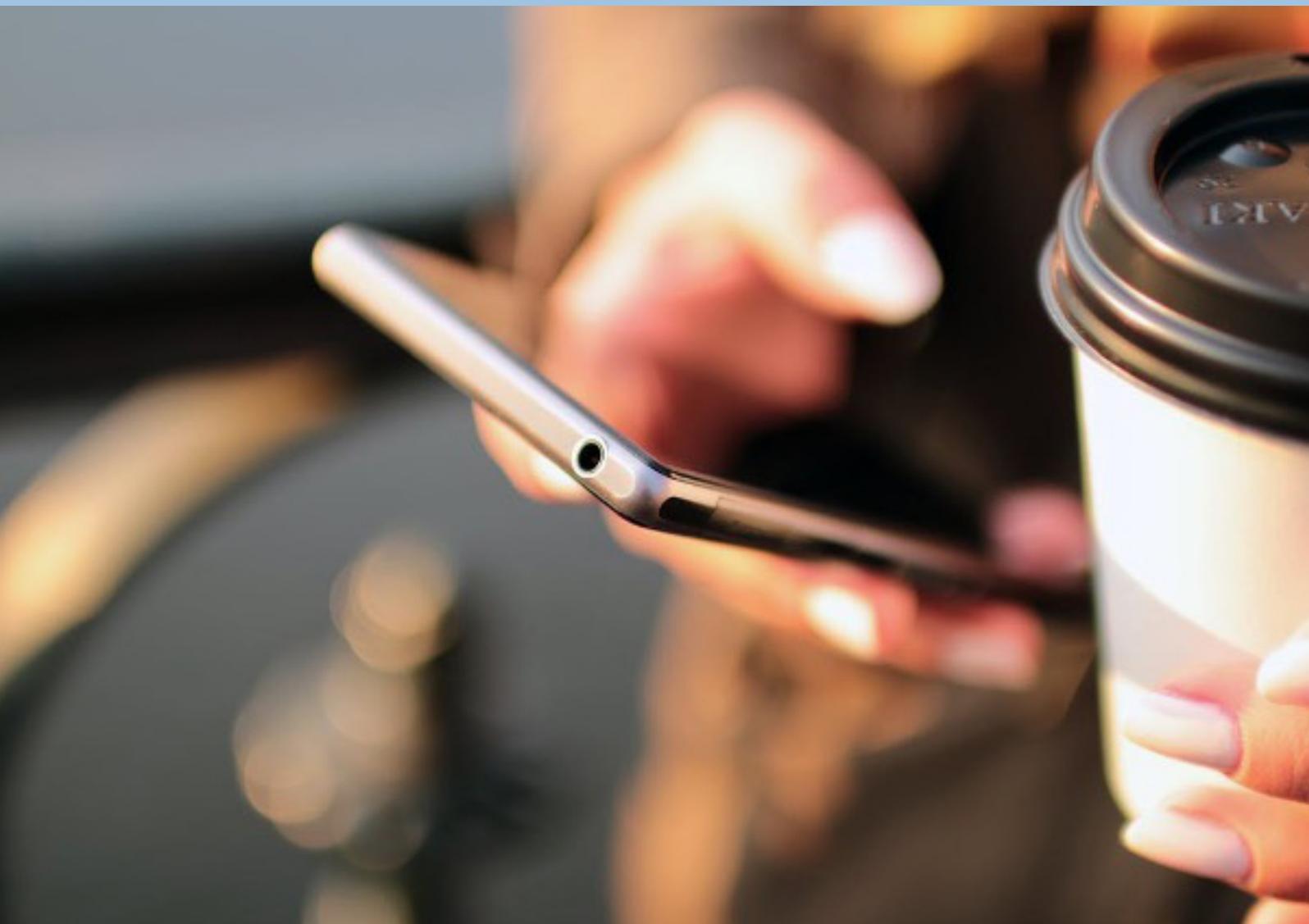
This composite index is the main tool used by the European Union and its Member States to track digitalisation successes. It consists of four key areas: *Human Capital*, *Connectivity*, *Integration of Digital Technology* and *Digital Public Services*. Three indicators of the Digital Public Services dimension capture eGovernment Benchmark results

- *Pre-Filled Forms* (DESI indicator 4a2): stands at 65% for the EU27 Member States, directly based on the eGovernment Benchmark indicator *Authentic Sources*. This means that more than six out of ten online forms requiring personal information pre-fill these fields based on data already known by the government.
- *Digital Public Services for Citizens* (DESI indicator 4a3): stands at 75% for the EU27 Member States, based on the eGovernment Benchmark indicators of *Online Availability* and *Cross-Border Online Availability* for all citizen-related life events. This means that most services in the life events of *Career*, *Studying* and *Family*, as well as *Health*, *Moving*, *Starting a Small Claims Procedure* and *Transport*, can be fully completed online with sufficient information and can be reached via main government portals.
- *Digital Public Services for Businesses* (DESI indicator 4a4): stands at 82% for the EU27 Member States, based on the eGovernment Benchmark indicators of *Online Availability* and *Cross-Border Online Availability* for all business-related life events. This means that most services in the areas of *Business Start-Up* and *Regular Business Operations* can be fully completed online with sufficient information and can be reached via main government portals

3. Key Trends in Government Digitalisation

*“Technology should **serve and benefit all Europeans** and empower them to pursue their aspirations.”*

European Commission, Declaration on European Digital Rights and Principles (proposed)



3. Key Trends in Government Digitalisation

Some trends in government digitalisation stand out this year. The following sections show the most relevant topics and developments.

3.1. COVID-19: An Accelerator for Digital Governments

Since the start of 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has disrupted many facets of society and the economy. Citizens have been required to work from home as much as possible and businesses have found new ways to engage with their employees when face-to-face contact is scarce. The pandemic has also challenged governments' ability to adapt. How has government adapted to COVID-19 and what impact has the pandemic had on digital service delivery?

In the past two years, many services no longer required a visit to a government service desk, enabling citizens and entrepreneurs to interact with the government from the safety of their homes. However, further progress is required to digitally transform governments.

Nonetheless, some areas have improved rapidly. This is especially the case for citizens moving from one place to another (within their country or to another country) and for people wanting to start a small claim procedure to settle a dispute. In both cases, they have reaped the benefits of accelerated government digitalisation.

Moving services have accelerated the most. In eight out of ten countries, citizens could register themselves online in their new municipality after moving (81%, compared to 73% two years ago). Moreover, local and central government websites increasingly provide information in English to foreign citizens who consider moving there. In almost nine out of ten countries, citizens can find their rights and obligations for moving to their new home country online (86%, was 72% two years ago).

Example of an online moving service during COVID-19

+ Switzerland: people residing in Switzerland can register a house move via [eMovingCH](#). Since the outbreak of the pandemic, the number of address changes processed has doubled to about 300 daily, half of which are made via mobile devices. Within minutes, notifications are sent to the commune of departure and arrival. Residents no longer have to visit two separate service desks. The portal is available in four languages.

The pandemic has also spurred an increase in the number of online services for **Starting a Small Claims Procedure**. Six out of ten countries enable citizens to appeal against a court decision online,

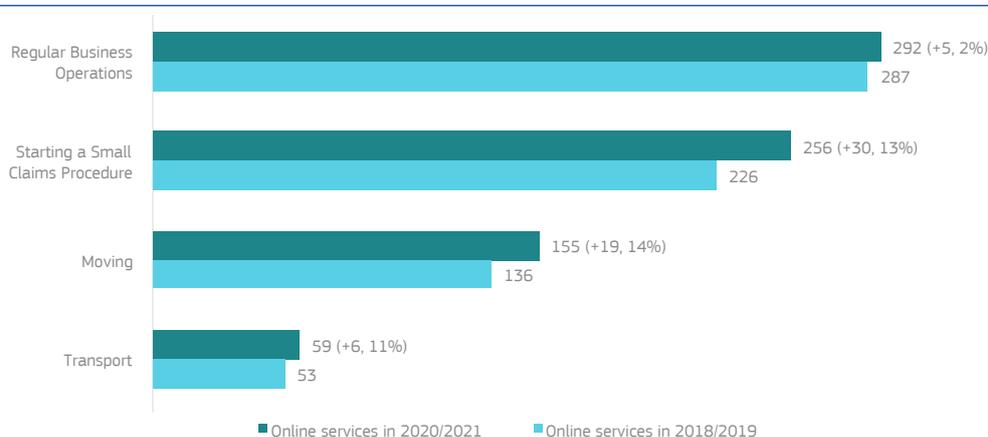


Figure 6. Number of newly added national and cross-border online services between 2019 and 2021, analysed for services that were measured both under the 2016-2019 method as well as the renewed 2020-2023 method (EU27+, per life event)

up from five in ten, two years ago. Furthermore, citizens who want to start a small claims procedure in another European country can increasingly find information in English to help them understand procedural steps for starting their claim, either online or offline (61%, up from 54% two years ago).

Transport services have moved online at a reasonable pace. For example, in many countries, cities are offering parking permits online. Two years ago, citizens could apply for a parking permit in 55% of countries, with this increasing to 64% in 2021.

A similar level of growth in newly-added services has not been reached for **Regular Business Operations** services: digitalisation levels for entrepreneurs only improved slightly. Since services for business owners were already digitalised to a large extent, rapid improvements are a bigger challenge for governments than the other, less digital, domains.

An interesting fact in light of the pandemic is that it has become slightly easier for entrepreneurs to register the illness of their employees than it was two years ago, although the difference is minor (83% versus 82%). Lives of entrepreneurs that own a small or medium-sized enterprise in another country have been made easier with the digitalisation of appeal processes for VAT decisions (currently online in 55% of the countries, compared to 50% two years ago).

3.2. New eGovernment Frontiers: health related online services for citizens

As citizens in Europe become older, the amount of healthcare they require increases. European governments want to provide citizens with access to safe and top-quality digital services in health and care. The European Commission acknowledges the relevance of eHealth in the digital transformation of governments and included the target that all citizens must have access to medical records online in the [Digital Compass](#). Moreover, the [Commission published a Communication on the Digital Transformation of Health and Care](#), which identifies three priorities.

1. **Citizens' secure access to their health data, including across borders**, enabling citizens to access their health data across the EU.
2. **Personalised medicine through shared European data infrastructure**, allowing researchers and other professionals to pool resources (data, expertise, computing processing and storage capacities) across the EU.
3. **Citizen empowerment with digital tools for user feedback and person-centred care** using digital tools to empower people to look after their health, stimulate prevention and enable feedback and interaction between users and healthcare providers.

2021 was the first year that data about health-related services was collected for the eGovernment Benchmark. The research finds that administrative procedures around healthcare, such as looking for information about where and how you can get healthcare, are to a large extent digitalised, but primary processes within hospitals, such as scheduling appointments and e-consultations are still in their infancy. These results hold for national as well as cross-border citizens.

In eight out of ten countries (77%), citizens can easily find information online about where they can access healthcare. Similarly, information about licenses and registrations of specific doctors is also readily available online (91%). Citizens that are looking for information about healthcare in a country other than their own are facilitated online in six out of ten countries (61%).

Finding information is, of course, the first step when obtaining healthcare services. After that, citizens might want to schedule an appointment, which can be done online in eight out of ten countries (79%). Non-national citizens can only use this service in three out of ten countries (34%), citing a lack of English information on hospital websites as the biggest reason.

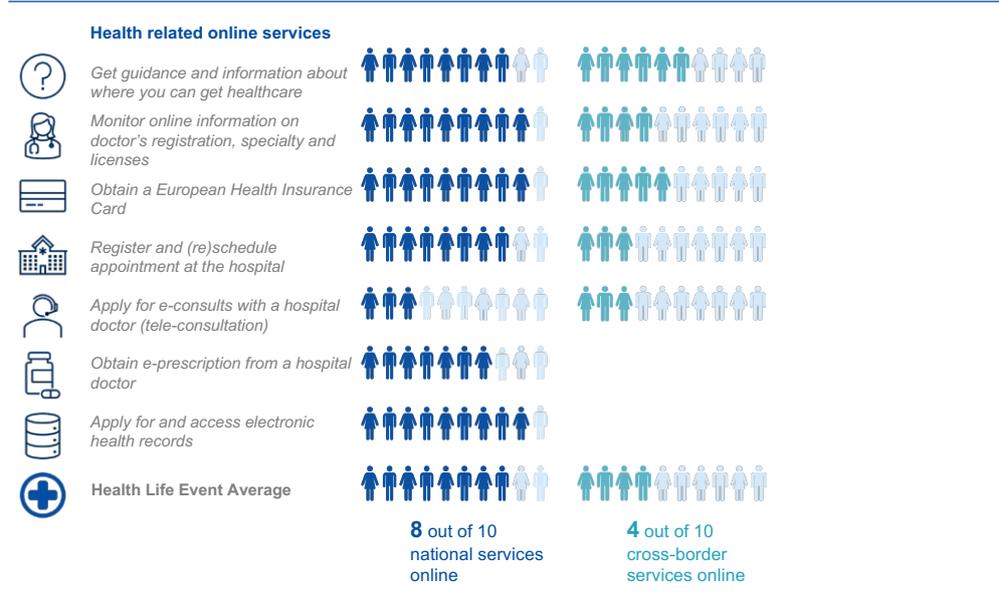


Figure 7 Availability of national and cross-border services for Health life event (EU27+ averages)

Prescriptions for medicines are also increasingly digitalised. Seven out of ten countries (74%) use ePrescriptions and several countries have automated the related services entirely for their citizens. A citizen only needs to show their identity card at the pharmacy for the pharmacist to use the system to identify which medicines the doctor has prescribed.

Lastly, in almost **nine out of ten countries (88%) citizens can apply for and access their personal health records online**. However, the completeness of these online health records differs. In some countries, citizens can access their entire medical history, whereas others only present minimal information about vaccinations and medical visits.

3.3. Local and Regional Government Bodies can learn from Central Government

European citizens and entrepreneurs interact with their government on different levels depending on the type of services, or the delegation of legal responsibilities in a country. They interact with their local (e.g. a municipal office), regional (e.g. a province or university), or national (e.g. a ministry

or national agency) government to meet varying needs and obligations. However, the maturity of digitalisation differs across these three government levels. With a few exceptions, **central government service providers are more digitally mature than their local and regional counterparts**. And subsequently, regional governments often outperform local governments.

Example of integrating central, regional and local service via a portal website

 Denmark: The Danish portal website borger.dk is an internet platform and one-stop shop where citizens can find a wide range of services, delivered by multiple service providers, both central and local. Citizens access services related to family matters, education, health, pensions, unemployment benefits, etc. Most of the services are delivered on the portal, but in some instances the portal links to the appropriate webpage from the service provider. The portal is linked to the Danish eID solution and offers a digital mailbox where citizens can safely correspond with their central and local government organisations.

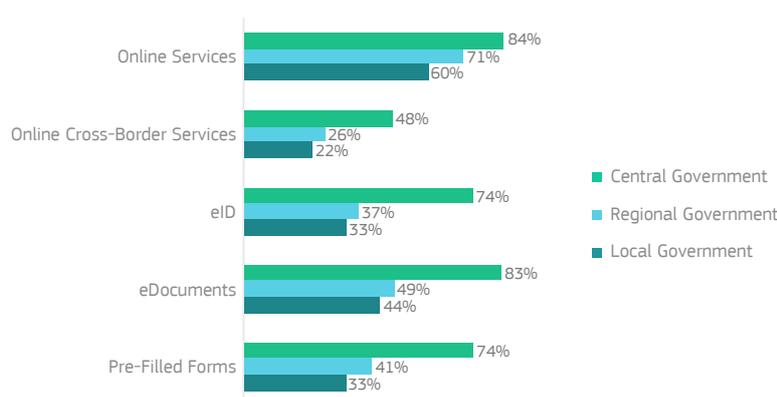


Figure 8. The percentage of (cross-border) services available online, supported by key enablers (EU27+ biennial average)

In Europe, **84% of all services provided by central government organisations are available online**, while 71% of regional services and only 60% of local services can be completed digitally.

The gap is even more striking for *Key Enablers*. Users can login with their eID for three out of four services delivered by central government, which dwarfs the share of services where authentication with eID is possible for regional (37%) and local governments (33%). A similar picture can be seen in the use of eDocuments, which is possible for eight out of ten central government services, but for less than half of all services delivered by regional and local governments.

Data reuse from Authentic Sources by regional and local services also lags behind the data reused by central governments: 74% of central government online forms are pre-filled with information already known via other services, which is substantially more than for regional government services (41%) and local government services (33%).

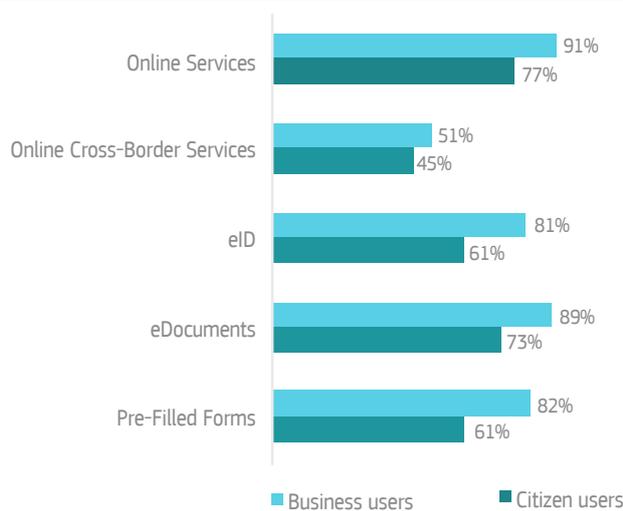
There are, of course, some exceptions to the rule that central governments outperform regional and local governments. Countries where the three governmental levels move at the same pace, with slightly more regional or local services available online than central ones, are Denmark 🇩🇰, Iceland 🇮🇸, the Netherlands 🇳🇱, Poland 🇵🇱 and Slovakia 🇸🇰. A high level of digitalisation of local and regional governments is often an accurate indication of good eGovernment in general.

3.4. Entrepreneurs and businesses are better facilitated than citizens in their online interactions with public authorities

Digital governments offer a broad range of services to a diverse group of individuals. These individuals may interact with the government on their own behalf, as citizens, or as entrepreneurs representing their company. **Digital services are more often online for entrepreneurs than for citizens**. In general, provision of eGovernment services is more mature for entrepreneurs than for citizens.

Currently, **91% of services for business owners are available online compared to 77% for citizens**. For cross-border services, the divide is less stark and there is still a lot of ground to gain for both business and citizen services. Slightly more than half of the services for cross-border businesses are available online (51%), compared to a little less than half of the services for cross-border citizens (45%).

Looking at the *Key Enablers*, which serve as building blocks to ease and secure digital services, we find a larger difference between services for citizens and services for businesses. Entrepreneurs can use their eID for eight out of ten services compared to six out of ten for citizens. Similarly, **entrepreneurs can obtain and submit online documents more often than citizens** (in 89% of cases for businesses versus 73% for citizens). Information is pre-filled for 82% of services for businesses and 61% for citizen life events.



Not all citizen life events lag as far behind the business life events. For example, more than eight out of ten services in the *Transport, Moving and Studying* domains are online in Europe, while only 63% of *Family* services can be arranged digitally. Further, in the *Moving* life event, the implementation of eID, eDocument and Authentic Sources solutions performs more like the business life events in comparison to the least performing *Starting a Small Claims Procedure* services for consumers settling a dispute.

The higher prevalence of online business services compared to citizen services is visible across all European countries, except for Iceland 🇮🇸

Figure 9: The percentage of services available online, supported by key enablers (EU27+ biennial average)

What we Measure for Businesses

- **Regular Business Operations (2021):** For experienced entrepreneurs, we assess corporate tax declaration and submission of financial reports via digital channels. We check for information on working conditions for employees, and whether businesses can change employee status online.
- **Business Start-Up (2020):** For citizens that want to start a business, we assess the administrative steps to register a new company. We also evaluate whether users can obtain a tax registration number online and how easily they can find mandatory insurance schemes. Early trading activities, such as hiring employees and requesting permits, are measured too.

What we Measure for Citizens

- **Starting a Small Claims Procedure (2021):** For citizens involved in an accident, we assess whether they can find information online about how to make a legal claim and whether they can do so online. It also includes consideration of how to appeal online.
- **Transport (2021):** For car owners, we assess whether information on vehicle taxes, insurance and registration obligations is available online; whether it is possible to verify information on second-hand vehicles in the car registry; and whether fines and duties relating to a private car can be settled online.
- **Moving (2021):** For families moving into a new residence, we assess what online information is available on local schools and amenities; whether it is possible to register the new address in the municipality online; and whether other relevant authorities are notified automatically.
- **Health (2021):** for citizens that need healthcare, we measure services related to obtaining basic healthcare, searching relevant healthcare providers, applying for the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), e-consultations and medical records.
- **Career (2020):** For citizens who lose their job, we assess whether they can register as unemployed online; whether information on unemployment benefits and entitlements are available; and whether these can be applied for online. Similarly, assistance services for finding a job are assessed, along with information on retirement as well as online pension claims.
- **Studying (2020):** For students, we assess the enrolment process in university programmes in the country of origin and abroad; whether application procedures for student loans and other financing schemes are available; and if, for students already enrolled, they can track grades online.
- **Family (2020):** For parents, we assess applying for child maintenance allowance online; obtaining parental authority for unmarried partners; and requesting a passport or replacement birth certificate.

3.5. Cross-border services not yet on a par with services for national users

During the pandemic, all travel restrictions and check controls became stricter, while the use of the digital highway was more important than ever as travel to other countries became unfeasible. In this respect, digital governments are a catalyst for European citizens who want to live, work, do business or study in another European country. Consequently, European economies and Europe's [Digital Single Market](#) in general profit from governments that cater for multi languages, foreign eIDs and other preferences of international users.

Currently, **less than half of all digital services are available online for international users (46%), whereas more than eight out of ten services (81%) for national users can be completed online.** What are the main reasons for the service gap between national and cross-border users? Which barriers should be lifted to give international users the same level of digital services as national users?

The first and most visible barrier to lift is **a lack of information for international users in a language they understand.** Currently, 68% of all government services do not have a translation feature on their websites to help the cross-border user understand the service. Further, four out of ten government websites lack specific information for international users.

Governments should clearly describe how cross-border users can obtain services without having a national eID, without a place of residence in the country concerned or, for example, without a permanent working permit.

Another barrier that should be lifted to facilitate cross-border digital services is that many public service providers only accept eIDs from their own country. Whereas national citizens can authenticate with eID for two out of three services (67%), **only one in four (24%) services enable access with eIDs from other European countries.**

Yet another barrier is that 52% of the services do not allow users to upload or obtain their **eDocuments**, such as, certificates, diplomas and proof of residence. Moreover, one in five (19%) cross-border services cannot be completed online due to issues with **translation or recognition of required documents.**

The final barrier is that, in one out of four services, **face-to-face contact is required** (excluding services for which physical appearances are legally obligatory, such as issuing a passport). For Europeans who do not live in the country they want to obtain a service in, this requires an extra effort

Often, cross-border users encounter multiple barriers at once. In almost two-thirds of cases (63%), cross-border services had more than one barrier. Clearly, successfully clearing removing one barrier will not automatically pave the way to seamless digital services for international citizens.

Online services for national citizens are more mature than for cross-border citizens in all European countries. The number of online national and cross-border services differs least in Luxembourg , Malta , Estonia , Latvia , Ireland  and Cyprus . It should be noted that Ireland has an advantage in this regard because the government websites are already in English, which makes them easier to understand for foreign users.

Single Digital Gateway Regulation 

After adopting the [Single Digital Gateway Regulation](#) in 2018, the European Commission and Member States have been building the [Your Europe](#) portal. It gives cross-border users information on how EU rules apply across EU countries. By the end of 2023, Your Europe will offer access to 21 online procedures in all EU countries. These 21 services, earmarked in the Regulation's Annex II, are slightly ahead than other services. Whereas 81% of the EU27+ services can be completed online by nationals and 46% by cross-border users, the Single Digital Gateway related services average 84% and 47%. To realise full digital journeys across borders, more of these services are expected to become online in 2022 and 2023.

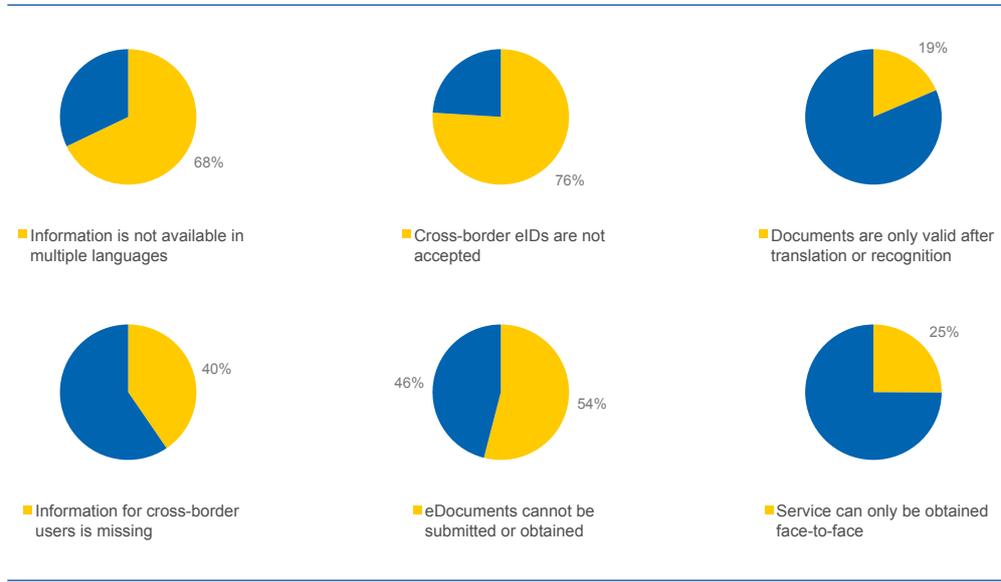


Figure 10. The percentage of cross-border barriers (EU27+ biennial average)

4. Key Policy Takeaways

*“We believe in a **human-centred** digital transition.”*

European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen



4. Key Policy Takeaways

European administrations have continued their **digital transformation** during the pandemic. Eight out of ten services can be fully completed online (81%). These services keep citizens and businesses up and running and will contribute to Europe's societal and economic recovery. At the same time, some services persist offline, lack transparency, miss the support of key enabling technologies, or are unavailable across borders. In relation to the strengths and weaknesses of Europe's digital governments, three main challenges lie ahead.

4.1. Challenge 1 - Rethink the User: Embracing eGovernment Diversity

There are many different types of users. While governments deliver excellent digital services to some users, a lack of availability seems to affect certain users more than others. Europeans need an **inclusive digital government** that fits all.

This means considering the needs of both **individual citizens and large businesses**. Currently, 77% of citizen services are available online, compared to 91% of business services. First-rate business services can stimulate economic activities and serve efficient taxation. Residents, patients and other individuals need high-quality services too. Insufficient eHealth services could risk people's well-being, while offline justice procedures may slow down the resolution of consumer disputes.

Rethinking the user also means **respecting both national and cross-border user needs**. Less than half (46%) of the services for foreign users are available online. The figure for the online services offered to nationals (81%) almost doubles this. Offering interoperable services in multiple languages and accepting interoperable eIDs as promoted under the [eIDAS Regulation rules](#) would open up a digital Europe with cross-border citizenship and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, government websites should be **open to people regardless of their visual, hearing, motoric or cognitive abilities**. However, only 16% of public sector websites comply with a selection

of eight web accessibility criteria. Firm actions are needed to ensure everyone can perceive, operate and understand their digital government in a robust manner. Again, user diversity can be reflected more broadly in the supply of today's eGovernment.

Users vary and so do their devices for accessing digital government services. An impressive 92% of government websites present mobile-compatible information. However, only 62% of the transactional service modules are fully available on a smartphone or tablet. Realising **'device-agnostic' design** ensures that both desktop and mobile users experience high-quality eGovernment services anytime and anywhere.

One way of better fulfilling human needs is by **co-creating services with users**. Currently, only one-third of public administrations (33%) engage with users in the design of digital services. eConsultation and eParticipation solutions will help users to have a say and enable governments to design services that meet expectations.

Europe is working on making digital governments a place for all users. Beyond the measured services for citizens and businesses, for nationals and cross-border users, for persons with different abilities, for desktop and mobile users, there are so many other **human characteristics** that matter for the provision of eGovernment. Respecting different ages, income levels, digital proficiencies, etc. would ensure no one misses out on the benefits of digital service delivery.

4.2. Challenge 2 - Realign the User Journey: Creating a Well-Aligned Ecosystem

Just as users are diverse, so too are **public administrations**. Different government entities, departments and divisions (e.g. local and national) have successfully brought services online. However, citizen and business life events often involve services from multiple government entities. How can governments reorganise themselves to fulfil the entire user journey online?

Currently, completing full user journeys involving **multiple layers of government** is challenging: 84% of all services provided by central government organisations are available online, compared to only 60% of local services. These service gaps jeopardise the smooth provision of end-to-end services.

Established **government portals** provide a solid starting point for streamlining the user journey. Countries have succeeded in creating one-stop-shops, where citizens and businesses can access several services. More than nine out of ten services (93%) can be found via these government portals. Moreover, nearly eight out of ten government bodies provide letters via a digital mailbox so that users have their government documentation in a single place, 76%.

4.3. Challenge 3 - Reinforce the Interoperability Ambition: Connecting Solutions

Well-orchestrated user journeys and stronger collaboration also require more **data-driven service processes**. By reusing previously provided information, more user journey services could be provided proactively, currently at just

6%. Or at least more than the current 67% of online application forms could contain pre-filled information. Whenever personal data is reused in proactive services and forms, this should be visible in more personal data monitoring solutions for users, currently offered by 58% of government entities.

While the future of eIDs looks promising based on European and national policies and strategies, there are still practical obstacles, such as existing **login procedures** interrupting user journeys. When logged in online, less than half (46%) of the services allow a single sign-on. This means users need to re-authenticate when switching between different authorities' websites within one life event journey. Moreover, users can login with their eID for three quarters of central government services, but only for one third of local administrations.

Bridging the digital transformations between different government layers will yield new opportunities in serving users along their entire user journey. Public administrations cannot succeed alone. They need each other and their users, while **synchronising the digitalisation of public services**.

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