Open**forum** europe

open, competitive choice for IT users

ROUND TABLE REPORT

PUBLIC SECTOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

From the Tallinn Declaration to a borderless government

Report

Round Table

Public Sector Digital Transformation: From the Tallinn Declaration to a borderless government

Brussels,17 October, 2017

Silken Brussels, Boulevard Charlemagne 11, 1000 Bruxelles

DISCLAIMER

This report is prepared by OpenForum Europe (OFE). The summaries of the speaker presentations and panel discussions in this report are based on the OFE's notes and they are not in any way binding or necessarily complete. All effort has been given to reflect and convey objectively the essence of the speakers' presentations and the discussion.

The views expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect those of OFE. OFE should not be held accountable for any claimed deviation from the original speeches.

Credits

Speakers

Kaja Kallas
Member of the European Parliament
ALDE Group, Estonia

Jaana Sahk-Labi
Counsellor for Information Society,
Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU

Pierre Damas
Head of Sector
DG DIGIT, European Commission

Moderator

James Lovegrove
EMEA Public Policy Director for Red Hat

Foreword

Digital Transformation within the Public Sector is conditional on both the procurement of transformative technology (e.g containers, devops and hybrid cloud) and establishing a more open and transparent culture to decision making. Using open source and open standards enables seamless digital interaction between citizens and administrations, boosts transparency and trust, as well as enabling pooled eGovernment solutions across Europe. This event explained the policy context around the Tallinn declaration, discussed a number of challenges faced by public administrations across Europe shedding light on some recent technology examples and progressive public policy underpinning progressive governmental leadership.

The [Tallinn](#) [Declaration](#), formally adopted by EU ministers on 6 October 2017 reflects some of the features of a Digital Government of the future: the once-only principle, ways to create trust in e-Government services using new technologies such as blockchain, and ways to measure the evolution from an analog government towards a borderless one, for the benefit of citizens and for supporting the economy.

For the features it puts forward, the Tallinn Declaration is a game changer. However, for it to reach its full potential it will need to be followed up by a proper implementation.

Sachiko Muto

Sachiko Muto, CEO of OpenForum Europe (OFE), opened the event by introducing OFE, the topic and the speakers. This was a moderated discussion, with a debate engaging the audience on the topic. The event started with informal presentations by the three speakers, then opened the floor to discussion and debate with the other attendees. Sachiko explained that the Chatham House Rule applies, in that the speakers could be quoted, but statements made by other participants would not be attributed. She then gave the floor to the moderator.

James Lovegrove

James Lovegrove from Red Hat and chair of the OFE's Open Government Task Force, welcomed the participants and provided a brief context and core hypotheses for the panel to tease apart. He also challenged the audience to consider the Tallinn Declaration as a "game changer" with two polls which, by the end of the event, provided an almost unanimous opinion that Tallinn's successful implementation over the next 12 months would constitute an inflection point in Public Sector digital transformation.

 He then invited the three speakers to make their opening statements:

- **Jaana Sahk-Labi,** Counsellor for Information Society, Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU;
- **Kaja Kallas,** Member of the European Parliament, ALDE Group, Estonia;
- **Pierre Damas,** Head of Sector, DG DIGIT, European Commission.

Jaana Sahk

Following this introduction, Jaana Sahk, Digital Counsellor from the Permanent Representation of Estonia towards the European Union, presented the Tallinn Declaration, reflecting that it follows the previous Malmö Declaration. She argued that it sets the path for the modernisation of digital services in the public sector. Indeed, she explained that this document had been signed by 32 ministers from EU / EEA countries, and underlined that it will be taken again into consideration in 2018 under the Austrian presidency of the European Council of the European Union.

She then explored the changes that the Tallinn Declaration brings about. She explained that in relation to the electronic signatures, the Declaration mandates the signatories to create opportunities for their citizens and enterprises to use the state's services digitally, and without any need to leave their homes.

To increase the deployment of eID-cards across Europe is another aim of the Declaration. In this regard, at the time of the Declaration, Germany was the first Member State to complete the formal notification of an eID under the eIDAS Regulation. As part of the Digital Single Market, this step is needed to ensure a mutual recognition and the use of national eIDs across all Member States. Therefore, it is welcomed that Member States committed to

accelerate the entire implementation of the regulation on the electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market (eIDAS).

The "once-only" principle will be reinforced, mandating countries not to ask their citizens and businesses for the same data several times. The once-only principle means that citizens and businesses should supply information only once to a public administration in the EU, regardless in what Member State they are. This is also part of the proposal for the Single Digital Gateway. Hopefully, following the Declaration, the adoption of this principle will become the rule, simplifying the interaction between citizens and the the public sector all over the Union.

At the same time, the Tallinn Declaration will also provide guidelines on how to cooperate more in Europe; the speaker underlined that "interoperability by default" will be crucial for this, and she pointed out the high degree of relevance of implementing the European Interoperability Framework by 2021. Moreover, ministers also committed to designing and delivering public services, guided by the principles of user-centricity (such as digital interaction, reduction of the administrative burden, digital delivery of public services, citizens' engagement, redress and complaint mechanisms).

Reacting to this, the moderator asked about the challenges for implementing this piece of legislation. In this regard, Ms. Sahk argued that there seems to be a high level of political will to achieve the objectives of the Declaration. Nevertheless, she commented that it would be very useful if Member State governments, as well as EU institutions, were to lead by example.

Kaja Kallas

MEP Kaja Kallas followed this intervention, pointing out that whilst the Declaration is a good step, it will be necessary to wait until the full implementation of its principles before being able to form a clear opinion.

Following this, she pointed out two areas of particular relevance for her: Digital Identities, and the Once Only principle. For her, the uptake of these initiatives is not taking place as fast as she considers desirable, because of many reasons. For example, there are concerns related to privacy, the lack of interest from citizens, etc. In this regard, she also considers that governments should lead by example, tackling the current barriers.

She also mentioned the need for governments to change their mindsets and help citizens to comply, instead of punishing them for doing illegal acts. Furthermore, citizens are increasingly living their lives online and governments need to be there as well, or cause citizens to feel alienated from their governments.

To finalise, she pointed out that there are some 'luddites' who have expressed fears about such "connected governments", arguing that data could be leaked. She argued that this is not true, because a proper eGoverment must be distributed, and therefore resilient and less

vulnerable to attacks. She ended her section by wondering why we assume that analogue is safer than digital.

Pierre Damas

Pierre Damas explained that in the Commission, Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) is technically now treated equally with its proprietary counterparts. Indeed, FOSS is used in the Data Centres, as a tool for building web and social tools to collaborate, as a provider of programmes to be used in the desktops, and as a tool to develop software. Moreover, the Commission also uses FOSS by providing in some cases software based on OSS licenses (e.g. Citizens' Initiative, EUSurvey and JoinUp).

It is important to notice that there are different levels of adoption of FOSS from use to use and from service to service. For example, in the area of desktops the level of adoption is low, because the desktop as a whole remains proprietary but the browser and other tools are FOSS. This is a contrast when we consider that in the area of software development the adoption is high, as the Commission develops its software under OSS licenses.

Pierre Damas then shared with the attendees some of the Commission's plans for updating its Open Source Software Strategy, identifying the key barriers and motivations for adopting it in practice. He explained that the barriers relate, among others, to a lack of skills, to the lack of interoperability or integration of some of the software already being used by the Commission, and to the lack of legal clarity in some cases. Moreover, new challenges are appearing relating to the Cloud or to the IoT.

Having this in mind, he stated that he is aiming at solving these barriers by introducing, for example, an internal simplification of the current ICT infrastructure in the Commission and by reducing the cost of transition towards FOSS products. Moreover, he wants the Commission to become a player in the FOSS community, contributing back to the projects that it uses. In this regard, he mentioned the EU-FOSSA project.

He ended his presentation by pointing out that the Commission is currently working on an updated Open Source Strategy, which will turn the Commission into a more active FOSS player.

Audience's questions

James then opened up the floor for audience questions. Following this, some participants pointed out that although the Declaration is good, it is necessary to wait until its implementation to measure its success.

Some participants pointed out that the Commission's initiatives in this area of eGovernment should become part of the Digital Single Market - maybe being all put together, and renamed the "Digital Common Government". These participants argued that there are many existing initiatives in the Commission and in the Member States dealing with eGovernment.

What has been missing is the high level focus, the support from the top. This is why the Tallinn Declaration possibly is a game changer: it gives the necessary impetus to this ongoing work. Participants agreed with this but then rose a question: how to ensure that the initiatives following the Tallinn Declaration keep the high level focus?

The panelists then had a few minutes for final remarks, where they reinstated their support for the Tallinn Declaration. Moreover, they added that in order to ensure the high level of discussion in this area, it is necessary to remind policymakers that there is a link between citizens' approval and eGovernment developments. Indeed, there is a part of the society that wants the government to be more transparent and efficient. Initiatives like the Tallinn Declaration, by modernising the government, answer to the desire of these citizens, improving the way that the society as a whole works.

Finally, to close the event, James thanked the panelists, and concluded the discussion, hoping that he would have convinced the participants that the Tallinn Declaration is a game changer.

Speaker's biographies

Kaja Kallas, MEP from Estonia

Kaja Kallas is an Estonian politician. She is currently a Member of the European Parliament elected from Estonia and belongs to the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). She has previously worked as an attorney-at-law, specialising in European and Estonian competition law and been a Member of the Parliament of Estonia, where she chaired the Economic Affairs Committee. She is also Vice-Chairman of the Estonian Reform Party. In the European Parliament, Kallas works on the Digital Single Market strategy, energy and consumer policies, as well as on the relations with Ukraine. She is a proponent of innovation and frequently emphasises that regulations can not and must not hinder the technological revolution.

Jaana Sahk-Labi, Counsellor for Information Society, Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU

Jaana Sahk-Labi is responsible for information society related topics in the Permanent Representation of Estonia to the EU including eGovernment, free movement of data, interoperability, eIDAS. Additionally she is responsible for issues related to parcel delivery and e-privacy. Before joining Permanent Representation, Jaana has worked on information society related topics for 10 years. She has been responsible for coordinating e-Justice related activities in Estonia while working as an adviser for the Estonian Ministry of Justice and doing the legal and policy work on eID and trust services (including eSignatures) while working as a seconded national expert in DG CNECT. Prior to that Jaana worked as a lawyer in the national court of justice.

Pierre A. Damas, Head of Sector at the European Commission

Pierre A. Damas is Head of Sector of Reusable Solutions at the General Directorate for IT (DIGIT) of the European Commission. He was responsible for projects and services touching Identity and Access Management, such as EC's authentication system ECAS (now EU Login), CEF eID and eSignature. He is responsible for the Open Source Strategy of the Commission as well as the European Parliament preparatory action on auditing of free and Open Source software, aka EU-FOSSA 2.

OpenForum Europe (OFE) is a think tank that draws support not only from some of the largest global ICT players, but also from organisations across Europe, that represent both SMEs and Open Source communities. The focus of OFE is to encourage openness in the ICT market, eliminate lock-in, and maximise the opportunity for all market players in Europe. Views expressed by OFE do not necessarily reflect those held by all its supporters.