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Results of Capgemini's 7th Annual EU Online Services Study Released

Strong growth in online service availability underlines the emergence of 'Gov 2.0' in Europe

Paris, September 20, 2007 – Capgemini, one of the world leaders in consulting, technology and outsourcing services, announced today the findings of its seventh annual eGovernment benchmark study, which it conducted on behalf of the European Commission. The study charts progress towards the goals set out in the i2010 eGovernment Action Plan for improved online public service delivery. The 2007 findings show 'fully-online availability' of public services in Europe has increased significantly from 50% in 2006 to 58% in 2007, driven mostly by improved on-line citizen services. The survey this year introduces a focus on indicators for user centricity.

The benchmark study is part of the measurement process for the European Commission's plan "i2010 – A European Information Society for growth and employment", launched 1st June 2005 as a framework for addressing the main challenges and developments in the information society and media sectors up to 2010.

The study has been conducted annually since 2001 assessing more than 5,000 public agencies in 31 countries, including the 27 EU member states plus Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. All countries covered by the study have made sound progress over the past year in the supply of public services. As well as extending the *availability* of 'e-services', since 2006 the services that businesses and citizens can access online has increased in *sophistication*. According to the survey, the most advanced country – Austria - has now achieved 100% against the criteria for the 20 services measured. There are other fast movers; Portugal has joined three other Member States that advanced significantly over recent years being Malta, Estonia and Slovenia.

Despite improvements in online citizen services there is still a 20% gap between fully-online availability for citizens (50%) and businesses (70%). There is also a 90% gulf between the leader Austria (100%) and the bottom of league table.

Commenting on the findings, Graham Colclough, Vice President, Global Public Sector, Capgemini, said: *“Modest size and central structures have enabled rapid advancement in a number of the (newer) member states, but size isn’t everything: we have found there are a number of smaller states, both old and new, that clearly have not embraced eGovernment to the same degree as the broad survey results suggest. There are also a number of previously progressive ‘old’ countries whose progress has faltered over recent years”*

This year the survey piloted the evaluation of user-centricity via a basket of measures that assess data security, multi-channel access, accessibility (inclusion). 24% of the websites assessed provide alternative access channels (call centre, mobile, kiosk, DigiTV) demonstrating progress in providing customers with choice. Although policies may be in place for security and accessibility, there appears to be gaps in terms of delivery. Only 27% of the EU websites have a legally binding eIdentification system in place. Only 5% of websites make clear reference to accessibility standards. On a more positive note an assessment of National Portals shows that on average 75% of the basket of 20 measured services are available through the National Portals – so the “one-stop” to government services is no longer a dream.

Graham Colclough continued: *“Although the results reveal strong evidence of businesses, in particular, being well served by online service; and governments being well advanced in services that bring them revenues; the risk remains of complacency in serving the citizen. This ultimately must remain the focus for all governments in order to build trust with their citizens. European governments must stop a gap opening up between the public and the commercial online worlds, and seek to deliver a new ‘Gov 2.0’ experience; one that attracts and fulfills citizen needs efficiently, consistently, inclusively, and economically – not a simple task I admit!”*

About the EU eGovernment Benchmark 2007

The objective of the survey is to provide a benchmark for the different European countries to compare progress and share best practice. The survey, conducted in April 2007 for the seventh time, is a core part of the i2010 initiative launched by the European Union to bring the benefits of the information society to all Europeans. The measurement criteria used covered the level of on line interaction and the overall availability of public services online.

The full report is available on the Capgemini website at:

http://www.capgemini.com/resources/thought_leadership/benchmarking_the_supply_of_online_public_services/

About the i2010 eGovernment Action Plan

Its five priorities are:

- *No citizen left behind*: advancing inclusion through eGovernment so that all citizens benefit from trusted, innovative services and easy access for all
- *Making efficiency and effectiveness a reality*: significantly contributing to high user satisfaction, transparency and accountability, and a lighter administrative burden
- *Implementing high-impact key services for citizens and businesses*: by 2010, 100% electronic availability of public procurement with 50% actual usage, and agreements on cooperation on further high-impact online citizen services
- *Putting key enablers in place*: so citizens and businesses benefit from convenient, secure and interoperable authenticated public service access across Europe
- *Strengthening participation and democratic decision-making*: employing effective tools for public debate and participation in democratic decision-making



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