

PSI Alliance Roundtable

16 December 2014, Brussels

The PSI Alliance held a successful roundtable on 16 December 2014 in Brussels, bringing together high-level speakers from private enterprise, NGOs and the EU Institutions. The thorough debate focused on **five topics including a discussion with the European Commission about its priorities for the forthcoming few years, preventing unfair competition, how to achieve a government-wide data inventory and whether it is time for an industry code for PSI**. The debate was followed by a workshop held by ePSI Platform on how to communicate the benefits of PSI to policymakers.

The event started with a discussion about the Commission's priorities for the coming years under the new Commissioner Oettinger, who has as his main focus the completion of the digital single market. The data driven economy is a large part of DG CNECT's focus, and they will build on the working document published in July will be fleshed out in more concrete terms in 2015.

With regards to implementation of the revised PSI Directive, two member states have completed – Greece and Denmark – and nearly all others seem to be well on their way.

Other updates included the European-wide portal which should be signed off in the coming weeks and the EU portal is getting close to completion.

Participants listened and participated in a discussion **about government competition in the field of PSI**, led by Girts Kebers of Lursoft. Despite updated rules, governments are still competing in the PSI market by **offering services already created by the private sector as well as by limiting and restricting re-use of PSI**. The pretext of governments limiting or restricting the re-use are often based on personal data protection, high costs or the lack of technical solutions. The industry expressed concerns about governments' commercial activities, such as creating products and services that can be bought from private companies, creating unfair competition. The question was raised **whether there is time for new guidelines from the Commission in regard of public authorities competing with the private sector in the PSI market**.

Arjan Al Fassed, CEO of the Open State Foundation gave examples of how he successfully lobbied the Dutch government to provide a government-wide inventory of its data sets. A major problem for PSI resuers is not always access to data, but often just to know what data exists in the first place. A comprehensive inventory of datasets, would be a huge step forward. It is something that the Dutch government have promised. Open State explained a few of hits tips for making this progress, including how they tried to empower the authorities, organising hackathons to get good PR, giving masterclasses and communicating with the authorities to

let them know why they wanted the data in the first place. Meanwhile, the Open State Foundation also lobbied politicians to raise awareness and keep up the pressure through measures such as parliamentary questions.

The PSI Alliance members and participants at the roundtable also held an engaging discussion led by Roland Lonnerbro of Bisnode about the **fact that the** PSI industry does not clearly fall under the scope of any paragraph in the NACE Code.

Furthermore, it was also discussed whether the PSI industry is visible without a separate code. Some of the gains with having a separate code would be a possibility to quantify the industry towards politicians and lawmakers, a possibility to enhance ethics as well as a possibility to underline the interdependence between industry, authorities and end-users.

The roundtable was concluded with a workshop on how to communicate the benefits of PSI to policymakers. **The revision of the PSI Directive serves as an opportunity and encouragement in this aspect to establish a genuine right to re-use of public information.** The sector also needs to raise awareness, extend the networking in EU and have multilateral discussions with member states in order to communicate better. Several benefits with opening up public sector data were mentioned, such as transparency, accountability, employment, economic growth and innovation as well as interoperability, participation and data quality. Individual examples and visualisation were shared by the speaker for roundtable participants to use in their own discussions with policymakers.

Presentations from the roundtable can be found here:

http://www.slideshare.net/psi_alliance