

Workshop report

“Open Source: Its place in a cross-border environment”

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Workshop report prepared by:

Authored by: Vassilia Orfanou, Eleni Galyfianaki

Edited by: Panagiotis Rentzepopoulos

Company: EUROPEAN DYNAMICS SA

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Validated by Mr. Vassili Danilof, Information and Communication
Management, EUROPEAN DYNAMICS SA

Project Officer: Mr. Aldo Laudi, DIGIT

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1 Introduction

The “Open Source: Its place in a cross-border environment” workshop took place in European Commission (EC) premises in Brussels on the 7th of April 2011. This event accommodated 12 speakers, 60 attendees and its web page reached 6417 visits 24 June 2011.

2 Morning session

2.1 *Introduction*

2.1.1 **The EUPL – Impact on sharing (e)Government software in Europe**

Mr. Szabolcs Székács, European Commission, presented the strategic views of the Commission on public administration collaboration.

He primarily stated that in the spirit of collaboration, the purpose of this event is to learn from each other on how Open Source can be used. The main problems encountered are licensing compatibility and how good solutions can be shared and work with each other.

He continued his presentation by posing the question “Why should public administrations cooperate?” Public administrations in Europe provide more and more services to businesses and citizens and to other public administrations. There is a risk of creating silos and standard applications which can only communicate directly with citizens or businesses considering the need for local, regional or national processes and business needs, while not being really able to interoperate with the other global European services. This means that there is a risk that new processes will emerge that will impede the proper functioning of the internal market. Member States should cooperate to improve the visibility and increase transparency of how a certain solution is chosen in order to reduce the cost and the time to market. It is much easier to adopt something which has already been developed, customize it and then further develop it. It is important that European public administrations have rather similar legal framework, business processes, and challenges. Therefore, the solutions provided should be similar and address the same challenges, instead of reinventing the wheel.

The limited reuse of software developed by public administrations is mainly due to limited knowledge of the actual issues that other public administrations face. Public administrations need to raise the level of awareness and to provide tools for people to discuss, debate and learn from each other’s expertise and solution implementations.

The ISA program is a tool launched by the EC to facilitate the cooperation and collaboration between European public administrations by enabling the delivery of services, which support the implementation of European Commission policies and activities. This is possible by translating cross-border and cross-sector interaction. The ISA programme has been allotted 160 million Euros over six years, and it provides a number of tools to facilitate interoperability such as common services or general policy. When providing

interoperable solutions and interoperable public services there are a number of principles that we should take into account: one is the entrepreneurial adaptability. When a new service is developed, there should not be any imposing of technical solutions to businesses or citizens or other public administrations. The selection of different technical solutions or standards should be as transparent and as open as possible. The process of sharing and discussing the solution with other public administrations and the process of using of open standards and solutions while providing European public services should be as open as possible. Other main principles include reusability, privacy, security, effectiveness and efficiency.

The ISA programme provides a number of tools to facilitate the sharing of public administration knowledge. There are three platforms: the first aims to share code and open source solutions (OSOR.eu), the second aims to share semantic assets, and shares code lists (SEMIC.eu), and the third, ePractice.eu, aims to share knowledge of good practice, and to discuss policies. There are a number of other actions that facilitate sharing, such as a one million Euro per year action to pass the building of communities of these platforms and a number of other actions facilitating the development of common services.

Mr Székács then posed the question “How and why does Open Source fit within the whole picture and why is it important for the Commission, why do we support the merge of open source communities or development of open source software by developing everything in open source or by providing guidelines to public administrations?” The development method and the legal framework of open source fit very well with the initiative of 2010 which calls for more cooperation and more collaboration between Member States. Open Source is easy to use, free to use, change and republish, and it is a very important tool to facilitate interoperable solutions. Secondly, public administrations produce many customized applications. It is estimated that half of the public administrations’ budget spent on software is actually spent on customized software and since the legal framework and the processes are similar or the same, this could be greatly reduced through reuse.

2.1.2 The OSOR website

Mr. Panagiotis Rentzepoulos, OSOR consulting team, concentrated in a presentation of the OSOR.eu website.

This presentation started with the main milestones, from the launch of the IDABC programme to the launch of OSOR.eu and the latest release of the EUPL. It continued with a short description of what OSOR.eu is, followed by a brief historical review of the OSOR concept and its role as a repository and an observatory on how OSS is developed, used or maintained by public administrations. Subsequently this presentation elaborated on the services offered at both layers of the platform; the national federated forges and the European Union Public License (EUPL). The presentation continued by inviting all interested parties to join OSOR and host their project therein. Finally, Mr Rentzepoulos presented the initiative of OSOR.eu to promote partnerships and create a network with interested organisations in spreading

good practice and knowledge of OSS to public administrations, primarily within the European Union.

2.2 Thematic area: Open Source Licensing

2.2.1 The EUPL – Impact on sharing (e)Government software in Europe

Mr. Patrice-Emmanuel Schmitz, Unisys, discussed “the EUPL and its impact on sharing eGovernment software in Europe”.

The financial crisis obliges to do more (and possibly better) with less money. The governments (at all levels) have to deal with a legal framework which is widely European and progressively harmonised, but they are still developing and implementing locally their own eGovernment applications. A fair solution to reduce costs by avoiding reinventing the wheel (while preserving subsidiarity and local employment) could be based on the free reuse and adaptation of existing public sector software.

EU Ministers acknowledged the need to facilitate the sharing of common solutions based on open standards. On 18 November 2009 in Malmö, Sweden, they declared that the open source model could be promoted for use in eGovernment projects. Developing this open source model across national borders means (especially for lawyers and decision makers in all levels of power) finding a convenient legal platform or licence. This legal framework must be based on European copyright law terminology, be officially valid in all EU languages and cover eGovernment software communication “as a service”. It must be realistic and reasonable regarding warranty or liability exclusions (for being possibly validated by Courts) and regarding existing patents. Lastly, it has to be copyleft (insofar public software appropriation is refused), but interoperable (compatible with other open source licences). For all these reasons, the European Commission created EUPL.

EUPL was considered as a “free software licence” by the Free Software Foundation (FSF) and was approved by the Open Source Initiative (OSI) in March 2009. It allowed several Commission services to license software and it is currently used by 30% of the 216 projects distributed from www.OSOR.eu. The EUPL is quoted as the proposed legal platform for implementing the reusability principle in the EIF v2 (16.12.2010). During the last months, several Member States have implemented the EUPL in their own legal framework or policies (Estonia, Spain, Malta, and the Netherlands).

Incompatibility issues related to the integration of GPLv3 licensed software in EUPL applications have been solved by licensors who offered an “exception” clause for EUPL at the software level.

EUPL will impact ICT procurement when authorities request from a contractor to deliver “an application that they could globally distribute under EUPL” (case reported in Spain) or give more points to a tender when the software “is EUPL compatible” (case reported in Italy).

However, these are still early examples and rather isolated cases: the way for implementing the Malmö declaration is still very long, and the reusability principle is not yet a general practice. In the meantime, it can be stated that the EUPL has ceased to be a “legal curiosity” (a worst-case scenario according to one of its writers, Prof. S. Dusollier) and it has become a “reliable foundation for public and commercial activity”, according to an industry expert group.

2.2.2 FLOSS Licences Compatibility Issues

Mr. Phillippe Laurent, CRID & MWP presented the FLOSS Licenses Compatibility Issues.

The proposed presentation explained what a “licence incompatibility” situation is, how such a situation can arise, and how some licences (such as the EUPL and the GPLv3) deal with such issues.

Licence incompatibility is a crucial aspect of FLOSS licensing, which influences the way a development project will be managed, which elements may be included and combined in such a project, and which licence should be used to redistribute the end result. This also influences the business model that could be adopted and developed around the software once it is distributed.

With the expansion of the FLOSS phenomenon and the concurring development of technology, the licensing practice has also greatly evolved. As a consequence, FLOSS licences multiplied and diversified. More than 60 licences are currently listed as certified Open Source software by the OSI, and more that 80 licences are listed as free software licences on the FSF website. They differ from one another not only by their drafting, but by the presence or absence of certain clauses or effects. The creation of new licences is usually a response to new needs, objectives or technologies, but also sometimes to new practices perceived by their drafters as threats to the FLOSS ecosystem. This is for instance the case of the Affero licences which reference the “distribution loophole” in the SaaS context. The GPLv3 is also a good example of reaction against particular unwanted practices or behaviours, such as “Tivoization”¹, the use of digital rights management systems (DRM’s), or software patent threats.

This diversity of licences reflects the diversity of business models that revolve around FLOSS, and must be respected as such. However, this proliferation of licences has generally complicated the FLOSS landscape. Developers are more and more confronted with new clauses, new limitations or new conditions to fulfil. The development of projects based on and combining FLOSS of different origins increasingly implies burdensome and intricate compliance duties.

¹ This neologism refers to the practice consisting of using FLOSS on hardware but impeding the users to run modified versions of the software on that hardware by way of hardware restrictions (such as digital signatures).

In the worst case scenario, compliance with each one of the licences applying to the combined codes is impossible, due to contradictory clauses. This gives rise to incompatibility situations. This “incompatibility” may indeed be described as a situation in which licensees cannot comply with all the provisions of two licences that apply on two portions of code that they would like to merge or combine. This means that if they merge or combine these code portions together, they would be exposed to claims or sanctions for copyright infringement and/or breach of contract. The practical consequence is that the licensees must give up the idea of using at least one of the two code segments in their project, even though they remain entitled to use them separately. In contrast, “compatibility” refers to a situation where two software modules under two different licences can be merged or combined together in a single project. In this case, special attention should be paid as to the licence under which the resulting system must be distributed under. Indeed, compatibility does not mean that the choice of license is always left to the licensee.

Copyleft is indisputably the main source of incompatibility, as by definition, a copyleft licence tends to regulate more than the existing code: it also governs further additional code. Incompatibilities arise when such additional code is already governed by a contradictory licence. Usually, this contradictory licence will be another copyleft licence, or a proprietary licence, but it is not always the case. The Apache licence for instance, is a non-copyleft licence that is incompatible with the GPLv2 because of the way some of its clauses are drafted and also because of the presence of other peculiar clauses such as indemnification and patent termination provisions.

2.3 *Thematic area: Open Source Interoperability*

2.3.1 The SLA approach in open source quality improvement in products & projects realization and in services supply through an effective OSS measuring and monitoring platform

Mr. Davide Dalle Carbonare, Engineering Group, discussed about the SLA approach in open source quality improvement in products and projects realization and in services supply through an effective OSS measuring and monitoring platform.

The presentation focused on the approach adopted by the Public Administration to efficiently manage the projects realization, products development and services supply, according to specific Service Level Agreements (SLAs), especially when this activity is committed to IT enterprises. This approach is more and more adopted, fostering the improvement of the realization process quality as well as the transparency of the communication among the actors involved in the development process. In fact, it enables the involved actors to jointly verify the quality of the development performances through data analysis based on pre-defined SLAs built on well-identified metrics. This allows monitoring the software quality

improvement over time as well. This approach enables the Public Administration to purchase quality from services providers in order to provide quality services to citizens, enterprises and its employees.

In particular, the Italian public administration, which follows the above-mentioned pragmatic approach, has defined some guidelines including specific service quality levels as well as ICT governance indicators. This fosters a comprehensive, integrated and thoroughly transparent perspective that involves the whole delivery process: quality policies to be applied within institutional missions, ICT sourcing strategies, public procurement, deal negotiation, and operations management.

The service levels are based on the various actors' point of views, on the activities performed during the whole services lifecycle and on operational requirements. This aims to foster the projects and ICT services success, and to consequently protect the investments over time, provided that they are supported by effective solutions.

The entirely open source Spago4Q platform (www.spago4q.org) is an effective solution allowing to measure and monitor the quality improvement over time in projects realization, software projects development, ICT services supply and facility management. It stands out among the present open source and proprietary tools that support ICT services supply, since it is particularly flexible and scalable. The presentation also focused on Spago4Q adoption within the QualiPSo European project (www.qualipso.org), where it has been integrated with open methodologies – such as the Model of Open Source Software Trustworthiness (MOSST) and the Open Source Maturity Model (OMM) – as well as with a complete suite of open source tools. The presentation mentioned other use cases in the European public administration domain, including the Directorate-General for Regional Policy of the European Commission and the Italian Veneto Region.

The Directorate General for Regional Policy of the European Commission has adopted Spago4Q, within the Project Management Service (PMS), as part of the Quality Management System, in order to perform the continuous monitoring of quality indicators and to collect data concerning the delivered products and services.

In the Veneto Region, a Regional Department of the Italian Public Administration, Spago4Q platform has been integrated into the IT governance system managing the application and information services supplied to the local government bodies, citizens and enterprises located on the regional territory. The services delivered by the suppliers (service desk, change management, application lifecycle management, asset and configuration management, network and hardware management) as well as the overall service provided to end-users are evaluated according to Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), based on ITIL v3 and CMMI standard processes.

2.3.2 OSEPA (Open Source Software for European Public Administrations): Towards a more efficient Europe

Mrs. Cristina Gallardo Rey, the Foundation for the Development of Science and Technology in Extremadura, discussed about “OSEPA (Open Source Software for European Public Administrations): Towards a more efficient Europe”. OSEPA promotes an interregional initiative fostering the exchange of best practices and the dialogue in the field of open source software at regional and local level of public administrations in Europe.

Territorial public administrations and knowledge organizations cooperate in the aim to explore the enabling framework conditions that will turn open source software into a viable solution for European public administrations. Adoption of open source software has the potential to generate significant efficiency gains and independence for vital IT infrastructures. OSEPA consortium exchanges good practices, produces analysis, conducts public consultations and debates on policies for common consensus approach for European territorial administrations regarding open source software adoption.

The main obtained achievements have been:

- The celebration of an International Conference (“Open Source Usage and Impact in Public Administrations”) that was held in the region of Extremadura.
- Nineteen practices of open source usage by public administrations have been collected that will comprise the corpus of the Good Practice Guide.
- Three interregional workshops (in Malmö, Sweden; Riga, Latvia and Nicosia, Cyprus).
- Three study visits (in Stuttgart, Germany, Malmö, Sweden and Badajoz, Spain) and one site visit (Riga, Latvia) were organized by OSEPA in 2010, facilitating the exchange of experiences and good practices among partners and between the consortium and stakeholders, such as competence centers officials and open source software communities.
- A report on “FOSS European and National Policies and Practices: Analysis and Recommendations” was published.

The OSEPA Consortium delivered its experience on creating “focus groups” and fostering a dialogue, transferring innovation from the most relevant actors at regional and local level of government to the ones that do not have any contact, and the main results of this knowledge relationship.

2.3.3 CIAO (Cloud, Interoperability, Accessibility and Openness) in public administrations

Mrs. Flavia Marzano, Una Rete, discussed about “Cloud, Interoperability, Accessibility and Openness (CIAO) in public administrations”.

Even in the cloud computing era, public administrations should be aware of the importance of adopting open source software models both concerning licenses and regulations.

G-Cloud (Government Cloud) offers public administrations clear benefits like: cost reduction, sharing of best practices, faster systems update and maintenance, access to the best applications even for smaller administrations. Basic G-Cloud typologies are:

- Software as a Service (SaaS)
- Platform as a Service (Paas)
- Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS)

In acquiring software (or even in using it on the Cloud), a public administration should verify the presence of several features for its own and the citizens' convenience. This presentation described these features and some rules that must be followed in order to help policy makers in defining policies and regulations.

A full exploitation of G-Cloud needs defining standards both for data and for services in order to make data exchange and elaboration easier, assuring interoperability and accessibility. Cloud computing at first glance does not seem to be relevant to the issue of OSS adoption in public administrations, but in order to fulfil the above mentioned requirements, openness (open source, open data, open standards,...) turns out to be essential. Further benefits of what an "Open G-Cloud" may be called are security, transparency, ease of use and maintenance, reuse of software solutions, and good price/performance ratio.

2.3.4 OpenPublic: The Open Source Solution for Governments

Mr. Ivo Radulovski, Chamber of Commerce in Austria, discussed about Open Public: the open source solution for Governments.

The main focus of the presentation was the introduction of the Drupal based content management system 'OpenPublic' and the emerging role of open source in the government sector. Using the example of projects he has been part of what Drupal can do for the public sector. Today's governments face an increasing pressure to provide more and better services when faced with scarce financial capital. Growing financial deficit in most European countries, has shifted priority in favour of cost-saving open source solutions among government CIOs.

Cost effectiveness is not the only advantage of open source software. Government websites show a range of specific needs. Past projects, such as the site of the White House or the New York Senate in the United States have showed that the Drupal open source CMS is able to provide very suitable solutions to those special needs. OpenPublic is a Drupal distribution developed on the basis of what have been learned out of past government projects. It works as a platform which provides a range of out-of-the box

features and built-in functionality for building and deploying affordable, standard-compliant public information websites.

2.4 1st debate: Interoperability in OSS solutions and impact of licensing compatibility issues

The morning session concluded with a debate session concerning interoperability in OSS solutions and the impact of licensing compatibility issues chaired by Mr. Szabolcs Székács.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács stated that what would really support is to include in the European frameworks, guidelines or suggestions for which a number of examples have been seen as in the case of Malta. Specifically, an effort should be made to use EUPL or other open source licenses and re-use software from OSOR in order for a specific process to be taken towards the harmonization of national interoperability frameworks by 2013.

In the aim to raise awareness about Open Source, there are a number of conferences, where the contractors visit to discuss the subject. During an open source conference, most people know everything, therefore the best approach would be to join or set up conferences with national and regional governments, which are aimed towards the generic public civil servants who may not know about open source and hence initial awareness about the subject could be raised.

Mr. Mikael Snarud, Universitetet i Agder, stated that he is currently working on measurements of eGovernment with a group of some 20 local municipalities that they are hardly using open source. From his experience and discussions with them, the main reason is that they are struggling with integration between their existing systems. They are even held back with a single vendor in many cases. It seems that they are, although held with a vendor, very keen on scoring well; so potentially this could be a way where the Commission could influence their attitudes; raise some awareness by simply measuring and giving some score according to the eGovernment performance. CapGemini has run this study and there are probably others where this could be included. Therefore, his question was related to whether benchmarking could be used to see whether open source is actually used in eGovernment.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács replied that the Commission has measured in the past the eGovernment services and one of the problems was that most of the member states strived on achieving the highest score possible and they really tried to focus their attention not on the generic use of eServices but to really align with the survey/benchmark. Secondly, benchmarking is very hard since those who are left behind or those who have low scores always come back arguing that the whole benchmarking process does not have a solid basis.

However, launching a survey is the first step to see what the situation is on the use of open source by public administrations as well as the situation with other generic tools like Linux or Open Office. What is interesting is the cost of development and how the issue of cost is handled by the different public

administrations. He then asked Mr. Snaprud how he has measured eGovernment on a national, regional or European scale.

Mr. Mikael Snaprud replied that the measurement he has been involved in was actually from a local standpoint and was related to a webpage for people with disabilities, primarily aggregating the data for Norway and then provided the data to CapGemini, Europe and to the UN to aggregate the same on a global basis.

Mr. Andreas Kuckartz, QuinScape mentioned that regarding the procurement of documents and the situation with German local administrations, the main problem resides with the existing IT infrastructure in which new developments and new features have to be integrated. The existing vendors, some of which are very well known, actually dominate the foundation of this infrastructure and even the best license would not help to tackle the problem of the vendor anarchy.

Based on a study read in the ePractice newsletter, an author wrote that most of the operating systems in the European public administrations are proprietary operating systems. In this respect, he continued, the situation is similar with office applications, which actually influences the rest of the software landscape in public administrations.

Mr. Ivo Radulovski replied that in one of the big open source communities that he is involved in, an effort is made to integrate one system in order to expose data that is locked in to open source systems and make these data reusable into open source systems. Therefore the first step is to develop a solution for connecting such systems to get the data and take it further from there.

Mr. Aggelos Charlaftis, Epaphos Advisors, mentioned that what it has not been made evident is the fact that open source is not a free source software. He then continued by asking whether the licensing departments cooperate with the European Patent Office.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács replied that there is no direct cooperation between them, but the licensing departments working for EUPL have been in contact with the Patent Office.

Mr. Aggelos Charlaftis said that there should be a closer cooperation with the European Patent Office, since it is the same industry.

Mr. Olle Eriksson Umeå Universitet, mentioned that something should be done about procurement, because when a municipality or customers are buying a system they want, there should be a functionality to simply evaluate it. When buying open source you buy a project. The code can be downloaded for free and a consultant can implement it. In addition, it should be considered to create a handbook on how to start and use OSS in business.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács replied that if the request pertained to adding information on the current procurement policy, there have been a number of guidelines published, one of each is on OSOR, with title 'Guidelines of procuring open source software'.

If the request related to changing the procurement legislation, then he is not certain this should be done. There have been a couple debates in other conferences and it has not been agreed that a specific procurement law is needed to procure or not software. Within the current procurement legislation it seems that a lot of things can be done that can favour open source. However, good arguments are needed to justify the reasons behind the use of certain open source instead of proprietary solutions and not just being in favour of open source.

Mr. Patrick Ohnewein TIS innovation park - Free Software Center South Tyrol, added that according to his experience, there is awareness in terms of the free software; EUPL and licensing are known and free software is introduced in the municipalities. However, the current issue is to raise awareness on and deal with free software and open source procurement. The guidelines are known but a process should be initiated for others to understand how to implement this procurement at the local level. There are experts related to the procurement in public administrations, but they are not experts on open source. With the current resources, it is difficult to go on. Therefore the proposition is to have conferences and workshops with the local public administrations and elaborate tools which are needed at a local level to introduce eProcurement.

Mr. Patrice-Emmanuel Schmitz replied that a set of guidelines about software procurement have been published on OSOR, but the visibility of these guidelines is not optimal and it would be useful if the Commission published a new version including practical examples, such as for instance a template of various forms of calls for tender specifications that the local administration could adapt. Currently, DG Information Society and Media is planning to provide a set of more elaborated guidelines.

Mr. Patrick Ohnewein inquired whether the plan is to only publish guidelines on the website or have concrete workshops that will engage people. Based on his organisation's experience it has been seen that open discussions should be made with many people and involve different stakeholders and public administrations to drive results. Therefore it would be helpful to have as many workshops as possible, where clear guidelines are given on how to run them.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács replied that usually guidelines are the cheapest to provide and the involvement of the Commission on a regional level such as organising or attending workshops is not always very feasible with the budget allocated. On the other hand, it is a very good suggestion to organise workshops within the framework of ePractice or OSOR to discuss procurement problems and best practices as well as what worked and what did not work. In terms of expert support, the Commission will not be able to provide all the materials at this moment, but it is already working to provide a service on advices and ad hoc legal problems. A similar service could be provided to supply information on procurement.

Mr. Andreas Kuckartz mentioned that there is a 'green book' from the European Commission regarding the modernization of the procurement processes in Europe on which they have been asking for comments, an opportunity that can be used to provide input to support the process, since this

is intended to produce guidelines for general procurement processes and also for potentially even changing procurement laws for central use.

Mr. Michel De Pryck, Public Procurement Ministry of Defence Belgium, added that when a public administration publishes a request for quotation with implicit openness which can make it a bit more complex, and then he states that the provider or the company will normally provide it with a EUPL license, it is quite difficult to check this, especially when the exact software architecture is needed from the beginning whether this refers to open source, or proprietary.

Despite that there might be a guideline on procurement, in the defence domain the choice for Open Source is by accident, even if it concerns closed systems with no communication with any other system. Then from the procurement side, there is a little bit of waiting time in terms of the legal aspects and suddenly it is decided that the other party is excluded, stalling the entire process. The finance people have the strength to say there is a budget risk and when this happens, the result is that everyone has worked for nothing. He finally stated that guidelines should be practical featuring real-life examples.

Mr. Pieter Breyne, PricewaterhouseCoopers added that there is a green paper on eProcurement produced by DG Market, available on OSOR.eu. One of its main elements is the open source software for eProcurement, called open EPRIOR, and developed by the European Commission.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács responded (to Michel De Pryck) that there are always issues with the guidelines for procuring open source software. The guidelines have a number of advices that you can use and it will not result in legal problems. Of course this has not been tested in any court yet so based on the Commission's understanding of procurement law it is related. However, there is always a chance that someone will be attacked and the procurement process will be delayed.

Mr. Patrice Schmitz added that there is one case produced by the Supreme Court in Italy stating that the request for open source software is a legal characteristic so it has nothing to do with the technical functionality and is absolutely legal.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács added that the Supreme Court takes a long time before they arrive at a final decision. Decisions are not made on a European level. The guideline states that one should not favour Open Source. It actually states that you should not even say that 'I want to have open source software'. Instead it should be stated that 'I want to have software that I can reuse, share with others because of a set of reasons.' This is the safe way if one really has the need for open source, and if there is this type of need, then this is sufficiently good argument.

Mr. Aggelos Charlaftis inquired why there is no cooperation with Brazil and use the experience from the Brazilians that are currently the best in open source.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács replied that this is a very good point and question and there should be more cooperation with other countries. Currently, he can only discuss about the IDABC programme which was a legal framework before the ISA programme for all the tools that are currently seen on ePractice and raising awareness, and OSOR, which is restricted to European Public Administrations. Most recently, ISA has extended the scope, so now the Commission can more closely work with other governments and can reuse and share their experiences.

Mr. Niels Heyvaert, NEBIX said that the first two presentations spoke about the ten key principles and why the initiatives of OSOR and ePractice are here. He continued that the balance that you need to make if you want to roll out these principles is to make sure that they do not favour certain technical solutions. By making these key principles as technology agnostic as possible you can achieve this and by doing so, you can avoid being in conflict with other interests, like commercial interests that other companies have. The idea should be around not pushing for open source; the idea should be around sharing, and opening the communication etc. The issue lies in integrating your back end with locked in solutions. If you push for openness and push for being able to communicate and share information and documentation with others within the IT infrastructure, you push those proprietary vendors to implement open standards, open ways of communication, and then you are able to get away from the proprietary legacy of knowledge.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács commented that the main issue is how you can live with the legacy systems of infrastructure and justify the reasons that one should or should not switch to open source. In an ideal world, the choice should always be for open and if the operating systems are expiring then it should be made as open as possible. Nevertheless, there are practical problems when aiming to maintain the infrastructure as coherent and whole as possible and this is why there are cases where the European Commission decided to have a number of procedures to renew the licensing of operating systems.

The European Interoperability Framework (EIF) cites that infrastructure should be as open as possible taking into account the legacy systems. Mr Székács continued that as a person that favours open source, he has always fought to make it more and more open, but there are about 20.000–30.000 computers and there are processes around legacy systems in addition to the cost of migration and pushing that have to be taken into account. His point of view is that there has to be a vision on how to get out of this locking and arrive to a point in the future where the systems are more interoperable and are using open standards. This is difficult in terms of passing the expenses of migration not as expenses of the new system but as part of the old system but nevertheless, these are expenses to be considered.

Mr. Gabriele Ruffatti, Engineering Group said that as part of representing a system integrator in Europe, he admits that the IT market is dominated by integrators. He agreed that the procurement policy cannot push open source since this would actually correlate with the pushing and sharing of the code, striving for openness etc. His company is proposing to push for and spread the use of good software solutions that are open source. Good solutions are

differentiated from poor in that the poor are commercial solutions that vendors may say that are open source but are usually enterprise editions of limited code of open source.

In his opinion the key aspects of open source is flexibility and adaptability to the customer needs, and not the price, where in the case of procurement the proprietary vendors tend to keep the entry level price very low to win the deal. The problem that should be looked at is whether we can insert an open source solution in this deal or are vendors looking for a proprietary product. So the key aspect that should be pushed is good software that is very flexible and very adaptable to the customer's needs. Low price is also very important, but flexibility is the second aspect that clients look at open source.

A member of the audience added that he would like to carry on with this discussion on procurement aspects, since he is currently being involved with what is happening in the UK government at the minute. As it have been followed by many experts of this audience, he continued, a series of announcements on the UK's ICT strategy have declared and sworn preference to the use of open source. They have debated long and hard on the legal aspects of all the issues and there is no way that the UK is going to mandate open source. To give an example, he continued, the government CIO called in all of the major systems integrators; about 60% plus of the total expenditure of ICT that are in the hands of 16 companies to show evidence through the submitted tenders that open source has been considered.

A very practical step that has been missed is the power that government procurement authorities have in changing the market and in changing the supplier industry. It is the single largest influencer, the single biggest buyer and there are practical steps without having to get bogged up in the legislation process and the use of the word mandate to make this happen. However, the missing link is the practical advice and guidance. It is evident that it would be practically difficult for the Commission and OSOR to go out to every local authority but it would be an idea to teach the teachers.

Mr. Ivo Radulovski added that it is also about the people who actually drive the force to push open source through. For instance in the case of the US, President Obama stated that the country would begin use open source and open data and it happened. He gave limited time and it really was pushed through. In a similar way, we need people that push open source at the decision making level.

3 Afternoon session

3.1 *Open Source for Public Administrations: Good practice*

3.1.1 **Status of open source business in Argentina and some known success stories in the Federal Government**

Daniel Coletti, XTECH, presented the status of open source business in Argentina and some known success stories in the Federal Government.

FLOSS exists since the '80s but it was not until the year 2000 that people outside the academic community started to take seriously this way of creating technology. Argentina became aware of Free/Libre/Open Source Software (FLOSS) by the popularity of the Linux operating system. The first FLOSS start-up companies appeared in 2000 and their customers were companies that had already successfully tried FLOSS. These start-ups helped their customers increase FLOSS implementations inside their LANs, and also worked hard on getting new customers. Companies that knew what FLOSS was but had not tried it yet were very reluctant to migration projects. This is because of the following reasons:

- There is no technical support, it is insecure and it is hard to find experts or people already trained.
- The companies did not need to change their closed source software implementations, which they were very comfortable with;
- The companies did not have the money to afford paying the user licenses, and CIOs had not experienced yet a lot of pressure from closed source companies to upgrade
- The core businesses of the companies were not as dependent of technology as they are today, so asking the closed source companies to change the software in order to adapt it to the users' businesses was not very common.

However, by the end of 2001 when Argentina was struck by the financial crisis, everything in the country's history changed. This crisis was not only economic, but social, and political. By mid 2002 to early 2003 companies did not have the budget for anything in the IT department and they had to cut costs in software, communications, hardware, and on top of that they had to adapt a lot of their software to this new reality.

FLOSS was one of the many IT strategies these companies had at hand, so many of them started to get in contact with these small consulting firms, others tried the big providers like IBM (SuSE and Red Hat were not established in the country), and the rest went simply for the worst of all the options: doing migrations themselves.

During this period, a lot was evidenced. FLOSS is a reliable technology, but relying on one company to do the necessary changes to the software can be very problematic. Closed software is more expensive and the software upgrading cycle is something that the user must control, not the provider.

The Government added that software technology independence can be achieved with FLOSS, and open standards is a must if today's public information needs to be read many years from now. Like many other countries, Argentina does not have a common IT strategy that fits the whole country, so decisions regarding software are left to the local CIO (province, city or office). However, the federal government (in Argentina is called "national government") is pushing FLOSS in different ways. One of them is by copying the Brazilian strategy of "public software". The public software is FLOSS created and maintained by the government, but it also keeps the four freedoms that GPLed software enforces. Based on this experience, all the software that is developed in cooperation between the countries of the Mercosur² is to be licensed as public software. Software developed by government programmers is commonly left unlicensed so it cannot be legally used by anyone except themselves. Traditionally, government project leaders never cared about this matter, but this is slowly changing. Citizens are expecting faster replies, better service and more access to public information than a decade ago, so the need of software is increasing and one easy way of reducing development time is by re-using software (and being able to change it).

The use of open standards is strongly debated, but mostly in conferences. There are many agencies that are starting to test FLOSS database engines (like PostgreSQL and MySQL), and also asking the software providers to export data to open standard formats when possible, the main reasons being accessibility and availability trough time.

3.1.2 Introducing Open Source solutions in Nordic municipalities

Olle Eriksson, Umeå University and **Michael Torp, Vaasa University of Applied Science**, presented the introduction of open source solutions in Nordic municipalities.

Sweden and Finland share a long history, alongside many similarities and differences. Finland with 5 000 000 inhabitants has more than 500 very small municipalities and Sweden with 9 000 000 inhabitants has about 290 rather small municipalities. More or less every municipality runs their own IT-department. In both countries, there are a few vendors with a strong and monopolistic grip of the municipality market with their proprietary systems. IT cost and budget is an ongoing question.

² Mercosur or Mercosul (Spanish: Mercado Común del Sur, Portuguese: Mercado Comum do Sul, Guarani: Ñemby Ñemuha English: Southern Common Market) is an economic and political agreement between Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. ([Wikipedia](#))

Both countries have identified problems with communication between parents and daycare/school. The open source product "Parents Meeting" can solve these problems. Parents Meeting is an Open Source solution developed in cooperation between the Mitt-university and the municipality of Sundsvall. The focus of the project was how to receive higher quality in information and make it easier for the teacher to communicate information between the daycare/school and the parents.

The following aspects were evidenced:

- It is important to have a close contact with the daycare/school staff and understand their situation.
- There was a lack of interest and competence in IT matters, while there were few computers in daycare/school.
- The daycare/school staff was afraid that their daily contact with parents would decrease when using IT systems.
- The IT department was centralised in the municipality, displaying a top down management approach. This did not support the installation of new programs for testing and evaluation, while the municipality was prone to using proprietary platforms and had many questions regarding open source and unknown vendors.
- It is important to make an effort to train the staff from the beginning in using the system, since they were unsure about new tools and they had low experience using them in their daily business.
- Overall, there was a great interest to buy the Parents Meeting product as SaaS (Software as a Service).

The achievements of this project were the following:

- There was a higher quality in communication with parents and information was not lost.
- Information about plans and daily matters were made available through the Parents Meeting product. More time was allocated to talk with parents about the children's progress and overall there was more time to work together with children.
- Parents could choose when they wanted to take part in information.
- The same information could be easily submitted to parents that lived separately.
- The project was a good opportunity for both staff and children to start using modern tools and techniques.
- The dialog between staff and parents focused on the children's progress and needs, and not on reminding practical issues.

The Open Kvarken project noticed that many of Finland's municipalities today have problems with their current (old) course and resource systems. For instance, in certain small municipalities they are actually booking on paper. Open Kvarken in collaboration with a local company has begun developing two new e-service solutions in cooperation with the municipality of Korsholm.

In conclusion the reflections have been the following:

- The municipality got interested to collaborate and subsequently was interested to develop two new e-systems based on Open Source.
- The problem identified opened up an opportunity to develop new resources on e-system and e-booking.
- Existing OSS were used to achieve cost efficient development, and a more open and flexible environment.
- The collaboration with the municipality was based on the fact that the benefits of using OSS were clear; addressed particular needs and explained how the future could turn out to be better when licensed as OS.
- This collaboration with Korsholm opened up the future cooperation of OSS with other municipalities.

3.1.3 Pan-European deployment of an Open Source VoIP (voice over IP) solution for EURid

Jacques Gripekoven, Eyepea, presented the deployment of an OSS VoIP solution for EURid. EURid (www.eurid.eu) is the European Registry of Internet Domain Names that manages the .eu top-level Internet domain under contract to the European Commission. They decided to migrate their office telephony as well as their call center towards open source VoIP technology (Asterisk). This deployment included countries such as Belgium, the Czech Republic, Italy and Sweden.

These counties wanted to move to an open VoIP architecture that would be very IT/Software driven and highly resilient. Eyepea (www.eyepa.eu) is the European Open Source VoIP Integrator that deployed the project for EURid. Eyepea proposed a solution based on Asterisk (www.asterisk.org), an Open Source telephony platform. The project involved the 4 sites of EURid (Belgium, Czech, Italy and Sweden) and the Asterisk servers were deployed in data-centers in a triple redundancy scenario.

The overall project took around six months to be deployed and become operational. It has been operational since 2010 and has had an uptime of 100%, resulting in high level of satisfaction for EURid customers, employees and management. In the near future, Eyepea should assist EURid to virtualise the servers used to run Asterisk.

3.1.4 Qualipso Competence Centres

Mr. Matteo Melideo, Engineering Ingegneria Informatica S.p.A. presented the Qualipso Competence Centres.

In recent years, the Open Source Software has become more popular not only in research projects, but also in the IT industry. However, there is still some resistance against broad adoption and usage of FLOSS, mainly due to the lack of confidence. There are many “grey areas” of FLOSS which cause major concerns to industries and public administrations, however all the concerns can be summarised in one word: trust.

These major issues were addressed in the QualiPSo project (<http://www.qualipso.org>), an FP6 Integrated Project, partially funded by the Commission. The project aimed at providing technologies, procedures and policies to leverage the Open Source Software development current practices to sound, well recognized and established industrial operations. However, the process of establishing trust is difficult and time consuming. To deal with these concerns and to establish confidence in a continuous manner the QualiPSo project established a long lasting network of Competence Centres. The idea of the network is to provide to any FLOSS users, producers or consumers, the resources and expertise on a variety of topics related to OSS, with a special attention to OSS quality, and consequently to encourage the adoption and usage of FLOSS in order for it to fall into the mainstream. These centres, offers independent and qualified support and services to establish trust in FLOSS. These services are delivered thanks to collaborative platforms, tools and process developed in the QualiPSo project. The access to skilled resources is offered openly to private and public organisations, large companies, SMEs, or end users.

Each QualiPSo Competence Centre works locally, within its geographical region and market segment. Each centre has a basic set of functionalities representing a concentration point of technologies and skills. While QualiPSo Competence Centres may differ from one another by their level of expertise on specific domains, altogether the competence centres form a federated network of expertise share the same ethics, methods and tools. QualiPSo competence centres are to be distributed worldwide.

Currently, the network covers three continents and consists of seven Competence Centres running in Brazil, Spain, Germany, Italy, Japan, Poland and China.

3.1.5 SPOCS: How to create an active and sustainable community in OSOR

Mrs. Ana Karla A. de Medeiros, SPOCS presented “SPOCS: how to create an active and sustainable community in OSOR.

SPOCS – Simple Procedures Online for Cross-border Services (www.eu-spocs.eu) aims at providing seamless cross-border electronic procedures for setting up a business in another EU country in the context of the Services

Directive³. The project builds on solutions developed in Member States as they implement the Services Directive. Building on compliance with the Services Directive, SPOCS is also about competitiveness.

The SPOCS pan-European interoperability layer is composed of five building blocks focusing on answering the following key questions related to electronic procedures in Points of Single Contacts⁴ portals:

1. *Syndication*: How to inform the end user of my PSC which documents should be provided?
2. *eServices*: How to improve the usability of my PSC by including cross-border electronic services?
3. *eDocuments*: How to represent, sign and exchange electronic documents?
4. *eDelivery*: How to exchange electronic documents in a asynchronous manner?
5. *eSafe*: How can the service provider safely store and retrieve documents?

Since the SPOCS building blocks are licensed under EUPL v1.1 and will be published in OSOR during the second half of 2011, this workshop helped to discuss with the participants their experiences in making software available in OSOR and fomenting the creation of projects with an active and sustainable community. More specifically, some of the questions addressed were “How to best create an active community of users in OSOR?” and “What are your experiences and lessons learned?”

3.1.6 Transferring open source know how from industry projects to the public sector – a one year retrospective

Mr. Thomas Biskup, OpenSAGA Initiative, delivered a presentation on Transferring open source know-how from industry projects to the public sector – a one year retrospective.

OpenSAGA was released on the 30th of April 2010 and is in some respects a very special open source project. OpenSAGA is a German open source project started by an industry initiative of SMEs with the single goal of providing a web development stack for Java based and SAGA compliant e-Government applications. In other words, the sole goal of OpenSAGA is to support the public sector and solve the problems of specialized technology area of the public sector.

³ Services Directive - http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/services/services-dir/guides_en.htm

⁴ Points of Single Contact - http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/eu-go/

OpenSAGA is powered by two underlying primary visions trying to provide further benefits while trying to achieve the overall goal of furthering eGovernment activities:

- Technology should become less intrusive than it usually is in the quick moving, very volatile and constantly supporting to change the web application ecosphere. Instead of technology, user requirements should be a focal point of any OpenSAGA project. The underlying development infrastructure provided by OpenSAGA has to mirror user requirements.
- Interoperability and openness are of prime importance. The SAGA standard itself as well as the various topics addressed under the e-Government label are too complex for one company alone. Thus OpenSAGA from the start right away tried to be a very open project, actively seeking contact with interested parties and inviting them to become important members of the OpenSAGA community. This continues till the current day but works better for some partner types than others. The presentation elaborated on the specific experiences gathered in this respect.

The companies, organisations and institutes of higher education involved in the OpenSAGA project perceive that a successful open source project with real benefits and business value for the public sector will be more than sufficient to compensate the participants for the initial investments into the platform. The OpenSAGA initiative was surprised by the real problems they started to face in “getting the message out”. Mr. Biskup, project lead of the OpenSAGA initiative, reported some of the most striking experiences concerning current weaknesses vastly inhibiting the dissemination of open source approaches and gave some ideas on how to solve these problems.

Experiences show deficits in two specific areas:

1. Open source in the public sector does not yet have a sustainable ecosphere. Actions are too local, strategies are too complicated, marketing is too technical, and so forth. The public sector needs to get into the right mindset before the public internet forces them to get into it.
2. Studies concerning open source by the public sector fail to take into account “crowd effects” for the long term.

There are ways to overcome these main deficits, but they require transparency, honesty, openness and direct approaches, which is not something that can easily be done in the existing ecosystem, whereby lobbying for decades has imprinted a very special flavour of doing business.

3.2 2nd Debate: Good practice and innovation in the use of OSS by public administrations

The afternoon sessions concluded with a 2nd debate concerning the good practice and innovation in the use of OSS by public administrations chaired by Mr. Szabolcs Székács.

Mrs. Ana Karla Alves de Medeiros inquired about the audience's opinions about creating an active community. She also inquired of the lessons learnt once a community has been built and maintained for some time. From a user's perspective and when looking at the building blocks produced by the large scale pilots, she inquired whether it would be better to have a single community or one for each project. She continued by asking whether it would be better to join an existing active community on OSOR or ePractice.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács replied that the communities on OSOR have not been very successful or active and there are a number of reasons for this. The ePractice communities, despite the high number of users are not really active. The reason is that most people do not realise that when a community is opened, the facilitators are actually required to feed the community with information. With OSOR, many questions are asked before the launch of a community. Meanwhile, in order for a community to succeed, there have to be concrete problem topics to discuss.

Mr. Székács then suggested to Mrs. Alves De Medeiros to initiate a more general community that will reach out to many people, despite that this is contradictory to having a community that targets specific topics.

Since SPOCS is both about technology but also about policy, he suggested having two communities; one on ePractice, which has more users and one on OSOR which would tackle the technicalities. Overall it would require a lot of effort to produce content for and maintain a community. Finally he opened the floor for other experiences.

A member of the audience stated that practical experiences depend on having concrete goals of what a community aims to reach. When something new is created, there are different opinions on what should be the appropriate direction to take, which in real-life makes the development very difficult.

Mr. Thomas Biskup stated that similar discussions on community building have been made with the consulate. In many cases, the success or failure of an open source project is dependent on the actual communities that have been built around this project. However, the area of community building is under-researched. For instance, community building, he continued, is quite unknown in Germany and overall to Europe. Meanwhile, the experiences from the US cannot be transferred to Europe, because the culture is different, hence calling for the adaptation of certain processes in addition to the development of new strategies.

For this reason, he suggested that when new funding programmes are set up for research, there should be programmes funding questions such as 'how to build communities', 'how to get people involved in open source software' and so on.

If funding is presented, there is a lot of data available to support the development of community building processes. For instance, he added, there is a way to find out the people to involve and whether they come from public administrations or private companies.

A member of the audience added on the previous remark about licensing that the first thing to ensure is to write the code. He also added points on finding ways to motivate people to start writing the code and making sure that there is an actual revenue stream for a project. This motivation should not necessarily relate to actual monetary gains, but rather feeling proud just for the shake for making something work or simply because the intention is to write about something just for recognition. This is the case when writing for the Linux Herald as it has been reported by a German professor in his study.

He added that when discussing about procurement and ways to get open source software, the main consideration should be to think about the ways to get the open source software in the first place. Following this comes rewarding the authors in a very fair ecosystem in order for people that write the original software feel appreciated for their contributions to big projects.

A different member of the audience said that according to his experience, the stock exchange should be considered in terms of actually seeing who the real drivers are. Many people often state that 'I am going to create a community about this and this' but what they are actually intending to do is to actually get other people working on the same software already used.

For instance, he continued, if you are Apple or a different big and promising company, everybody wishes to have a share in the business. The reality is similar for the communities and in case a specific community is dying, then people will start running from it instead of wishing to continue being part of it.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács commented that indeed the culture of the US is different to Europe. At the same time, he continued, the public sector cannot be compared to other sectors.

In this respect, public administration projects are usually run by one contractor and not by a 1.000 or 10.000 municipalities working on this project, which is rather the case with an open source project. Secondly, he added that rarely someone would work on something for the actual recognition and it is about delivering a project or writing a code on the basis of knowing how to write but also getting rewarded in terms of monetary gains.

OSOR has 220 projects, from which one or two projects started as a code adaptive projects. In the public sector it is already very difficult to provide an open source project and develop it and find another municipality with the same problem and discuss about where this should be heading or begin cross border collaboration.

Therefore, the way it is done is for administrations to develop the project and then upload it on OSOR, hoping that some people will use it. In the case of successful projects, then communities are built around these projects.

Mr. Olle Eriksson, Umeå Universitet commented that for him open source is more than code. He also accented on the importance to promote the sharing of ideas, culture, and innovations. The current era, he continued, calls for promoting a culture of sharing to address a number of issues such as energy saving, sustainability and so on.

He then added that the production model should be more open source and continued that younger people are very clever and would probably be more attracted to open source.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács added two interesting projects: a Swedish one, the 'Free com port' and a Norwegian software service that was developed by a public administration and is pertinent to managing courses.

This project has already built a committee of 50 municipalities, but it started with one municipality. The 50 municipalities participate in a yearly conference to decide how the project should be further developed, while they can vote for new features or simply participate without any voting power. He continued that it is possible to create an ecosystem in the open source community, but sometimes different for public administrations because they usually work through contractors and his experience is that they are risk averse, so they really want to avoid risk and they only join when something works.

Mr. Aggelos Charlaftis added the example of Linux, an operating system that system that Brazilians use. Linux is a stable service and can be installed to universities for students to use instead of giving them grants. This system, he continues can support our state systems and the European Union.

Mr. Gabriele Ruffatti added that community building is a tricky topic. At first, open source communities had the vision or the foundation. Currently, he continued, the need is to discuss about ecosystems rather than communities and understand their difference.

When looking at public administrations, in Italy there are some regional governments that have kick-started some communities of users. Initially they were the communities of local entities that interacted with the regional government and then they aimed towards expanding these communities with the small-medium enterprises and the consultants that are working for these governments. Turned into community ecosystems, these could begin networking with other communities like OSOR or others.

He continued that an important aspect is to trigger the interest of the community participants and added two good practices coming from public administrations and eProcurement. In Italy and France, he added, there was a call for tender asking the supplier for maintenance fees to deliver the product in open source and kick start the community for the maintenance phase in 3-5 years. This allows a community to get kick-started, but it is also taking into account that it might not survive.

When working with communities, it is essential to manage the balance of spontaneous participation and assigning a good leader.

A member of the audience added about the AKS project that focuses on semantic technologies and funded by the European Commission is quite interesting. Within the integration of OpenSAGA, the project participants were primarily interested to lease all the software produced as open source.

The questions at that point were: "Which license would be used" and "What could be done with the community". The intention was not for the software to

end with the project's finish. Then it was decided that the software would be given to the Petra Software Foundation, at which point they transferred a significant part of this software and was developed within the wider community of the Foundation.

The Foundation is an American Legal body but it illustrates that open source is an international community. This project will survive in the end without funding because most participants have never been part of the AKS project and are still interested in further developing semantic technologies, which could be useful for the public administrations.

In terms of what kind of community a software project should have, it would be recommended to exercise caution and possibly integrate software within a larger community to make use of the network effects. Even if there are no committed people who can write code in the community, there will be people who get to know about the project and recommend it to others.

Mr. Jacques Gripekoven, Eyepea added that there are two phenomena in open source: forking and merging. Forking means having more communities, and more projects in numbers but it results in overcrowding, while merging is making everybody work together in collaboration. He continued that the forking should be "punished" and should not go for more projects, while merging should be rewarded and should enhance the collaboration of existing projects into common streams.

A different member of the audience stated that according to his experience, entry levels should be equally considered. For instance, in the Netherlands the street map started off in the beginning of 2007 and half a year later, the street map was completed.

The street map was a donation from a Dutch street map firm. In the beginning, when someone had a GPS, he would walk around and contribute a lot to the map, since there was nothing similar before then. After the company donated their complete street map to the Netherlands, people really had to start thinking about doing more labour in order to get a positive feeling about contributing, since they had to check if streets still exist and whether the signs were right. Thus, the community ended up having simple contributors and on the other hand, very technical. The project has been running for some years now, but in the beginning its donation resulted in stopping the community's growth.

Mrs. Ana Karla Alves de Medeiros added that all of important input has been gathered and to recap, she added, the things to consider would be entry level; recognising people and merging with existing communities to spread the word.

Mr. Gabriele Ruffatti added that in many cases joining an established community may involve barriers for new entrants, such as being new; or that you are not a good community leader or comply with specific goals. If it was up to him, he would opt for creating a new community and then network with other communities.

A member of the audience added that open source has its own, free dynamics. There will be certain projects well populated and a huge long tail of projects which are neglected or have a few people interested in it. This is part of the dynamics; being open and hard to control.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács asked Thomas Biskup whether the number of partners that the project has (both from the public and private sectors) have been established on a country level or a network around Europe.

Mr. Thomas Biskup replied that it is on a country level and specifically in Germany, since this is the first time that the company has established an open source project. He then continued that open source projects are international and there should not be any barriers and once a project has been launched and tested, the next step should be to make it international. One of the ways to do so is by participating to events such as this one.

In terms of building a community around a project, he added, it costs effort, resources and money and it is not something that usually happens on its own. Initially, the project received much slower feedback than expected from the public administrations, while more positive feedback was received from the industry. Actually, at a point the feedback was so vast that the company stopped getting partners, since it could not manage to get quality discussions and organise them. Currently, the company has stored enough ideas to support making the project international and harmonised with European efforts.

Mr. Thomas Biskup added that more transparency is needed in terms of the procedures. For instance, even though there is a Saga 5.0 document discussed with the government and some private companies, a copy of this document has not been officially available. Overall, some of the arguments regarding software patterns should be reconstructed, while the procurement and discussions about such standards should be more transparent. In addition, the standards regarding accessibility should be harmonised to avoid having conflicting standards across Europe.

Mr. Szabolcs Székács thanked the presenters and the audience and ended the session.

4 Annex I: Agenda

Time	<p style="text-align: center;">AGENDA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ePractice workshop:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Open Source: Its place in a cross-border environment Albert Borschette Conference Centre, Room: AB – 1C, 36 Rue Froissart, B- 1040 Brussels</p>
9:30-10:00	Registration
10:00-10:10	<p>Strategic views on Collaboration</p> <p>Szabolcs Székács, EUROPEAN COMMISSION</p>
10:10-10:25	<p>OSOR.eu website presentation</p> <p>Panagiotis Rentzepopoulos, EUROPEAN DYNAMICS S.A.</p>
	Open Source Licensing
10:25-10:40	<p>The EUPL – Impact on sharing (e)Government software in Europe</p> <p>Patrice-Emmanuel Schmitz, Unisys</p>
10:40-10:55	<p>FLOSS Licences Compatibility Issues</p> <p>Philippe Laurent, CRID & MVVP</p>
	Open Source Interoperability
10:55-11:10	<p>The SLA approach in open source quality improvement in products & projects realization and in services supply through an effective OSS measuring and monitoring platform</p> <p>Davide Dalle Carbonare, Engineering Group</p>
11:10-11:25	<p>OSEPA (Open Source Software for European Public Administrations): Towards a more efficient Europe</p> <p>Cristina Gallardo Ray, The Foundation for the Development of Science and Technology in Extremadura</p>
11:25-11:40	Coffee Break & Networking

	Open Source Interoperability
11:40-11:55	CIAO (Cloud, Interoperability, Accessibility & Openness in public administrations) Flavia Marzano, Una Rete
11:55-12:10	OpenPublic, The Open Source Solution for Governments Ivo Radulovski, Open Source Experts at the Chamber of Commerce in Austria
12:10-12:55	Debate 1: Interoperability in OSS solutions and impact of licensing compatibility issues
12:55-13:55	Lunch Break
	Open Source for Public Administrations: Good practice
13:55-14:10	Open Source Software Adoption for Public Sector with Real Options approach Androklis Mavridis, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
14:10-14:25	Status of open source business in Argentina and some known success stories in the Federal Government Daniel Coletti, XTECH
14:25-14:40	Pan-European deployment of an Open Source VoIP (voice over IP) solution for EURid Jacques Gripekoven, Eyepea - Open Source VoIP Solutions
14:40-14:55	Introducing Open Source solutions in Nordic municipalities Mikael Torp, Vaasa University of Applied Science & Olle Eriksson, Umeå University
14:55-15:05	Coffee Break & Networking

	Open Source for Public Administrations: Good practice
15:05-15:20	<p>Qualipso Competence Centres Matteo Melideo, Engineering Ingegneria Informatica S.p.A.</p>
15:20-15:35	<p>SPOCS: How to create an active and sustainable community in OSOR? Ana Karla A. de Medeiros, SPOCS</p>
15:35-15:50	<p>Transferring open source know how from industry projects to the public sector – a one year retrospective Thomas Biskup, OpenSAGA Initiative</p>
15:50-16:40	Debate 2: Good practice and innovation in the use of OSS by public administrations
16:40-16:55	Conclusions
16:55-17:30	Networking

Prepared by:

Contractor:

EUROPEAN DYNAMICS

<http://www.eurodyn.com>

Author:

Vassilia Orfanou, Eleni Galyfianaki OSOR Consulting Team

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