SP CS

Seamless cross-border
electronic procedures

POINTS OF SINGLE CONTACT

RESEARCH STUDY

- Electronic and traditional PSC reviews
- PSC portals assessment
- Best practices

April 2011

CONTENTS

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I. Introduction

Directive 2006/123/EC of the European Parliament adopted 12 December 2006 on services on the internal market obliged Member States to implement legislative and administrative regulations essential to full transposition of the Directive by 28 December 2009.

The Services Directive aims at creating a genuine Single Market by diminishing barriers in cross-border provision of services in the European Union. The Directive strives for the creation of favourable conditions for business activities and enabling of both service providers and recipients to take full advantage of the existing possibilities and freedom, which in turn will result in competitiveness and growth. The Directive is a horizontal instrument, which covers a wide range of activities from setting-up a business to various day-to-day business running procedures, which are covered by a number of legal acts. The implementation of the Service Directive requires both legislative work and other – organizational and practical – measures. Apart from legislation screening, each of the Member States was obliged to set up a "Point of Single Contact" (PSC), which should meet specified requirements. PSCs play a crucial role for service providers in providing necessary information and enabling them to complete procedures electronically. The implementation of the Services Directive has turned out to be a time-consuming and challenging process for most Member States.

More than one year after the deadline for the Directive's implementation, the PSCs represent a mixed and divergent level of development. This research reveals not only the advancement of PSCs according to the Services Directive's requirements, but also the approach adopted, which differs significantly across Europe. Thus the aim of the research was not to underline the drawbacks and delays in reaching full operating capability, but to show the differences in the scope of information and technical solution aspects as well as back-office integration which affect cross-border services provision. Since the user-friendliness of the portals is crucial from a business perspective, the research also focused on the user-friendliness of the portals, measuring the transparency and availability of the PSCs.

II.   Research assumptions

The research methodology included several parts encapsulating technical aspects of PSCs development as well user-friendliness of the portals. Three questionnaires were developed and sent out to the experts on the national level as well as competent persons in charge of PSCs development. The aim of the first general questionnaire was to gather information about both electronic and physical PSCs organization and to map competent persons in charge of PSCs development. The second detailed questionnaire on electronic PSCs was sent to the PSC experts indicated by the Ministries, in some cases the Ministries answered to the questionnaire themselves. The last survey concerning physical PSCs was again distributed among persons indicated by competent Ministries. In case of countries within SPOCS project the partners were responsible for collecting data from the competent bodies and PSC experts.

Electronic PSCs
- The assessment criteria were based on a questionnaire survey.
- Experts responsible for PSCs in all Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway provided general information (general questionnaire by national public authorities) on electronic PSC organisation in their country.
- Persons responsible for PSCs operation in all Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway (except for Portugal), answered the detailed questionnaire on electronic PSCs.
- The questionnaire was completed by 46 PSCs including:
  - 27 national PSCs
  - 19 regional PSCs
- The national and regional PSCs results were analysed together due to several reasons:
  - countries which decided to establish regional PSCs do not have a central one-stop-shop thus adopting the separate national and regional approach would prevent from overall PSCs analysis across Europe,

- the Services Directive gives Member States the possibility to choose the way of PSCs organisation. No matter if the PSCs are regional or national, they still should meet the same requirements, fulfil the same goals and enable electronic procedures operation on their area,

- the Federal Republic of Austria and Germany grants some sovereignty to the subdivisions thus the regional PSCs in Austria and Germany act as independent organisations with no obligation to develop one-stop-shops in the same and adopt unified approach in most cases as every federal states can have it is own legal regulations. Due to that fact, it must be noted the regional PSCs may differ in terms of the technical solutions adopted which may influence the PSCs interoperability,

- seldom did the PSCs provide all answers required (in case of Austria only answers which are the same for all PSCs were delivered.) therefore the analyse of just regional PSCs wouldn't be valuable on its own.

PSC portals assessment

- The assessment criteria were based on the WAES method. The criteria included traits within categories: navigation and branding, contact information, issue-related information, interactivity, accessibility, website accessibility, security and privacy, therefore the portal assessment results cannot be regarded as the evaluation of PSCs operational stage.

- The PSCs portals assessment aimed to underlined good practices in portals usability.

- The assessment was conducted taking into account all operational PSC national portals in each MS. In the case of regional PSCs the assessment covered all of them, and was conducted unless their development was at such an early stage that it made no relevant impact. The regional portals of Germany and Austria were examined.

General PSCs evaluated: 52

National PSCs evaluated: 27

Regional PSCs evaluated: 25

Number of unavailable PSCs: 1

- The assessment was conducted after the website was translated into English (if translation was available) or using the Google translator tool (full translation was not always available). The disturbing fact was noticed in some cases as while switching into English language the different portal or subpage appeared. In the case of France, the assessment was conducted by a French speaking person, due to the lack of possibility of translation.

- The average assessment time was 20–30 minutes.

- The research might have been impaired by translation issues or the limited time of assessment. The aim of the assessment was to examine the ease of finding relevant traits.

Traditional PSCs

- The assessment criteria were based on a questionnaire survey.

- Experts responsible for PSCs in all Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway provided general information (General questionnaire by national public authorities) on physical PSC organisation in their country.

- Persons responsible for physical PSCs operation answered the detailed questionnaire on physical PSCs

- 51 respondents were gathered from the physical PSCs of 12 out of 20 countries that have set up traditional infrastructure (due to the large number of PSCs in some countries).

- All Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway provided general information (General questionnaire by national public authorities) on traditional one-stop-shop organisation in their country.

III. Electronic PSCs

❖ ESTABLISHMENT AND ORGANISATION

In 27 countries the model of one central electronic PSC was adopted. In Austria, Germany and Italy a number of electronic PSCs according to the relevant area are present. In 25 countries (see *Figure 1*) either a special project, unit or budget was established in order to organize the PSC. Currently there is no obligation to maintain consistency in the presentation of the content on regional portals, and a mechanism to deal with requests sent to the wrong PSC is not a common solution either.
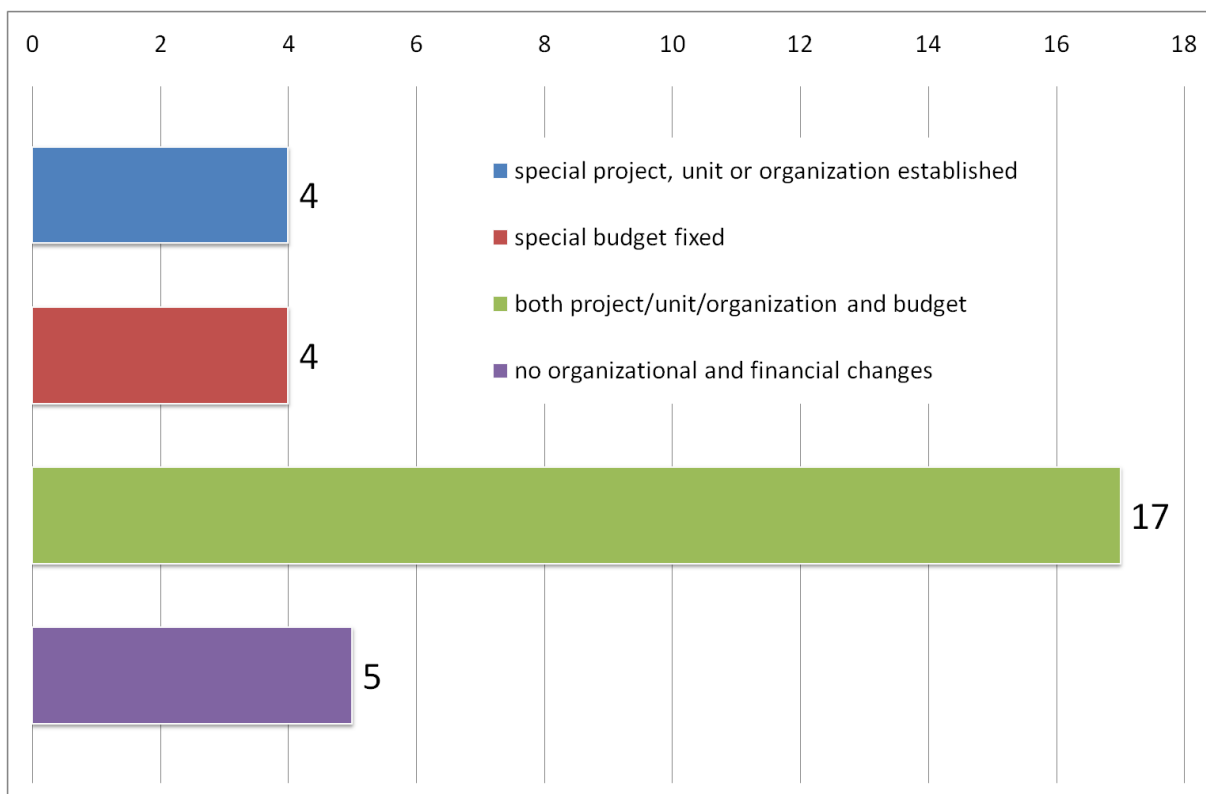

Figure 1: Organizational arrangements for PSC establishment
(30 respondents: 27 Member States of European Union, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)

The deadline for PSC establishment was 31 December 2009. Most of the countries managed to meet the deadline or even implement the PSC earlier (see *Figure 2*) especially in cases where existing portals were used. 6 countries launched PSCs after the 1 January 2010, and in 4 countries the PSCs have not yet been officially introduced. All the regional PSCs of Austria and Germany responding to the questionnaire set their one-stop-shops on time therefore the results are presented together.
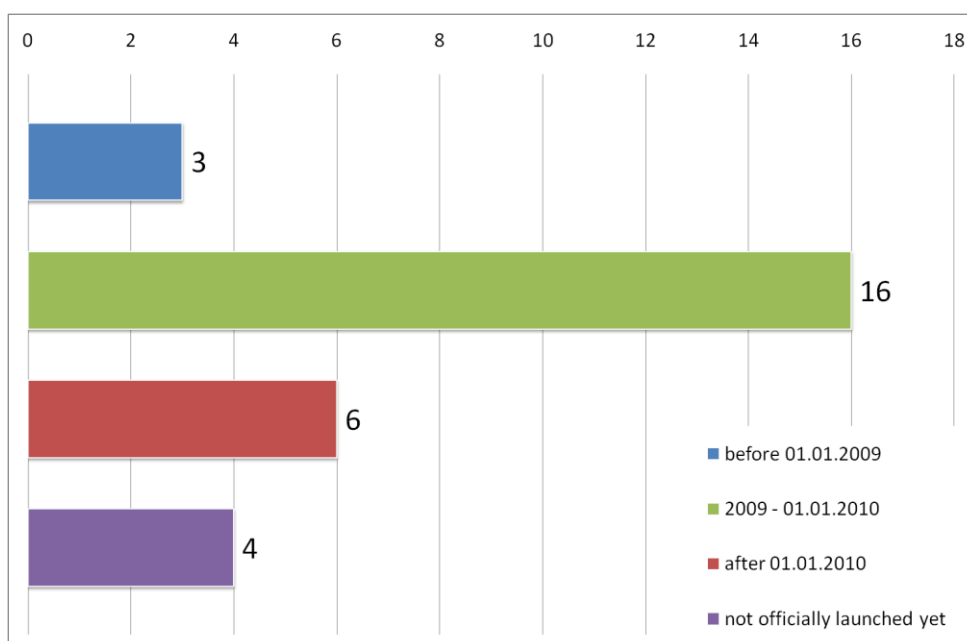

Figure 2: Date of PSC establishment
(29 respondents: 26 Member States of European Union, Iceand, Liechtenstein, Norway)

Already existing national or regional websites for entrepreneurs were adopted for PSCs in 33 cases (20 national and 13 regional PSCs). The PSCs fulfil mainly a coordination role (46 respondents: 27 national, 19 regional PSCs) leaving the final decisions with the competent authorities responsible for the procedures. Only 3 national PSCs (Czech Republic, Norway The Slovak Republic) indicated that they have decisional powers. An information role was indicated by 13% of the examined PSCs (4 national, 2 regional PSCs).

26% of PSCs (8 national, 3 regional PSCs) were directly connected or provided a link to different contact points in the country relevant for the business sector, and 4 PSCs (3 national, 1 regional) intended to provide such a possibility (43 respondents: 27 national, 16 regional PSCs).

Most of the PSCs did not charge users for the services they provided (26 national, 12 regional PSCs); however there were plans to introduce some fees in the case of 2 regional and 1 national PSCs. The PSCs which currently charge service providers for services are mainly German regional PSCs.

Nearly half of examined PSCs (46 respondents: 27 national, 19 regional) provided at least one other than a national language on the website (see *Figure 3*) whereas 37% (5 national, 12 regional PSCs) intended to translate their portal. Only 7 PSCs provided more than one foreign language. The most often available foreign language on PSC portals was English. It was quite common to provide general information in the languages of neighbouring countries (e.g. Finland, Spain, Branderburg region[1]).
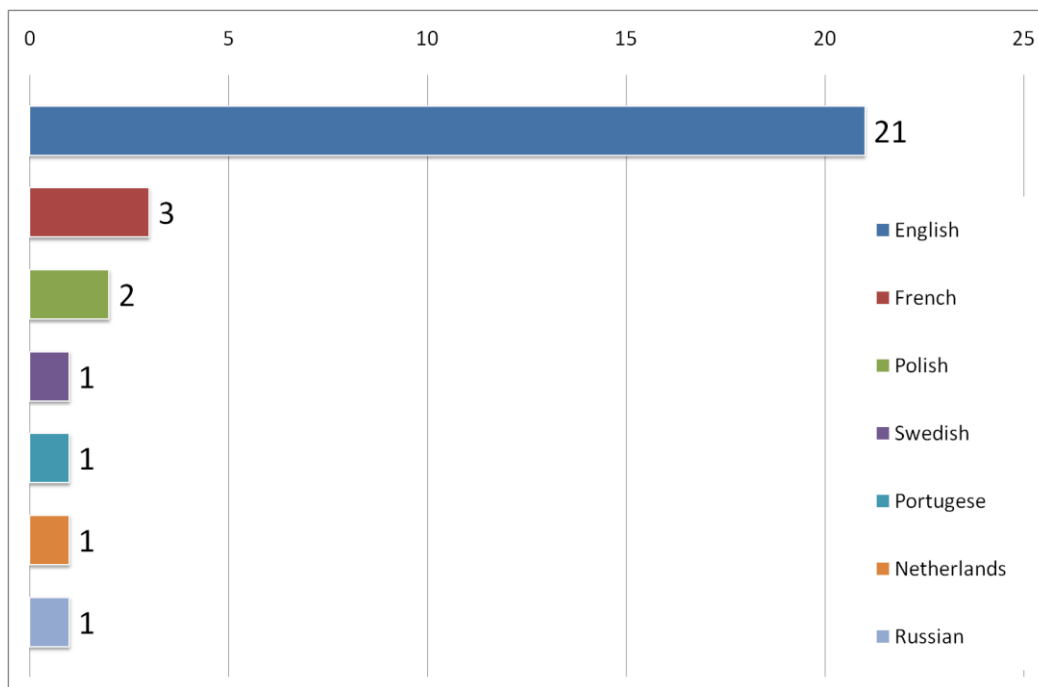

Figure 3: Foreign Languages provided by PSCs
(21 respondents: 16 national PSCs, 5 regional PSCs)

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[1] Region of Germany

The scope of the translation of information was varied (see *Figure 4*). Nearly half of PSCs provided general information in foreign languages. The administrative procedures of 14 PSCs (31%) were described in other than a national language, whereas translation of law regulations was found at 9 PSCs (20%). The entire PSC content in a foreign language was available at 12 PSCs mainly national ones (10) (English language at 10 PSCs, e.g. Estonia, Belgium, Denmark, Luxemburg).
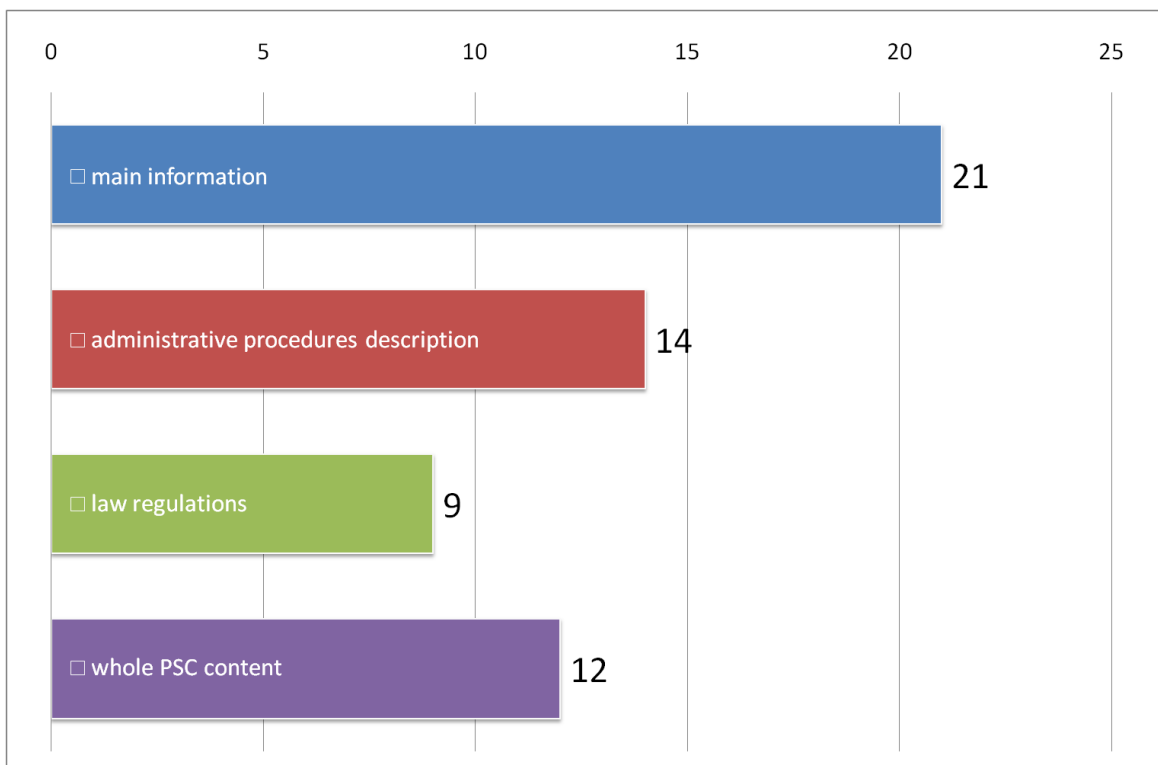

**Figure 4: Scope of information provided in foreign languages
(21 respondents: 18 national PSCs, 3 regional PSCs)**

Distinction between procedures on national establishment and cross-border provision of services was made at 14 PSCs (33%), mainly national ones (10) by clear indication of the nature of the procedure in its title, content or separate category of the procedure. (26%) PSCs (8 national, 3 regional PSCs) intended to provide such a distinction in the future.
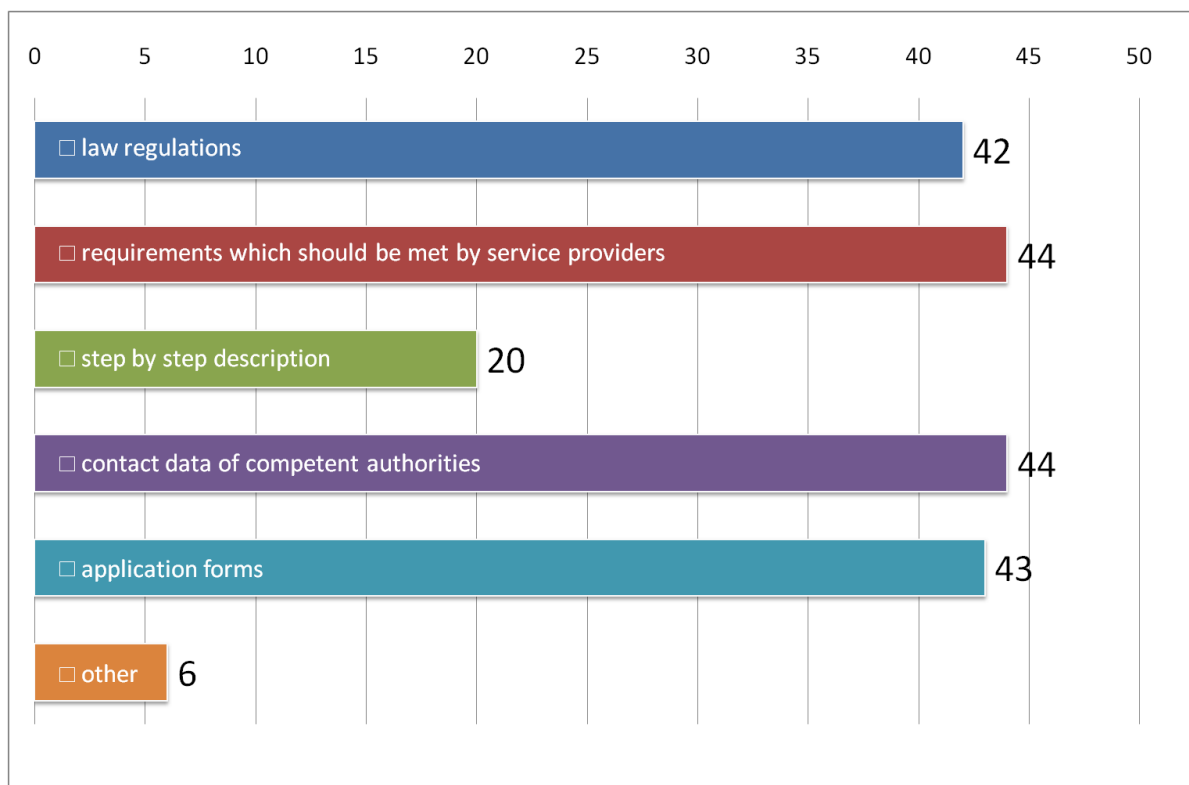
Figure 5: Scope of information provided in procedures description
(45 respondents: 27 national PSCs, 18 regional PSCs)

Nearly all responding PSCs provided legal regulations, information on the requirements which should be met by service providers and contact data (see *Figure 5*). It was also a common practice to present application forms, although only half of them included step-by-step process description (mainly national PSCs - 15). Other information indicated by 6 (13%) of respondents were: costs, duration/validity, deadlines, business environment and other. It must be noted that 25 PSCs (10 national, 15 regional) indicated that information was hosted on the portals of local/regional authorities, therefore the procedure description may have been available on those websites and not directly on the PSCs.
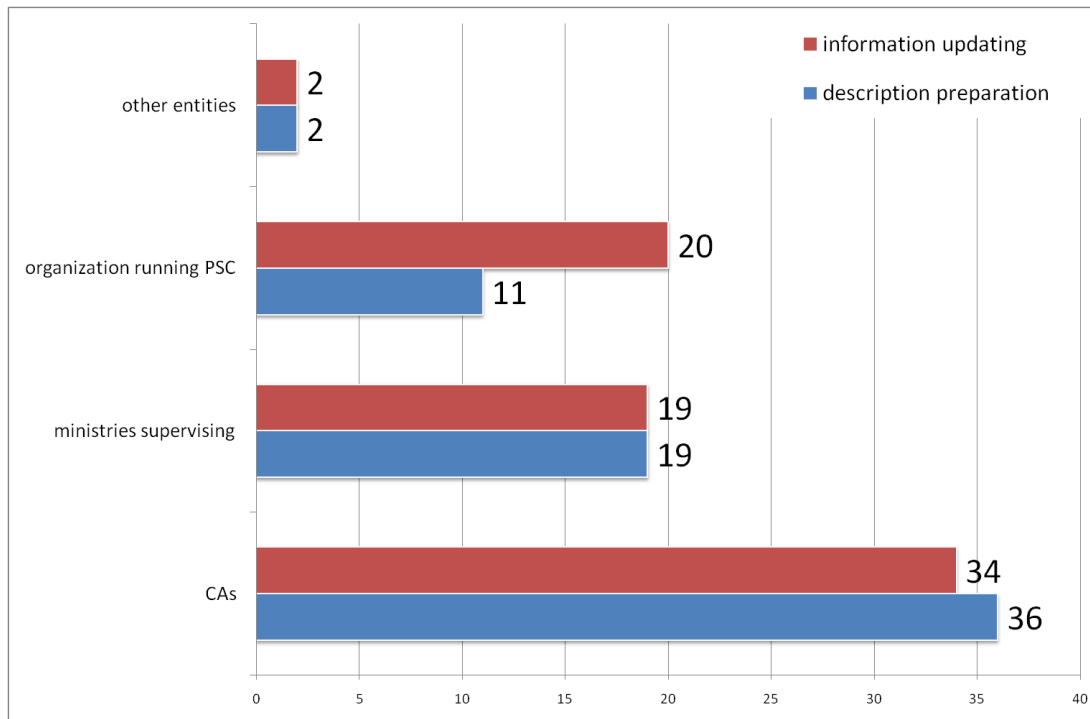
Figure 6: Organizations responsible for preparation of procedure descriptions and updating information (44 respondents: 26 national PSCs, 18 regional PSCs)

The competent authorities were responsible for preparation of procedure descriptions for 36 PSCs (11 national, 15 regional); however in the case of 20 one-stop-shops there was more than one entity in charge of that task (see *Figure 6*). The Ministries supervising the CAs and proper administrative procedures were indicated by 19 PSCs (5 national, 9 regional) while 11 PSCs (8 national, 3 regional) took part in preparing the descriptions themselves. A similar situation was noted for the information updating task, although with stronger involvement by the PSCs (45%).

Nearly a half (21) of responding PSCs (26 national PSC, 17 regional PSCs), mainly national ones (19), provided information and allowed for completion of procedures in relation to service sectors that are not within the scope of the Services Directive. However that information was mostly offered (18) by PSCs which were established on the basis of pre-existing websites. Just 6 (25%) of the PSCs providing such information are portals set up for the purpose of Services Directive implementation.

The full information content is available on 72% of PSCs (14 national, 17 regional) (see *Figure 7*); however some minor improvements are taking place at nearly half of them. The content is not ready on 11 national and 1 regional PSCs responding in the survey. This year the full content will be provided by 9 PSCs (21%).
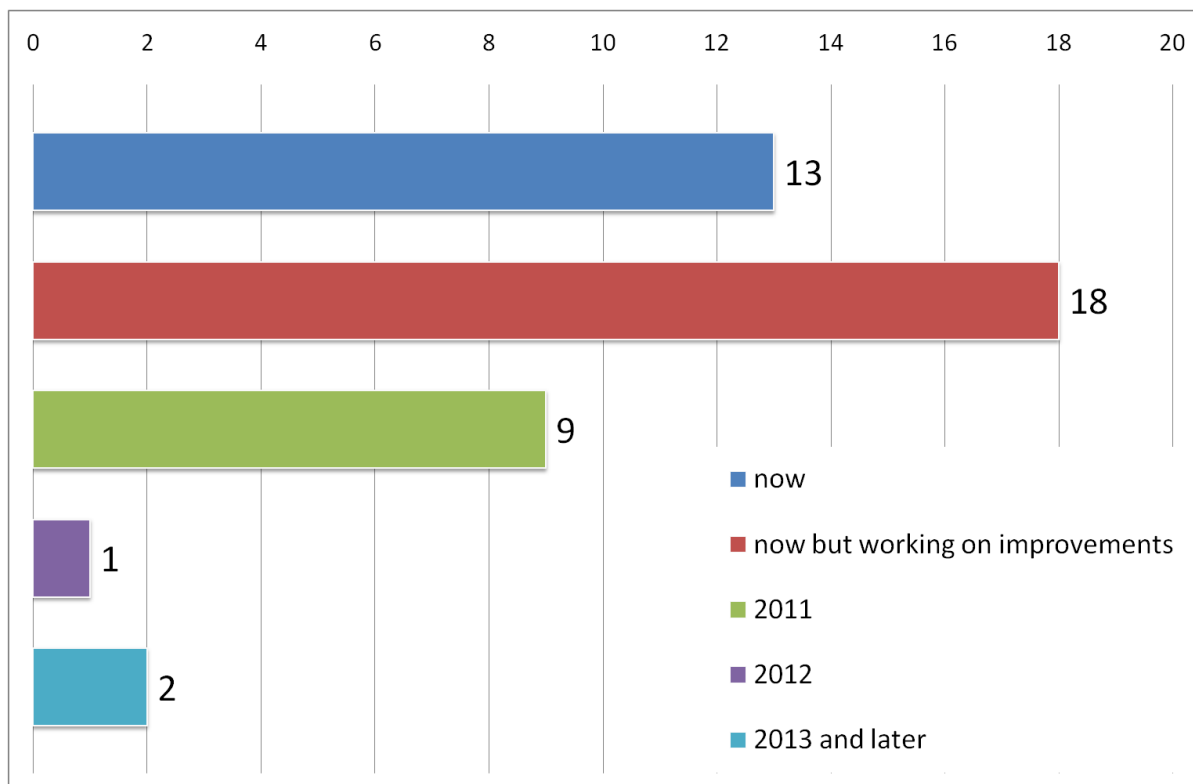

Figure 7: Availability of full information content on PSCs
(43 respondents, 25 national PSCs, 18 regional PSCs)

The difficulty and effort in preparing the proper information depends partly on the way the PSC is organized, as some one-stop-shops provide just general information, with details available on the website of competent authorities. Such a practice is followed by 25 PSCs (10 national, 15 regional). 75% of them already provide all information content at the moment. The PSCs which provide just general information are linked to competent authorities' websites (96%) and/or business information portals (57%). Of course the links are also provided by one-stop-shops hosting all information on their website, although more as a supportive feature.

❖ COMPLETION OF PROCEDURES BY ELECTRONIC MEANS

The average number of administrative procedures within the scope of the Services Directive is 234. The number differs significantly among European countries, from just 8 up to 1570 procedures (35 respondents: 22 national, 13 regional PSCs). Lower number of procedures in the regional PSCs cannot be noted. On average 85% of procedures are currently described at PSCs (33 respondents: 20 national, 13 regional PSCs). Quantities of 95% or more are described at 24 PSCs. As nearly all PSCs provide service providers with relevant forms, 72.5% of forms are currently available on the portals (20 respondents: 17 national, 3 regional PSCs), whereas 55% can be submitted via the PSCs (22 respondents: 19 national, 3 regional PSCs). An average 57% of administrative procedures can be conducted online, starting with submission of relevant forms up to receiving a decision (32 respondents: 20 national, 12 regional PSCs).
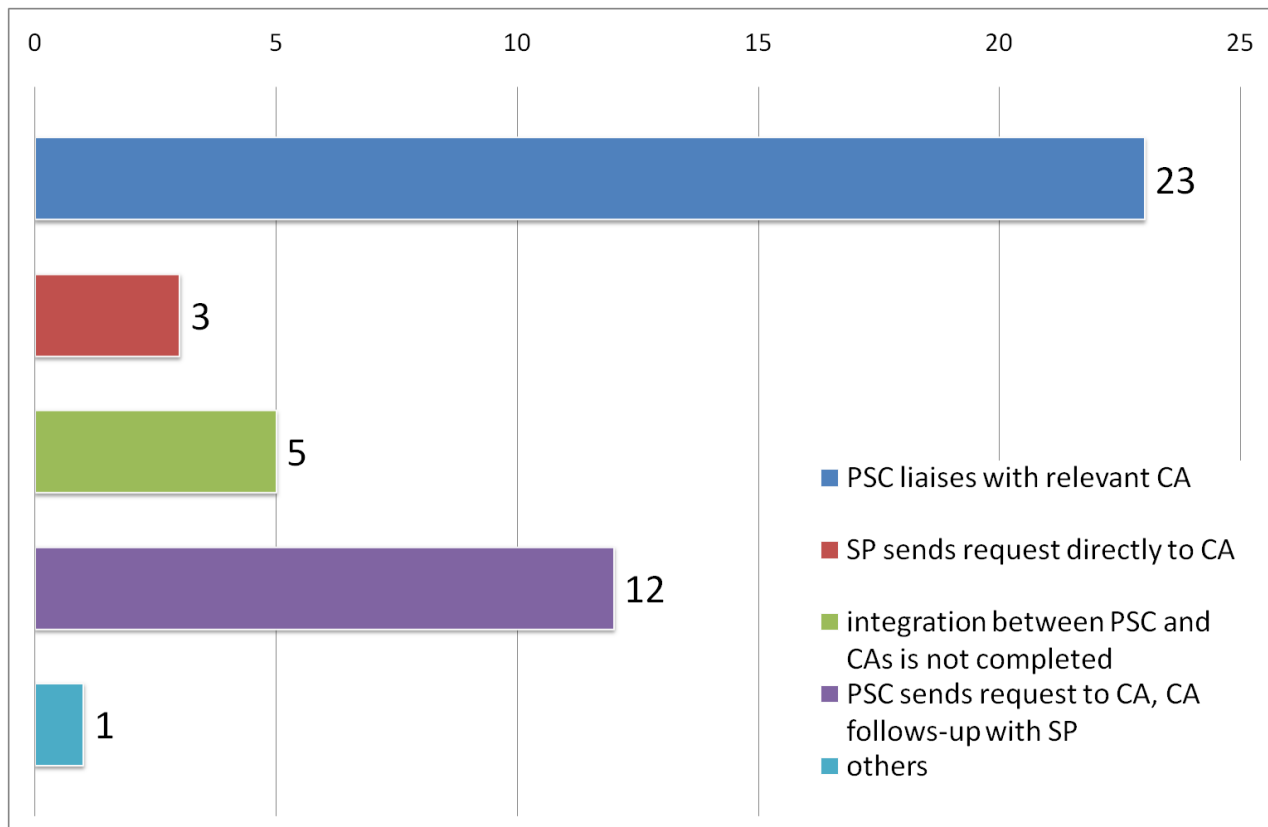

Figure 8: Liaison between PSC and competent authorities
(44 respondents: 25 national PSCs, 19 regional PSCs)

Figure 8 shows the differences in the integration of authorities and PSCs across Europe. Over half of PSCs liaised with relevant competent authorities in terms of sending requests/documents and collecting replies. In 12 PSCs (mostly regional PSCs of Austria) communication was focused only on sending the documents, while the competent authority replied directly to the service provider. It must be noted that the given answers might not be relevant for all procedures at the PSC, as they are greatly dependent on the local/regional authorities and their integration with the PSCs.

5 PSCs (national) were currently conducting the integration, and in 3 cases the users send the documents directly to the competent authority.

Communication channels between PSCs and CAs depend on the legal regulations in each country or federal state. Different requirements might exist concerning e.g. electronic signatures, which influence the communication channels for different procedures, explaining the number of different responses (multiple choice).
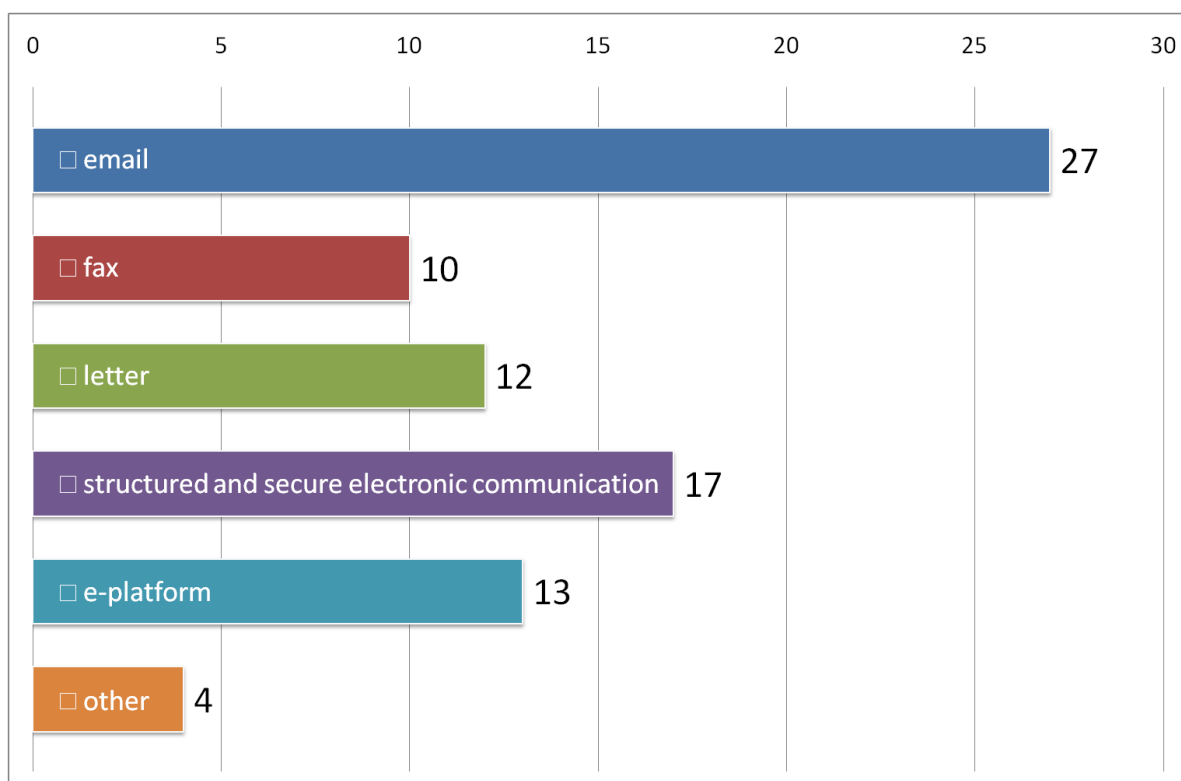

Figure 9: Channels of communication between PSCs and competent authorities
(43 respondents: 24 national PSCs, 19 regional PSCs)

The most common channel of communication between PSCs and competent authorities was email (10 national, 17 regional PSCs) (see *Figure 9*). Structured and secure electronic communication was declared by 17 (14 national, 3 regional) PSCs, and the e-platform method by 13 (6 national, 7 regional) one-stop-shops. Fax or letter communication was possible on 22 PSCs overall. Just 14 respondents (9 national, 5 regional PSCs) provided statistics on number of submitted applications via PSCs during the year 2010. The highest number was indicated by Hungary, but PSCs stressed that it was not possible to select data relevant for procedures only within the scope of the Service Directive. A significant number of applications were submitted via the PSCs of Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom also. The data on the nationality of service providers submitting the applications is rarely gathered.

Also 22 PSCs (44 respondents: 26 national, 18 regional PSCs) were integrated with national or federal government systems, whereas 5 were planning such a step in the future. A single sign-on mechanism was available in 6 cases.

The most popular format of electronic forms available on PSCs was an interactive form, as used by 63% of respondents (8 national, 7 regional) (see *Figure 10*). The other formats were

Figure 10: Format of electronic forms available on the PSC for service providers (24 respondents: 16 national PSCs. 8 regional PSCs)
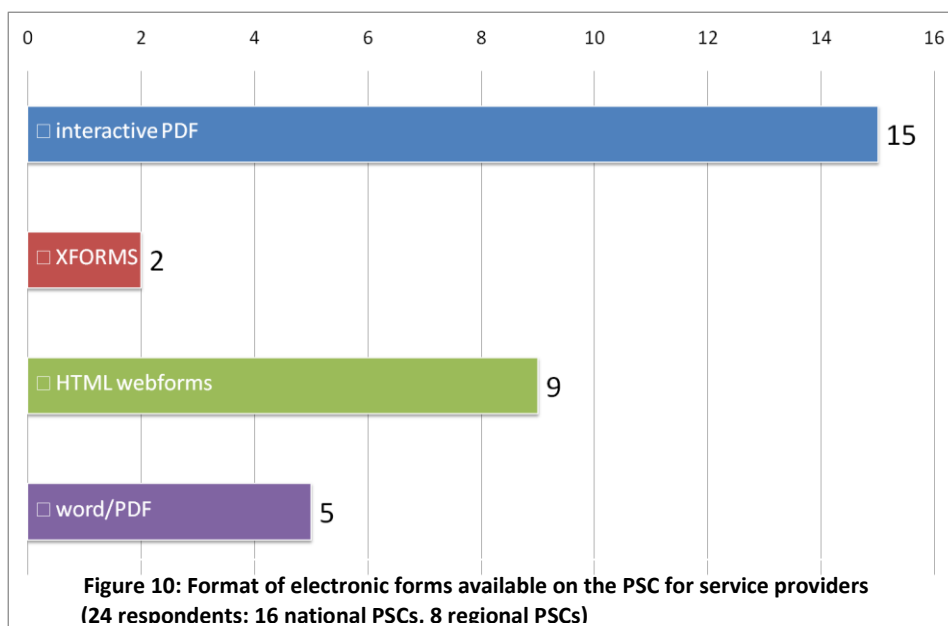
HTML Web forms, indicated by 7 national and 2 regional PSCs, and downloadable PDFs or Word documents, available on 5 PSCs (mainly national). The question concerned only PSCs that published electronic forms on their portals, but it must be stressed that in many cases the forms were available only on the websites of authorities to which PSCs were linked (e.g. all

Austrian regions). In such cases one can assume that there is no particular standard for all entities concerning the format of the provided forms.

The PSCs were asked to indicate to their best knowledge what formats of documents are accepted by the authorities in charge of procedures (which can also give a view of available documents on their portals). PDFs were accepted by almost all of the PSCs (21 national, 19 regional) (see *Figure 11*). Nearly 80% of respondents indicated scans. XML documents were accepted by slightly less than 60 % of competent authorities. It was often indicated by PSCs that the formats of documents accepted depend on the competent authority. Among others OOXML, ODF, DOC, ADOC (national solution for signed e-documents), HCSW (Oracle UCM), PDF, JPEG, TIFF, PNG and XLS were also indicated.
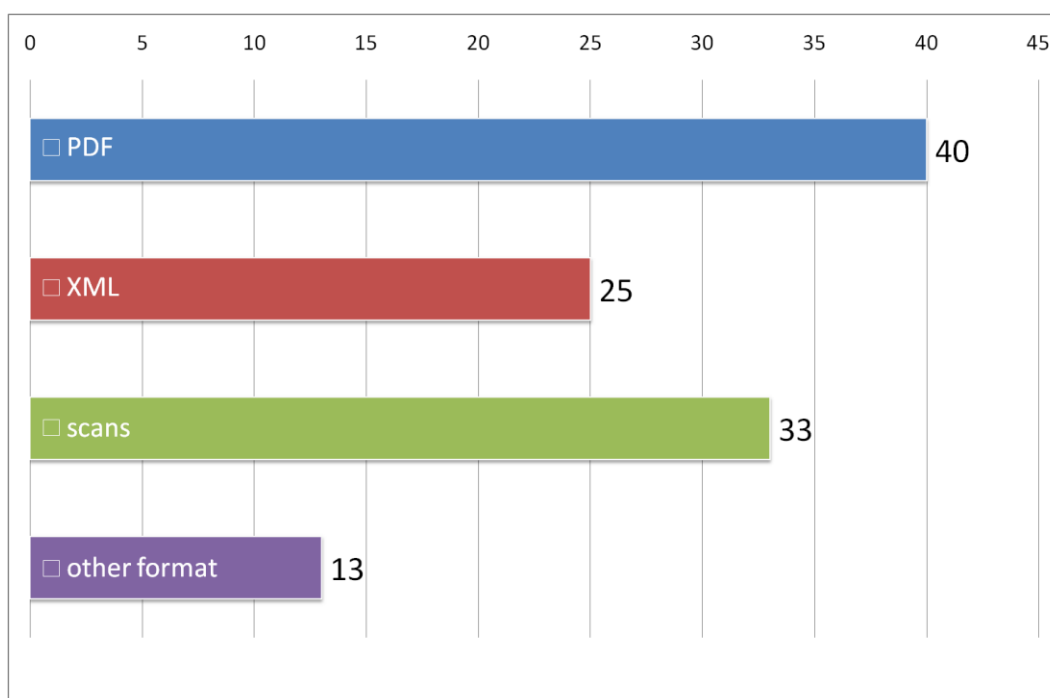

Figure 11: Format of electronic documents accepted by competent authorities
(42 respondents: 23 national PSCs, 19 regional PSCs)

The qualified electronic signature was the most common solution (see *Figure 12*) both required from service providers and used by competent authorities when communicating with PSCs. A third of authorities and nearly half of service providers were not obliged to use any electronic

signature for the moment; however some PSCs also declared that electronic signatures will be introduced in the future. Unqualified electronic signature was marked as acceptable for public administration bodies by 12 PSCs (among them the regions of Austria) and for service providers by 4 PSCs. Whether an electronic signature is required may depend on the type of administrative procedures and specific legal regulations.

11 national and 3 regional PSCs accepted electronic IDs as a means of authorization (see *Figure 13*). 7 (5 national, 2 regional) accepted cards of service providers and only

Figure 12: Types of signatures
(42 responses: 24 national PSCs, 18 regional PSCs)
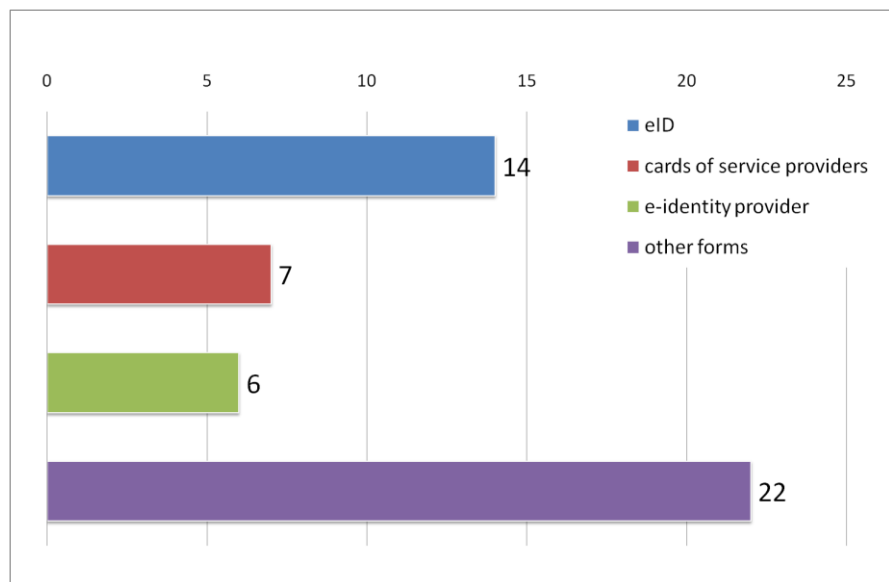
Figure 13: Forms of authorization accepted by PSCs
(42 responses: 24 national PSCs, 18 regional PSCs))

6 (4 national, 2 regional) accepted authorization from e-identity providers. The majority (22) of PSCs accepted other methods of authorization, which suggests user login and password or methods like authorisation via unqualified electronic signature, internet banking or mobile IDs or scans of ID documents. The authentication of national electronic signatures is mostly
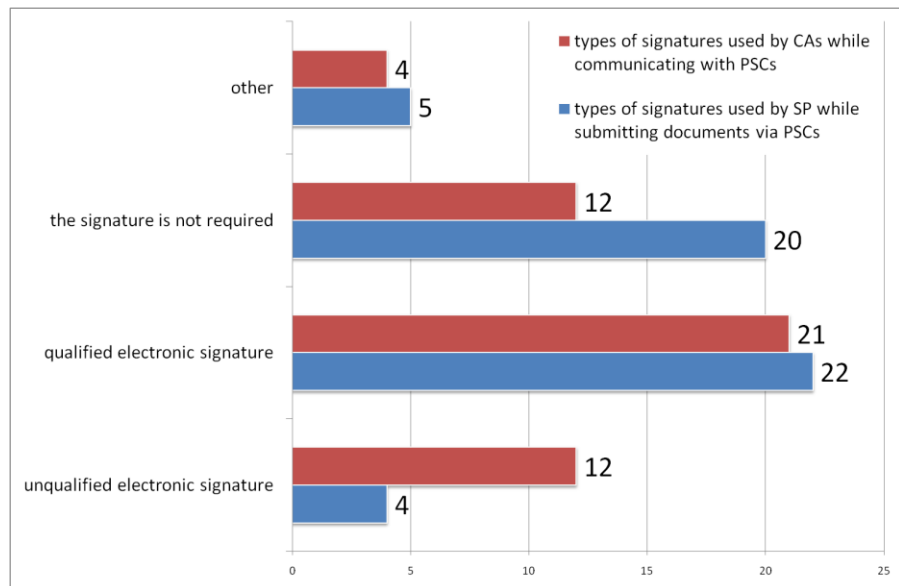
performed via Web services – half of responding PSCs (7 national, 12 regional) – while 15 (11 national, 4 regional) PSCs use specific software (see *Figure 14*).

TSL was the most common method of performing the authentication of electronic signatures from abroad – it was indicated by 32% of responding PSCs (see *Figure 15*). Web services were used by 5 PSCs and vendor software by 4 one-stop-shops.

Figure 14: Ways of performing the authentication of national electronic signatures (37 responses: 22 national PSCs, 15 regional PSCs)

A lack of authentication capabilities was declared by 6 (4 national, 2 regional) PSCs. In the case of some PSCs (e.g. all Austrian regions, Norway) the authentication is not performed as the electronic signature is not required, thus the question was not applicable in those cases. The solutions of the PEPPOL project were planned to be used by 5 (3 national, 2 regional) PSCs; 1 of them does not have any authentication solution available at the moment.
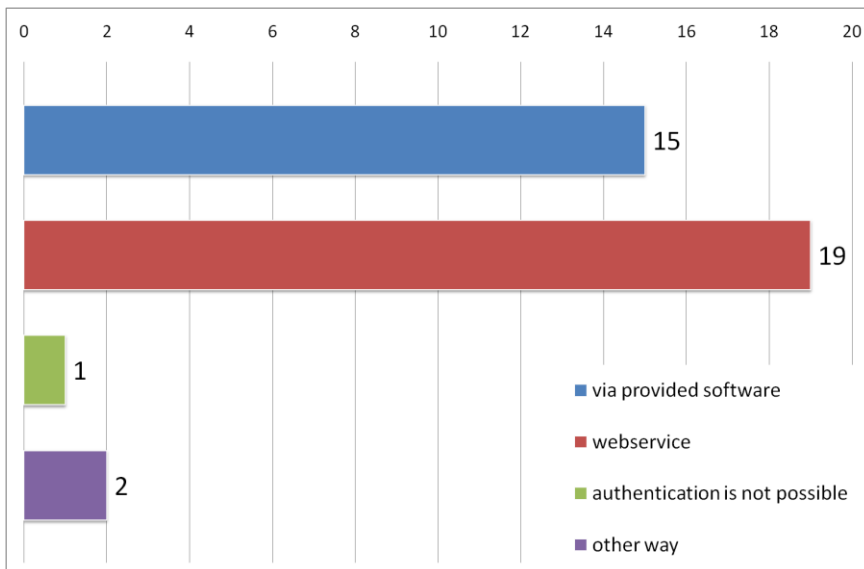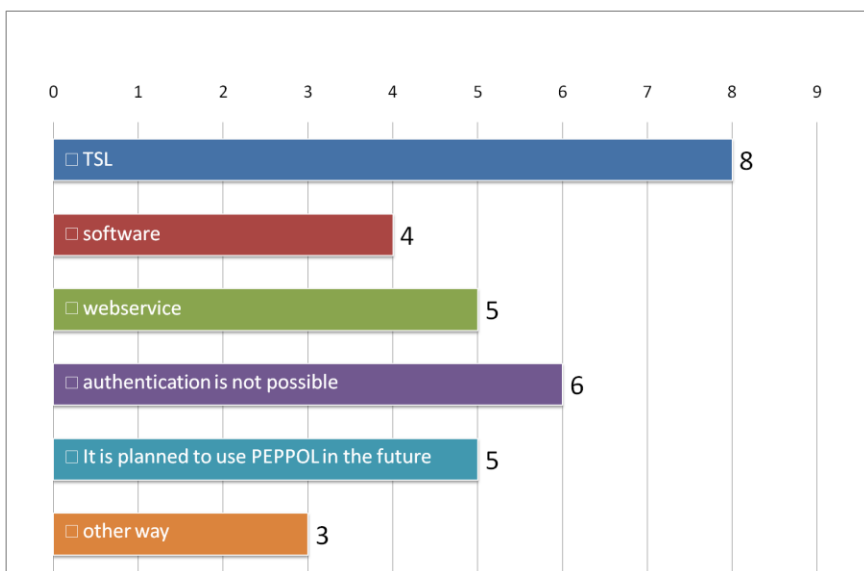

Figure 15: Ways of performing the authentication of electronic signatures from abroad (25 responses: 18 national PSCs, 7 regional PSCs)

❖ FUNCTIONALITIES

The PSCs provide users with various functionalities, which aim at facilitating portal use. There are still many plans either for new functionalities or development of the existing ones. The most popular functions of the PSC portal were completing and submitting application forms (18 national, 8 regional PSCs) and other documents (17 national, 17 regional). Among plans for functionality development, tracking the status of a procedure was the most often indicated category (see *Figure 16*). Administrative fee payment was the least popular functionality, available on 4 PSCs (Finland, Latvia, United Kingdom, Berlin[2]). Just 6 one-stop-shops (5 national, 1 regional) declared plans to provide content syndication for other portals, and not many more (6 national, 1 regional) indicated syndication from other websites. In this case however 20 PSCs already provided the functionality at the time of the research.
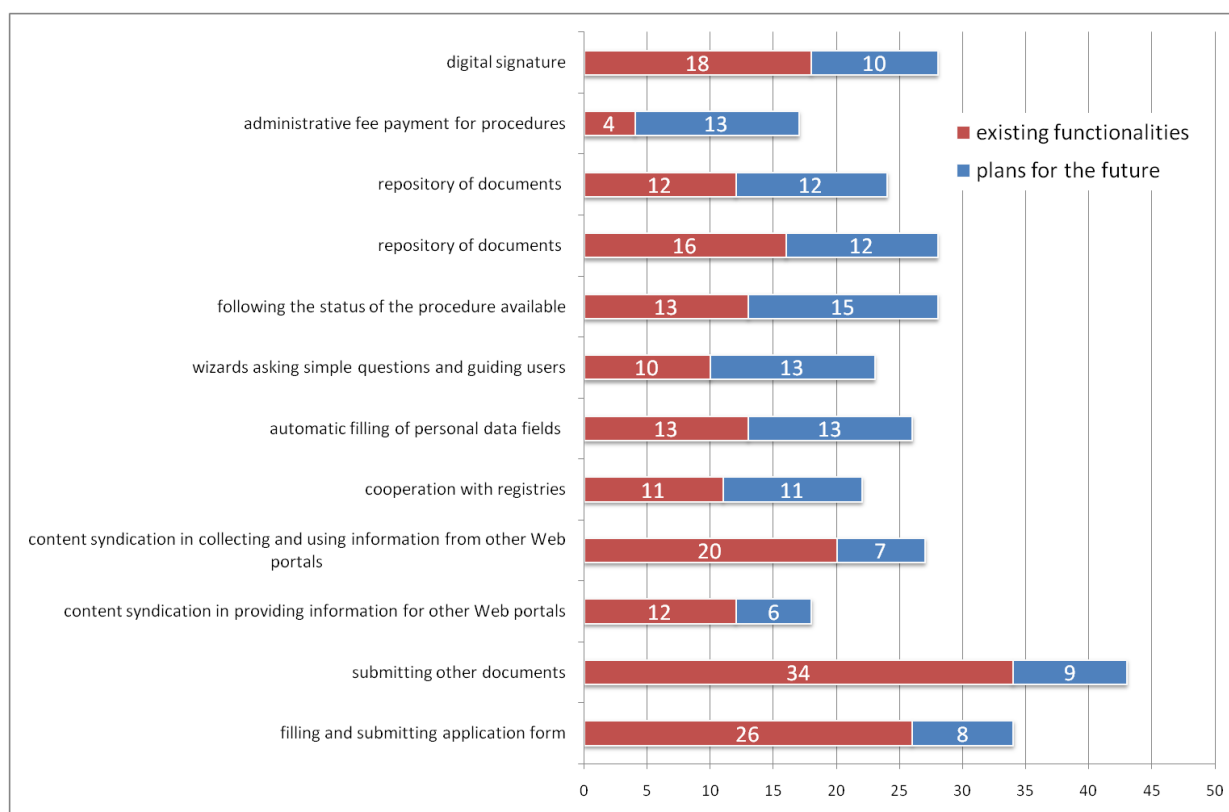

Figure 16: Functionalities provided by PSCs
(45 respondents: 27 national PSCs, 18 regional PSCs)

[2] Region of Germany

In order to make the PSC portal more attractive and improve website friendliness, creators of the PSC provided many interesting modules. Links that may be found useful by users were published by 85% (18 national, 10 regional) of the respondents, and a further 12% (4 national) intended to provide them in the future (see *Figure 17*). Statistics and country information were offered by 14 PSCs (9 national, 5 regional). Other popular functionalities were news and frequently asked questions. Personalisation options and a calendar of events were among the most frequently indicated plans for the future. The least popular functionality as regards both the current situation and future plans was case studies.
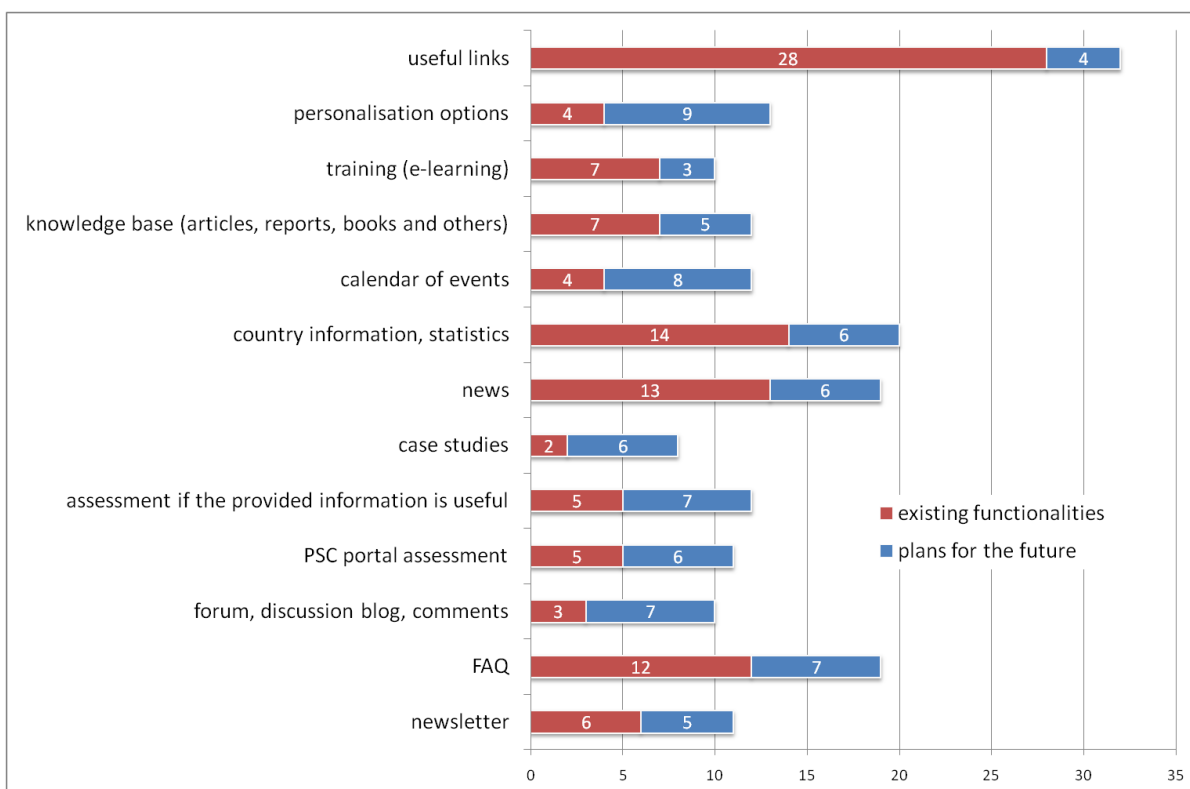

Figure 17: Functionalities
(33 respondents: 23 national PSCs, 10 regional PSCs)

14 PSCs had full operational functionalities available at the time of the research (see *Figure 18*) and a further 8 (5 national, 3 regional) declared they would attain this in the year 2011, which will bring the number up to approximately half of PSCs. Functionalities of 8 (5 national, 3 regional) PSCs are to be completed in 2012, but 12 (11 national, 1 regional) one-stop-shops will achieve all operating functionalities not earlier than in 2013.
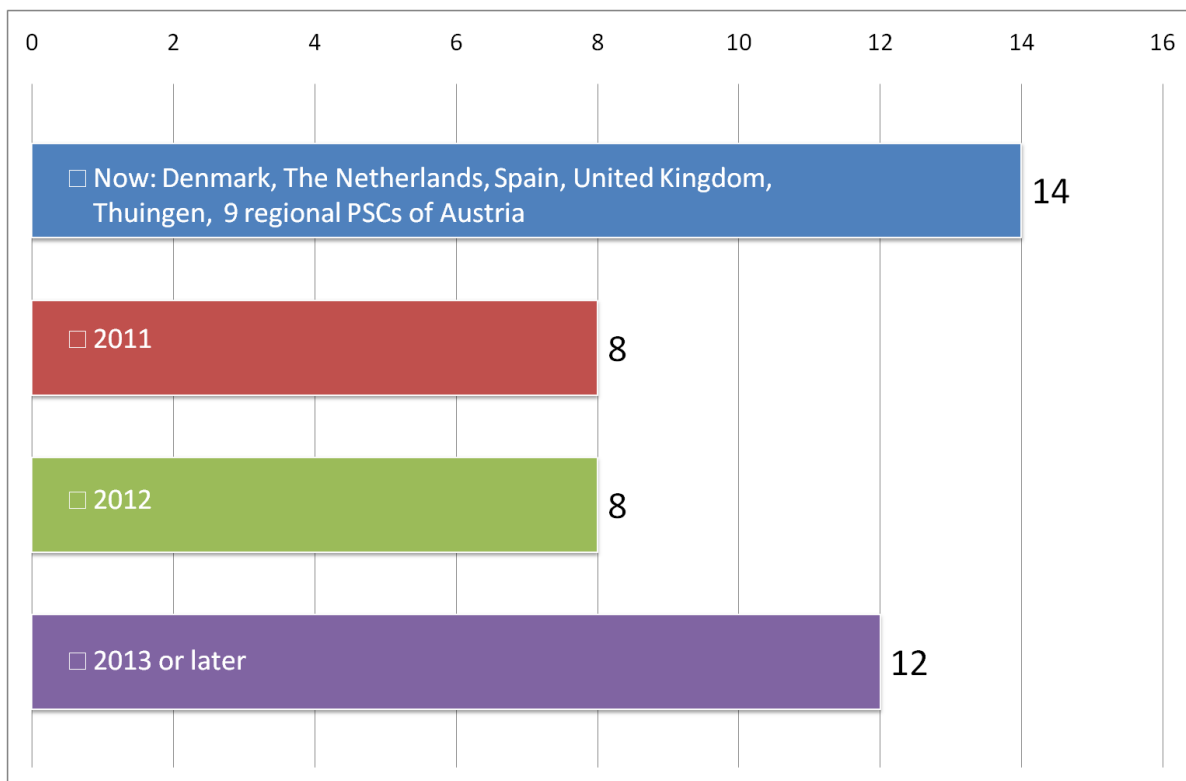

**Figure 18: Anticipated time of full operational functionality availability
(43 respondents: 26 national PSCs, 17 regional PSCs)**

❖ PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO PSC USERS

29 of the PSCs (20 national, 9 regional) provided support for users via either technical or information (content-related) requests. Support in both of the above categories was provided by 19 (13 national, 6 regional) PSCs . 13 PSCs intended to launch help-desk tools in the future (3 national, 10 regional PSCs) (see *Figure 19*).
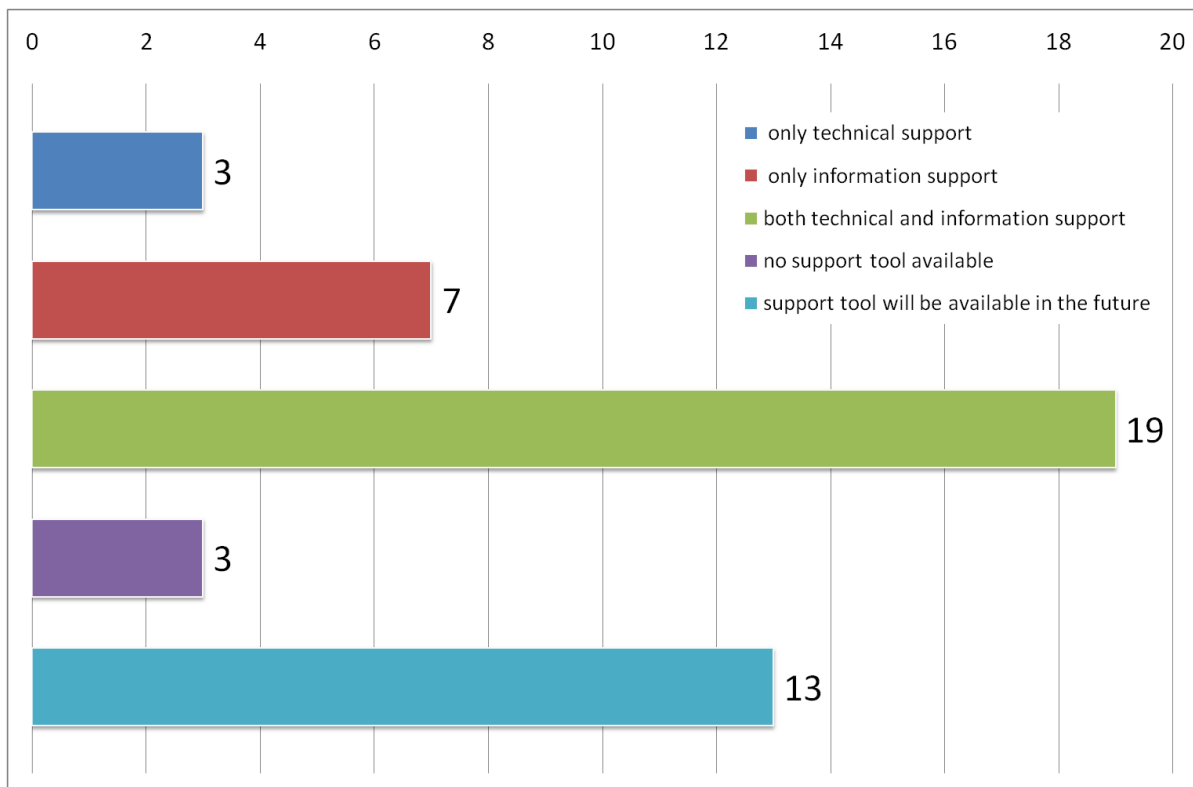

Figure 19: Availability of help-desk/support service from PSCs
(44 respondents: 25 national PSCs, 19 regional PSCs)

The most popular way of contacting the help-desk, regardless of the nature of the requests (both technical and information), were telephone and email (contact form). These methods were offered by the majority of PSCs offering a help service. Chat or other forms of communication were used by only 1 PSCs (see *Figure 20*).
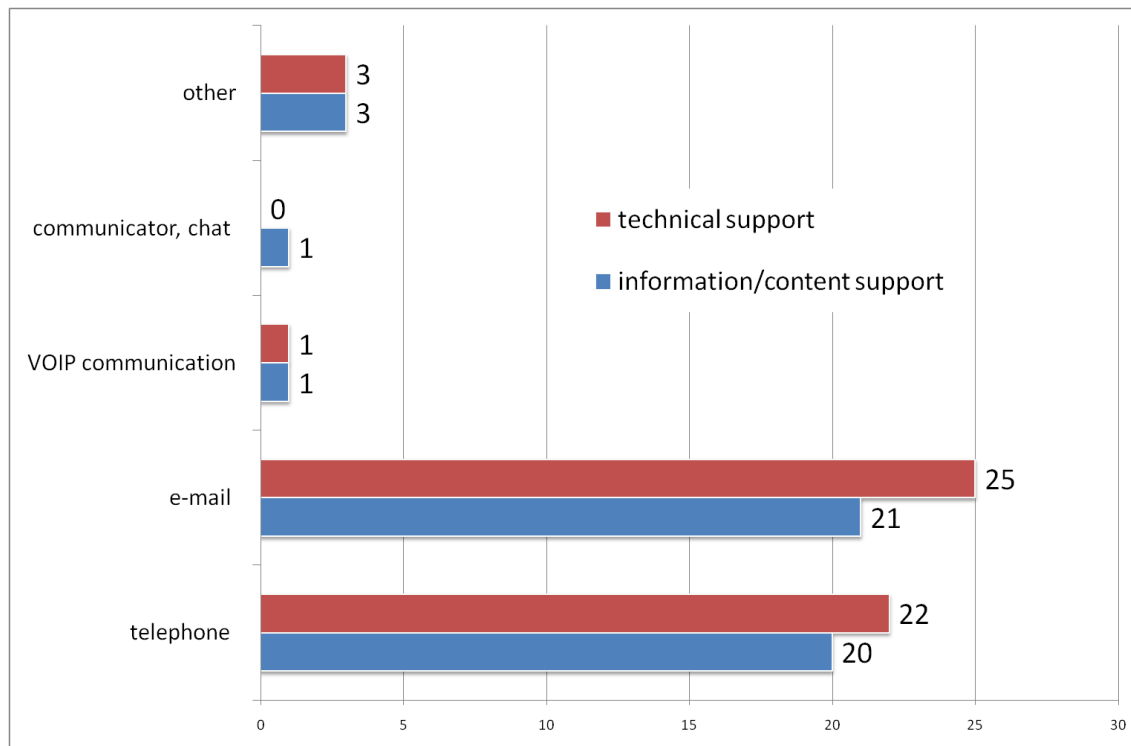
Figure 20: Means of contact with PSCs' help-desk
(29 respondents: 20 national PSCs, 9 regional PSCs)

The average number of requests per month last year varied from just a few requests up to as many as 40 000 (21 respondents: 15 national, 6 regional PSCs). Information and content were much more often the subject of requests than technical support. It should be noted, however, that the statistics may concern the whole portal, including requests related to procedures not within the scope of the Services Directive. Hungary and the Netherlands were the PSCs with the highest rate of requests per month. Both of these portals were built based on existing national websites.

The average time of response for a help-desk request was 1 day for information or content related requests and 1–2 days for technical requests.
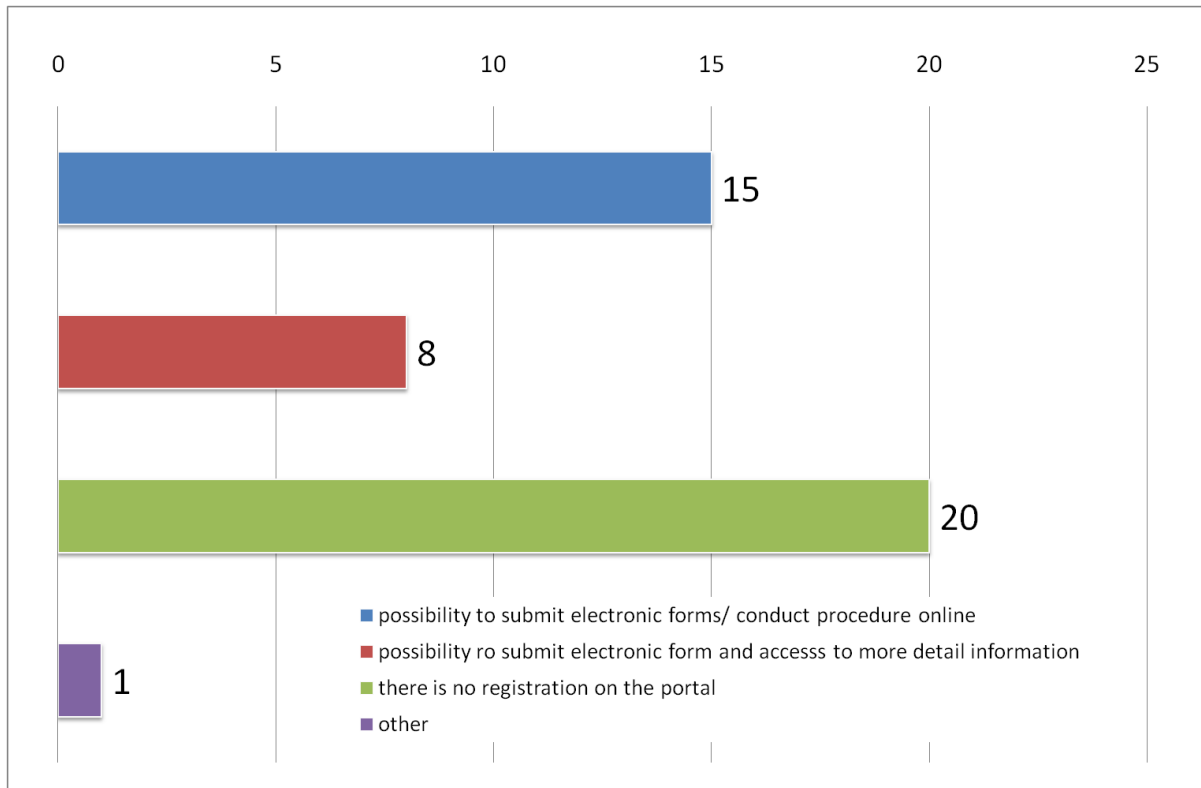
❖ STATISTICS

Figure 21: Benefits of registration on the portal
(42 respondents: 25 national PSCs, 17 regional PSCs)

Registration was available on over half of PSCs (16 national PSCs, 7 regional PSCs). In nearly 70% of them registration provided the possibility of submitting electronic application forms in order to initiate an administrative procedure (see *Figure 21*). The highest number of registered users was indicated by Hungary and Latvia, where national portals were used to set up the PSCs. Among PSCs established just for the fulfilment of Service Directive objectives, the top countries are Spain and Poland. The data on nationality of registered users are seldom gathered. The average percentage of registered foreign users on 8 PSCs which provided data is 2% (8 respondents).

Previously existing portals can be seen to be ahead of new ones in terms of the average number of PSC visits. The countries with the highest average number of PSC visits per month were

Hungary and the Netherlands among the "oldest" portals, while Spain and Belgium were the most often visited portals among the "new PSCs" (21 respondents: 16 national, 5 regional PSCs).

Data on average visit time at PSCs was collected only at a few PSCs (13 national and 1 regional PSCs). At 9 portals visitors spent 1–15 minutes per visit. Only in Belgium and Cyprus did the average time exceed 15 minutes.
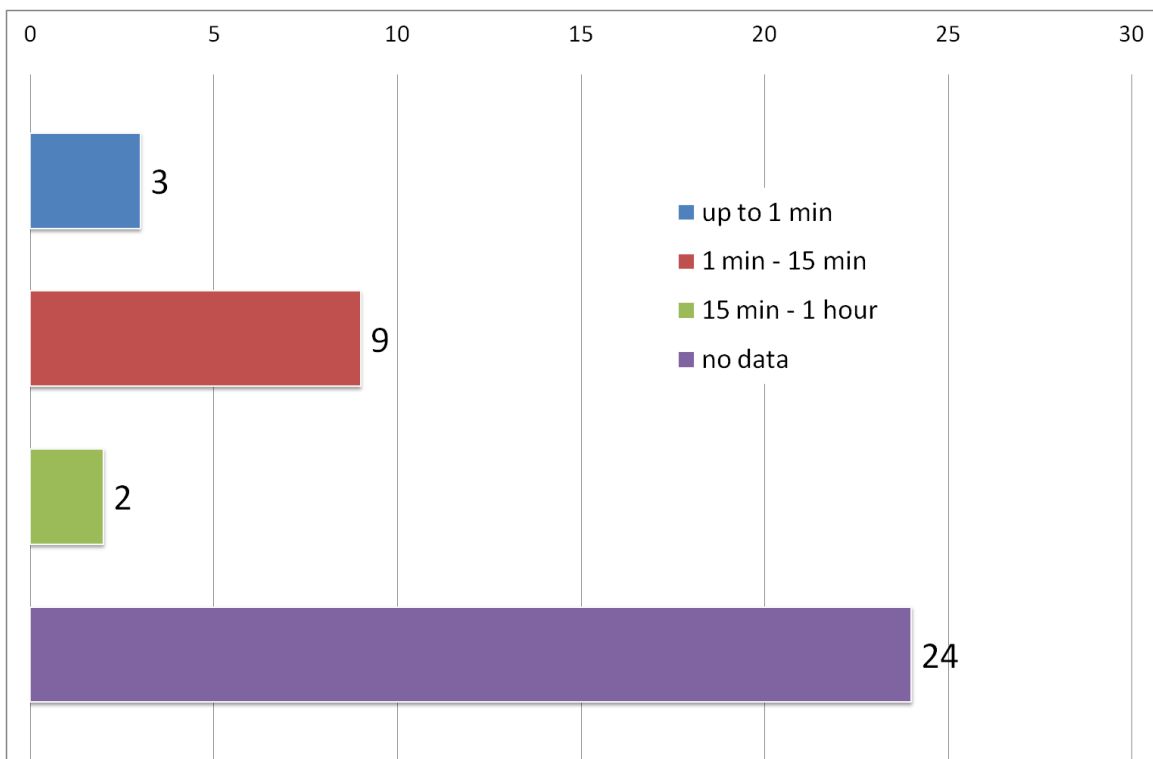

Figure 22: Average visit time on PSC portals (38 respondents: 21 national PSCs, 17 regional PSCs)

❖ PROMOTION

Nearly all PSCs conducted marketing activities (21 national, 18 regional PSCs). 32 of PSCs held meetings and the same number of one-stop-shops promoted themselves by presenting logo and information in other thematic portals (see *Figure 23*). Press articles were published by 19 PSCs, while social networks were used by as many as 16 PSCs. Other methods of promotion utilised were leaflets, brochures, flyers, press conferences, logos at public authorities' websites, and radio and online advertisements. 11 PSCs cooperated with other countries regarding PSC promotion activities, and 8 PSCs intended to do so in the future.
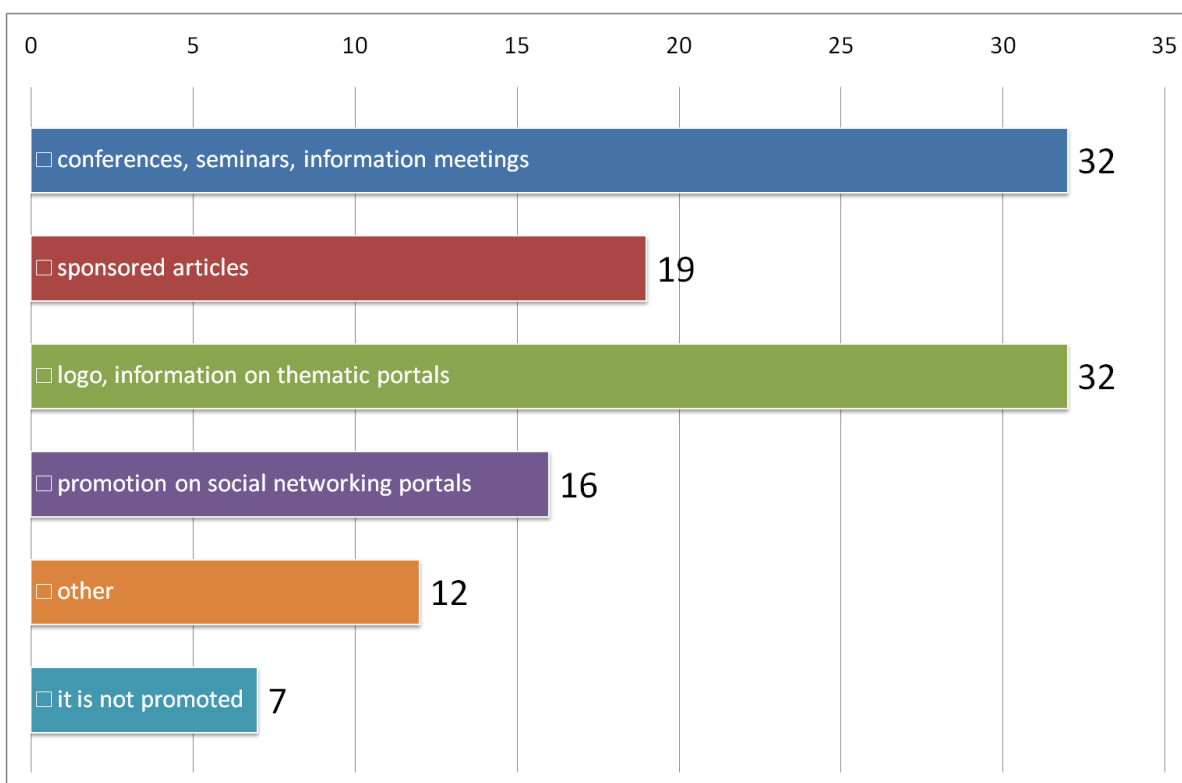

Figure 23: Promotional activities
(44 respondents: 25 national PSCs, 19 regional PSCs)

SPOCS
Building the next generation Points of Single Contact
www.eu-spocs.eu

❖ PROBLEMS

Different formats and methods of procedure description, as well as the scope of the description, were seen as problems in dealing with foreign service providers by many PSCs (respectively 19 and 18, see *Figure 24*). Different document formats were mentioned as an obstacle by 9 PSCs. Other problems identified by the PSCs were:

- lack of information and translation of application forms,
- different understanding of certain business activities,
- different digital signatures across Europe,
- different authentication mechanisms.

It is worth mentioning that software was also identified as a problem – interactive PDF documents can be damaged if opened by other PDF readers than Adobe 8.0+.
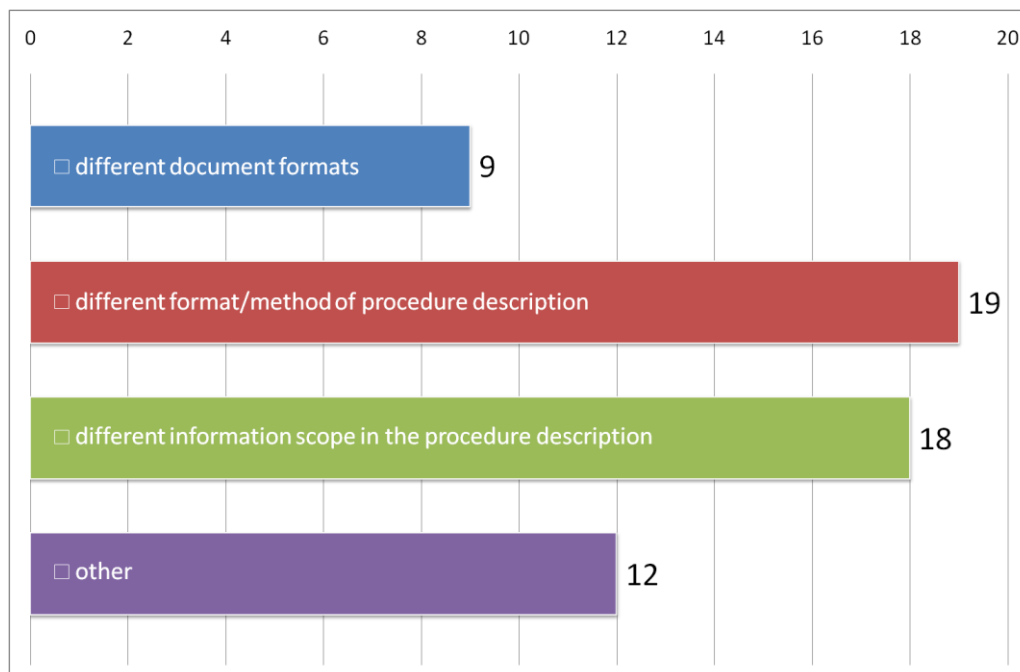

Figure 24: Problems in dealing with foreign service providers
(28 respondents: 15 national PSCs, 13 regional PSCs)

In terms of obstacles in creating fully electronic procedures, legal aspects were indicated by more than half of the PSCs. As many as 20 PSCs found organizational matters troublesome,

while technical problems were noted by 18 PSCs (see *Figure 25*). Among other problems financial limitations were mentioned very often. Specific problems in the above mentioned categories were:

- lack of coordinated use of eIDs in Europe,
- different requirements of local governments concerning applications for the same licences,
- strict regulations regarding electronic signatures,
- insufficient cooperation between authorities,
- lack of preparation of service providers concerning temporary cross-border service provision,
- limited financial sources for technological adaptation of ICT,
- different standards in document formats,
- low user awareness of PSCs,
- varied organizational and technical solutions,
- lack of regulation concerning the delivery of documents to recipients abroad,
- lack of technical standards and lack of standards for electronic signatures.
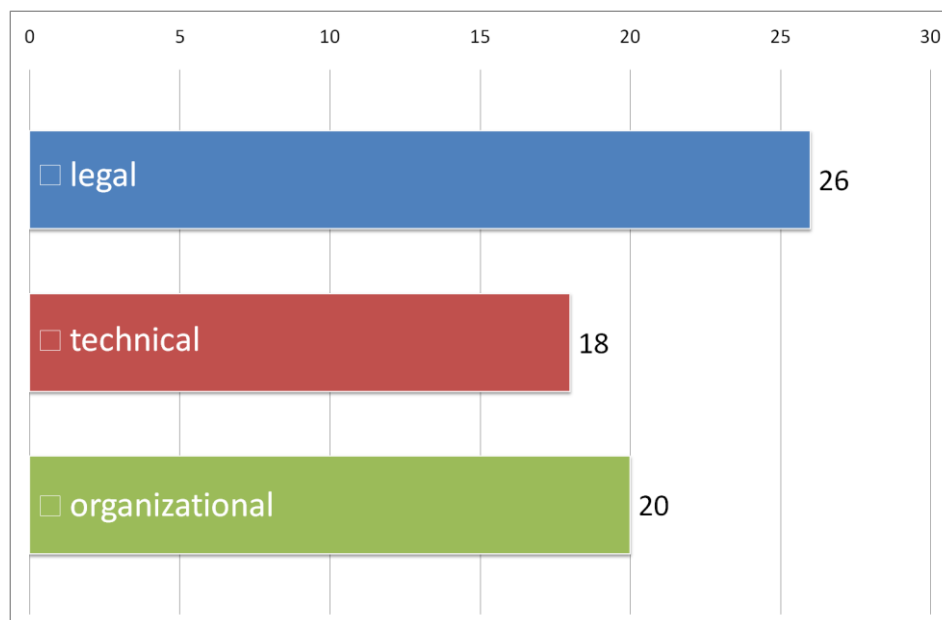

**Figure 25: Obstacles in creating fully electronic procedures
(34 respondents: 17 national PSCs, 17 regional PSCs)**

Setting up different "points of single contact" for foreign and national service providers might result in discrimination, which might also arise if countries decide to set up different "points of single contact" for establishment-related questions and questions relating to the provision of cross-border services. Therefore these forms of differentiation should be avoided.

IV.   PSC portals assessment

In order to examine the information content and functionality available at PSC portals, a study was prepared based on the Website Attribute Evaluation System (WAES). Evaluation criteria were adjusted to the specific needs of PSC research. Moreover additional measures were applied which do not appear in the WAES methodology. While developing the questionnaire special attention was paid to points concerning website transparency and ease of use. Features such as structures, contacts, issue-related information, interaction and security were also covered by the research. The aim of the research was not only to check the existence of selected traits but also to examine the possibility of reaching them in a short time.
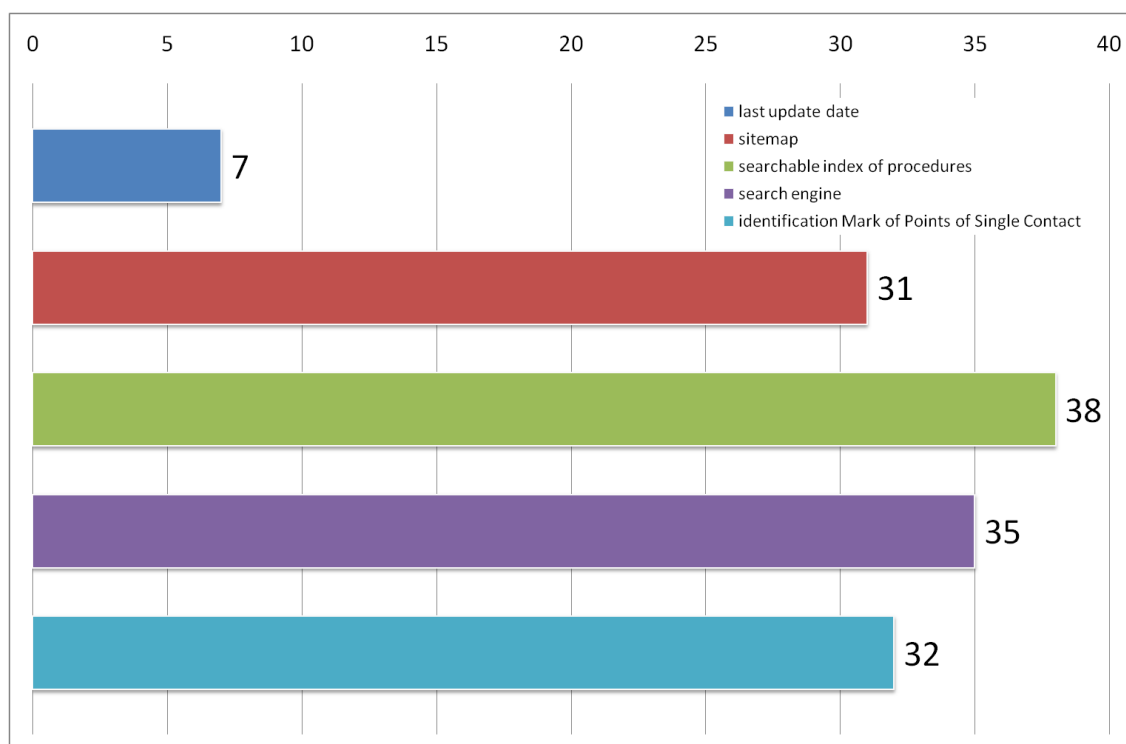

Figure 26: Navigation and branding

In a legal environment that often changes, in the context of regulations affecting procedures, it is essential for visitors to know that the information is up-to-date. Unfortunately it seems rather uncommon for PSCs to provide update date information. Only 7 PSCs (out of 52

examined) have posted a date of last update (see *Figure 26*) – Cyprus, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Sweden, Saxony[3].

More than a half (31 / 52) have created a sitemap which shows the structure of the website with sections and links between them, making navigation on the site much easier. An updated sitemap is good both for users (better navigation) and for search engines (better visibility). It should be noted that in the case of regional PSCs (Austria and Germany) nearly half of them did not provide sitemaps.

An index of procedures with a search mechanism was available in 38 of the PSCs and a search engine for the whole website in 35 of the 52 examined PSCs. In many cases (20) more than one way to search for a procedure was provided. The most often used mechanisms are: alphabetic list, search engine for procedures only, procedure catalogue divided into sectors or categories (see *Figure 27*). In a few cases, interactive guides or short questionnaires helped the user find proper procedures after asking some questions. Such a solution can be found in Belgium, Spain, and the German regional portals of Hamburg and Berlin. Search engines for general information at the PSC website

Figure 27: Navigation tools

were available in 34 PSCs. An interesting and useful tool was found in Finland – a search engine capable of searching for specific e-forms.
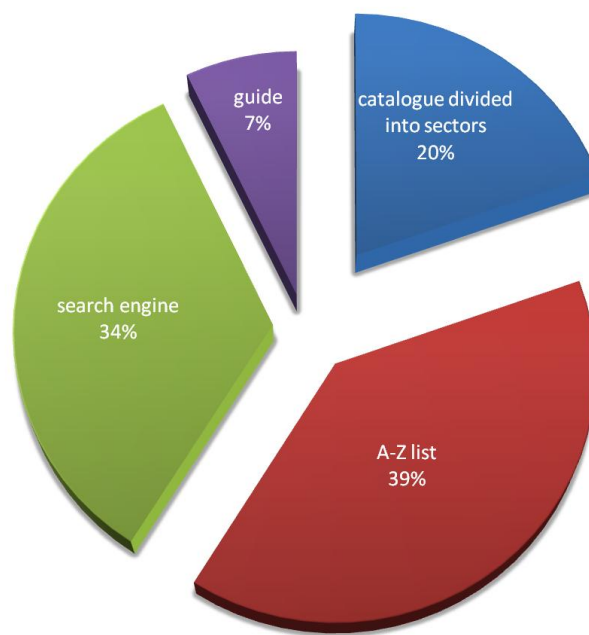
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[3] region of Germany

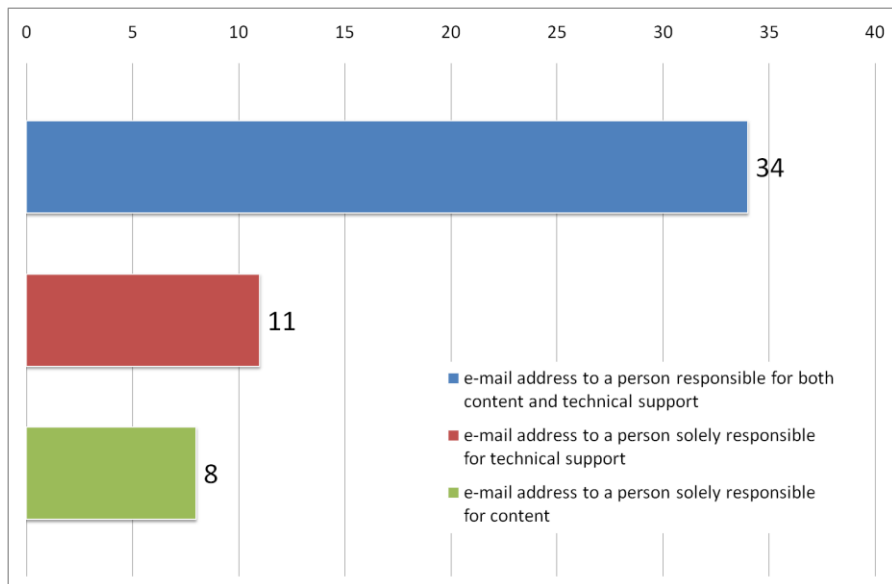2 websites have clearly identified themselves as Points of Single Contact – it was possible to find the EUGO logo on the homepage. This identification mark for PSCs acknowledges that the portal is the right place to find official information on administrative procedures. Generally, after entering deeper into the portals subpages, the logo can eventually be found, but the

Figure 28: Contact information

assessment gave priority to finding an instant message for the citizen that he is in the right place. Therefore only PSCs providing a EUGO logo on the homepage were given a positive mark. Only 6 of 16 regional PSCs in Germany were marked with the EUGO logo, although all of them provided another PSC Mark in the German language.

Contact information was published on nearly all PSCs (47) either as a contact form or email address. In most cases
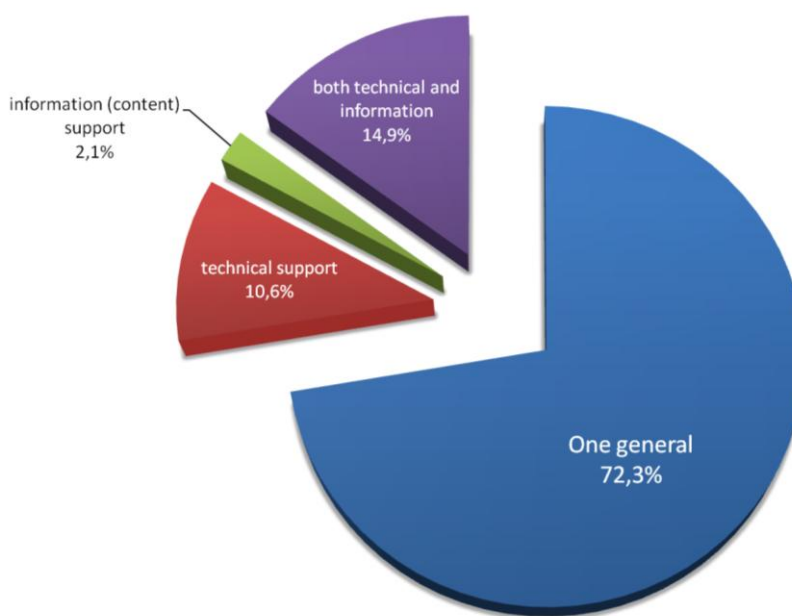

Figure 29: Contact information (2)

one general email address was indicated – over half of PSCs published e-mail contact information for a person responsible both for content and technical support (see *Figure 28*). Some PSCs provided separate contact data for technical and information support – 12 provided

a separate e-mail address for a technical support person, while as few as 9 provided the e-mail address of a person responsible for content. Only four portals in the regions of Austria did not provide contact information due to legislative process. In the light of the above one can assume that the best practice of differentiating between technical support and website content support has not been implemented.

Over half of PSCs (33) provided information either on Service Directive or Points of Single Contact in the EU directly on their website.
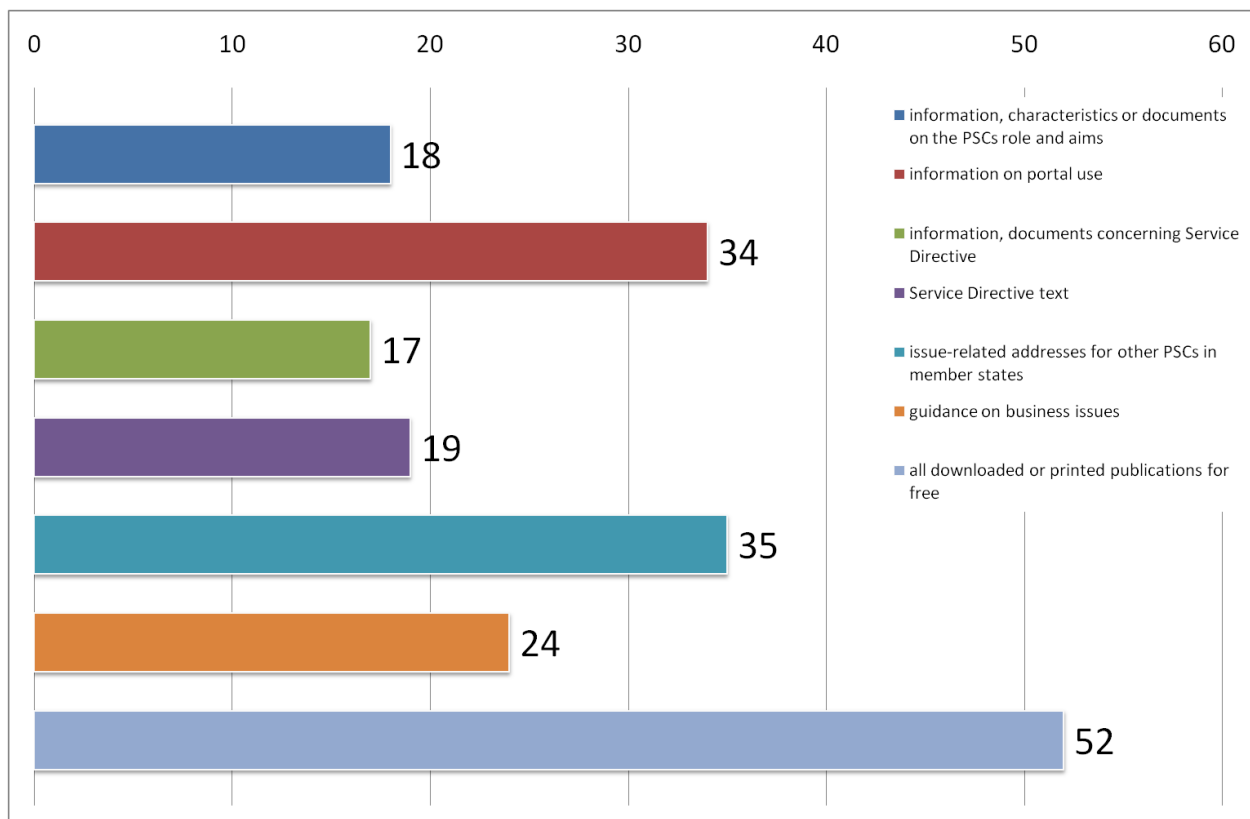
Figure 30: Issue-related information

Less than a half of examined PSCs (see *Figure 30*) provided information (links were not taken into account) on the PSC's role and aims (18), information and documents concerning the Service Directive (17) and the Service Directive text (19). Almost half of PSCs published guidance on business-related issues (24) by presenting information on business setting-up and business running, legal forms, taxes etc. More than a half offered information on portal use (34) and issue-related addresses for other PSCs in Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein

and Norway (35). Most of them directed the user to the European Commission website; just two enabled direct access to other PSC portals (Poland and Cyprus) .

34 PSCs provided information such as guides or content description of the PSC website. Generally all information including guides, handbooks, reports etc. on all PSC portals was provided without any charge.
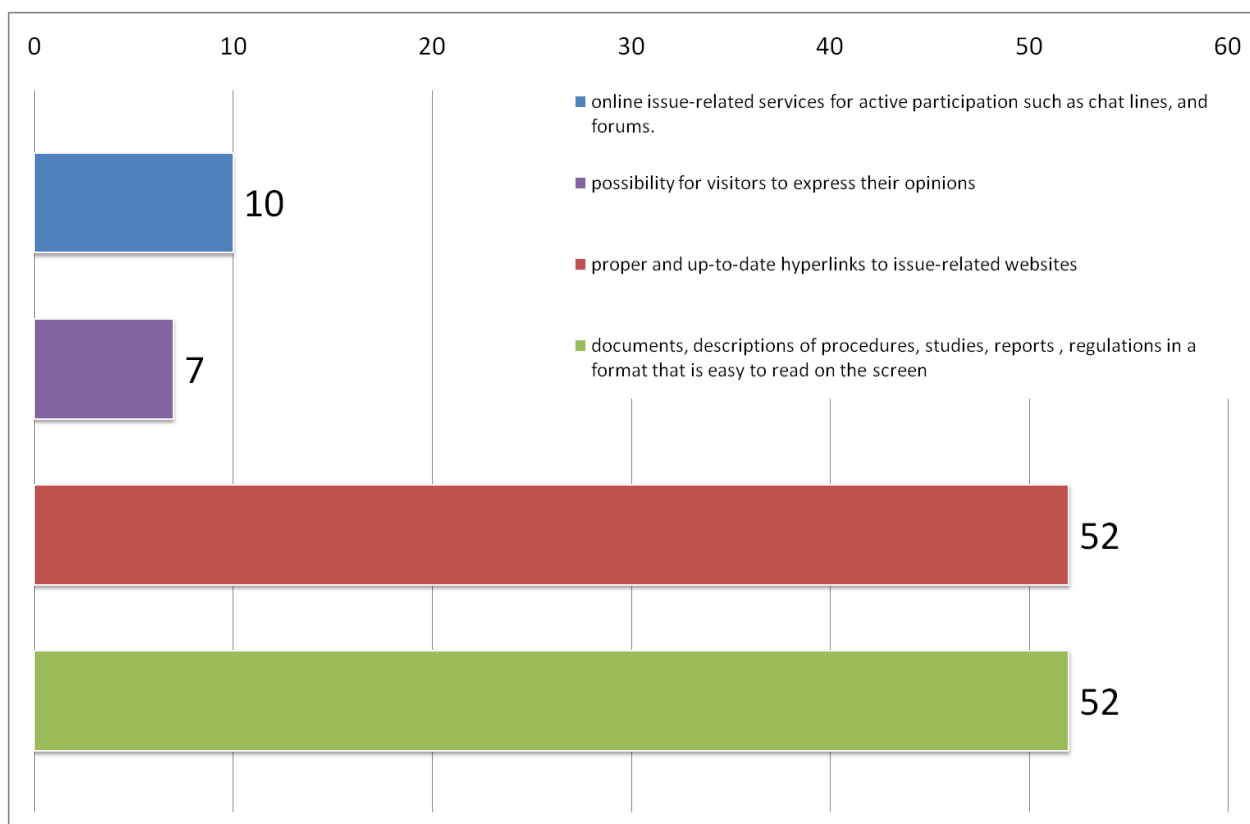

Figure 31: Interactivity and accessibility

Less than a fifth (10) of the PSCs examined provided tools for active participation – forums or social network profiles, and very few (7) offered the possibility of expressing opinions on the procedures or articles (see *Figure 31*). All of the assessed portals published working and up-to-date links to issue-related websites and documents, descriptions of procedures etc. in a format that was easy to read on the screen. A forum was available on only 3 PSCs – Czech Republic, Greece and Hungary. An interesting solution was found on a German regional portal (Baden-Württemberg), which provided 3 forms to give feedback on issues of current plans and

regulations, over-restrictive rules, and friendliness and efficiency of Regional Administrative Offices (see page 45).
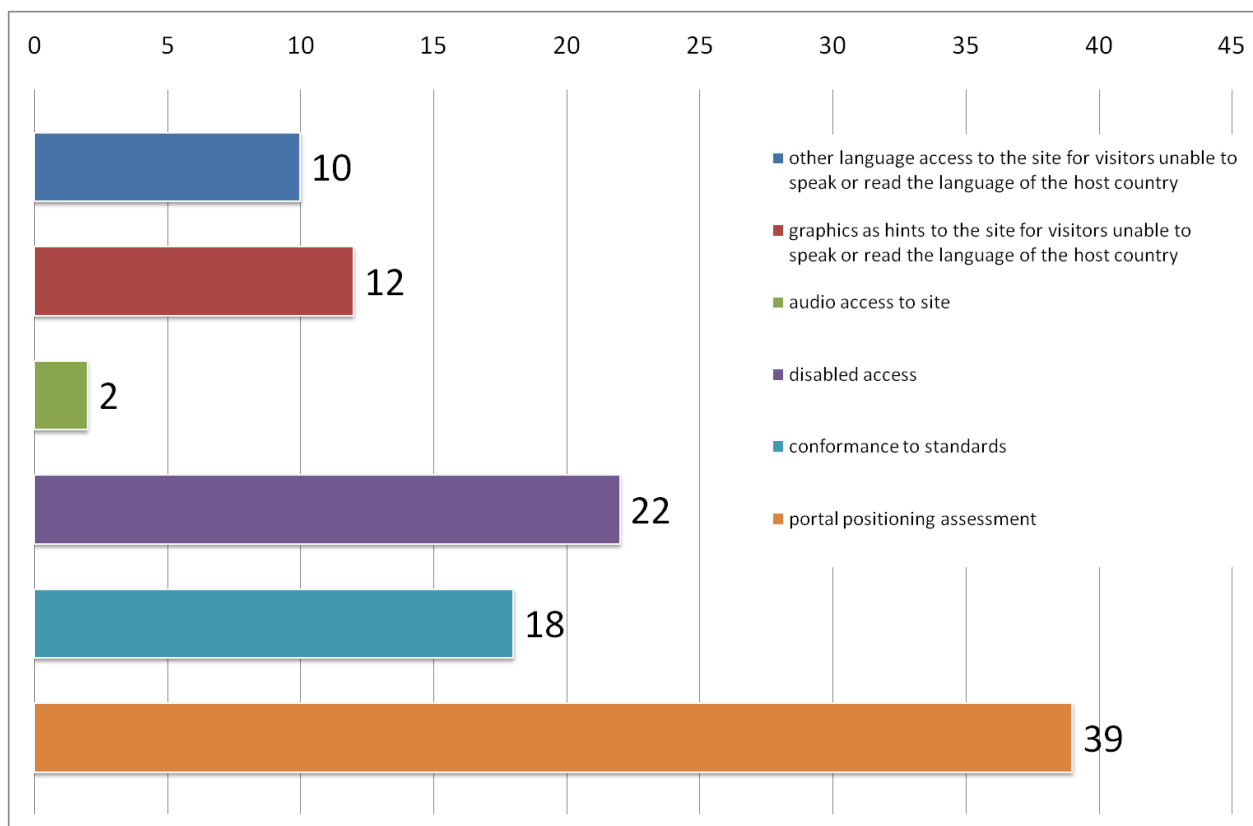

Figure 32: Website accessibility

Less than a fifth (10) of the PSCs examined provided a different than native language version of the website. The PSC portals, apart from that of France, could have been translated with Google Translator; however that option was directly available on only the Polish site. Only 12 of the PSCs presented graphics as information hints for foreign users. Just two PSCs (Wien[4] and Saarland[5]) offered audio access to the website (see *Figure 32*). Support for disabled people such as font enlargement or a text mode was present in 22 PSCs. Conformance to Internet standards (W3C online validator) was declared in 18 of the PSCs, and assessment of portal positioning was provided in 39 of the PSCs.

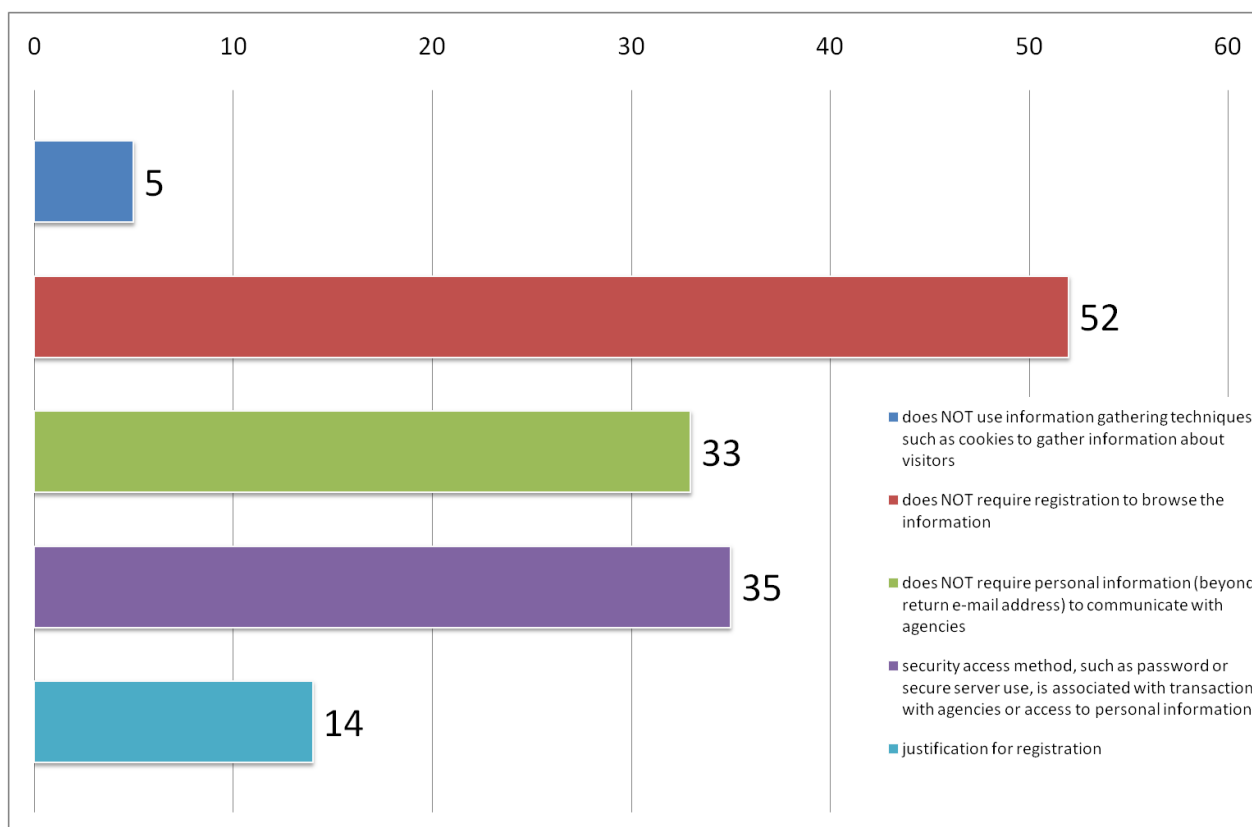[4] Region of Austria

[5] Region of Germany

Figure 33: Security and privacy

Only 5 of the examined PSC portals did not use information gathering techniques (see *Figure 33*) which indicates a bad practice (most probably done to obtain usage statistics). Some of the PSCs, however, included information on how to switch off that option. All the PSC portals did not require registration to browse the information, which in turn is a good practice. 14 PSCs provided information on why registration is required in the portal and what are the benefits and consequences of it. More than half of the examined portals (33) did not require personal information to communicate with agencies, which assures anonymity to site visitors, and as many as 35 PSCs used security mechanisms to transfer information to agencies or to access personal information details. This low number can be explained by the fact that some PSCs did not yet provide electronic procedure processing.

Category	Top scoring countries
Navigation and branding	Lithuania, Tyrol, Bulgaria, **Czech Republic**, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Netherlands, Latvia, **Poland**, Sweden, United Kingdom, Schleswig-Holstein, Saxony, Hamburg
Contacts	Vorarlberg, **Cyprus**, **Czech Republic**, Latvia, Luxemburg, Slovenia, Berlin
Information criteria	**Cyprus**, Spain, Lithuania, Sweden, Bremen
Interactivity, accessibility	**Czech Republic**, Greece, **Poland**, Hungary, Baden-Württemberg
Website accessibility	Wien, **Cyprus**, Bavaria
Security and privacy	Baden-Württemberg, Steiermark, **Cyprus**, Denmark, Spain, Norway, Hungary, Schleswig-Holstein, Rheinland-Pfalz, Hamburg

Figure 34: Countries with the highest marks by category

Figure 34 presents a table of top scoring countries in the accumulated categories of the WAES study. **Cyprus** was a top scorer in four categories, the **Czech Republic** in three categories and **Poland** in two. The top scoring portals can be regarded as best practices within user-friendliness and website accessibility however the portal assessment results do not reflect the quality of both content and online service provision of PSCs as these were examined within the detailed questionnaire on electronic PSCs (see chapter III).

V.   Traditional PSCs

According to the Services Directive, European countries were to decide whether to set up a PSC only as an electronic one-stop-shop or to provide entrepreneurs with a traditional office. During this research it came to light that states have identified the demand for traditional infrastructure for those who are not familiar with electronic tools of communication. According to the information provided by all EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as many as 20 countries have decided to establish PSCs in the form of traditional offices. The number of such premises differs significantly due to already existing one-stop-shops with similar aims. A single national PSC was adopted in 7 countries, including Malta, Spain and Poland (see Figure 35). More than half of the examined countries (13) provided more than one PSC, and Italy had as many as 500.
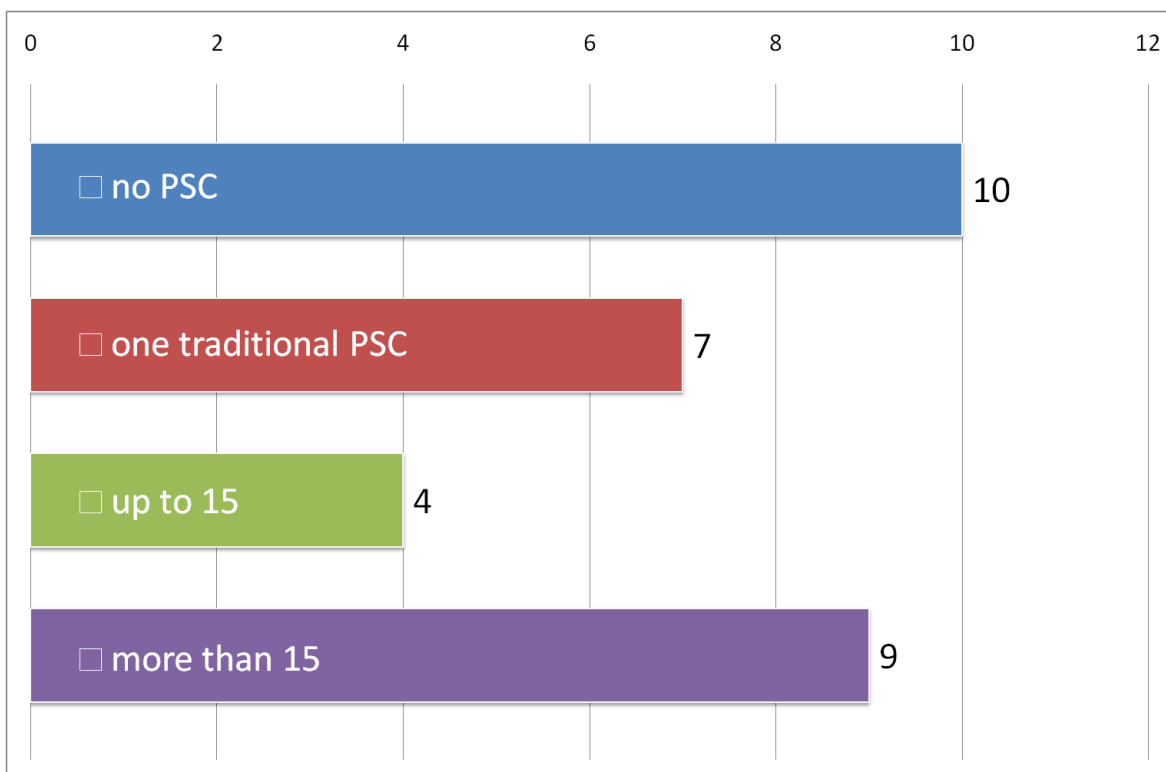

Figure 35: Traditional PSC organisation in Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway

The majority of the PSCs are regionally oriented; however in 4 countries aside from regional orientation a division into economic sectors has been implemented. Among the countries with more than one PSC, a central traditional PSC office was identified in just two cases. In 12 countries (see Figure 36) either a special project or budget was fixed to set up a PSC. In most cases existing physical infrastructure was used for that purpose. Physical PSCs were usually run by public authorities, chambers of commerce or centres for entrepreneurs.
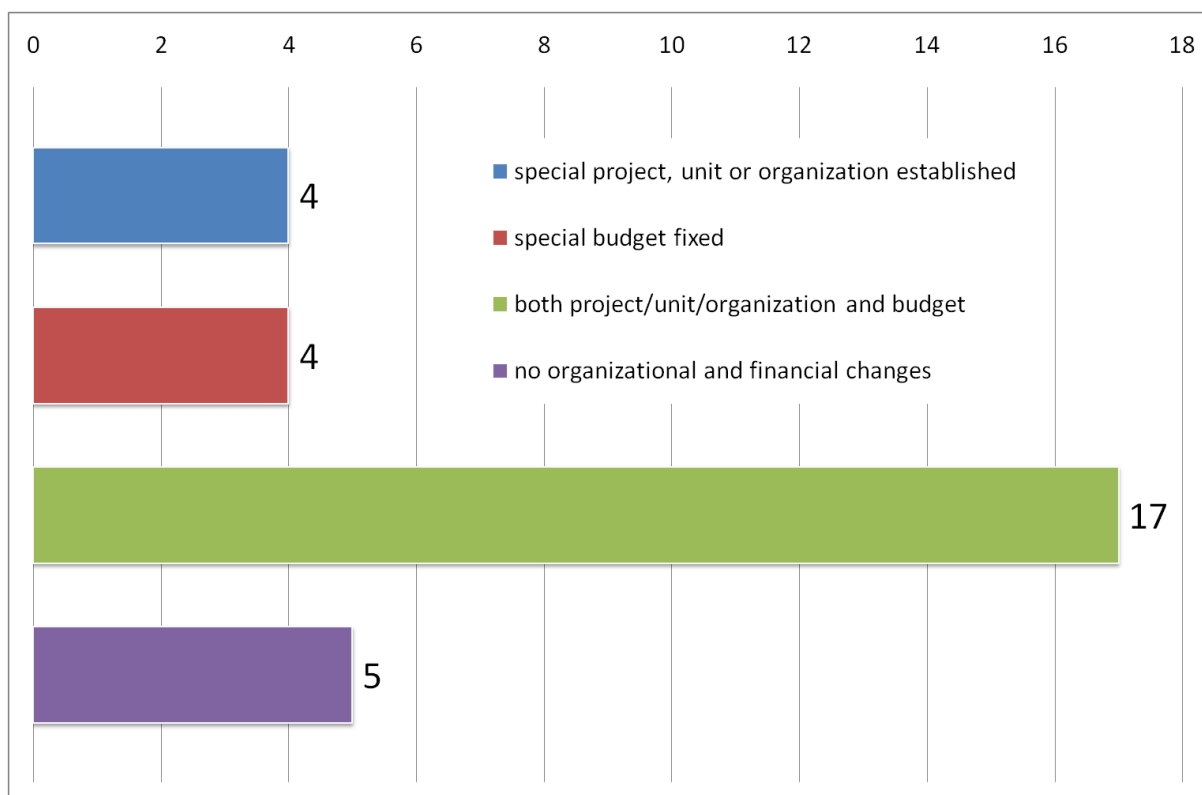

Figure 36: Organizational arrangements for traditional PSC establishment in Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway

According to the information provided by 51 traditional PSCs, these are usually small one-stop-shops where on average five employees operate from Monday to Friday. The number of enquiries during a month ranges from just a few up to about 3000. The highest number was indicated by PSCs in Belgium. It can be noticed that the PSCs set up on the foundation of one-stop-shops with similar purpose generally have quite a significant number of procedures. This

explains the case of Belgium, where 9 PSCs have operated since 2003. It was indicated by 60% of questionnaire respondents that the number of issues is constantly increasing. However no relation between the number of requests/visits and the applied model of diffusion can be noticed.

Due to the fact that many traditional PSCs were based on existing infrastructure. the scope of information provided was usually much broader than the Services Directive requirements. At the same time, however, not all areas within the Directive were covered – in some PSCs the scope was limited to information on national requirements or just strictly to the process of establishing a business, dealing with taxes or social security obligations. Just 20% of PSCs indicated exclusively the Services Directive scope.

Nearly all (95%) of traditional PSCs provided application forms for different administrative procedures and enabled submission of the forms via a one-stop-shop office. The ways that traditional PSCs provided support varied (see Figure 37), from personal visits to submitting emails with requests or using a contact form.
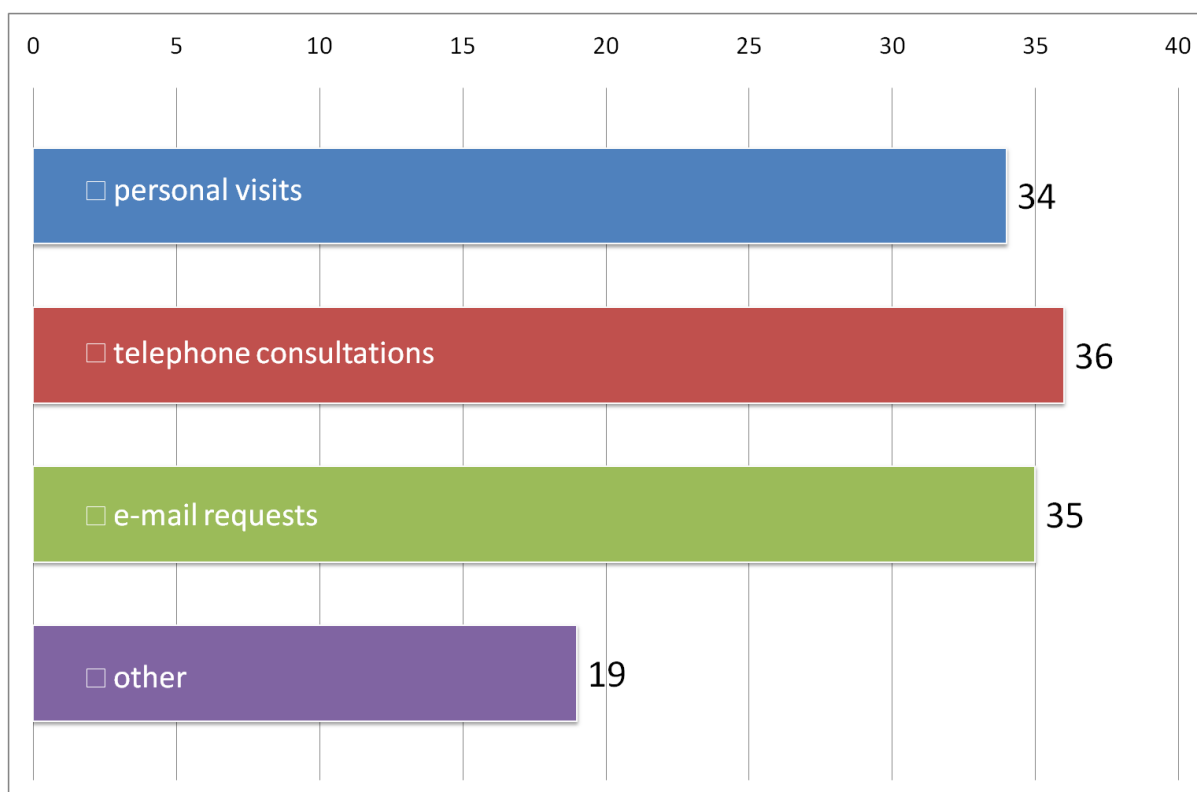

**Figure 37: Contact channels to traditional PSCs (51 respondents)**

VI.   Good practices, interesting functionalities

The Services Directives created a general framework and thus gave European states the possibility of organizing the PSCs according to their own concept. The PSCs differ in many aspects, such as the means and scope of information provision, but also in terms of the functionalities provided. Interesting solutions and good practices which can be used by other PSCs are presented below, with a short description of the most interesting cases. These were discovered during the portals assessment research or indicated directly by the Points of Single Contact in the surveys.

1. Vienna PSC, Austria

The Vienna portal is probably the only PSC where a speech synthesiser is provided directly on the website, without the need to download or install any additional applications. This tool enables users to listen to the text on the website or download an mp3 file containing that information.

This application has been available since May 2010. It is a custom-made solution for the City of Vienna – the portal that has been adopted as a PSC. The speech

Figure 38: Vienna PSC – speech synthesizer
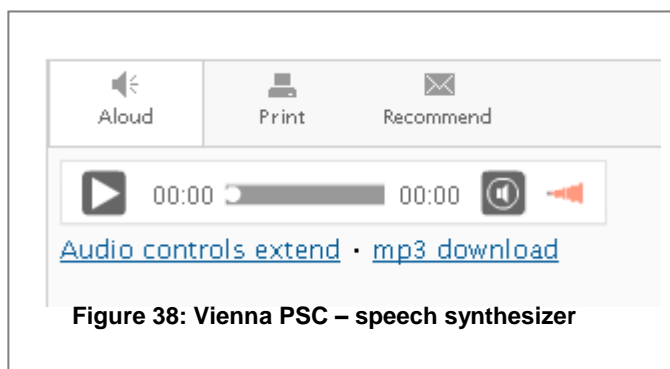
synthesizer is based on a research project "Viennese Sociolect and Dialect Synthesis" conducted for the city during 2007–2009. Audio samples were taken from human speech, therefore the synthetic voices sound natural, close to human speech. This tool was available for the administrative procedures description as well as other content of the portal. The synthesizer is at the moment available only in German, although different dialects of German and Austrian as well as English, French and Spanish languages were developed in the project.   Although comparing the usage of that tool with the overall visit statistics, interest in it is low (1/1000 or less), the tool can serve as a good example of facilitating information access for people with visual impairments.

2. Poland PSC

The Polish PSC provides free Google-based translation available directly on the website. It supports automatic translation into 57 languages in a very short time. The Google Translate tool is currently one of the best Web translators, allowing one not only to translate words, but also whole sentences with contextual meanings. This feature was available from the start of portal operation (December 2009). The implementation is free and overall not troublesome, although dynamic elements of websites displayed without reloading the page (AJAX elements) do not interoperate with the translator automatically. The main drawback of the tool is the quality of translation – the translated text cannot be regarded as reliable and binding in the light of legal implications. Moreover the translated text is not recognized in the search engines.

Individual Contact Points in other countries of the European Union

Austria	Belgium	Bulgaria	Cyprus
Languages: de	Languages: de, en, fr, nl	Languages: bg	Languages: en
Go to page	Go to page	Go to page	Go to page

Figure 39: Polish PSC – direct links to PSCs

Another good practice worthy of mention is the fact that the Polish PSC is one of very few that provide direct access to other PSCs without the need to visit the European Commission website. Polish PSC is supported with an advanced searching tool which browses for the information by its meaning and remembers the words entered by the visitors as well as the chosen procedures. After indicating the activity or product, the search tool assists the service provider by presenting a list of procedures that may be necessary to conduct. The search engine produces also reports about lack of hits on searching phrases for the administrators in order to improve the functionality. Having found the proper procedure it shows the competent public administration office according to the personal data (usually address) entered by the user.

3. Czech Republic PSC

The PSC of the Czech Republic was one of those few one-stop-shops that provided the possibility for users to evaluate content, information,
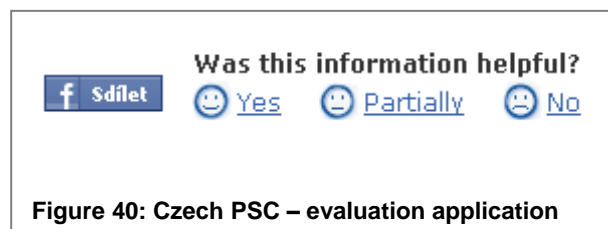
Was this information helpful?
f Sdílet   ☺ Yes   ☹ Partially   ☹ No

Figure 40: Czech PSC – evaluation application

articles or online services within the portal. Only users with cookies enabled in their PC/browser settings were able to use the evaluation application. The application checks whether the individual user (with IP) has already evaluated the information, thus it is possible to evaluate a specific item of information/application/service only once. After execution of evaluation a user can see the current result of the evaluation. With the use of filters in their internal system, the PSC team can extract and see evaluations for specific content of different modules within the portal. Moreover filtered results can be further searched through and filtered with more detailed criteria. In this way the information received from the users is used to constantly improve the quality of the information provided. The grade of difficulty of implementation was indicated as medium, and the cost of implementation was assessed at 90 000 Kc (3 750 EUR).

4. Luxembourg PSC

A mobile version of the PSC of Luxembourg was provided both to citizens and companies. This tool offered a "step by step" guide to administrative procedures and access to related competent authorities. Topics classification and categorization was the same in the mobile as in the non-mobile version of the portal, so that full consistency was achieved. The difficulty of such implementation was indicated as easy, and it cost 20 000 EUR. This functionality has been just recently launched, so statistics have not yet been collected.

Figure 41: Luxembourg PSC – mobile version

5. Norway PSC

The PSC of Norway was based on the ELMER (Easier and More Efficient Reporting) standard, which is a user interface guideline for governmental forms on the Internet. This comprehensive set of principles and specifications for the design of Internet-based forms facilitates user-friendliness, simplification and standardization of public forms. By a decision of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, since the summer of 2009 Elmer has been the government IT standard for public forms in Norway. That solution was quickly adopted by commercial form developers and

public agencies. The Norwegian PSC was developed on the basis of the ELMER guidelines, which are managed by the Brønnøysund Register Centre. ELMER guidelines are available, explained and illustrated in English and are ready to use free of charge for everyone.

6. Baden-Württemberg PSC, Germany

The PSC delivered the possibility of sharing ideas, questions and criticism so that the authority can improve services according to users' requirements. Three areas were covered:

- questions, criticism or ideas on how the Regional Administrative Offices could make their services more citizen-friendly, cost-effective or simpler. Users could create their own contribution and also browse and comment existing ones within 50 different categories,
- contributions for the regional representative to reduce bureaucracy – users could indicate the rules and regulations which they found too restrictive, too complicated or superfluous,
- comments, opinions on the current plans and drafts of regulations.

7. Spain PSC

Spain's PSC delivered functionality for foreign service providers intending to run business in Spain. Equivalent names of types of companies in 26 Member States have been published. Additional information on number of company

Figure 42: Spanish PSC – equivalent names of types of companies
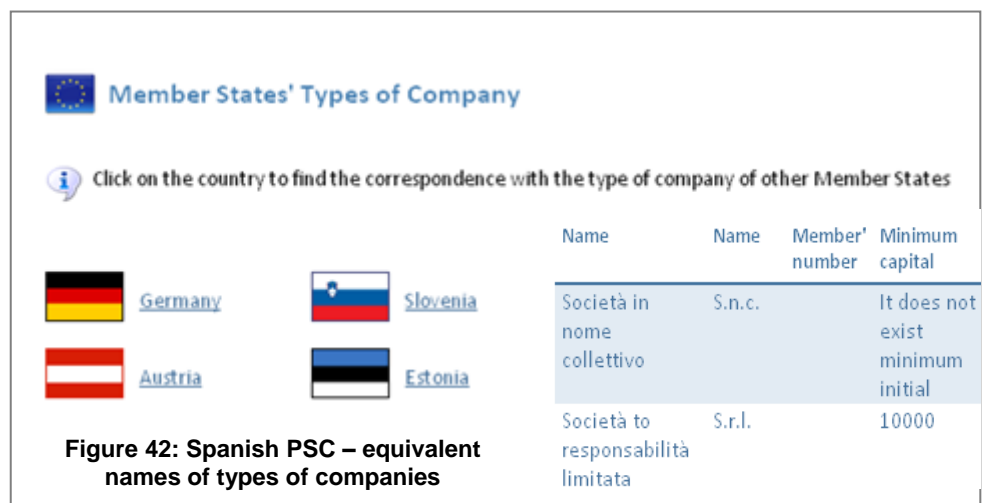
members, minimum capital and liability was also available.

Spain's PSC was a good example as regards information provision. The comprehensive information on portal use and the Services Directive, including a multimedia presentation, made the portal very user-friendly.

8. Estonia PSC

The PSC of Estonia provides notification service functionality, which was introduced in the end of 2008. It allows government agencies and major infrastructure operators to send users information on events and obligations. The user may be either an individual or legal person.

Events may include the deadline for income tax returns, driving licence expiry date or a planned power outage. Users can also enter events themselves and provide other users with access to events they create.

> **Example**
>
> The Tax Board used the service last year to send text messages to 1000 people and companies who owed a total tax debt of € 1 125 044. Within a week of receiving the messages, 221 persons had eliminated their debt entirely and 77 had reduced their debt. The cost of the messages to the Tax Board was € 53.

The sending of notifications is available for users who have activated an official e-mail address (every citizen with an Estonian personal identification code has an e-mail address).

There are different possibilities for ordering or sending notifications:

- Personal notices – an e-mail is sent to a company or personally to an individual.
- Service-based notices – a notice is sent to all persons who have ordered the relevant service via the state portal (e.g. driving license validity).
- Location-based notices – a notice can be sent to all persons who provided their location via the state portal. For instance, companies with stores all over Estonia can order notices relating to the location of the stores.
- Mobile notices – the application allows government and public sector agencies to offer short text message services to mobile phone users.

9. Sweden PSC

The PSC in Sweden, which was built on top of an existing national portal for entrepreneurs, offered an extremely broad scope of information on business issues, exceeding Services Directive requirements for information provision. The content was structured in a user- centric way. The information was divided into five stages (considering, starting, running, developing and closing a business) and followed an entrepreneur's or company's life cycle. By providing crucial information on e.g. insurance, imports, employment and accountancy, the PSC simplified the process of starting up and running a business. The information was provided both in Swedish and in English.

Sweden's PSC also published brief information on the starting up of businesses by foreigners. The first steps and Agencies necessary to be contacted were presented.

Moreover, the PSC in Sweden allowed the user to search for proper permits with four tools:

1. Licence browser according to categories,

2. Search function to retrieve a list of licences matching the search criteria,

3. Permits listed in alphabetic order,

4. List of local government authorities with the permits administered by them.

The permits marked with a specific icon indicated that the procedure was within the scope of the Services Directive.

"Find advisor" was another interesting tool available on the portal. It is a database of public advisors to help the user find a business advisor in a specific region or town. There were 245 advisors registered at the time of the research, offering free services for start-up companies. The tool provided users with a function to search for the name of an organisation according to their competences by selecting one of fourteen categories such as product development, environment, or grants for business.

10. United Kingdom PSC

The PSC of the United Kingdom is one of those few one-stop-shops that provides a variety of ways to browse through administrative procedures. At the time of the research there were four methods of finding the correct licence or permit procedure:

- licence and regulations tool, which involved going through 5 steps (and multiple questions) before the user was presented with a list of licences which best match their requirements,
- licence search function to retrieve a list of licences matching the search criteria,
- site search to retrieve all content, including licences matching the search criteria,
- licence browser according to defined categories.

Figure 43: PSC of the UK – *licence browse* tool

The *licence browse* functionality has recently added a fourth option allowing users to browse licences, organized into categories which were very intuitive for users. This enabled visitors to locate procedures that may be of relevance to them without knowing the exact licence or procedure name. This solution proved to be an easy, low-cost implementation of a very useful function. Other interesting functions at the United Kingdom PSC were a search engine for business events across the UK and recommendation of the portal to friends.

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11. PSC Denmark

The PSC of Denmark demonstrated good practice in providing information tailored to the needs of foreign visitors. This portal delivered useful information regarding the registration procedures for foreign service providers, registration of other than Danish companies and services, as well as regarding the language requirements such as:

- language used for completing forms,
- language of additional documentation (diploma, declaration, etc.),
- documents translation.

Another good practice found on the Danish PSC was an e-learning module, which was helpful both for national and foreign users intending to start a business in Denmark. The PSC provided an e-learning module of about thirty short films on the establishment and running of businesses in Denmark, as well as instructions on portal use. The films were divided into twelve categories such as starting a business, operating a business or managing staff. The service provider could learn about requirements for a food company to be set up, what the tax ID is, or how to register with the portal using a digital signature.

12. PSC Bremen, Germany

The PSC of Bremen can serve as good practice in terms of adopting the business and investors approach. This probably results from the fact the website is managed by WFB Economic Development, which aims at promotion of Bremen economy environment for business. The portal provided description of key sectors and business environment in Bremen, putting emphasis on innovation areas.

PSC of Bremen provided updated news about the economy in Bremen as well as business events list. The entrepreneurs could find regularly published tender offers in the areas of "support" and "Construction and Development" and comprehensive information about the ongoing tenders and details of where and how one can apply.

"The project of the month" presented an interview with one entrepreneur per month on their business.

![SPOCS logo]
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VII.   Main findings and conclusions

Member States under this research have adopted different strategies concerning the establishment of the PSCs. Germany, Austria and Italy have decided to adopt regional Points of Single Contact while other countries (27) have opted for one central electronic Point of Single Contact. In most cases already existing national or regional websites for entrepreneurs were adopted for electronic PSCs.

PSCs fulfilled mainly a coordination role leaving the final decisions with the relevant competent authorities. Many PSCs provided information in English apart from the native language however the scope of the translation differed. Nearly all responding PSCs provided legal regulations and information on the requirements which should be met by service providers also presenting application forms.

On average 85% of procedures under the Services Directive were described at PSCs . In nearly all PSCs forms were available on the portals, or could have been submitted via the PSCs. The most popular format of electronic forms available was an interactive PDF form followed by HTML Web forms. In many cases downloadable PDFs or Word files were available. In terms of documents accepted by the CAs again PDF was at the top, followed by scans and XML documents. In terms of qualified electronic signature usage the Members States are almost equally divided – half of them require qualified signature and half doesn't. In terms of functionalities available for the users the most popular were submitting documents, filling and submitting application forms and signing digitally application forms.

Different formats and methods of procedure description, as well as the scope of the description, were seen as problems in dealing with foreign service providers by many PSCs. Different document formats were also mentioned as an obstacle. PSCs also identified other problems such as lack of information and translation of application forms, different understanding of certain business activities, different digital signatures across Europe and different authentication mechanisms. In terms of obstacles in creating fully electronic procedures, legal aspects were indicated by more than half of the PSCs. Many found the following organizational and technical matters troublesome: lack of coordinated use of eIDs in

Europe, different requirements of local governments concerning applications for the same licences, strict regulations regarding electronic signatures, insufficient cooperation between authorities and lack of preparation of service providers concerning temporary cross-border service provision.

The overall picture of Europe in terms of Services Directive requirements fulfilment is highly positive. Member States already provide support and information to the service providers. There is however a vast area of discrepancies beginning with legal understanding of similar business activities going through unstandardised electronic documents and application forms and finishing with lack of coherence in terms of authentication mechanisms. These discrepancies should be addressed in close future in order to provide common understanding and possibilities of fully electronic administrative procedures across Europe.

VIII. List of figures

IX. Appendix

PSC portals assessment criteria

Navigation and branding		
1. Last update date is provided on the main page or a key subpage.	Tests the extent to which website is actively attended to by the organization's staff. "Freshness" indicator up to 3 months	0 or 1
2. Provides sitemap	Tests if sitemap is provided	0 or 1
3. Provides searchable index of procedures	Tests if agency allows user to search the site for procedures	0 or 1
4. Provides search engine for other information	Tests if agency allows user to search the site for other information	0 or 1
5. Provides identification mark of Points of Single Contact	Tests if EUGO logo is provided on the main page	0 or 1
Contact information		
6. Provides e-mail address to a person responsible for both content of the site and technical support of the site	Test if one person performs both editorial/content and technical functions	0 or 1
7. Provides e-mail address to a person solely responsible for technical support of the site	Tests if web operation functions are differentiated among several people, testing here for technical support (possibility of indicating technical problems)	0 or 1
8. Provides e-mail address to a person solely responsible for content of the site	Tests if web operation functions are differentiated among several people, testing here for editorial or content support (possibility of indicating problems on the content)	0 or 1
Issue-related information		
9. Provides information, characteristics or documents on the PSCs role and aims	Tests if information on the PSCs role and tasks is provided (links are not accepted)	0 or 1

10. Provides information, documents concerning Service Directive	Tests if information on the Service Directive regulation and aims is provided (links are not accepted)	0 or 1
11. Provides issue-related addresses for other PSCs	Tests if issue-related addresses for other PSCs are provided (including webpage of European Commission with links to PSCs in other Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway)	0 or 1
12. Provides guidance on business issues	Test if guidance, presentations or other information on setting up and running a business are provided	0 or 1
13. Provides information on portal use	Test if instructions, guidelines on portal use, description of portal content are provided	0 or 1
14. Provides all downloaded or printed publications for free	Tests if there is no charge for information	0 or 1
Interactivity, accessibility		
15. Provides an online issue-related services for active participation such as chat and forums.	Tests if agency provides a chat line, profile on social network or forum for interested parties to discuss topics, ask questions	0 or 1
16. Provides proper and up-to-date hyperlinks to issue-related websites	Tests if provided links are correct and active	0 or 1
17. Provides documents, descriptions of procedures, studies, reports , regulations in a format that is easy to read on the screen	Tests if documents, description of procedures, studies, reports, regulations are provided in forms easy to download (DOC, PDF) or print	0 or 1
18. Provides possibility for visitors to express their opinions	Tests if possibility for visitors to express their opinion on the information is provided (regarding administrative procedures, articles)	0 or 1
Website accessibility		

19. Provides other language access to the site for visitors unable to speak or read the language of the host country	Tests if site provides other language than principal language of the country (tests if country is officially multilingual if at least two official languages are used on the site)	0 or 1
20. Provides graphics as hints to the site for visitors unable to speak or read the language of the host country	Tests if site provides icons or images that help users with limited reading or text processing skills to make rudimentary use of the site	0 or 1
21. Provides audio access to site	Tests the extent to which the site provides audio services, either for visually impaired users, or to capture verbal activities, such as hearings, presentations or speeches	0 or 1
22. Disabled access	Tests the extent to which the site is accessible to disabled users (at least minimal facilities e.g. possibility to use text mode which is available for speech synthesizer , font enlargement)	0 or 1
23. Conformance to standards	Tests if Web page meets requirements of W3C standards	0 or 1
24. Portal positioning assessment	Tests if after typing into search engine: point of single contact + country, the link to the portal will appear among the first 5 items Or other keywords: enterprises, business set up (in appropriate languages)	0 or 1
Security and privacy		
25. Does NOT use information gathering techniques such as cookies to gather information about visitors	Tests whether the site uses (or not), techniques such as cookies to gather information about user access or behaviour on the website, thereby providing a degree of privacy to the site visitor	0 or 1
26. Does NOT require registration to browse the information	Tests whether the site requires registration (or not) as a condition to browse through information (including description of procedures) thus providing a degree of anonymity to the site visitor	0 or 1

27. Does NOT require personal information (beyond return e-mail address) to communicate with agencies	Tests whether the site requires that users provide any information other than return e-mail address as a condition of communicating with the agencies, thus providing a degree of anonymity to the site visitor	0 or 1
28. Security access method, such as password or secure server use, is associated with transaction with agencies or access to personal information	Tests whether site access involving transmission of sensitive or personal information is accompanied by use of security feature such as password or secure server	0 or 1
29. Justification for registration	Test if explanation is provided as to why registration is necessary and what benefits result from registration	0 or 1

General questionnaire

Respondent's data	
Country	
Organization	
Address	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Contact person	
Electronic PSCs	
1. Number of electronic PSCs	☐ one ☐ more than one …….
2. Has any special Project, unit or Organization been established in order to organize or run electronic PSCs?	☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Has any separate budget been fixed in order to organize or run electronic PSCs?	☐ Yes ☐ No

4. If there is more than 1 electronic PSC, what model of division has been applied?	☐ regional PSC6 ☐ sectoral PSC7
5. If there is more than 1 electronic PSC, was it obligatory to maintain consistency in presentation of the content?	☐ Yes, please explain ☐ No ☐ No, but it will be in the future
6. If there is more than 1 electronic PSC, is there a mechanism to deal with requests sent to the "wrong" PSC?	☐ Yes, please explain ☐ No ☐ No, but it will be in the future
7. If there is more than 1 electronic PSC , is there a central electronic PSC?	☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Organization(s) responsible for running electronic PSCs (please indicate all of them)	Name of PSC: Organization: Address: Tel.: E-mail: Contact person: PSC type: ☐ central ☐ regional ☐ sectoral
Physical PSC	
9. Number of physical PSCs	☐ one ☐ more than one ....
10. Has any special Project, unit or Organization been established in order to organize or run electronic PSCs?	☐ Yes ☐ No
11. Has any separate budget been fixed in order to organize or run physical PSCs?	☐ Yes ☐ No
12. If more than 1 physical PSC exists: What model of division has been applied?	☐ regional PSC8 ☐ sectoral PSC9

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[6] different PSCs for different areas

[7] different PSCs for different sectors

[8] different PSCs for different areas

[9] different PSCs for different sectors

13.If more than 1 physical PSC exists: Is there a central physical PSC?	☐ Yes ☐ No
14.Organization(s) responsible for running physical PSCs (please indicate all of them)	Name of PSC: Organization: Address: Tel.: E-mail: Contact person: PSC type: ☐ central ☐ regional ☐ sectoral

RESPONDENT'S DATA	
Country	
Organization	
Name of PSC	
Address	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Contact person	
ESTABLISHMENT AND ORGANISATION	
1. Start date of electronic PSC operation	

2. Has an already existing portal been used in order to establish your PSC?

☐ Yes (what type of portal/website was it?: national, regional, other?)
☐ No

3. What role is fulfilled by your PSC?

☐ coordinating (final decisions remain with the existing competent authorities, the communication between the "points of single contact" and the competent authorities is organised)
☐ decision-making powers (for instance, Member States could consider that PSCs are directly responsible for the registration of businesses or for the granting of authorisations of a simple nature)
☐ others (please explain) ....

4. Is your PSC "connected" with other contact points in your country – not PSCs (e.g. Contact points which result from the implementation of Directive 2000/31/WE on electronic commerce of 8 June 2000)

☐ Yes, there is one portal for different contact points
☐ Yes, there is information/link to other contact points (please name …)
☐ No
☐ No, but it will be in the future

5. Does your PSC charge users for the services it provides?
☐ Yes - What kind of services? How much is the fee? (please explain) ....
☐ No
☐ No, but it will in the future

INFORMATION PROVISION

6. Is your PSC available in other languages than national?

☐ Yes (go to question 7)
☐ No (go to question 8)
☐ No, but will be in the future (go to question 8)
☐ No, but online translation tool is available on PSC website (go to question 8)

7. In what language and scope is your PSC available?

	English	German	French	other(…)
Main information				
Administrative procedures description				
Law regulations				
Whole PSC content				

8. Is there a clear distinction between procedures on national establishment and cross-border provision of services?

☐ Yes, how the distinction is made: …..
☐ No
☐ No, but it will be in the future

9. What does the procedure description include?

☐ law regulations
☐ requirements which should be met by service providers
☐ step by step description
☐ contact data of competent authorities
☐ application form

☐ other (please explain) ....

10. Who is responsible for the preparation of procedure descriptions?
☐ Competent authorities ☐ Ministries supervising the authorities competent in the field of procedures ☐ Organization running electronic PSC ☐ Other entities, please list them …..

11. Who is responsible for the updating of information relating to administrative procedures description?
☐ Competent authorities ☐ Ministries supervising the authorities competent in the field of procedures ☐ Organization running electronic PSC ☐ Other entities, please list them …..

12. Does the PSC provide information and allow for completion of procedures in relation to service sectors that are not within the scope of the Services Directive?
☐ No ☐ Yes, related to running the business ☐ Yes, the scope is beyond running the business ☐ Not yet, but it is planned for the future

13. Is the full information content available on your PSC?
☐ Yes ☐ Yes, all the necessary information is provided, however we are still working on improvements. Please explain ☐ No, information content is not completed, please indicate when it is expected to be ready. This year, 2012, 2013? ………….

14. Is all information hosted on the PSC website?
☐ Yes, all information is hosted on PSC ☐ PSC provides general information and is linked to other pages hosted by competent authorities ☐ PSC provides general information and is linked to other business information portals ☐ Other (please explain) ….
COMPLETION OF PROCEDURES BY ELECTRONIC MEANS

15. How many administrative procedures are there (approximately)?

	Within the scope of the Service Directive	Beyond the scope of the Service Directive (if the PSC provides them) (defined for your PSC)
Total number of procedures in your country		
On the PSC — % of described procedures on your PSC		
On the PSC — % of forms which are possible to print		
On the PSC — % of electronic forms which are possible to fill in and send via the Internet		
On the PSC — % of electronic procedures which are possible to process electronically – from gaining information up to receiving final decision		

16. What is the number of applications submitted electronically via PSC (during the period 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010)?

General ……
☐ Including:
  applications submitted by national service providers ………..
  applications submitted by service providers from abroad …………….
☐ no data on the service providers' nationality

17. Does your PSC liaise with the relevant competent authorities (national, regional and local) in your country?

☐ Yes, the PSC sends requests/ documents to the competent authorities and collects replies
☐ No, service providers send requests directly to the competent authorities, and competent authorities follow up directly with the providers (without going through the PSC)
☐ Not yet, the integration is not completed
☐ Other. Please explain …

18. If your PSC sends requests/documents to the competent authorities, what channel(s) of communication is/are used:

☐ email
☐ fax
☐ letter
☐ structured electronic communication/ secure document exchange
☐ e-platform
☐ Other. Please specify:….

---

19. Is your PSC integrated with other national electronic systems?
☐ No (go to question 21)
☐ Not yet, but it will be in future (go to question 21)
☐ Yes, please name them ………. (go to question 20)

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20. Does the service provider need to have a registered account on another portal in order to conduct the administrative procedure?

☐ Yes, a single sign-on mechanism is provided (SSO)
☐ Yes, other solution is provided, please explain …….
☐ No

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21. In what format are electronic forms available on the PSC for the service providers?

☐ interactive PDF
☐ XFORMS
☐ HTML Web forms
☐ IBM Lotus forms
☐ other, what format ? ….

---

22. What format of electronic documents is accepted by the competent authorities?

☐ PDF
☐ XML
☐ scans
☐ other, what format ? ….

---

23. What types of signatures are used by service providers in your country when submitting documents via PSC?

☐ Unqualified electronic signature
☐ Qualified electronic signature
☐ Signature is not required
☐ Other, please explain ....

---

24. What types of signatures are used by public administration bodies while communicating with service providers via the PSC?

☐ Unqualified electronic signature
☐ Qualified electronic signature
☐ Other, please explain …..
☐ Signature is not required

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25. What forms of authorization are accepted by your PSC?

☐ eID
☐ cards of service providers
☐ other ……
☐ e-identity provider

26. How is authentication of national electronic signatures performed?

☐ via provided software
☐ Web service
☐ authentication is not possible
☐ other method………

27. How is authentication of electronic signatures from abroad performed?

☐ TSL
☐ software
☐ Web service
☐ authentication is not possible
☐ It is planned to use PEPPOL in the future
☐ other method ………

FUNCTIONALITIES

28. What functionalities does your PSC provide?

Available now	Plans for the	
☐	☐	completing and submitting application form
☐	☐	submitting other documents (i.e. attachments)
☐	☐	content syndication in providing information for other Web portals
☐	☐	content syndication in collecting and using information from other Web portals
☐	☐	cooperation with registries
☐	☐	automatic filling of personal data fields (data provided by the service provider during the registration process are used to facilitate automatic completion of electronic forms)
☐	☐	wizards asking simple questions and guiding users step by step, to facilitate completion of more complicated forms
☐	☐	tracking the status of the procedure
☐	☐	repository of documents (PSC keeps the documents which are sent by service providers)
☐	☐	repository of documents (PSC keeps the documents which are received from the competent authority)
☐	☐	administrative fee payment for procedures
☐	☐	digital signature

29. Are there other functionalities you would like to indicate?

....
....

30. Are there additional functionalities available on your PSC?

- ☐ ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ ☐ FAQ
- ☐ ☐ Forum, discussion blog, comments
- ☐ ☐ PSC portal assessment
- ☐ ☐ Assessment if the provided information is useful
- ☐ ☐ Case studies
- ☐ ☐ News
- ☐ ☐ Country information, statistics
- ☐ ☐ Calendar of events
- ☐ ☐ Knowledge base (articles, reports, books and others)
- ☐ ☐ Training (e-learning)
- ☐ ☐ Personalisation options
- ☐ ☐ Useful links

31. Are there other functionalities you would like to indicate?

....
....

32. When is the full operating functionality expected to be available?

- ☐ It is available now
- ☐ This year
- ☐ 2012
- ☐ 2013 and later

PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO PSC USERS

33. Does your PSC provide a help desk/ help service?

- ☐ Yes, technical support (go to question 34)
- ☐ Yes, information support (go to question 34)
- ☐ No (go to question 37)
- ☐ No, but it will in the future (go to question 37)

34. What methods of contact are available?

	technical support	information support
telephone	☐	☐
E-mail	☐	☐
VOIP communication	☐	☐
communicator - chat	☐	☐
other, …	☐	☐

35. What is the average number of requests (via all possible ways of contact) to the help service per month? (1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010)

Relating to information support ……
Relating to technical support ……

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36. What is the average time of response (for all possible methods of contact) to a request?

	Technical support	information support
1 day	☐	☐
2 days	☐	☐
3 days and longer	☐	☐

37. What does registration with your PSC offer to the user?

☐ Ability to submit electronic forms/ conduct procedure online (go to question 38)
☐ Access to more detailed information (go to question 38)
☐ There is no registration (go to question 39)
☐ Other (please specify).... (go to question 38)

STATISTICS

38. Number of registered users at your PSC ….....
Including:

☐ National users ….....
☐ Foreign users……….
☐ No data available

39. Average number of visits to your PSC per month (1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010)
....

40. Average time of visit to PSC portal

☐ up to 1 min.
☐ 1 min. – 15 min.
☐ 15 min. - 1 hour
☐ Over 1 hour
☐ No data available

PROMOTION

7. What are the methods of promoting the PSCs in your country?

☐ conferences, seminars, information meetings
☐ sponsored articles
☐ logo, information on thematic portals
☐ promotion on social networking portals
☐ they are not promoted
☐ other…

8. Do you consider promotional activities with other countries?

☐ We currently cooperate with other MS (please give details) ....
☐ Yes, we plan to cooperate with other MS
☐ No

9. Is there a network of infokiosks where PSC websites are available?

☐ Yes
☐ No

☐   No, but it is planned in the future

PROBLEMS
10. What problems do you notice in terms of dealing with foreign service providers on your electronic PSCs ?   ☐ different document format   ☐ different format/method of procedures description   ☐ different scope of information in the procedures description   ☐ other, please describe ? …
11. What obstacles have been noted in the full electronisation of procedures ?   ☐ legal…..   ☐ technical ….   ☐ organizational ….   ☐ other…..

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
12. If you would like to share your experience, good practices or give comments feel free to   write:

Traditional PSC questionnaire

RESPONDENT'S DATA	
Country	
Organization	
Name of PSC	
Address	
Telephone	
E-mail	
Contact person	
1. Number of employees in your PSC : …………..	
2. Opening hours: ……………..	

3. Date of PSC operation start: ....
4. Has any existing infrastructure been used in order to establish your PSC? ☐ Yes, what was it?…. ☐ No
5. Average number of visitors/requests per month (1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010)
6. Trend of visitors/requests ☐ increase ☐ decrease ☐ constant
7. What is the scope of information provided by your PSC:
8. Does your PSC provide application forms to initiate administrative procedures? ☐ Yes ☐ No
9. Is it possible to submit application forms via your PSC? ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. How does your PSC provide support? ☐ personal visit ☐ telephone consultation ☐ e-mail request ☐ other, please explain....
Should you have any comments, feel free to write