

**Speech by
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organization at the
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Ladies and gentlemen,

In public administration, nothing is as constant as change. Despite the naysayers, public administration has always been flexible enough to meet new challenges. The projects presented here, with their impressive innovations show that this is still true today.

In Germany, modernization has two key objectives: transforming public administration through e-government and, as a result, ensuring transparency, participation and cooperation, that is, more Open Government.

This is not a new trend: Democracy and public participation belong together. Democracy depends on people who are committed and ready to take responsibility. The way people participate has changed over the centuries. Web 2.0 has created new instruments, ways and means of political participation. “The Internet doesn't make history, but history today is made with the Internet”, as Heinrich Wefing wrote in the German weekly “Die Zeit” a few weeks ago. Be it politics, society, public administration or each individual – all must face the new challenges posed by the Internet. Internet literacy and – if I may be so bold – the ability to share knowledge have become just as important as reading, writing and arithmetic.

In resource-poor Europe, knowledge is a valuable asset. The economy needs expertise and innovation to prosper. Innovation is driven by networking, which requires the willingness to share knowledge and create added value through cooperation. The government and public administration, too, should share knowledge, become more open and solicit public input for their actions.

An interesting example is **crowdsourcing**, which helps gather society's widely dispersed knowledge and make it accessible for government action and decision-making.

For example, many cities have launched “**Fix my street**” projects: Individuals report infrastructure deficiencies to the authorities, complementing government inspections and enabling more rapid repairs, for example of pavements or street lights.

The Spanish city of **Sant Boi de Llobreac** has recognized the potential of closer cooperation and created a virtual space of knowledge and relationship. Demographic, economic and social indicators as well as studies and monographs are provided on an online platform. Public administration and citizens may use this platform to communicate and generate new knowledge. They may participate in open debates, resolve questions, establish new contacts to experts and create knowledge databases.

The public is asking for more true participation. They are not only disgruntled citizens, but want to contribute their knowledge and experience to decision-making processes.

Knowing, considering and weighing all the facts surrounding a decision does not threaten legitimate political decision-making processes, it strengthens them.

Electronic services make this easier. The public administration in **Lisbon** has understood this and became the first European capital to offer the **Collaborative Budget 2.0**, a participatory budgeting model. For four years now, the citizens of Lisbon have been able to decide on five percent of the city's investment budget. Modern IT plays a significant role in this as the use of Web 2.0 formats enhances interaction between municipality and citizens. Decision-making processes can be depicted in a more transparent manner.

To ensure public participation and government accountability, the government and public administration must provide information. This also helps overcome the loss of confidence in government decision-making.

For example, the **best-practice project “Transparent Town of Martin”** focuses specifically on this aspect. The mayor of this Slovak town decided to publish all public contracts such as purchasing, staff recruitment, procurement, and rental contracts. The public is kept informed of government decisions, which builds trust and prevents

corruption. In addition, electronic contract awarding procedures help achieve significant savings.

Open Data initiatives increase the focus on transparency. Sets of data are provided in an easily accessible and standardized form for further use. Linking these data offers the advantage of creating new connections between information.

The EU¹ understood the significance of Open Data very early: Open Data strengthens not only the public's right to know, but also the economy. Businesses and research institutes may explore open data, for example environmental data and geodata, to develop new offerings, services and business models. This creates jobs and income. Governments should therefore be committed to providing quick and easy access to data and information.

Munich was the first city in Germany to launch an Open Government Data initiative, the Munich Open Government Day or **MOGDy**. I am delighted that it has received an award as a best-practice project in the EPSA competition.

MOGDy focused on the question of which forms of digital participation should be offered by the government and which applications (apps) can be created from the city's public data stock. In April this year, useful applications based on open data were awarded a prize.

Munich has inspired other German cities to build Open Data platforms and organize competitions. A few days ago, the nation-wide competition "Apps for Germany" was launched. It is organized by three associations of the Internet community that are supported by private businesses, the city of Berlin and Bremen. The Federal Minister of the Interior is the patron of the competition. We are all curious about the results. However, we can draw a preliminary conclusion: The community of citizens and public administrations seeking to make data openly available has become stronger. This is what MOGDy tries to achieve at local level.

¹ For example, EU Directive establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information (INSPIRE) and the EU Directive on public access to environmental information.

Ladies and gentlemen,

These are only a few examples of activities in area of Open Government – there are many, many more. In Europe and around the globe, we are only at the beginning of exciting changes that are reshaping the relationships between government and the public.

The Federal Government in Germany has taken on the goal of coordinating and linking these activities. To this end, an Open Government initiative was launched in 2010. It is part of the government programme “Transparent and network-based administration” to further modernize the federal administration. We intend to build a national Open Government platform by 2013 which will list all federal, state and local services. We are very confident that we can build on the strengths of Germany's federated system and gather a great variety of Open Government initiatives at local, state and federal level. We hope that this transparency will then spur on the competition for the best ideas and inspire the award-winning best-practice initiatives and flagship projects. I am looking forward to the upcoming developments.

Thank you very much for your attention.