NEW TENDENCIES IN E-GOVERNMENT
IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Balázs SZABÓ

ABSTRACT: In this article, I would just like to show some new tendencies, methods, which were developed and introduced in the recent years, especially in Hungary regarding e-government developments. It is impossible to show all of them, so I try give a short overview with some examples. If we rely on the Status and trends in the development of e-government secretariat document as a base issued by the United Nation’s Economic and Social Council on 7-11 April 2003, we can conclude the analyse of a society as follows: “the nature of governance hinges to a great extent on the performance and behaviour of the Government. Governments are public organizations through which societies pursue development objectives”. We can describe their main functions as seeking legitimacy by articulating consensus reached by the sovereign body. Also responding to society’s needs, demands and proposals (via aggregating those needs, demands and proposals and producing solutions). Finally making itself accountable to the oversight body (via transparency).”

KEYWORDS: tendencies; EU; ICT; Technology; changes; ASP

JEL Classification: K 23

E-government is one of the newest forms of classical government, that seeks to optimize its functions by transforming internal and external relationships with the use of ICT. However, this optimization should not be seen as being about administrative convenience or automation alone, without any personal aspect. The connection between

1. The work was created in commission of the National University of Public Service under the priority project KOFOP-2.1.2-VEKOP-15-2016-00001 titled „Public Service Development Establishing Good Governance” in (the) Győző Concha Doctoral Program

* Dr. Jur., University of Miskolc, Institute of State Laws, Public Administration Department, HUNGARY.


4. See above, page 3., point 5.
government and governance allows us relating e-government development to support for the desirable system of governance. 7

We can state that, „the emergence of the Internet and developments in processing capacity and data storage over the 2000’s have significantly altered the environment for ICT use across society and in government, and beside that the longer-term effects of this digital revolution are likely to be profound, these developments have already increased pressure on governments to improve performance and provided them the tools to do so. This does not mean, however, that e-government challenges are primarily technical, but mostly e-government services continue to be embedded in the environment of today’s public administrations and therefore remain limited by what these administrations are capable, and willing, to do. 8”

Nowadays, we are the participants of a new generation of open, flexible and collaborative e-Government services, which is needed to empower European citizens and businesses, to improve their mobility within the internal market of the 21st century and to ensure that public services can serve an economy which relies on the networks of the future.

We can say, this is the time(period) of rapid technological changes. „Technological advancements and the search by suppliers for new markets have resulted in a bewildering array of technical solutions in search of problems to fix. Governments face the challenge of fostering the development of e-government, while there is still great uncertainty regarding fast moving technological change, and it is difficult to anticipate future policy impacts in detail. New technologies are tempting, because they often promise better solutions and enticing possibilities for business change. More often, however, they promise solutions that purport to enable an organisation to implement IT without changing its business processes. It is therefore not surprising that public sector organisations keep trying to develop systems based on new technologies. Experience shows, however, that systems built on emerging and unknown technologies are very susceptible to failure. In some instances the potential benefits might warrant taking such huge risks; most often this is not the case. 9”

„Risk of failure can be reduced by using well-proven approaches or even better, standard software, although this will often imply that business processes have to be adapted to the possibilities offered by the IT system. The application of common commercial practice, rather than custom software, has proven time and again to be the most successful solution. Where the use of unproven technologies is unavoidable, a testing programme for the new technology in question carried out prior to the contract with the supplier could help identify, assess and manage the risks. Broad approaches to dealing with emerging technologies include:

- Technology neutrality in legislation and regulation to avoid closing off promising options, and flexibility within broad regulatory frameworks and adaptation of current laws to a digital world.

7 See above, page 3. point 5.
9 See above, page 1.
10 See above, page 2.
- Performance requirements rather than technical specifications when procuring new technologies.
- Involvement of all stakeholders in regulatory processes. Increasingly looking to international co-operation to harmonise approaches to transborder issues. "11"

We have to concentrate on, when we do the modernisation, we have to fulfill the protection of privacy and security matters as well.

"Citizens are unlikely to use e-government services without a guarantee of privacy and security. Governments also have a strong interest in maintaining citizens' trust (e.g. that information provided will not be misused). Ensuring that e-government initiatives are in step with society's expectations in this area is a crucial means of building trust. The challenge facing e-government coordinators and implementers is to respect accepted privacy principles while allowing the benefits of the Internet and other technologies to flow to citizens. This balance is of particular importance when considering seamless government services involving data sharing among agencies. Government has a responsibility to provide leadership in developing a culture of privacy protection and security. It should provide this leadership through its roles in the development of public policy, as owner and operator of systems and networks, and as an user of such systems and networks. As an user of information systems and networks, government shares a role with businesses, other organisations and individuals for ensuring secure use of the system and network."12

Most of the changes, modernisations are originated from the expectations from the society and citizens. "Another constraint on e-government is the difficulty with which governments are developing services that are customer-focused. As governments are developing more and more electronic services, they are also coming to the realisation that they often do not know what kind of e-government citizens want. ICT tools have provided governments with new ways to provide information and to consult with citizens, but determining the preferences of citizens and businesses with regard to the structure and content of electronic services rests a true challenge for OECD countries, in part because many people would hard-pressed to be able to articulate their expectations of government, even with a full understanding of the technological possibilities.

Countries are developing a common understanding, however, that services should be organised and provided according to customer needs and preferences and not according to the internal logic (or illogic) of government administrations. The Internet has brought a quantum leap in efforts to provide a customer focus, and OECD countries are actively developing initiatives to draw together information and services for specific customer groups. These seamless online services aim to transcend the agency-based structure of the supply of information and services and present users with a coherent, integrated package of government information and services. Such services can provide higher levels of value to customers than separate services.13"

"One-stop shops, advice bureaux, whole-of-government telephone call centres and services such as information kiosks have attempted to bring together information and

---
11See above, page 2.
13See above page 4.
services from different government agencies. The capacity to offer integrated, seamless government services so that users can interact with government as a single organisation, however, relies not only on ICT tools, but also on deeper organisational and cultural changes within public administrations.

The development of a customer focus requires collaboration. As services become more complex, efficiency considerations require greater co-operation between agencies, in areas such as authentication, shared processing and the exchange of data. The need for collaboration between agencies thus has both “front-office” (service to the customer) and “back-office” (efficiency in government) dimensions. From the customer’s point of view, government should appear as one organisation; from government agencies’ point of view, the customer should appear as a single customer.¹⁴

Despite the immense amount of progress that has been made during the past decade in bringing physical ICT connectivity to developing countries and regions the largest challenge that remains in the wide spread use of ICTs for governance are connectivity and access constraints. Donors Experience shows: parallel with the growth of IT services, IT enabled services are increasing. The value of the off shoring of ICT related services, for instance, is estimated to be a 300 billion industry. E-Government applications are also proving to generate huge financial savings and cost reductions through increase of efficiency.

“Most of the driving forces behind e-government development follow parts of this world-making agenda. From the point of view of that agenda, no one would object to the national New Public Management coalitions that pursue increased efficiency and effectiveness in public administrations. The New Public Management revolution, where it works, embraces application of ICT in public administration. This brings savings, especially in personnel costs, and raises the quality of public services. It can increase the inflow of revenues. As a result, it can even have a favourable impact on the macroeconomic outlook of the country concerned.

Effectiveness and efficiency-conscious knowledge workers are also after the cost and quality of government services.¹⁵

“Social development-conscious politicians and civil society organizations see in e-government an instrument for better labour market management, for closing the geographic divides in the supply of public services. The lobby for job creation and small and medium-sized enterprises embraces e-government as a potentially important tool for bringing the market entry and transaction cost down: by curtailing corruption; by cutting the cost and time required to obtain various licences; by offering to small and medium-sized enterprises services that only much larger firms could normally secure; by creating a platform for e-commerce. The international and local business lobby needs digitized data, especially in the trade and financial sector, speed of communication and increased level of transparency. All these are important elements of the development environment. Human development and economic growth can be supported by them.¹⁶

“E-government also offers opportunities for governance development. This potential needs a political coalition behind it in order to be utilized. It needs a strong and focused

¹⁴See above page 4.
¹⁵See above page 4.
¹⁶See above page 8. point 26
support coalition, as deepening democracy in the world may indeed be the one single accomplishment that is capable of broadly opening avenues to a more peaceful, prosperous and just future. If e-government can be instrumental in this process, it deserves attention and support at many levels, from many social domains and throughout the world.\footnote{See above, page 8., point 27}

These examples are proof of the benefits ICTs in general and e-Government in particular can bring to developing country economies. However, they are unfortunately the exception. The following major causes of failure were identified in the recent years: Many countries are doing well in formulating strategies and policies, but the legal framework is often still lagging behind. Evoking a change of management culture toward knowledge sharing is however more difficult than overcoming technological or legal difficulties. There is indeed a need to share: to share infrastructures and invest in Open Standards and interoperability frameworks, to share services and roll out successful solutions, to share systems and databases. Th is goes for governments as well as donors. Currently, there is still a lack of oversight in investments. Instead of spending money on reinventing already written content, the approach should be to customize it. Investing in capacity building on all levels should be the major priority. Large tech investments without investments in staff training equal data bases with no data entries.

The governments should invest in:

- Shared infrastructure and services and Open Source software – the decades of insular proprietary software development are over. Software will increasingly be understood as a service. Service Oriented Architecture\cite{4}
- and the use of Business Process Modeling (BPM)\cite{5} New technologies such as Web 2.0 –This may be a challenging prospect in a political, rather than a technological sense, but holds chances to better governance, closer to citizens. Mobile platforms and new infrastructure technologies.
- How can e-Government help achieve Aid Effectiveness and make the procedures faster? E-Government is about using information and communications technologies (ICT) to improve the transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness of public institutions. Aid Management and transparency are the two key areas where ICTs are considered important enablers. There are a number of existing bilateral and multilateral initiatives to promote the use of e-Government to improve aid effectiveness – however – much remains to be accomplished.

On the internal level, information management systems and systemized data sharing between government institutions can help to allocate, track, monitor and control aid funding and expenditure.

Internet services and tools can help provide different government stakeholders, the press and citizens with access to information and help increase transparency and accountability of government decision making and spending. ICTs also play an increasingly important role in the delivery of social services. There is a need for harmonized information management systems and increasing capacity development programmes as well as strengthening national statistic capacities and creating linkages between financial management information and performance information; this information should then provide a basis for a national monitoring and evaluation system.
ICTs can be used to creating learning networks, support knowledge sharing within communities of practice and give a platform for peer to peer learning. Aid management systems can provide strategic focus for Paris Agenda issues. Aid management platforms, shared data and data standards can help donors and partner countries align their efforts and create a common knowledge base of development initiatives. On a bilateral level, such data and information platforms are important to increase coordination and aid predictability – an example of this technology usage is the ICT based dialogue system with donors in Ethiopia. Currently, the donor coordination process is still in its primary stages. To achieve international data standards, there is a need for better information sharing and results management.

The private sector can be both beneficiary as well as provider of e-Government solutions. Creating benefits for the private sector, in particular local SME, is often a primary target of improved service delivery through e-Government. Many governments specifically promote e-Business solutions for SMEs. Involving the private sector in Public Private Partnerships is often seen as a key success factor for e-Government initiatives.

In connection with the first priority, the Action Plans (from the recent years) of the EU aim at maximising the complementarities of national and European policy instruments. Its actions support the transition of e-Government into a new generation of open, flexible and collaborative seamless e-Government services at local, regional, national and European level that will empower citizens and businesses.

There are strong political and economic reasons for European collaboration in e-Government. Joint action and knowledge sharing at EU level contributes to overcoming the current economic crisis, by using public resources more efficiently.

The Commission's main mission is to optimise the conditions, for the development of cross-border e-Government services provided to citizens and businesses regardless of their country of origin. This includes the development of an environment which promotes interoperability of systems and key enablers such as eSignatures and eIdentification. Services accessible across the EU strengthen the digital single market and complement existing legislation in domains like e-Identification, e-Procurement, e-Justice, e-Health, mobility and social security, whilst delivering concrete benefits to citizens, businesses and governments in Europe. The Commission will lead by example in further implementing e-Government within its organisation.

The combination of all these efforts should lead to an increase of the take-up of e-Government services.

1. E-GOVERNMENT TRENDS AND METHODS IN HUNGARY NOWADAYS

The role of e-services in our daily life is not negligible anymore. More and more services can be reached through the technological equipments and the internet, and also many can only be availed in an electronic way. The modernisation reaches more and more role in our everyday life and in every field of life. The European Union is competing with the USA and with the developed Asian countries in the world market. For this purpose the internal (single) market was developed, the four fundamental freedoms are allowed and for the improvement and enlargement of this single market action plans, programmes and unique environment for regulation are available.
The effective functioning of a state depends to a great extent on how far it can catch up and adapt to the opportunities offered by modern technologies. The more IT conscious thinking prevails, both in society and in state governance, the more effective and competitive state. In the followings, I will try to just introduce one way, the way of developing the administration of the local governments with modern methods.

"The Economist Intelligence Unit's 2014 report, in 60 countries, investigated the relationship between the development of infocommunication and GDP growth and concluded that 0.4% of the infocommunications area would increase the 0.52% per capita GDP in the more developed countries. "[6]

In the economic sphere, in terms of effectiveness, businesses are largely distinguished from the extent to which they are able to efficiently exploit the opportunities offered by infocommunications.

The development of the Hungarian eGovernment Knowledge Portal supported by the European Union has been completed. It is currently available in a pilot version at http://www.etudasportal.gov.hu. Besides the traditional homepage functions, the online platform offers interactive and web 2.0 services, including eLearning, online advice for the development of e-Government services, navigation and user-friendly search possibilities on the multi-dimensional expert knowledge map.

The project aims to provide and make available the information and knowledge bases relating to e-Government that already exist in the central and local institutions of the Public Administration. The portal will track and publish the new knowledge and solutions created in the framework of the Electronic Administration Operational Programme and in the State Reform Operational Programme projects.

Among the major services of the e-Government Knowledge Portal is the interactive knowledge base which includes systematically gathered and well structured information on both domestic and international best practice, experiences, trends and strategies. A complementary function of the Portal will consist of providing online teaching material offering basic eGovernment knowledge and inter-connections for public officers.

It can be said that the existence of infocommunication tools alone does not create an information society. To do this, it is not only necessary to continuously increase the knowledge level of an individual applying information technologies, but also to achieve a great deal of embedding in social governance and economy by using these tools. If a state wants to develop a knowledge-based information society, it needs to prepare both the state-provided services and the public service workers in the background.

The knowledge we need to do so can also be interpreted in relation to an administrative organization. An organization can efficiently act in the interests of the citizen if the information received from the state-provided services can be transformed into public knowledge.

The Government is called on the Minister of National Development to prepare and disseminate the National Infocommunication Policy Strategy to the Government by June 30, 2013, with the involvement of the Minister of Public Administration and Justice. The aim of the Strategy is to "provide a coherent picture of the current state of the Hungarian information society and, accordingly, define the development directions, public policy, regulatory and support activities in the infocommunication area for the time horizon coinciding with the 2014-2020 EU planning cycle, resources
From the point of view of administrative informatics, the current situation covers the fact that the administrative tasks of the organization in the field of business administration are receiving greater IT support than other administrative areas.

In 2012, the European Commission conducted a survey of how satisfied the users are with e-services in the government sector. The result of the survey also proves that further development measures are needed in Hungary to catch up with the EU average. In Hungary, 38.0% of the population and 83.3% of the enterprises handled their cases electronically.

The Zoltán Magyary Public Administration Development Program aims at expanding and improving the quality of services provided under E-Administration. The financial resources needed to realize them are provided by an EU source.

2. ELECTRONIC ADMINISTRATION OPERATIONAL PROGRAM (HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS EKOP)

The overall objective of the program is to improve the performance of the public administration, and to develop the capacity of the information society to meet the needs of the modern age. "It aims to achieve the efficient operation of the state through simplification of government processes and the promotion of infocommunication tools. The program seeks to modernize not only public administration, but also justice through the use of infocommunication technologies in the operation, process, processes and services. The fulfillment of the overarching objectives is served by two specific objectives:

- to improve the effectiveness of administrative services,
- increase operational efficiency.

The development of a service-oriented service state requires the coordination of individual institutions, processes, the consolidation of individual databases, their possible interconnection, data connections, the provision of data flows, economic aspects and the framework provided by law. It is also important to improve the quality of services available to citizens and to achieve cost and time savings in this regard. Completing these is indispensable for the IT development of the public administration system.

Within the framework of the EKOP, EUR 421,700,133 is available, which amounts to four priority axes for the development of public administration. Only half of this amount can be spent at 43.8% for renewing the internal processes of public administration and administrative services.

This support rate is due to the fact that "a large part of IT systems used in public administration are unable to make the data they manage to customers and other bodies.[7]" Electronic processes of the internal organs of public administration are at different levels. In the field of central administration, the IT background for providing e-services is mostly the same, but this is not the case in local governments. In the different local governments with different economic performance, the IT networks were developed differently. "Only 44% of local governments using computers have an internal computer network, and only 63% use an electronic bank account management system."

On the basis of these shortcomings, the program aims to establish a local ASP center, which supports the internal functioning of local governments by providing e-government
services and provides access to e-administration tailored to citizen and entrepreneurial needs.

The ASP (Application Service Provider) is the essence of users using a simple browser program to access the remote service provider's services and applications to support their business over the Internet.”

The purpose of introducing the local ASP system is to modernize local government IT systems, to support the internal operation of local governments and to provide uniform electronic administration services for citizens and businesses.

The Government operates the local ASP system through the Hungarian State Treasury. It is the task of the application center set up under the Treasury: [8]

a) provision of connection and service management,
b) the conclusion and modification of service contracts with the acceding organizations,
c) Providing customer service contact information, information and administrative tasks related to the provision of customer service, ensuring fault reporting,
d) coordination of communication and training related to services.

The ASP system consists of a framework, systems, data warehouse and support.

It provides a unified interface and access to the systems. It is suitable for substitution management. It can be used to build the hierarchy of the local government through the establishment of main and sub-organizations and by fixing staff members of each unit. The system keeps track of the processes that are being carried out. It is suitable for measuring the day-to-day activities of an organization's assigned staff.

The Professional Systems of the ASP system's systems can be accessed through the framework. The 257/2016. (VIII.31.) Government Decree has defined a system of specialization covering eight areas.

The Registry management system, which task is to support administrative and document handling work in the local government. Including receipt, arriving, resolution, signing, search for history, registration, publication, expedition, filing, scrapping, archiving, sending internal documents and archiving received by the local government. It is important that the use of the system necessitates the revision of records management policies in agreement with the Government Office and the Archives.

The Local government portal, which primarily communicates with information, information, presentation, news, news, and information to citizens.

The electronic portal, including the electronic form service in the ASP center, the place of electronic administration. Services currently available on the Portal: Tax Balance Query, Attorney, Issuance.

The Management system, has tasks to support the management of municipal governments, local minority self-governments, multi-purpose micro-regional associations and the budgetary organizations under their control. The economic system manages the process of general ledger bookkeeping, the process of financial activities, the controlling activity for the users' management, the statutory and management information obligations and requirements.

The Local government tax system is responsible to ensure the central and local taxes of the local (local) authorities, the registration, settlement and management of public debts, fees and allowances, fines and administrative fees, as well as the settlement of administrative fees, by means of electronic settlement of the tax obligations.

The Industrial and commercial system provides full electronic support for the administration of industrial and commercial administration cases referred to the local government and provides for the registration of the data, allows for the settlement of cases electronically and supports the fulfillment of the statutory KSH and other regular or occasional data services and publication tasks electronically. Licensing procedures supported by the system: business administration; administration of sites; administration of business accommodation; administration of events, administration of fair, market and shopping center; non-business community-based, leisure-time lodging service.

The Inventory system supports the registration and administration processes of local governments regarding inheritance issues.

The Data Warehouse is a Treasury-run system, that serves to prepare governmental and local government decisions. By using it, the reporting and reporting obligations of local governments become more uniform and simpler.

The „Support systems” are Applications for day-to-day administrative, customer service and operational tasks of the local government ASP system.

The effective operation of a state depends to a great extent on the extent to which the efficiency of the infocommunication efficiency gains in the administrative authority procedure. This is well illustrated by the 2016 Monitoring Report of the NemethInfocommunication Strategy, which states that in the period 2012-2015, online administration is below the EU average. According to Eurostat's 2013 survey, 44% of Hungarian citizens said they were satisfied with the ease with which to find online information. They said in the same proportion that they are satisfied with the usefulness of information made available by the government. „As far as online services are concerned (for example, obtaining a birth certificate, extending a driving license and technical approval, submitting a tax return online), 39% of Hungarians said they were satisfied with the ease of use of these services online. In addition, 35% of Hungarians claimed that they were satisfied with the information they received on online information to the government."[10]

In summary, compliance with electronic administration involves a complex issue. Quality services should be provided at the nearest level of citizens. If so far the possibility of electronic administration for individual municipalities has not been secured, it should be developed in all cases possible; where it is already provided, it must be matched to the expectations of the Eucharistic Church; In the case of cooperation with a particular organization, electronic contact and information must be ensured. [11]

The unified provision of these can be achieved by the national extension of the local ASP system.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Human resource development plan is a key component of the overall e-government strategy of any government. The role of external, development partners is to provide financial and knowledge support for e-Government. Information on processes and
technical information should be made widely and freely available. Development cooperation should promote the exchange of experience and technology from donor to developing but also amongst developing countries. Facilitating south-south exchange is a key to create synergies and spread working solutions. However, the role of donor agency interventions should not be limited to governments – the support of community driven development to help enable not only top-down but also grass roots innovations should also be part of international development agendas. Furthermore, efforts to introduce e-Government should not be restricted to the executive branch of government, but should also take the legislative and judiciary into consideration. E-Government can increase transparency for citizens in the legal sector.

"While policies for e-government development must remain within the domain of sovereign decisions of Member States, Member States should carefully examine and seriously consider the introduction of suitable e-government applications to the operations of their public administrations according to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Such applications have the potential to raise the effectiveness and efficiency of these operations; to raise the performance standards and image of the public administration; and to serve well the overall developmental goals adopted by the society."

One of the European Union’s main advantages for EU citizens and businesses is the ease of moving, trading, or working in any other EU country (till the given moment, because there will be changes in our opinion because of the migration situation nowadays). Surprisingly, cross-border online services are 30 percentage points behind public services for country nationals. It is rarely possible to make transactions online, or to organise online your moving, working, or opening a company in another EU country. The gap prevents citizens and businesses – who plan on undertaking activities cross-border – from an unnecessary headache.

If we examine the small and large countries, it is clear that the smaller and medium-sized European countries have reached a better performance in public service delivery online. Perhaps their size allow for an easier centralisation and management of the implementation of online services generally, but there are exceptions certainly. Another very important aspect is the question of digital natives and of the non-skilled users. Even though digital improvements in services will certainly benefit a high number of citizens, it is still important to take into account the digitally non-developed regions and members of EU societies. That is why the EU follows a systematic support system more than 15 years. It means practically that there are direct and also in-direct financial bases, which can support the "good ideas" and the governmental movements of the higher implementation of e-services.

For the second decade of the XXI. th century, infocommunication tools have become a part of everyday lives silently, built into our lives in such a way that their presence is almost unnoticeable, but their shortcoming still poses great challenges to us in the short term. In post-industrial societies, where digital tools and applications are now emerging as societal forces, we are called infocommunication societies. The transformation of social relations, the emergence of new rules and relations systems, are necessarily implicated in such a degree of social transformation. Law as one of the most important societal regimes

\[\text{See above, page 13., point 45.}\]
will have to deal with new phenomena sooner or later, even if this legislator often tries to do it more than before. The legislature is particularly vulnerable when the environment itself is changing dynamically, constantly overcoming the otherwise deliberate legislative mechanisms. Thus it often happens that if the subject of the regulation is closely related to the application of the state of the art technology, the legislator (and the law enforcement) has just implemented the new technology, created the regulation so that the application could spread and the case law could be established, has become higher and so is the regulation itself. This phenomenon is particularly problematic in areas where coding regulation does not tolerate the use of analogy, and the status of the parties derives from the need for strict regulation (when the state as a practitioner is the subject of legal affiliation).

REFERENCES

http://www.unpan.org/egovernment2.asp.