

## SUMMARY / FINAL REMARKS

### Workshop on Open Data and Public Sector Information (PSI) – Expectations of High Value Datasets

#### Academy of the Konrad -Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

We are used to having produced goods readily available within the European Union because of the common market. Like produced goods, data also does not stop at borders or artificial margins of sectors. Data floats freely. Instead of falling into the trap of protectionism, we should try to internalize the use of data and utilize it for our own good.

The goal of the Directive on Open Data and Public Sector Information (PSI) is to facilitate the use of data rather than finding reasons why not to publish data. By seeking to establish a common European data market and ecosystem, the authors of the directive are working towards this goal.

The workshop at the KAS on February 27<sup>th</sup> brought together experts from different disciplines, sectors, and areas of expertise to discuss one of the pillars of the new Directive: the implementation of high value data sets in the member states.

The representatives of the DG Connect of the European Commission, Jiri Pilar und Szymon Lewandowski explained the origins and goals of the directive – also in the context of the recently published European strategy on data. The attendees of the workshop made arguments on data privacy, especially GDPR, the particular role of public undertakings and their competition, as well as civil organisations championing transparency.

In one of the final discussions of the day, Victoria Boeck from the Technologie Stiftung Berlin, made an important statement: “When identifying data that is of high value one needs to consider the data that is most valuable to a large group of people, rather than thinking solely in terms of what would generate value for SMEs.”

One thing that became apparent during the workshop is that more time must be spent on discussing how to measure “value” in the context of high-value datasets, and part of this conversation needs to include addressing the question of who the value is for. Answering these questions is critical in deciding which datasets should be focused upon as part of the effort to identify high-value datasets.

There needs to be better dialogue between EU lawmakers, member state governments (at all levels), and state-owned enterprises/public undertakings. The discussion showed a disharmony between these actors as far as what the expectations for data sharing and publishing are and should be. More work needs to be done to better understand and address the concerns of SMEs regarding what data they should be obligated to publish.

So how can Europe identify high value data sets and how can they be made available in the 27 European member states? What are the challenges in finding and publishing the datasets? The discussion showed hindrances that are summarised in the remarks below:

### **1. What data are we talking about?**

Most of the organisations, whether public or private, do not have an overview about the data they are collecting, holding, and using. There is a lack of data inventories, or differently formulated lists or registries. This means that in society there is no common understanding about what data we are talking about. Which data can be of high value when chosen from an undefined lake of data?

### **2. Scattered Responsibilities - First Access then Re-use**

Due to scattered responsibilities in the German public administration there is no political ownership regarding how to go about identifying data, publishing data, and then regulating its re-use. The directive regulates the re-use of data from the very beginning. However, if there is no data made accessible, then the regulated re-use is irrelevant. An important first step will be to refine policies on what data to publish and make accessible.

### **3. Understanding what Data Means**

Politics must reach a point of understanding what data and its value mean for our economy and society. Data is at the core of the digital transformation and its importance is growing daily. Anyone who believes that data can be disregarded in the digital age is missing the opportunity to take part in the global digital market and its competitive processes. At some point this technological gap will bring about a negative impact in Germany and Europe.

### **4. Looking for Hindrances rather than Opening Doors**

In Germany there is a tendency to look at reasons why something cannot be done, rather than embracing the opportunity at hand. We claim to be pioneers - a politically defined goal - but do not really understand what that means. One cannot be a pioneer without investing, showing a clear political agenda, and accompanying the implementation professionally.

### **5. Looking for Similarities, not Differences**

Every organisation and association is unique by its own admission. But are they really? When comparing German structures to other European countries, we are always different, and no comparison is sufficient. Instead of looking for differences, we should look for similarities and learn from other organisations and countries. Our goal must be to learn more about best practices while learning from others' mistakes.

Here is what can and should be done instead:

#### **1. Make bold Decisions FOR Data**

Bold choices for data are the prerequisite of progress. Putting together DOS rather than DON'TS can help steer the discussion to a more positive outcome. There is a need to get used to getting started without having every outcome perfectly pre-defined.

## **2. Making sure that those in charge understand the Meaning of Data**

If Germany truly wants to move forward more quickly in the digital transformation, we need to make sure it implements both a top-down and bottom-up approach. This includes improving data literacy, the way we work with data, and access to data. This requires that decisions are made at the top level, and subsequently pushed through all hierarchical levels with the correct amount of force. This process will not work given the presence of just one weak link. For example, if a single decision maker halfway down the hierarchical chain fails to understand the importance of accessing and using data, then most efforts will prove worthless. What is needed is a continuous chain of decision-making, which assures that political decisions reach every level of an organisation and are fully implemented.

## **3. Using political Momentum to make Change**

Right now there is still an open window to tackle challenges, make bold decisions, and be pioneers in the future. The implementation of the Directive, the development of a more encompassing open data policy, the European and German strategy on data, all show political momentum and offer the possibility to pave the way into the future.

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