

We need more national PSI project champions!

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This year's review of the PSI Directive ([Commission Communication of 7 May 2009](#)) confirmed its positive impact in promoting the PSI re-use in the EU in the past years. It is certainly not a perfect instrument, but I am an optimist and I prefer to present the situation as a half full glass rather than a half empty one. But of course our duty is to add a drop to the glass every day.

There is still much work to be done to reach the full potential of the EU PSI market and the European Commission continues its work to persuade the Member States (MS), the PSI holders and possible re-users of the advantages a developed PSI market can bring to the economy and citizens.

Our key activities at the moment are:

- encouraging the authorities in the MS to take proactive measures that facilitate the re-use of PSI (e.g. PSI portals);
- monitoring the implementation and application of the PSI Directive in the MS; in this respect we have started infringement procedures against 3 MS, with two of them (Sweden and Poland) already working on new legislation to come;
- scrutinising possible exclusive agreements; and
- as a follow up to many studies, move forward in the area of PSI re-use metrics and economic modelling on reuse.

Today I will write about the first point. Encouraging PSI re-use across all MS: all sectors require a joint effort by all stakeholders. Member States are crucial actors, and where proactive policies have been put in place, results have flourished. We see this in the UK and more recently in Spain. These actions require motivated officials, **project champions**. We need many more of them.

A concrete example of proactive measures is PSI portals. I believe we all agree that being able to find reusable data and know its conditions of re-use is a first crucial step in the process of PSI re-use. On 25 September 2009 we organised a [meeting](#) on PSI portals with representatives from the MS, industry and other stakeholders. A few MS have projects underway as concerns the PSI portals. The British, Spanish, French, Belgians and the Italians of the Piemonte region have portals in place or are working towards this objective. After the [Aporta project](#) was launched, the interest in PSI re-use matters rose dramatically in Spain. We drew a parallel between the PSI portals (existing and foreseen) presented during the meeting:

- the majority of them are built on open-source tools;
- they have published the re-use legislative framework; the conditions for re-use are published in the form of the legal notices or licences; and
- the reusable data is presented in the data catalogues and asset lists, or is directly available for download.

It is important to add that the portals don't only enable access to information but also help to raise the debate on the subject, awareness, knowledge, the "unlocking" service of OPSI (Office of Public Sector Information) in the UK, etc. In the recently launched "[data.gov.us](#)" portal, a major initiative of the Obama administration, a repository of "Apps", of applications that add value to the data resources is being put in place as a shared resource for re-users.

It appears from the outcome of the meeting that technological, organisational and financial aspects of PSI portals do not represent a real issue. There is enough knowledge, technology and good

practice available on which to build PSI portals. Open-source tools enable setting up a PSI portal with relatively low costs. At this point one question is inevitable. Why aren't there more PSI portals around!? Of course, this is a rhetorical question. The answer is clear: we lack political will in those countries where more could be done; we desperately need more PSI champions.

My Unit will follow the work of the MS where PSI portals are underway. Good cases persuade others to follow the example. To help them even more, we are considering taking a step forward by preparing some kind of specifications/checklist paper/guidelines for those wishing to implement portals in the future.