Could digital certificates and vaccine passports be the key to returning freedom of movement?

**Jon Shamah,
Chair of EEMA**

The DE4A project commenced on 1st January 2020, just weeks before the world began to comprehend the true extent and ramifications that COVID-19 would have on society and commerce. Throughout the pandemic the DE4A consortium (of which EEMA is a member) has continued on its mission to work towards creating an EU that makes it easier for citizens, businesses and students to live, work and study.

With national borders closed and tight restrictions on movement (both nationally and internationally) in place for more than one year the ambition and the resolve of all DE4A consortium partners to see the EU return even stronger post-pandemic has been a driving force as work continues.

To return us to this path the EU must first find a path to return the block to its core principle that every citizen from any Member States has the right to freedom of movement throughout the region. To this end, the EU Commission last month proposed the introduction of a Digital Green Certificate, that if initiated will provide a means for citizens to prove their vaccination, antibody and testing status. EU Commissioner for Justice, **Didier Reynders stated in a Tweet** on 13th April: "Our objective is to facilitate a return to free movement within the EU in view of summer, in full respect of the principles of non-discrimination & data protection."

As the EU continues to steer us through the pandemic the DE4A project will ensure that when businesses bounce back and look to expand, people reinstate their plans to move (whether for work, family or retirement), and students look to take advantage of the wealth of opportunities our higher education institutions have to offer, the EU will be stronger and more open than ever before.

Post COVID-19 - Ensuring the future of free movement

On Tuesday 29th June (11.00 to 12.15 CET) EEMA will host a webinar as part of its 34th Annual Conference, to consider the role technology has to play in the safe reopening of society. The session will be Chaired by Steve Pannifer, COO of Consult Hyperion, with an panel that includes Bart Preneel, a Professor at KU Leuven and a member of the EEMA Board of Management.

Bart was involved in the development of Belgium's coronavirus tracing smartphone app – Coronalert. They will be joined in the debate by Andy Tobin, Vice President of Delivery at Evernym and Viky Manaila, Trust Services Director at Intesi Group SpA.

**Bart Preenel speaking
at an EEMA conference**

EEMA project partner spotlight

Georg Nesslinger is the Head of Division "eGovernment for Businesses" in DG ICT of the Federal Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs in Austria. Alongside EEMA it is a DE4A project partner. In this spotlight he shares his view on the Once Only Principle - the expectation that public administrations in the EU should only request information from citizens and businesses once.

What is the biggest opportunity that the Once Only Principle creates?

The Once Only Principle creates more than one opportunity, it is rather a bunch of opportunities. Let us split it into government internal and external opportunities, which could result in real benefits in time. For the government internal area, we can extend and foster our attempts to automate processes, for which the Once Only Principle provides technical, juridical and organisational support. It brings up the chance to evaluate existing processes of data management - and this "End2End" alongside the governmental "value chain". It touches the data systems itself and could result in data harmonisation in large-scale, both nationally and European wide. That is also a reason why we are so eager to participate in European research projects, such as DE4A, because it brings up significant advantages and experiences to cope with all the challenges. We can learn a lot from other experiences in Europe and we hope we are a good partner for others as well.

To have a closer look at the external sphere we see some very important opportunities as well. The governmental internal advantages of Once Only Principle find its equivalent in the improvement of the external business processes. The more the Once Only Principle is developed and rolled out, the better for the businesses and the people, because their governmental related processes are more automated, secure and faster. The great benefits are visible in domestic governmental procedures, but even more in the European dimension.

Nonetheless, we must consider some very important points on the road to Once Only Principle in the future, for example data protection and within this we have to strengthen all efforts and specifically on data minimisation.

Are there any examples of OOP in existence today that provide a blueprint for the EU?

The road to Once Only Principle is paved to a certain extent. This does not mean that everything is tuckered out, but the European and the Austrian ideas are stretched out. Alongside these lines we have pinned our strategies. The participation in European initiatives, work groups or the participation in European research projects from PEPPOL to TOOP and further to DE4A brought and still brings up huge advantages to fulfil the tasks. The European initiatives also foster the Austrian strategy and the realisations thereout. In Austria we are on the way to implement the necessary legal basis; we implement the Austrian Data Hub, a technical service bus for secure data exchange; we have connections to our main registers in the business-related eGovernment; we set up an information obligation database (IVDB) with the aim of providing a national data catalogue and, finally, we are integrating the specific Once Only use cases. Our national infrastructure will also serve as the hub for the European connections.

We share our experiences with other partners in Europe within the research projects and we also communicate our findings within the work groups, such as the SDG work groups. We are sure that the most benefits are in the cooperation of all partners involved. So, we want invite everybody to get in touch with us and exchange ideas and experiences!

Georg Nesslinger,
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Federal Ministry
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Economic Affairs