

NEELIE KROES

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, - 8. 06. 2011
Ares(2011) 616357

Dear Mr Tarkowski,

I was very pleased to receive your invitation of 6 June to the meeting on open government being held on 9 June in Warsaw. Unfortunately I cannot be with you in person in Warsaw, but I would like to express my strong support for the event and I would be grateful if you could have the following statement issued on this occasion, as you proposed:

The European Commission is working hard to encourage Member States of the European Union to make all information produced by the public sector freely accessible and re-usable. This is not just an important means to ensure the transparency and efficiency of our administrations. It is also a way to provide a new source of economic growth and employment.

Looking at the recent policy announcements on public sector information in Poland, I am glad this is well understood in your country. This does not happen by chance, as today's event demonstrates – so let me congratulate the President of the Republic of Poland, Mr Bronislaw Komorowski, and the Polish Government, in particular Minister Jacek Michalowski, Chief of Presidential Chancellery and Minister Michał Boni, Chairman of the Permanent Committee of the Council of Ministers, for their forward-looking approach.

You will know that the 2003 Directive on the re-use of Public Sector Information is the EU legislation to help you achieve this. This legislation will be reviewed before the end of this year and the feedback we have received from a recent public consultation comforts us in our vision that the time is ripe for more ambition.

Mr Alex Tarkowski
Director
Centrum Cyfrowe Projekt:Polska

By e-mail: atarkowski@centrumcyfrowe.pl

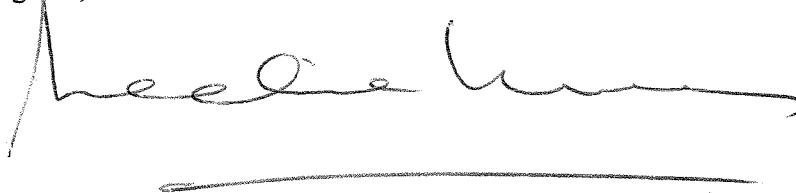
The scope of public sector information is indeed very rich and diverse. It is not just about processing statistics or geographical information. Take for instance scientific information, the majority of which is produced through public funding. We can help develop new ways to share research results and exploit them in the scientific community. It is a new and better way to conduct research that can emerge.

Another example is the experience given by Europeana¹, the gateway to the digitised collections of hundreds of libraries, museums and archives across Europe. Once it is put online, our cultural heritage provides great material for developing new API services, as a series of "hackathons" now demonstrate². One of the most recent of these Europeana hackathons took place just a couple of days ago (7-8 June) at the Działyńskich Palace on the Old Market Square in Poznań, thanks to the Poznań Supercomputing and Networking Center and the Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences !

Promoting the re-use of Public Sector Information is a collective effort and the Commission itself is well aware it can do more to put its own data online. In the near future, we will also put forward proposals for a pan-European portal to give a single access point to the data which is being put online by the Member States. Looking at your commitment, on the eve of your Presidency of the European Union, I have no doubt Poland will be one of the front-runners of Europe.

I send you my best wishes for a successful meeting.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neelke Doorn', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

¹ www.europeana.eu

² <http://www.version1.europeana.eu/web/api/hackathon-prototypes>