



# Facilitating collaboration in eGovernment: the European Union Public Licence

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# Policy Background

- § The **eEurope Action Plan 2005** requested that pan-European eGovernment services should be established – „based on **open standards** and while encouraging the use of **open source software**”.
- § The succeeding **eGovernment Action Plan i2010** ... puts a strong emphasis on "**sharing**" eGovernment applications and experiences across borders and between administration – and requests that Member States and Commission should establish essential infrastructure services that support **working together**.



# OSS at the European level

- European public administrations were among the early users of OSS (1990s). The European Commission took up the issue around 2000. Since then it initiates, sponsors and manages projects that further OSS, deal with the OSS usage and the benefits of using OSS for the Information Society at large.
- Support at policy level came early, but varies in scope over the time and depending on the context.



# OSS in the European Commission: Main Players

## u IDABC in Directorate General for Informatics

â OSS for pan-European eGovernment services

<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc>

## u Directorate-General for Informatics

â responsible for the Commission's internal OSS strategy

â IT services for the Commission: uses internally a substantial amount of OSS

â OSS projects

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/informatics/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/informatics/index_en.htm)

## u Information Society and Media Directorate-General: eGovernment unit, Software Technology unit et al.

â Information Society Policy: i2010 Initiative

â Research and development - OSS projects with focus on business, administration, education etc.

[http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activites/open/source/european\\_activities/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activites/open/source/european_activities/index_en.htm)



# OSS strategy for the Commission

## Objectives:

- è Use OSS products where they bring value to the organisation
- è Consider OSS solutions aside proprietary solutions whenever products are selected
- è Work collaboratively!
- è When appropriate, Commission software under an OSS licence

## Underlying motivations:

- è Value for money
- è Limit vendor-locking
- è Share with others when appropriate (good use of taxpayers money)



## IDABC ... in a few words

**IDABC** stands for ...

Interoperable **D**elivery  
of pan-European eGovernment Services  
to Public **A**ministrations, **B**usinesses and **C**itizens

**IDABC** is ...

a programme of the European Commission;  
2005-2009; 130 millions Euro total budget

**IDABC** works ...

in close cooperation with the **PEGSCO** (**P**an-**E**uropean  
**e**Government **C**ommittee) that is composed by experts from  
all Member States



# Why does IDABC promote OSS in Public Administrations?

Apart from all other good and well-known reasons such as avoiding vendor lock-in etc., because ....:

- **Development methods and the legal framework of OSS** (licences) fit well (better than anything else) to the requirements of **collaboration** and sharing that are put forward in the i2010 Initiative.
- European administrations produce many **custom applications** to support their business processes.
  - Many **can be reused** in localised versions.
  - Why should the tax payer pay twice for the same?
- OSS helps to achieve **interoperability** based on **open standards**



# OSS activities of IDABC (formerly of IDA)

## IDABC is funding and/or implementing:

- Projects to create awareness and promote knowledge on OSS in public administrations à **Open Source Observatory** featuring international news on the IDABC Website (OSO)
- Projects building applications using OSS that now are distributed under the EUPL v 1.0 à **CIRCA, IPM**
- Projects producing **practical advice** for public administrations à studies that lead to the creation of the EUPL and its linguistic versions / newest: „**A Guideline on how to use the EUPL**“
- Projects facilitating the collaboration between Member States' administrations and their partners à **IDABC Open Source Observatory and Repository (OSOR)**

<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/oso>; <http://www.osor.eu>



# Why create a European Licence?

- The European Union Public Licence (EURL) is not a goal in itself, but a means to achieve policy objectives that have been defined in the context of the Lisbon Agenda and the related i2010 Initiative
- It has been created to facilitate OSS activities of the Commission in the context of the previously mentioned policy programmes
- It was considered that previously existing licences did not meet the Commission's needs.



# EUPL: underlying motivations

- IDA and IDABC's need **to share its eGovernment applications** (CIRCA, IPM etc) with Member State administrations and other partners led in 2003 first to studies on OSS licences that would be adequate for the use by the Commission;

<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/document/5425/5980>

- As a consequence the EUPL was created to enable IDABC to release its software as Open Source;
- The IDA(BC) studies showed that **European administrations in Member States have similar needs** → the production of linguistic versions in official European languages responds to that;

<http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/eupl>

- **The licence can be used by everybody:** administrations, businesses, and citizens.



# Adoption of the EUPL V1.0

- Following extensive public consultation
- EUPL adopted by the European Commission on 9 Jan. 2007: Decision C(2006) 7108
- Released in 3 languages :
  - French
  - English
  - German
- Used by the Commission to release software developed under IDABC



# What makes the EUPL unique?

- For the first time a public administration of the size of the European Commission publishes a copyleft OS licence.
- EUPL will have original value in EU 22 official languages.
- EUPL considers the Member States Law and the Community Law (copyright terminology, information, warranty, liability, applicable law and jurisdiction).
- Downstream compatibility issues with the most relevant other copyleft licenses is facilitated. List includes:
  - General Public License (GPL) v. 2
  - Open Software Licence (OSL) v. 2.1 & v. 3.0
  - Common Public Licence v. 1.0
  - Eclipse Public Licence v. 1.0
  - CeCILL v. 2.0



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