



Minister Launches Pan-European Statement on Local eGovernment

Citadel Statement Aims to Make Malmö 'Real' by Identifying What Local eGovernment Really Needs

Gent, 14 December 2010 -- Geert Bourgeois, Vice-Minister-President of the Flemish Government and Flemish Minister for Administrative Affairs, Local and Provincial Government today announced the launch of the Citadel Statement [1] – a pan-European declaration that aims to identify what local government really needs to deliver on the vision set forth in last year's Malmö Ministerial Declaration on e-government.

On November 18, 2009, EU Ministers signed the Malmö Ministerial Declaration [2] outlining a forward-looking e-government vision to be achieved by 2015. The Citadel Statement aims to help 'make Malmö real' by producing a pan-European 'Call to Action' that will help local government deliver on the key objectives of the Malmö Declaration. 'With the Citadel Statement we have tried to translate the broad aims of the EU, such as they were defined last year in Malmö, into more concrete objectives,' Minister Bourgeois said.

Supporters of The Citadel Statement believe that European and National decision makers should look to local government to see how their e-government policies are being delivered in practice, and whether national and regional e-government programmes are helping to improve service delivery at the local level. Based on extensive consultation across Europe, the Citadel Statement identifies five core areas where European and national decision makers can provide tangible support to improve local eGovernment:

1. Common Architecture, Shared Services and Standards:

Incorporate EU best practices into a common service delivery architecture (information, process and application-layer) that provides one common language and helps local governments share services and learn from other 'best practices' such as how to work with authentic registrations, how to create personalized access to

services, etc. Bolster this architecture by creating standards for government communication that helps citizens find their way in all governmental websites.

2. Open Data, Transparency and Personal Rights:

Show a commitment to making public data open and accessible by establishing a well maintained repository of definitions and taxonomies that makes data consistent throughout Europe. Develop clear guidelines and data models for the use of personal details about citizens. Mandate five key areas where data can reasonably be expected to be shared nationally and across Europe by 2013. Areas could include: public service lists, standard information on citizens, standard information on businesses, transport timetables, environmental information and geodata (GIS-data).

3. Citizen Participation and Involvement:

Demonstrate political leadership and courage by actively championing the advantages now offered by ICT to improve the democratic process and facilitate citizen participation in decision-making across Europe. Promote the value of co-designing services in conjunction with citizens as a first step in making government more people-focused. Provide guidelines, training and methodologies on involving citizens in decision making and service design.

4. Privacy and Identification of Individuals

Create a robust political and policy framework to address common privacy issues across Europe associated with personal data. Provide protocols that enable the easy identification of individuals over the Internet and facilitate mobility by developing shared standards for the identification of people that makes it easier to travel and do business all over Europe.

5. Rural Inclusion

Promote the concept of Broadband as a public utility that - like electricity and water - should be available to all communities no matter how small or geographically dispersed. Enhance and improve the Broadband capacity of both rural and urban areas alike by supporting EU regulation to set a minimum standard for broadband access in all of Europe to be achieved by 2015. Equality of access is an important precondition for the growth of superfast broadband - an economic necessity in today's growing marketplace.

Supporters hope that this Call-to-Action becomes a 'living document' that continues to evolve in the run-up to 2015 in a manner that spurs local government to achieve better eServices for citizens. 'Personally I do support the ambitions set in the Citadel Statement,' said Minister Bourgeois. 'I will instruct the Flemish eGovernment service to work along those lines to support our communities and provinces. And I will take the necessary initiatives to continue the debate on the federal level in Belgium and on the European level.'

NOTES:

[1.] The declaration has been named the 'Citadel Statement' for two strategic reasons:

- The word citadel is originally derived from the phrase 'citta ideale' or 'ideal city' and stands for a fortress that is used to protect a city.
- The launch event for the declaration will be in the Ghent Citadel Park on the site of a former fortress built at the beginning of the 19th century.

[2.] The key 'Malmö' objectives that EU Member States have pledged to achieve in the next five years are:

- To empower businesses and citizens through 1) eGovernment services designed around users' needs, 2) better access to information and 3) active citizen involvement in the policy making process;
- To facilitate mobility in the single market by providing seamless eGovernment services for setting up business, studying, working, residing and retiring in Europe;
- To enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of government services by reducing the administrative burden, improving the organisational processes of administrations and using ICT to improve energy efficiency in public administrations.