May 2020

DATA-AGILE ECONOMY:
From reactive to proactive approach for the benefit of the citizens

Helsinki EU Office members joint contribution to a European approach to digital transformation

Helsinki EU Office member organisations who have contributed to this paper

City of Helsinki, City of Espoo, City of Vantaa, Helsinki-Uusimaa Region, Päijät-Häme Region, Kymenlaakso Region, Aalto University, University of Helsinki, University of the Arts Helsinki, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Metropolia University of Applied Sciences, Arcada University of Applied Sciences, Finnish institute for health and welfare, LUKE Natural Resources Institute Finland.

Contact:

Senior Advisor Iiro Kangas
Digitalisation & health policy
iiro.kangas@helsinki.eu
+32 499 50 04 49

Data-agile economy: From reactive to proactive approach for the benefit of the citizens

We welcome the high ambition level of the European Commission to make Europe fit for the digital age. We believe that common European strategies and legislative action are crucial to facilitate the digital transformation of the continent.

We highlight the need to develop a European legislative framework that is clear, coherent and contributes towards transformation from reactive to proactive use of data that contribute towards public good and is for the benefit of the citizens.

Our key messages:

- **Innovative cross-sectoral use of data** plays a major role in developing more effective, proactive and personalised public services.

- **Close cooperation of different ecosystem players** (public, RDI organisations, companies and NGOs) is crucial for unlocking the potential of digital transformation.

- **Enabling personal data use on people's terms** could bring benefits to individual citizens and contribute to the public good.

- **Trust and citizen empowerment** must be achieved through better tools for data management and higher level of general data-literacy and digital skills.

1. Cross-sectoral data use should be supported and made easier

Many authorities in Europe gather an extensive amount of personal data to public sector registers. Valuable data is also gathered by many actors in the private sector and NGOs. This data should be made better available to provide more effective public services while preserving the privacy of the individual citizens.

New technologies can bring many possibilities for example in preventing social and health problems or contributing towards the achievement of environmental goals and improving sustainable economy. Innovative cross-sectoral use of various register data and relevant data from private sector actors can help to achieve these goals. This could enable creating a 360° view of the customer bound to life events which would enable new proactive services[1]. Legitimate mandate for this kind of usage of data should be created at a more general level rather than by individual consent.

We strongly support the creation of common European data spaces and see the potential it could bring in this regard. While building the sector-specific data spaces focus should be maintained at the core objective of building cross-sectoral European data space. The planned EU Data Act should facilitate effective data sharing from B2G and vice-versa.

Piloting of new technological and digital service innovations should be made more flexible. Common approach for example in research permits could make innovative pilots on a European scale easier. This could facilitate more European pilots and gathering information for evidence-based law-making. Support for these kinds of pilots and actions should be offered through European funding programmes.

---

[1] See for example: AuroraAI (the Finnish National Artificial Intelligence Programme)

2. European roadmap for enabling proactive and personalised services

A European approach to data use should not overlook the potential of using personal data. While acknowledging the data-privacy questions that may arise, we call for exploring European roadmap for enabling personal data use for transparent, proactive and personalised services. Necessary legislative steps/guidelines should follow. Proactive and personalised services should be developed on people´s terms.

Early intervention and personalised services can bring many benefits for the individuals concerned and work also for the public good. Preventive measures in healthcare and social problems are more cost-effective and ensure also better life quality to the individuals benefitting from the services. With personalised, data-driven services people can make climate-smart decisions of their everyday food choices and consumption.

3. People should be in control of their data

We see trust and ethical soundness as key building blocks in making data work for people´s benefit. We acknowledge the potential Europe has in this field compared to global competitors. We believe that empowering citizens is crucial for digital transformation. The citizens need to be seen as active participants rather than passive targets of data collection. Therefore, we call for full integration of MyData principles[2] to the relevant European policies and legislation.

We acknowledge the potential that could be achieved by reaching data portability[3] and see this as an essential part of empowering people through gaining control of their data. We emphasize the need for creating technical solutions for personal information management systems. To facilitate scalability these should be based on commonly agreed standards that secure interoperability of data, systems and services[4].

We welcome the planned investments in skills and general data literacy. These are key elements in building trust and in the empowerment of citizens. In addition, knowledge about new business competencies are needed, e.g. how to create new business from data. This is necessary for building the competitive advantage of European ICT companies.
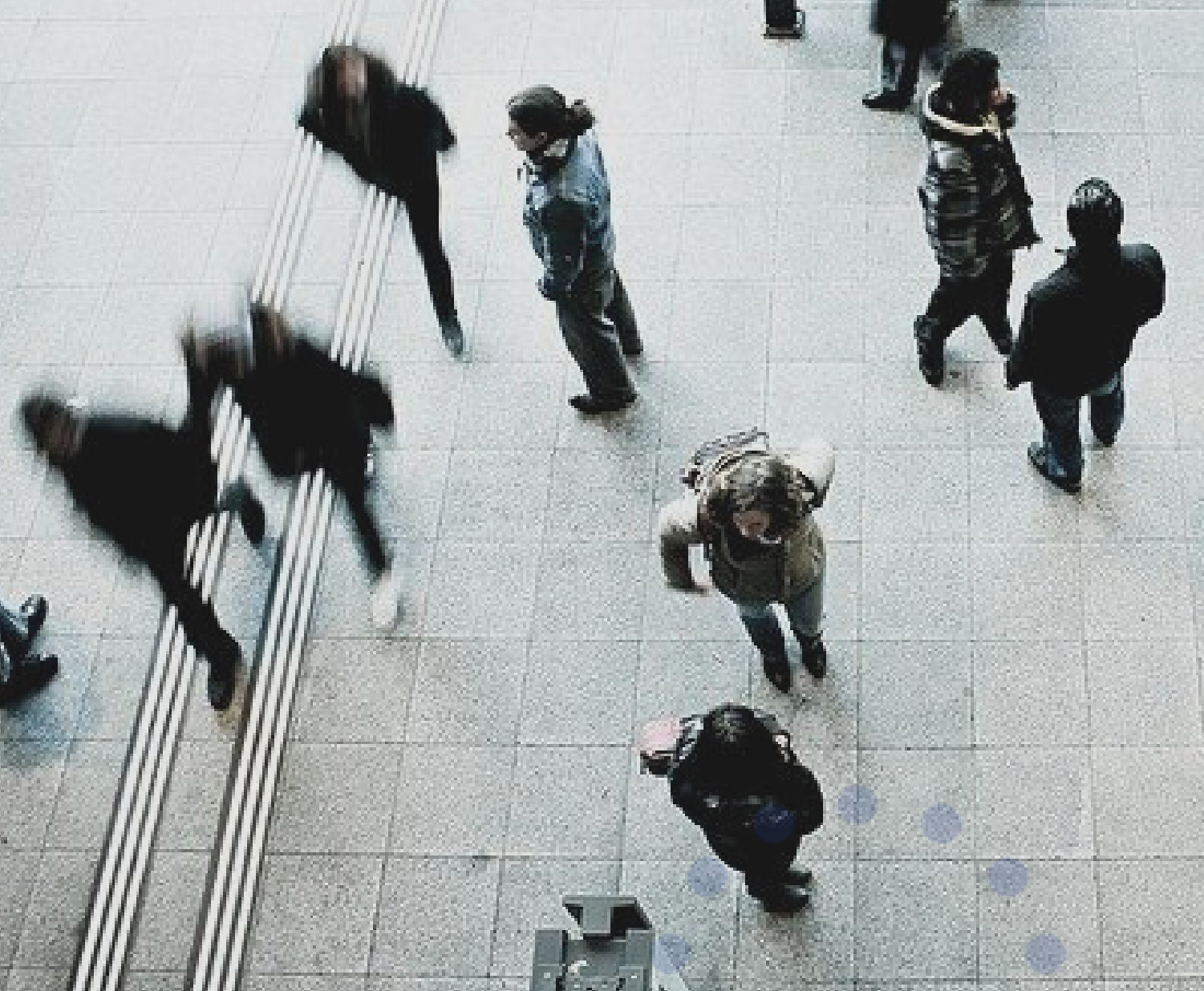
---

[2] https://mydata.org/declaration/
[3] as stated e.g. in the Article 20 of the GDPR
[4] such as the OASC Minimal Interoperability Mechanism principles (MIMs), with special focus on the work done with MIM 4 Personal data management

4. Europe must stay open for international cooperation

We strongly believe that international cooperation is crucial in unlocking the benefits of digitalisation on a global scale. Therefore, while developing the European way, we must remain open and contribute towards fair competition also in the digital sector on a global level.

HELSINKI
EUOFFICE

Representing Finland's most innovative regions, cities, universities and research institutions in Brussels. Facilitating smart partnerships. Making an impact. 🐦