

Public sector information: a key resource for Europe

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The context

- Technological change
 - facilitates dissemination and re-use
 - possibilities for added-value
- Governments digitise information and put it online
- Optimise use of digital technologies in the economy (Lisbon agenda)



Re-use of public sector information: What is at stake?

- PSI is a prime content resource
 - Added value products and services
- Barriers at European level
- Comparison with the US
- In Europe some countries moved ahead, others did not



The barriers

Difficulties to make European products

- Lack of clear rules and policies
- Mindset public sector bodies
- Unfair competition
- Lack of transparency
- High charges



The different phases

- Green Paper 1999
- 2001 Communication on PSI
 - Coherent set of measures
 - eContent projects, PSI-group
- The directive, adopted Nov. 2003
 - Discussions in Council and Parliament

Towards a new European way



The Directive

- Minimum harmonisation to facilitate cross-border use
- Transparency of conditions
- Avoid abuse of market power
- Non-discrimination
- Clear procedures
- Lists of assets, online licenses

Recitals go beyond legal obligations



Some issues

- Market legislation, not freedom of information legislation
- Intellectual property rights of public sector bodies
- Charges
- Practical burden on administrations

Also discussions within all MS



The Results

- Transparency, fair competition, downward effect on charges
- First time legislation in some EU-countries
- Speed up developments in others
- Review clause
- Recitals go beyond legal obligations

Change of culture in public sector



What will happen next?

- Implementation before 1 July 2005 (18 months)
- Implementation in Hungary
- Role of the Commission
- Review of the directive in 2008
 - Benchmark study



Conclusion

- Public sector information: an important component of the content market
- Barriers prevent full impact on economic activity and employment
- Directive will create minimum of legal security and will stimulate investment
- It is up to the public sector and to business to realise the potential

