

# RESEARCH REPORT SUMMARY



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**E-GOV4YOUTH**  
Digital Governance

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## ANALYSIS OF E-GOVERNMENT BEST PRACTICES BASED ON YOUTH & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS SURVEYS

**PROJECT NUMBER – 2023-2-IT03-KA220-YOU-000177604**

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This document summarise the transnational survey conducted in six member states and offers a comprehensive analysis of the needs, expectations, and challenges young people face in relation to e-governance services.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Analysis of E-Government Best Practices

This section determines key themes and insights from an analysis of 24 e-government best practices across Estonia, Italy, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Norway and Greece. In the initial phase, consortium members were tasked with conducting comprehensive desk analyses to identify 4 Best Practices that promote the participation of youth in democracy and public decisionmaking in their country. For the purpose of this analysis, activities qualified as best practices if they have completed two or more activity years and if the contribution of public authorities to the implementation of the activity is substantial. A template was used to guide participating countries in collecting data on the best practices. All participating countries successfully identified at least four best practices following the criteria.

### Youth Survey

The survey was conducted in partnering countries from June 2024 to August 2024. The survey covered the following areas: principles of E-Government, tools and technologies, civic participation and engagement, open data and transparency, security/ethics in E-Government, tools and resources for local development.

### Public Authorities Interviews

The interviews were conducted in partnering countries from June 2024 to August 2024. In total, 31 public authorities were interviewed (at least 5 per country), which is in line with the goal set out by the project quality indicators. Moreover, nearly all public authorities that were interviewed either oversee some aspect of development and implementation of e-government services within their institution or have experience shaping the policy framework and strategies around e-government.

Interview methods depended largely on the availability and preferences of the public administrators contacted. Greece and Bulgaria brought out that interviewees did not mind having in person interviews, but given the summer period and differences in location this was not possible. In most cases, interviews were either held online via channels like Zoom, through phone or even by simply filling out the questionnaire. Only Bulgaria reported having two interviews in person.



# E-GOVERNMENT BEST PRACTICES



## Early civic engagement initiatives

This category of best practices includes programs and initiatives which deploy digital solutions to varying extents to promote early civic engagement/involvement and democratic participation of citizens, especially youth. Examples include Youth Government/Parliament initiatives (National Youth Council in Italy, Youth Parliament in Greece), platforms stimulating policy discussions (Opinion Festival in Estonia, Oslo Talks in Norway) and platforms which facilitate two-way communication between state organizations and citizens (Citizens Voice in Cyprus, ParticiPa platform in Italy).



## Training and Information platform

This category includes best practices that provide accessible training programs/information to citizens through the use of interactive online platforms. These practices are generally accessible to a sizable part of the target group. Reported BPs under this theme included for instance training platforms for a particular set of skills like digital skills (National Digital Academy for Citizens in Greece, Digital State Academy in Estonia) and information platforms such as the Ole Valmis! application in Estonia



## Administrative & Service Platforms

Best practices under this category include digital channels and platforms used for administering some service/sector of public administration. These initiatives are more complex as they encompass a wider array of functions including information provision, facilitating interactions, managing data and providing relevant services. Examples include baseline central e-government platforms as well as platforms for a particular sector like the Shkolo platform that digitizes the entire education system in Bulgaria.



## Initiatives to support youth

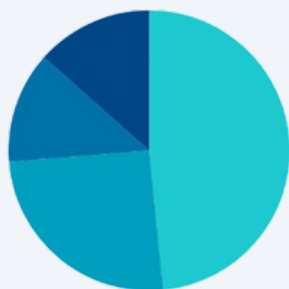
This category includes initiatives that to varying extents deploy digital solutions to subsidize and facilitate certain activities for youth particularly. Examples include the Youth Pass Platform in Greece, which offers youth cash-transfers for engagement in tourism and cultural activities, and the European Digital Youth Card, which provides discounts to youth in over 100000 businesses. These BPs directly promote inclusion of youth to society.







# YOUTH SURVEYS KEY FACTS AND NUMBERS



- Age 15-18
- Age 19-22
- Age 23-26
- Age 27-30

The total number of survey responses obtained was 174, which exceeds the goal set out by the quality indicators of the project.

## AWARENESS



Overall, 50% of respondents were able to name at least 3 services that come to mind when hearing the term E-Government. This is 20% lower than the expected benchmark set out by the project qualitative indicator.

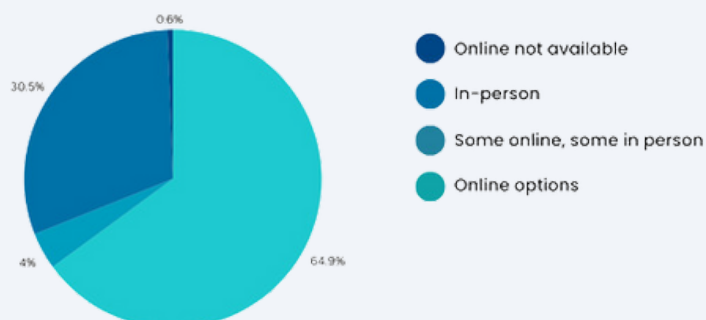
On a national level in this section, Greece stood out with 100% of respondents reporting awareness of the term, this is a stark contrast to the e-government frontrunners Estonia and Norway which had 72.4% and 40.7% of respondents confirming they were aware of the term respectively.

## EXPERIENCE

The lowest experience with e-government services was reported by youth in Italy and Bulgaria, where only 66.7% and 59.3% had interacted with the government online. In both cases half of the respondents with experience reported their experience to be positive, while the other half said this experience was neutral. In contrast, 100% of Estonians reported having interacted with e-services previously. Negative experiences with e-government were only reported by Greece (12%) and Cyprus (7.4%).

## PREFERENCES

On a national level, in highly digitised countries Norway and Estonia, 81.5% and 82.7% of respondents prefer to use online options. Moreover, in Estonia only one person indicated a preference for entirely in-person interactions.





# YOUTH SURVEYS KEY FINDINGS



## INTERACTIONS

In all countries young people most reported interacting with the government 2-3 times per year.



## TRANSPARENCY

In Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria, slightly over half of the respondents were neutral about their governments' level of transparency. In the case of Greece and Cyprus, the rest of the responses were generally very mixed, with some perceiving the government to be very opaque while others very transparent. In the case of Bulgaria, the perception leaned more towards a lack of transparency in data usage. Perception of transparency was high in Estonia and Norway.



## USER FRIENDLINESS

Overall, 67.6% perceive existing e-government services to be either somewhat or very user-friendly. Bulgaria stood out in this regard, as 63% of respondents found e-government services to be very user-friendly and 22.2% somewhat user-friendly, making it the country with highest satisfaction with user-friendliness of services based on our survey. In Italy 61.1% believe services to be user-friendly, with the rest being split between neutrality and perceiving e-government services as difficult to use. The lowest perception of user-friendliness was apparent among Cypriot respondents.



## INTEREST IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Nearly 80% (79.3%) of youth respondents reported being at least somewhat interested in participating in local development through e-Government systems.

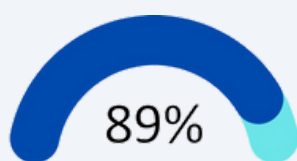


## MOTIVATION

Time-saving and convenience were undisputedly the most popular choices among youth in all countries.



## FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF E-GOVERNMENT



89% of young respondents are interested in using at least one e-government service in the future. This exceeds the benchmark 80% set out at the beginning of the project.





# YOUTH SURVEYS KEY FINDINGS

## Key concerns about the future of E-gov



Protection of personal data and privacy were again at the forefront in all countries.

In Italy, the perennial concern about the deepening urban and rural divide is also present in regard to e-government, and exclusion of the elderly was brought up as well. This could reflect the country's ongoing struggle with ensuring wide-ranging access to e-government and digital technologies overall.

Cypriot respondents mentioned concerns about the lack of consistency in e-government service offering between different authorities as well as a lack of follow-through commitment by different authorities

## Proposals from youth

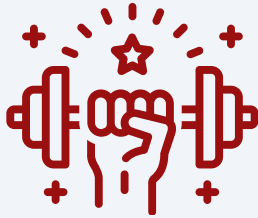


Estonian respondents brought out the need to introduce e-government as a facilitator of interactions with government at an early stage and more systematically in schools.



Respondents in Cyprus and Norway suggested that more direct participation and engagement opportunities should be developed, to increase young people's sense of inclusion in decision-making processes. Italian respondents suggested engagement could be increased if youth were involved in the development and shaping of e-services from the start as well as by organising more hackathons and competitions to incentivize participation.

# PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS INTERVIEWS. KEY FINDINGS.



## Implementation & encouragement

Most commonly, Public Administrators (PAs) reported efforts by their institution to offer information and access to services through digital platforms. While Estonia's focus is on improving existing digital service quality through working towards a more proactive provision of services, Italian representatives revealed shortcomings in the current state of implementation of e-government services.

## Security and Privacy

All public administrators demonstrated a high-level understanding and importance put to security and privacy questions in e-government initiatives. In most cases, PAs demonstrated an awareness of the responsible body/institution for security-related questions. Estonian and Norwegian authorities stood out for reporting high-level security mechanisms, while Italian representatives recognized the need to improve cybersecurity measures.



## Training and education

Most countries reported a variety of training and education initiatives that target improving digital literacy and awareness among citizens and businesses. Bulgarian institutions stood out for stating that currently not enough efforts are made to educate locals on how/why they should use e-government services and that insufficient promotion of e-government services is among the main drawbacks of e-governance.

## Measurement and improvement

In all countries, the most commonly reported measurement was some type of user satisfaction survey. The extensiveness of measurement mechanisms differed between countries and institutions. Local government representatives in several countries reported relying on general feedback forms, whereas centralized authorities described more extensive quality control mechanisms, that combine a variety of metrics.





# PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS INTERVIEWS. KEY FINDINGS.



## Accessibility & inclusion

Public authorities in all countries placed importance on accessibility and inclusion.

The Ministry of Economic Affairs representative in Estonia brought out concerns about the “Digital First” policy being overly focused on improving digital services at the risk of excluding minorities without digital literacy.

## Collaboration & innovation

Most interviewed organizations highlighted the importance of collaboration in offering e-government services. Only in the Bulgarian context no specific cooperation examples were mentioned.

In terms of adoption of innovation to e-governance, a particular emphasis was placed on adoption of AI technologies in all countries. A strong sense of caution was also apparent about the threat that such technologies could pose on the human connection.

## Active youth participation & democracy promotion

Youth participation projects do not appear to be among the top priorities of public administrators when talking about e-governance.

This result therefore falls notably below the project goal of 70% of PA operators being interested in new E-Government initiatives for young people.



# COUNTRY SPECIFIC TRENDS

## CYPRUS



According to our research, 70% youth are acquainted with the term e-government and 90% have used digital government services. This could reflect that technology adoption is primarily a problem among older citizens and people who do not have higher education. Nevertheless, lack of trust in government among youth was apparent.

## BULGARIA



Both, interviews with PAs and youth responses reflected a relatively slow developing e-government. Additionally, youth reported lack of knowledge and limited-service availability as the most common challenges, while PAs additionally pointed out lack of coordination on data protection and interoperability measures across different institutions as some of the key problems faced.

## ITALY



Italy faces a drastic digital divide, with disparities in digital infrastructure across urban and rural areas and income levels. It would be useful to develop a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) that can be used by municipalities to monitor the progress of digital services and quickly identify areas in need of improvement.

## NORWAY



Survey results from Norwegian youth revealed that despite the high degree of digital government service provision in Norway, there is relatively low awareness of e-government among youth (40.7% acquainted with the term). Findings also revealed the prioritization of data privacy among youth given the high awareness of youth on how their data is being handled.

## ESTONIA



100% of youth respondents reported having interacted with e-government, reflecting a high level digital literacy as well as extensive e-service provision by the state. Both youth and public administrators appear to be acutely aware of risks related with e-government and perceive data privacy and cybersecurity matters to be of primary importance.

## GREECE



Although trust in government is limited and there is a general great worry about data privacy among youth, the majority believe that e-government is an essential tool for democracy and civil participation. This sends an important message to the government authorities to invest more in ensuring transparency and encouraging through cultivating trust.





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**TAL  
TECH**



**VERNIAN** 

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