Chapter 10
Interoperability: 
A Challenge of the EU Services Directive

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ABSTRACT

The EU Services Directive (EU-SD), which was passed in December 2006, should simplify access to the services market in all Member States of the European Union and eliminate bureaucratic barriers for Service Providers. This chapter presents an overview of the major functional components and processes that are necessary to implement and run the EU-SD between all stakeholders such as Service Providers, newly introduced Points of Single Contact and Responsible Public Authorities, based on a general framework for federated enterprise SOA. Especially in Germany, consisting of federated and autonomous federal states, but equally between different Member States, interoperability between different components is one of the major challenges of the EU-SD. This chapter elaborates on the interoperability aspect of data/document exchange between the stakeholders, using a secure “call by reference” concept that is implemented by an Electronic Safe, together with appropriate concepts for identity and access management.

INTRODUCTION

Substantial changes will take place in the public sector in all EU Member States due to the EU Services Directive (EU-SD). The “Points of Single Contact (PSC)” introduced in the EU-SD are particularly important in this context, because they will make contact between providers of services and public administrations considerably easier. There are various design options available for setting up PSCs. The Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems (FOKUS) has published an architectural framework (von Lucke, et al., 2008) and built several prototypes to show examples of a possible technical configurations meeting selected requirements of the EU Services Directive. The available chapter presents an excerpt of this framework focussing on service

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Interoperability-oriented design principles and major functional components and processes. The electronic safe eSafe and corresponding identity management concepts will be elaborated in more detail, to emphasise the challenges to ensure interoperability between those components in the EU-SD that will be implemented and accessed by different PSCs, provided by different public authorities residing in different Member States.

The EU Services Directive, which was passed in December 2006 (The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2006), should simplify access to the services market in all Member States of the European Union and eliminate existing bureaucratic barriers for service providers, thus promoting cross-border services within Europe (Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007). The directive must become national law and implemented in all EU states by December 2009. In order to achieve this, the governments and administrations of the Member States have to complete a multitude of tasks associated with comprehensive modifications to business and administrative law. As part of a One Stop Government it is necessary to set up Points of Single Contact (Article 6) for service providers in all Member States and to accompany them in all administrative processes during the entire life cycle from the cradle to the grave. As depicted in Figure 1, PSCs have to support a Service Provider (SP) from the start up of services activities and during the course of these services activities, right through to liquidation. These PSCs should keep service providers from EU Member States informed about all relevant guidelines and responsibilities and also help with the processing of procedures and formalities in the public sector (Article 7). It is assumed that Points of Single Contact in many Member States will not only be assigned to service providers residing in foreign countries: this service will also be offered to national businesses for politico-economic reasons.

Furthermore, Public Authorities (PA) at all administrative levels must ensure that the administrative procedures affected by the EU Services Directive can be electronically transacted (Article 8) towards PSCs and responsible Public Authorities. The authorisation procedures and formalities (Article 13) must be simplified so that applications can be processed promptly and within a predetermined and publicised timeframe. This time only commences once the required documents have been submitted and validated in their entirety. This will noticeably speed up procedures and put the administrative departments in particular under the pressure of a time limit. If

Figure 1. Major tasks of a Point of Single Contact
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