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PORTUGUESA

MINISTRA DA PRESIDÊNCIA E DA
MODERNIZAÇÃO ADMINISTRATIVA

5th OECD Global Policy Roundtable on Equal Access to Justice

Your excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be with you on the occasion of this
5th OECD Global Policy Roundtable on Equal Access to
Justice.

I would like to start by thanking you for your kind
invitation and for the opportunity to share some of our
goals and initiatives concerning administrative
modernisation.

Innovation and knowledge are distinguishing factors
and engines of growth and progress, especially today.
This is also truth for the Public Sector.



But let me blunt about one thing: the modernisation process should never be a goal in itself.

Our main purpose is to provide the best public services to our citizens.

By fulfilling this objective, public services themselves benefit from this process by improving their own organisation and efficiency.

And it is encouraging to know that in the most diverse sectors there is a dynamic and a willingness to contribute with innovative solutions that improve the lives of our citizens.

That is precisely what has been discussed during the past two days regarding Access to Justice, a field where innovation has played a major role in promoting equality and in making people's lives simpler and thus better.



Portugal has been at the forefront of digital administrative modernisation programmes for quite some time now.

We started off by focusing on gaining efficiency within our administration and we are now in the process of designing the next generation of co-created and anticipatory public services for citizens and companies.

Regarding Public Administration, the contribution of companies and civil society has been critical for the creation and development of solutions that meet the real needs and expectations of the users of public services – our citizens.

However, we do not let ourselves be deceived.

When the governments' top-down political impetus weakens, public structures and entities may become increasingly averse to change and more conservative.

Thus, the effort to modernise and to simplify, which must be continuous, might be lost. And we cannot let that happen.

That is the reason why we have promoted the sharing of ideas and experiences among Public Administration agents and those who directly deal with the State.

SIMPLEX + is the emblematic example of this dynamic.

The umbrella SIMPLEX Programme, launched in 2005, marked the beginning of a virtuous transformative cycle based on:

- Simplify before digitalizing;

- And to use digitalisation as a key enabler of legislative and administrative simplification.

Also during this time, the Justice area was fundamental in the much-needed push for simplifying citizens' lives.

That would become very clear from two significant projects in that field: the “company on the spot”, focused on making entrepreneurs paths simpler, and the CITIUS platform, an initiative of dematerialisation of judicial cases.

By listening to civil servants, companies and citizens, we were able to develop a progressively more participative, more efficient and more innovative programme.

Today there are more than two hundred projects in SIMPLEX + 2018, with a very significant part of them

involving the use of ICTs and resulting in new digital services for citizens and businesses.

The SIMPLEX programme is now a hallmark, representing not just ‘public service simplification’, but also a new culture of participation, collaboration and trust between public administration and citizens.

In 2018, SIMPLEX has reached all aspects of citizens’ lives, going from the universal and free access to the Official Journal and the possibility to read the summaries of legislation in clear language, in order to allow everyone to better understand the applicable law and their rights and duties. To sum up, to allow our citizens to lead a more participative and informed life.

In the area of Justice, we can highlight new innovative measures: the Online Civil Registration Certificate, the Online Criminal Record, and the creation of a



electronic notification system to ensure that our citizens' documents are always up to date.

Furthermore, we have created measures such as the Automatic Income Tax Returns, the Electronic Health Registration or the Paperless Prescription, which save time and money. Both to our citizens and to our services.

As I mentioned before, our goal is to serve our citizens better. We cannot be mesmerized by all the digital glitter.

In Portugal, we have recognized the need to include those who are less proficient in the digital arena and fully adhere to the 'no citizen left behind' principle.

That is why we have also launched a comprehensive digital skills initiative named INCoDe.2030, built upon

five main axes: Inclusion, Education, Qualification, Specialisation and Research.

Inclusion is absolutely essential to ensure that all citizens have the digital skills to be fully included in present-day society.

Regarding the Public Administration, we rely on the Qualification axis to improve the digital skills of our public officials.

Without those skills, we will not be able to further proceed in the Digital Transformation process.

Also, we need to be prepared to take advantage of the technological innovations that emerge every day, such as Cloud Computing, the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence and Big Data, to name just a few.

That is why, in the Public Administration, we need to take advantage of our Research and Development ecosystem.

Among the many technological innovations I've just referred to, we are paying particular attention to those related with data: big data, data science and artificial intelligence.

We all know public administrations everywhere collect, store and manage significant amounts of data as part of their normal functioning.

Administrative data for every citizen and business is collected from birth to death.

How can we use this administrative data, combined with data from other sources, to better inform our public policies and decision-making processes, and to



change from a reactive paradigm to an anticipatory service provision paradigm?

No doubt this will have a big impact on Public Sector Digital Transformation processes.

To take advantage of this data we need very specialised skills and knowledge, which are in short supply in Public Administration and in high demand even in the private sector.

That is why we have been promoting partnerships between public entities and research centres from our academia.

Let me give you some examples of what we are doing in this area:

- Predict public services demand peaks, and help design the response to accommodate them;



- Identify the degree of risk of every new unemployed citizen to become long-term unemployed, characterize skill gaps and design specific preventive interventions;
- Identify patterns of possible fraud in several social security benefits, and therefore make sample inspections “smarter”.

This kind of innovative approaches must be prototyped in order to minimize risks without losing creativity.

That is why we launched LABx, our Public Administration Experimentation Laboratory.

A place to experiment and to prototype new solutions, to involve public officials, citizens and entrepreneurs in service design processes, and to combine traditional tools from the ICT field and new sciences and skills such as ergonomics or behavioural sciences.



Like so many other countries who went down this digital transformation road, we had to overcome several obstacles, but I think we have achieved some successes.

If the Government is responsible for developing public policies that contribute to a sustainable development, it is up to us to do it involving the most innovative companies, universities and sectors of our society.

Most importantly, it is essential to share our experience and to learn from others how to avoid repeating past mistakes.

Initiatives such as the Policy Roundtable we are closing today are of crucial importance in improving our citizens' lives.



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We are thankful for being able to share our experience and to cooperate with other countries in order to reach that goal.

Thank very much for your attention.