



MENA-OECD Initiative – 2021 Ministerial Conference

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Designing a Roadmap to Recovery in MENA

Sessão 2: “People-centred policies for more resilient and inclusive societies”

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Good afternoon,

It would like to greet OECD and European Commission members, Ministers, State Secretaries, Ambassadors in this Conference and congratulate you for such an important initiative, allowing us to discuss how can we foster a more cohesive and inclusive recovery path, towards a comprehensive and sustainable development.

I’m honoured to be here, sharing with you the portuguese vision and recent steps towards transforming public administration, which also transforms citizens and businesses’ daily lives.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced citizens and public services to adapt and highlighted the need for agile responses from



governments, but it has also shown us that technology and also proximity can play an important role by removing barriers, promoting integration and accessibility to all, despite of location, user profile, social or economic issues.

We envision a public sector transformation based on a human centric approach, fostering a cohesive society and a greener economy, in line with the UN SDG's. This is why Portugal is reinforcing its path of modernisation, with an additional focus on simplification, digitalization, but also in innovation, civic participation, capacity building and leadership.

We want to go further, that's why we have a roadmap to modernise public services, where digital transformation strategy has a broad focus on technology as well as on people and institutions.

To accomplish this vision, the current government has created a ministry that brings together human resources management in public administration, innovation and decentralisation to local governments, because we believe that the whole-of-government perspective is necessary.



So, last year we presented the Strategy for Innovation and Modernization of State and Public Administration, built around four axes. The first one, to Invest in People, by empowering and developing the skills of public servants and their leadership. The second, to Develop Management, since public resources are crucial to tackle the current challenges. Thirdly, to Explore Technology, by promoting global technology governance, enhancing interoperability as well as service integration and managing the data ecosystem safely and transparently. The fourth and final axis is Strengthening Proximity, because public administration performs better and fosters inclusiveness the closer it gets to people, with special focus on the most vulnerable groups.

These are the 4 axes that consider technical, organisational and individual conditions to provide more digital and inclusive public services as well as a new generation of more integrated public policies to tackle the complexity of the challenges that we face.

It should be noted that technology, being relevant, is only one of the four axes of this Strategy, because to innovate is to change the way we envision and relate to citizens and businesses to respond to everyone's needs, anticipating them as much as we can and

integrating participation mechanisms to better understand them and engage people in service design.

And this also means that we must embrace an omnichannel approach on public services delivery, combining traditional face to face channels with voice and digital channels, ensuring an appropriate transition to the mobile environment.

Allow me to give you some examples.

A citizen can reach public services with a simple click on the ePortugal website - the Portuguese Single Digital Gateway - which currently provides information on service points, as well as more than 2500 online services for citizens and businesses and Shortly we will have chat and video call service to support its use.

But If someone prefers to look for a service according to his or her location, he can access the Citizen Map which provides information on all Public Administration service locations, namely hospitals, police stations, finance offices or Citizen Shops.

On the other hand, to reinforce citizens' confidence in digital public services, we are improving electronic Identification mechanisms. That's why we developed the Digital Mobile Key, an



ID mobile signature and authentication solution with the maximum level of security assigned by the European Union, that allows the access to more than 200 websites, apps and platforms from public and private organisations. Currently we have more than 2.5 million subscriptions and about 1.7 million activations.

We are also committed to accessibility and since public services should lead by example, we have launched the new Accessibility Portal, with information and tools to support good practices that ensure a better digital experience for all citizens, regardless of physical or cognitive disabilities.

If you are asking by now if this digital approach means that a citizen or a company that wants to get an information or a licence using a face-to-face channel, will not be able to do it...

... not at all. Physical points of service remain available and are increasing, such as our 59 Citizen one-stop-shops that join several public and private services in the same space.

Or, for example, the 745 Citizen Spots, mostly operated in a partnership with local government, but also available in some portuguese diplomatic missions abroad – which are physical counters that combine digital services from different public

institutions in a single helpdesk, with the assistance of a trained mediator, supporting citizen learning on how to use digital services.

To conclude these few examples, what if someone needs to identify himself in one these citizen spots and suddenly realizes that has forgotten his wallet? Well, he can use Id.Gov, an app that allows users to share digital and certified versions of their identification documents.

So, we are enhancing public sector performance but also focusing on providing full digital literacy to all people, supporting citizen's skill development through more integrated and efficient training programmes and policies. If we meet this challenge, we may open a new chapter in our countries, having more open and innovative governments, citizen's participation, access to information and public services or job opportunities, leaving no one behind.

These lines of action take us directly to the motto of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Council, "Time to deliver: a fair, green and digital recovery".



A motto that embraces the three dimensions of Europe's recovery as main priorities shaping the public sector, social and economic transformations that we envision.

This is a recovery model that we want to share and support beyond organizational siloes or country borders.

Global challenges unite countries and different regions around common purposes of innovation and modernization, pushing us to build new bridges and partnerships. Focusing on the values that unite us and finding common ground to collaborate. Portugal is therefore engaged in this regional dialogue and available to promote cooperation in this joint path of recovery, sustainability and ensuring better lives to all people in our communities, our countries, our planet.

Thank you very much for your attention.