

Here is our "brief contribution" as requested in your VANS message, i.e. comments on the chosen questions. The answers are not based on objective sources, rather they are subjective views and suggestions, drawing from the experience of working at Euro Info Centre.

(For your information, the Swedish MIDAS-NET (INFO2000 program) node of which our EIC is a partner, organized a hearing on the Green Paper in Stockholm on April 29.)

Best regards,
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3a Could the establishment of European meta-data (information on the information that is available) help the European citizens and businesses in finding their way in the public sector information throughout Europe? Yes

3b If so, how could this best be realised? Probably by creating a meta-database which is available for free on the Internet. Cooperation among libraries in the various member states could accomplish this. There are probably good examples of this, e.g. Nordguide which lists all Nordic databases (accessible online, cd-roms, websites, etc.).

3c What categories of content should directories of public sector information resources contain? Legislation, regulations, public registers, etc.

4a What bearing do different pricing policies have on the access to and exploitation of public information? Basic public information, such as legislation, should be free. Most businesses are willing to pay a small amount for bits of information as long as it is not cumbersome. Micro payments on the Internet could be the solution. For information specifically compiled for a company, the willingness to pay is higher. Business Information Providers who are publicly funded and not allowed to charge for their services, may not be able to pay for this kind of information.

4b Does the impact of different pricing policies on access to and exploitation of public information create differences in opportunities for citizens and businesses at European level ?
Yes, especially the entrepreneur who is looking for opportunities is hampered by costs and difficulties in accessing information.

5 To what extent and under what conditions, could activities of public sector bodies on the information market create unfair competition at European level? -

9a To what extent are the policies pursued by the EU institutions in the field of access and dissemination of information adequate? The EU website is a step in the right direction but needs to be further developed, e.g. more frequent updates, information in more languages than French, etc. Easy access to information on the work of public institutions is expected since they are financed by taxes.

9b In what way can the policies pursued by the EU institutions in the field of access and dissemination of information be improved? --

10 Which actions should be given priority attention at European level? Increased transparency of public institutions and easier access to information on standards, etc. to establish the internal market.