

**Conference “Open Europe: Open Data for Open Society”,
18th-19th of February, 2015, Riga & Jelgava**

Recommendations from Expert Panel on Open Data

About the Expert Panel

Expert panel convened during international conference “Open Europe: Open Data for Open Society” on February 18th, 2015. Part of official agenda of Latvian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (<https://eu2015.lv/events/political-meetings/conference-open-europe-open-data-for-open-society-2015-02-18>), it was organized by Latvian Open Technology Association, co-financed by the Latvian state.

Expert Panel convened for 2 hours face-to-face meeting on February 18th, 2015, following prior electronic discussions. Given the timeframe and format for this panel discussion, Expert Panel was expected to facilitate converged discussions about Open Data from interoperability, legal and security perspectives and to create a set of high level recommendations for policy makers.

Expert Panel members

Nuria de Lama (Spain), Arnis Daugulis (Latvia), Baiba Kaškina (Latvia), Karel Charvat (Czech Republic), Rosana Lemut-Strle (Slovenia), Dr. Georg Hittmair (Austria), Freyja Van den Boom (Belgium), Jaak Vlasveld (Netherlands), Christiana Maria Mauro (Hungary), Aigars Jaundalders (Latvia)

Summary and recommendations

Expert Panel acknowledged that there is a strong requirement for policy adjustment to compensate current gap in regards to economic value and risks from using data generated by European citizens or pertaining to them. While European Union is still at the forefront of data privacy protection, data from European citizens is often processed and mined outside of European Union. That means that economic value is created in other geographies, while Europeans are still facing risks from such processing.

Experts unanimously supported opinion that governments should not view Open Data as an end goal, but rather treat it as a market intervention tool to stimulate big data and data driven



economy. Public administration must lead by example and stimulate growth of data enriched services by opening up government data with as little exceptions as possible.

In order to address recent technological advances and changing expectations from market supply side, governments must work both on supplying downloadable datasets and providing efficient open APIs (application programming interfaces) for access to data.

Expert opinions differed about building business cases for open data. Some experts supported pull strategy – soliciting what kind of data is needed first and opening that data after market demand is determined. Others took opinion of Open Data as a public good, where business case for opening up data can not be created at any individual agency or service level. It is rather a matter of public welfare in general that can only be maximized if consumption of data is maximized, usually requiring market intervention from governments to ensure optimum supply.

Experts reiterated that for open data security fundamentals are as valid as for any other type of ICT product or service. The large difference is in terms of eco system. With open data, everyone involved in creating end user services – governments and ICT companies included– must embrace openness, make data trusted, but must not assume that other counterparties are trusted too.

Rather heated debate aroused over privacy topics. Experts agreed that legal framework for data privacy is as complicated as probably majority of legal frameworks. Nevertheless, taking into account pervasiveness of data based services and complicated nature of technical protection controls, we should do better in explaining choices consumers are making. One possible solution discussed was privacy lights system, building on intuitive traffic light principle and intuitively signaling to consumer privacy environment of a particular product and service. In highly competitive environment for consumer oriented ICT services, it would also motivate companies to produce “greener” (from traffic lights analogy) services, better protecting consumer privacy, so that consumers intuitively would choose them over “more yellow” or “red” competitors.