



Press Release – 18 June 2021

European Official Publishers meet to find innovative solutions for easy access to law for all in the post-Covid era

On the 17th and 18th of June 2021, the 17th edition of the European Forum of Official Gazettes took place for the first time online, in the context of the programme of the EU Council Presidency held by Portugal. The objective of the Forum is to share knowledge and experience about the publication of legislation.

The event was organised by the Portuguese official journal, published by the Imprensa Nacional – Casa da Moeda (INCM) (National Printing Office and Mint), in cooperation with the Publications Office of the European Union.

The new online format was due to the world pandemic, which translated also into the title of the event “THE HEALTH OF OFFICIAL GAZETTES AFTER COVID”. The Portuguese organisers reviewed the capacity of European official journals to ensure business continuity during the pandemic, as the publication of Covid-related legislation under urgent deadlines was an essential component of the response of public authorities to the crisis.

Throughout two intense days of presentations and thriving discussions, the Forum addressed topical subjects such as: the use of emerging technologies (e.g. Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain) for publishing, consolidating and anonymising (personal data protection) official information; accessibility to laws for the disabled (e.g. visually impaired); making access to law easier for the citizens; ensuring publication of data according to the FAIR principles (data should be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable).

The activities of the Forum range beyond Europe, and in this year’s meeting, particular attention was devoted to the cooperation with Africa: presentations were done by the University of Cape Town (South Africa) and by the official gazettes of Angola and Cape Verde.

In the opening speech, Mr Gonçalo Caseiro, CEO of INCM, stressed that: “ . I believe that the Official Journals of the future will not only be consumed by citizens in a different way, in citizen journeys that we cannot imagine today, but will also, I would say, be a “source of truth” of machines and artificial intelligence products. And these interactions will even mean better enforcement, because official journals will be like “base registries” for the digital world and the software that we increasingly have in our lives.”

Concluding the event, Mr André Caldas, Secretary of State for the Presidency of the Council of Minister, stated that: “This Forum has, once again, allowed a close collaboration and the share of technological solutions, highlighting them as an indispensable tool to respond quickly to the new challenges faced by Official Gazettes: the swift implementation of legislative artificial intelligence as a new fundamental right of citizens and businesses.”