



Federal Ministry
of the Interior
and Community



GOUVERNEMENT

*Liberté
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Direction
interministérielle
du numérique



Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en
Koninkrijksrelaties

DECLARATION OF INTENT

**TO STRENGTHEN TRILATERAL COOPERATION IN THE FIELD
OF DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

BETWEEN

**THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND COMMUNITY OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY**

AND

THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC

AND

**THE NETHERLANDS MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR AND KING-
DOM RELATIONS**

The Ministry of Interior and Community of the Federal Republic of Germany, represented by Secretary of State Markus RICHTER and the Ministry of Public Transformation and the Civil Service of the French Republic, represented by Stéphanie SCHAER, according to point 2 of article 1 of French Decree no.

2005-850 of July 27, 2005 and the Netherlands Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, represented by Art de Blaauw, Director CIO Rijk according to article 10 of the CIO system decree¹ on delegations of signature by members of the Government, hereinafter referred to as the "Sides", have come to the following understanding:

In the current global digital ecosystem, European countries have a strong interest in working together to build innovative digital public services with real impact on end users.

On January 26th & 27th, 2023 in Paris, meetings were held between German and French Chief Information Officers (CIOs) and experts on concrete cooperation possibilities in the domain of eGovernment. During these meetings, German and French representatives decided on a common agenda aiming at tackling major issues the Sides face regarding digital transformation of public administrations.

With the aim of expanding their work to other willing agencies of European Union Member States, this Declaration of Intention sets out the areas of work in which the Sides want to cooperate. The European Commission's Open-Source Software Strategy and the country-specific strategy papers will serve as a cornerstone of these concerted efforts. For example, the IT Planning Council (GER)² and the Interministerial Digital Directorate (DINUM) (FR) have recently adopted strategies to strengthen digital sovereignty that can be used as a starting point³.

Together, as a core priority, the Sides wish to:

- Make digital sovereignty in an open manner a strategic priority for their administrations;
- To that matter:
 - contribute to and operate a selective set of best of breed free software offering civil servants sovereign digital workplaces including an instant messaging service;
 - develop artificial intelligence tools for civil servants based on state-of-the-art free and open-source Large Language Models (LLM).

The Sides recall that on the 05th of February 2024 in Berlin, France and Germany signed the Declaration of Intent on to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the field of digital sovereignty for public administration.

On September 12th and 13th 2024 in Paris, The Netherlands joined the "100 days challenge" and Projectathon as observers and took part in the framework on PACE programme (Public Administration Cooperation Exchange), and EDIC, European Digital Infrastructure Consortia, with France and Germany.

Together, the Sides aspire to:

- Encourage the use and the contribution to free and open-source software, from end-user collaborative tools to artificial intelligence tools and infrastructure building blocks, in order to maintain control over technological developments that are essential to the continuity of the

¹ [wetten.nl - Regeling - Besluit CIO-stelsel Rijksdienst 2021 - BWBR0044613](https://wetten.nl/Regeling-Besluit-CIO-stelsel-Rijksdienst-2021-BWBR0044613).

² https://www.it-planungsrat.de/fileadmin/it-planungsrat/foederale-zusammenarbeit/Gremien/AG_Cloud/20210104_Strategy_for_strengthening_the_digital_sovereignty_of_public_administration_IT_1.0.pdf

³ https://www.numerique.gouv.fr/uploads/DINUM-roadmap_EN.pdf

public service. The Sides will consider components used in common in order to back them up with a transnational community of contributors coming from the public sector and the civil society;

- Share research, product design and development results of the open-source based sovereign workplaces developed in France (La Suite) and Germany (openDesk) and use it as a starting-point for further joint developments in the area of end-user collaborative tools. The publication (open-source code and other technical artefacts) and collaborative further development of the sovereign workplaces will take place on public open-source repositories including the Open CoDE platform (www.opencode.de) for openDesk and those referenced on Code.gouv.fr (<https://code.gouv.fr/public/>) for La Suite;
- Promote, through civil servants, exchange programs organized by the European Commission, the constitution of product teams at the European scale aiming at delivering services with high impact on public action;
- Acculturate civil servants on the common issues involved in establishing digital sovereignty in an open manner, so that they become fully aware of the strategic environment in which they operate;
- In order to tackle the current challenges of digital transformation, strive to enforce their efforts for modern level cross-border interoperability in the European public sector;
- Enhance the digital literacy and skills of their civil servants, notably in the fields of (i) data, (ii) personal data protection and (iii) algorithmic transparency as well as in the fields of (iv) cyber security, (v) artificial intelligence and (vi) green-IT/digital sustainability and (vii) collaborative digital workplace and (viii) digital leadership;
- Strengthen cooperation on both interoperable identification and trust services and also cross-border online services (ex. OOTS - Once-Only-Technical-System) that can be used across Europe based on a security and privacy by design approach, preferably based on open-source solutions.

To solidify this strategic partnership, the organizations involved will maintain an **open exchange** and coordination with each other. The specific scope of mutual activities will be further clarified in subsequent stages.

The Sides will bear **the costs** associated with their personnel and any applicable fees incurred during the participation of their personnel in support of these activities. No additional expenses will be incurred by the Sides as a direct consequence of this Declaration of Intention or any amendments.

This Declaration of Intent may be amended at any time by mutual written consent of both Sides.

Each Side may end cooperation under this Declaration of Intent at any time. It should inform the other Side in writing of its intention to end cooperation at least six months prior.

This Declaration of Intent is not intended to and does not create any legally binding rights or obligations.

Berlin, 12 December 2024

The Ministry of the Interior
and Community of the Federal
Republic of Germany

Minister for Digitalisation

The Prime Minister

By delegation:

