

MINISTERIAL MEETING - PANEL #6 - ESTONIA

The case of e-resident digi-ID in Estonia:

Cooperation with the Public and Private Sectors:

New Partnerships for a Safer World

- E-crime, e-(identity) theft, e-terrorism etc is nothing new in the world, different forms of crime have simply emigrated from the physical world to the digital sphere.
- Estonian e-state has been internationally praised as a success story; it decreases government spending, cuts down on bureaucracy, saves time and makes the governing more transparent.

Estonia as an E-state:

- Recently, when Apple introduced the possibility of signing documents electronically, Estonian prime minister recommended on his Twitter account that anyone who is interested in how files are really signed digitally should contact any Estonian.
- He wasn't just bragging – virtually every Estonian has an ID card with a built-in microchip and personal PIN codes that enable them to communicate digitally with the state.
- There are more than 4000 e-services that can be used in Estonia:
 - More than 182 million documents have been signed digitally to this day. Taking into account that our population is 1,3 million, it makes 140 signatures per person, including babies and retired people
 - Last year, more than 95% of tax-payers declared their income electronically, filling out a tax form takes about 5 minutes in Estonia
 - At the last election, more than 100 000 people voted online, it is about a third of the total number of voters
 - 99,6% of all bank transactions are made electronically
 - In 2013, 95% of prescriptions were issued electronically.
- On the other hand, copying the Estonian model may not lead to similar results in other countries. Our key to success has probably been the small population of Estonia and the high digital literacy of our people.

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Adopting the digi-ID:

- Now, Estonia will be the first country in the world to take its digital services to the global level. A couple of weeks ago, our government adopted the act drafted by the Ministry of the Interior, enabling people living anywhere in the world to apply for Estonian e-residence.
- Since December this year – in less than in a month – the Police and Border Guard Board will start issuing digital identification documents (digi-ID-s) to Estonian e-residents.
- Digi-ID grants foreigners similar rights to Estonian citizens and residents, enabling them to use Estonian public and private e-services from anywhere in the world.
- For the future e-residents, digi-ID makes running errands as easy and safe as it is currently for Estonian citizens and residents. For example, it enables them to sign documents digitally and avoid time-consuming paperwork; it also makes economic, research and educational co-operation more flexible and effective.
- To Estonia as a country, it means that the businesses important to Estonia will operate in Estonian economic environment; it helps bring investments, jobs and added value to the country.

Security issues of digital data administration:

- Whenever we speak of digital data administration, the security issues arise: who has access to this data and how is the access secured?
- According to data protection experts, digital identification is more secure than paperwork – the information is stored on a microchip and personal PIN codes are needed to use it. This solution is more secure than physical signatures and other online self-identification methods.
- There is no single place where all the data is stored – Estonian data security relies on government-run technology infrastructure called X-Road that links public and private databases into the country's digital services. All personal information is kept on

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separate servers of government agencies, but the system allows state bodies and businesses (like banks) to share data when individuals give their consent.

Security of digital ID:

- It means that in the near future, countries will have to face the fact that crime is largely based on digital identity and located in the virtual environment.
- This is where the use of e-ID increases the security, since private law personal identification methods tend to be less secure than personal identification documents issued by the state.
- In order to avoid illegitimate use of the documents, a thorough background check is run for the applicants to make sure that they are trustworthy. In case of suspect, the digi-ID is not issued.
- It is possible to suspend the validity of an issued document or to annul it. It is also possible to limit the access of an e-resident to specific services if necessary.

Engaging the private sector in providing security:

- Private sector plays an important role in avoiding and identifying the improper or criminal use of e-ID, the state is closely co-operating with them to monitor the use of the documents.
- The service providers have the right to determine the capacity and conditions under which e-residents can access their services with digi-ID-s.
- The service providers also monitor the use of e-ID and notify the Police and Border Guard Board of all deviations.
- This is because each service provider possesses the best information about the possible dangers and patterns of improper use of their services.
- The state in return provides the businesses with thorough information beforehand, concentrating on the most critical services and the services that interest the e-residents most.

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Estonia as a cloud state:

- In 2007, when a cyber attack against Estonia was orchestrated, it couldn't throw Estonian e-services off the rails. It is good evidence of the fact that our e-systems are solid.
- The heads of Estonian IT-development have come up with an even further development of e-Estonia idea – the idea of Estonia as a „cloud state“. It means that all the data critical for the state, like the State Population Registry and Business Registry, but also e-government and e-health, would be moved to servers located in various countries in the world.
- It would mean that if we faced a serious cyber attack tomorrow, we wouldn't be switched out of the network as it happened in Georgia in August 2008, but Estonian e-services would continue to function from Germany or the Netherlands.

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If Asked:

- The e-resident digi-ID does not give the foreign citizen any rights that they didn't have until now, for example rights to travel, vote at elections, belonging to a political party etc.
- The e-resident is not a citizen of Estonia nor a resident, Estonia gives them a digital identity for running their e-matters.
- The functionality of the digi-ID issued to an e-resident is similar to the digi-ID issued to the citizens and residents of Estonia, in other words it has technically the same functionality and is equally secure.
- Upon issuing the document, the country does not take any responsibility for the illegitimate use of the documents. As for every identification document, counterfeiting an e-ID and using a false ID is a crime.
- Another note: being Estonian e-resident and having an Estonian e-ID is a possibility, not a right automatically granted to anyone and is intended to be used as such.