

## **PAN-EUROPEAN ELECTRONIC IDENTITY BECOMING A REALITY** **International Porvoo Group Conference in Tallinn, 13–14 May 2004**

Representatives from 13 European countries met in Tallinn, Estonia on 13–14 May 2004 to discuss the situation regarding electronic identity and electronic services and the development projects in participating countries, as well as to exchange information regarding the ongoing projects. This was the 5<sup>th</sup> conference of the international Porvoo Group which was established in conjunction with the eEurope 2002 project and consists of governmental representatives of European countries. The organisers of the e-ID conference were the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications of Estonia, the Citizenship and Migration Board of Estonia, the Estonian certification authority Sertifitseerimiskeskus AS and the Finnish Population Register Centre.

The conference discussed, inter alia, the issue of so-called cross-certification between different countries and co-operation between certification authorities, electronic signatures, mobile certificates and biometrics, as well as the legal and standardisation aspects of electronic identity, such as the status of eAuthentication.

The CEO of the Estonian Sertifitseerimiskeskus AS, Mr **Ain Järv**, noted that, during the first few meetings of the Porvoo Group, there were extensive discussions regarding different electronic identity cards. The focus has now shifted to creating a diverse range of electronic services. Consensus between different countries has also been established regarding the role of certificates.

### **The objective is to create certificates operable between different countries**

The long-term objective is to facilitate so-called cross-certification where the national certificate could be used in services provided in another country. The efforts are now focused on legislation and the creation of identity, i.e. registering. The issues of particular importance include the allocation of financial responsibilities, as well as legislation governing data and privacy protection. The basis for cross-certification is the reciprocal recognition of such qualified certifiers in different EU countries that comply with the directive governing electronic signatures.

The electronic signature is an essential element of cross-certification. Many congress representatives felt that the present EU directive does not provide a solid basis for introducing a uniform electronic signature for Europe; instead, certain standards allow several alternatives. The Universal Electronic Signatures (UES) is an Estonian-developed model for reconciling the qualified certificate systems of different countries, facilitating electronic signatures that are interoperable across country borders. The Estonian UES initiative is currently being examined by Belgium and Finland.

### **Standardisation work is under way in many areas**

When developing the pan-European electronic identity, attention must be paid to organising the deployment, legal issues and standardisation. Regulation is needed regarding e.g. the procedures when issuing electronic identity, the issues related data contents of certificates, data protection and liability. The European parties working on electronic identity and authentication include the WS eAuthentication working group of the CEN/ISSS (Information Society Standardisation System). One of its objectives is the minimum level harmonisation of authentication practices in Europe. There has also been co-operation with the USA and Japan.

The conference discussed the need for a directive governing electronic identity. The Porvoo Group ended up recommending that the directive governing electronic signatures should be revised and supplemented in order to more closely specify the relationship between authentication and identification.

## **A review of the national situation in certain countries**

The European countries that have made most progress in implementing the electronic identity system are Estonia, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Slovenia and Italy. Spain, France and Austria also have well-advanced projects.

**Estonia** is the country to have made most progress. The electronic identity card is compulsory in Estonia, and some 500,000 cards have been issued since 2002 (the country has a population of 1.4 million). Electronic signatures have been possible for 1½ years. There are projects under way in Estonia aimed at establishing eEstonia. The starting point is that the ID card and electronic identity are cornerstones for the interaction with citizens, and that the information is accessed using centralised communication tools on the Internet. Development work has been carried out in Estonia for a public authorities' portal, a collection of services entitled eCitizen (or X-Tee). The new services intended for citizens include online access to one's personal data and online information on who and for what purposes has accessed to them, as well as vehicle registration services. The Tax Office also uses electronic signatures. The local applications for the electronic ID card include ticketing systems; doctors also use it for signing prescriptions electronically. At EU level, the intention is to support eEurope programmes and projects aimed at enhancing administration and the citizens' possibilities for interaction. In Estonia, the national ID cards are issued by the Citizenship and Migration Board. A "Starter Kit" is available for persons acquiring the electronic ID card. It can be bought at an inexpensive price, even from grocery stores.

**In Norway**, the standardised PKI (Public Key Infrastructure) solution has made different parties, in both the private and public sectors, interested in developing the services which are becoming more popular among the citizens. New services have been introduced to the social security and health sectors, and students can apply for government grants electronically. Voting using a smart card has also been tried out in local elections, and in the 2005 general elections it will be an alternative to conventional voting. The Norwegian lottery has successfully launched 2.1 million smart cards. There are two alternatives available: a card with a credit facility, an electronic purse, and a pure "lottery card". The citizens' usage of electronic services and public opinion regarding them are closely monitored in Norway through market surveys. The act governing electronic signatures has been in effect since July 2001.

**Finland** uses electronic ID cards that have a validity period of 5 years. The card contains a citizen certificate issued by the Population Register Centre. From the beginning of June, the holder of the card can have his/her social security details imprinted on the card. Approximately 40,000 electronic ID cards have been issued to date. The act governing electronic signatures came into force on 1 February 2003. There already is a multi-application card in use in Finland, allowing access to services provided by governmental authorities, municipalities, banks, insurance companies, stores and other service providers of the private sector. The citizen certificate can also be used on different platforms and is channel independent. From next autumn, it will be available in the whole country for the Visa Electron cards issued by the OP Bank Group. The Population Register Centre is also developing a mobile certificate, a mobile telephony service allowing the electronic identification of users, in co-operation with three operators. The goal is to have services available for consumers during 2004. The mobile citizen certificate is part of the national basic solution based on the reliable identification of persons anywhere, at any time without physical documents.

**In Belgium**, a pilot programme organised by the government started in March 2003 in 11 municipalities, where electronic ID cards were first issued to civil servants and later to other citizens also. The programme was considered a success, and starting this year the cards will be introduced to the whole country. The intention is to replace all the current paper cards (some 10 million of them) with electronic ones in 5 years — carrying an ID card is compulsory in Belgium. The electronic ID card will become the principal method for personal identification and authentication for the electronic administrative services, and plans are being drawn up for a nationwide ePortal. To date, some 56,000 cards have been issued. The card costs 10 euro, and it

is valid for 5 years. In Belgium, the Ministry of Internal Affairs is the only certification authority. The cards are distributed by a private company authorised by the Ministry.

**In Italy**, the major challenges for eGovernment include transforming the traditional processes into electronic form, to be safely accessible through the Internet, as well as starting the process of creating new electronic services for citizens. The first pilot phase of electronic identity has been completed. It involved 83 of the country's 8102 municipalities and 100,000 electronic ID cards were issued to citizens. The second phase is currently under way, and during the third phase to be implemented during 2005–2009, electronic ID cards will be introduced in all municipalities in Italy. The electronic ID card can already be used at national level for the following services: identification of persons at the polls and citizen checking of his/ her fiscal position. The services available locally include children school enrolment and school fees payment, as well as city residence and street residence change. Several services are being prepared at both national and local levels.

### **The Porvoo Group is an active “interest group”**

As its name suggests, the international Porvoo Group was established in the city of Porvoo, Finland, in the spring of 2002 during the international conference held in conjunction with the Public Identity project of the Smart Card Charter operating under the eEurope programme. The Porvoo Group consists of governmental representatives of European countries, and representatives of the private sector have also attended its meetings. The representatives of the European Commission have also participated in seminars. The Director of Certificate Authority Services at the Finnish Population Register Centre, Mr **Tapio Aaltonen**, noted that the Porvoo Group is an active European-level electronic identity “interest group”, widely recognised as the correct party for public dialogue. The Group seeks to promote the popularity of electronic identity and electronic ID cards in Europe, the introduction of interoperable certificates and technical specifications, and the interoperability of administrative services. The Group has had regular meetings at 6-month intervals. The previous meeting was held in Issy-les-Moulineaux near Paris in September 2003, and the next meeting will be held in Rome in November 2004. The number of member countries has steadily increased, and at present 19 countries have representatives in the Group.

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**Visit the web site** on electronic identity at [www.electronic-identity.org/](http://www.electronic-identity.org/) and select the For Experts link for further information on e-ID in Europe. The presentations and resolutions of the 5<sup>th</sup> Porvoo Group meeting are available at [www.id.ee/porvoo5](http://www.id.ee/porvoo5).

**See also:** [www.vaestorekisterikeskus.fi/](http://www.vaestorekisterikeskus.fi/) Electronic Identity – Porvoo Group and [www.fineid.fi](http://www.fineid.fi) (the Internet sites of the Finnish Population Register Centre) and [www.europe-smartcards.org](http://www.europe-smartcards.org)

### **With Best Regards,**

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