[eGovernment in]

Estonia

Eesti

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Country Profile

Basic Data Indicators

Basic data

Population (1.000): 1.347,0 inhabitants (2005)

GDP at market prices: 11.060,7 million Euro (2005)

GDP per inhabitant in PPS (purchasing Power Standards, EU-25=100): 60,1 (2005)

GDP growth rate: 10,5% (2005)

Inflation rate: 4,1% (2005)

Unemployment rate: 7,9% (2005)

Government debt/GDP: 4,8% (2005)

Public balance (government deficit or surplus/GDP): +1,6% (2005)

Source: Numerical data provided by Eurostat

Area: 45.000 km^2

Capital city: Tallinn

EU Official Languages: Estonian

Currency: Estonian kroon

Source: Europa website

Political Structure

Estonia is a Parliamentary Republic, established in 1991 following the fall of the Soviet Union.

Legislative power lies with the unicameral parliament, called the State Assembly (Riigikogu in Estonian). The Assembly has 101 members, elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms. Members are elected on the basis of a proportional system, and a 5% splinter party threshold applies for those wishing to take part in parliamentary activities.

Estonia's Head of State is the President, elected for a five-years term by the Riigikogu. The Government, exercising executive power, is formed by the Prime Minister, nominated by the president, and a total of 14 ministers. The Government is appointed by the President after approval by the Parliament.

Estonia is divided into 15 counties and 227 urban and rural municipalities (towns and parishes), which powers and responsibilities are established by the Local Government Organisation Act of June 1993. The government of each county is led by County Governor, who represents the national government at regional level and is appointed by the Central Government for a term of five years. Local self-government is exercised solely at the municipal level.

The Constitution of the Republic of Estonia was adopted on 28 June 1992.

Estonia became a member of the European Union on 1 May 2004.

Current Head of State: President Arnold Rüütel (since 8 October 2001)

Current Head of Government: Prime Minister Andrus Ansip (since 12 April 2005)

Information Society indicators...

Percentage of households with Internet access: 39% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises with Internet access: 90% (2004)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet at least once a week: 54% (2005)

Percentage of households with a broadband connection: 30% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises with a broadband connection: 67% (2005)

Percentage of individuals having purchased/ordered online in the last three months: 4% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises having received orders online within the previous year: 8% (2005)

Percentage of individuals using the Internet for interacting with public authorities: obtaining information 29,0%, downloading forms 17,5%, returning filled forms 16,6% (2005)

Percentage of enterprises using the Internet for interacting with public authorities: obtaining information 66%, downloading forms 62%, returning filled forms 50% (2005)

Source: Eurostat

eGovernment History

Main developments and key milestones (in reverse chronological order)

For the latest developments, see: eGovernment News - Estonia

July 2006..

- For the third year running, all Estonian students taking national examinations can register on the Estonian Citizen's Portal to receive their **exam results** either by e-mail or sent directly to their mobile phones via SMS. Results will reach examinees as soon as the papers are corrected and the marks entered into the central database.

- The Estonian government launches a service by which Estonian school leavers will be able, for the first time, to **apply to universities on-line**. This new service is available on the Citizen's portal or on the **new Common Admissions Information Portal** (SAIS).

May 2006..

- Official presentation of Estonia's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT). This new unit deals with security incidents that occur on Estonian networks, carries out preventive actions to avoid them and contributes to internet security related awareness-raising. The tasks of CERT are implemented by the Department for Handling Information Security within the Estonian Informatics Centre. CERT is the first entity of its kind in the country.

- Leaders of the largest banks and telecoms as well as the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications of Estonia sign a co-operation agreement to launch a nationwide **"Computer Protection 2009"** initiative to increase end-user PC protection and awareness in Estonia. "Computer Protection 2009" aims at making Estonia the country with the most secure information society in the world by 2009. To this end, a number of sub-projects will be launched, one of the priority fields being the promotion of ID card-based authentication in the use of eServices.

April 2006..

Publication of the Estonian IT Interoperability Framework, version 2.0.

March 2006..

- **New initiative for Internet penetration - Küla Tee 3 (VillageWay 3).** The objective of the programme is to improve access to permanent Internet connection in sparsely populated rural areas by guaranteeing quality Internet coverage of 90% of Estonia's territory. As a result of the programme there will be created the conditions, which guarantee the inhabitants' access to permanent Internet connection on the same conditions as in densely populated areas (cities, towns, other larger centres). The service is bought by public procurement from the best provider(s). The State on its own accord has also established clear technical requirements (for both cable and radio Internet) and price limits in order to ensure people's access to the service.

▶ The Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications releases the annual report 'IT in public administration of Estonia Yearbook 2005'. This document presents the main achievements in the eGovernment field in 2005, the latest figures relating to the advancement of the information society in Estonia and a brief description of the government's **'Information Policy Action Plan 2006'** (already published in Estonian in June 2005). The Plan sets out 16 priority action areas in which the government would like to see significant progress in 2006, including: the further development of geo-information services (eGIS), increasing the share of electronic document management and digital archiving in government departments, as well as the development of a coordinated social welfare information and service system. Many of these projects have been supported, since 2005, by the European Structural Funds. Efforts will also be made to improve interoperability with other EU information systems.

▶ The Estonian Informatics Centre announces Estonia's new initiative: the SMS texting scheme. The SMS tool would be used as a powerful and convenient way for people to communicate with the government.

November 2005......................................

The Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications announces that it has prepared a nation-wide information security policy that specifies and coordinates the upcoming e-security related initiatives. The new policy notably aims to create a secure 'eEnvironment' for business and consumers.

October 2005......................................

Estonia becomes the first country in the world to enable its citizens nationwide to vote over the Internet for political elections – the local elections of 16 0ctober 2005. Citizen willing to cast their ballots online could do so in advance between 10 and 12 October, using their electronic identity cards. Launched in 2002, the Estonian eID card is mandatory for all residents older than 15. To vote online, users must insert their cards into readers connected to their computers and log on to the Internet voting **website**. Once authenticated, they cast their ballots through an encrypted system and then affix their digital signatures to verify the selections before transmitting them. The number of e-votes cast during the local elections amounted to 9.287, representing 1% of total votes and 7% of advanced votes. No glitches or security issues were reported, and this vote thus paves the way for generalised, optional but legally binding Internet voting during the legislative elections of 2007.

June 2005......................................

The Government adopts the Information Policy Action Plan for 2006. The Action Plan sets annual priority projects with detail of schedules, funding sources and responsibilities for project implementation.

April 2005......................................

The Estonian Parliament approves the Estonian Broadband Strategy, setting out the principles for the development of fast Internet connections until 2007.

January 2005......................................

An **eVoting** pilot is conducted in Estonia's capital city, Tallinn, on the occasion of a local consultation on the location of a Freedom Monument. The e-voting system is based on the use of the electronic ID card to identify voters. IDcard penetration is particularly high in Tallinn where it is used as an e-ticket in public transport. Despite a low turnout, the objectives of eVoting pilot project are met, paving the way for a generalised use of e-voting for all e-ID card holders at the local government elections taking place in October 2005.

May 2004......................................

The Estonian Government adopts a new Information Society policy, the Principles of the Estonian Information Policy 2004-2006. Entitled 'Towards a

More Service-Centred and Citizen-Friendly State', the new policy document maintains most of the principles defined in the 1998 strategy, but takes a step further, with a view to strengthen central co-ordination and increase consistency and collaboration in developing the Information Society. Following Estonia's EU accession, the new policy also aims to align more closely national actions with EU priorities, in particular the objectives set out in the eEurope 2005 action plan. Together with the new Policy, an Information Policy Action Plan for 2005 is adopted, setting annual priority projects with detail of schedules, funding sources and responsibilities for project implementation.

April 2004...

59% of natural persons' income tax returns (incomes of 2003) are submitted electronically, making Estonia the European eTax services champion in terms of service take-up.

May 2003...

Finland and Estonia sign an agreement to harmonise the concepts and practices between the two countries regarding digital signature and document format and exchange. The signature project, codenamed OpenXAdES, is an open initiative, which promotes the 'universal digital signature'.

March 2003...

The Estonian Government launches its **eGovernment portal** eesti.ee. Branded "the Citizen's IT Environment", the site is meant to provide a single, one-stop umbrella for the many government services already online, and for all new services being developed.

Summer 2002...

Together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Open Society Institute (OSI), the Estonian Government establishes an

eGovernance Academy (EGA). Designed to train civil servants and policy makers of other Central and Eastern European countries, as well as countries from the former Soviet Union and Asia, the Academy will enable Estonia's neighbours to benefits from its eGovernment experience and expertise.

January 2002...

Estonia starts the introduction on national electronic ID cards. The card fulfils the requirements of Estonia's Digital Signature Act and is mandatory for all Estonian citizens and permanent resident foreigners over 15 years of age. It is meant to be the primary document for identifying citizens and residents and its functions are to be used in any form of business, governmental or private communications. The card, besides being a physical identification document, has advanced electronic functions that facilitate secure authentication and legally binding digital signature

December 2001.....................................

Launch of the X-Road system. X-Road is a middle-tier data exchange layer enabling government databases to communicate. The system allows officials as well as legal and natural persons to search data from national databases over the Internet within the limits of their authority. The system ensures sufficient security for the treatment of inquiries made to databases and responses received. The databases themselves remain functioning in standard way; they are connected to the X-Road system by a special user interface. Due to this unified user interface queries to all databases are made in the similar way. The system has been designed and created in a secure way. The security servers of databases and information systems connected to the X-Road communicate with each other through encrypted channels. All users must pass the authentication and authorisation procedure.

Summer 2001.....................................

The Estonian Government launches an innovative e-democracy portal, TOM (*Täna Otsustan Mina* – in English "**Today I Make Decisions**"). The aim of this

website is to enhance citizens' participation in the public decision-making process. Anyone can use the website to submit ideas, thoughts and suggestions, and to comment on draft legislation submitted by others or elaborated by ministries. Ideas that find support among users are submitted by Prime Minister's resolution to respective agencies to be executed. The public can constantly monitor what happens to the idea. In January 2003, 372 ideas that had been submitted in TOM were in legislative proceeding in different government agencies, 5 acts based on submitted ideas were in the signing stage and 10 draft legislations were under elaboration in the ministries.

June 2001..

The eEurope+ Action Plan is published by the European Commission in conjunction with the Central and East European accession countries. The goal of this plan is to foster the development of an information society in the accession countries, including Estonia.

February 2001....................................

The government approves a new update of the **Information Policy Action Plan**.

01 January 2001...................................

The **Public Information Act** enters into force, setting the freedom of information regime in Estonia.

2000 and before...................................

▸ The Digital Signatures Act is approved in March 2000. In addition, in October, the eTaxBoard application is launched. e-TaxBoard enables taxpayers to file, view and correct their income tax returns online, but also to file VAT returns and

submit VAT refund applications, to calculate their social tax and to view their tax account balances.

▸ The year 1998 marks the adoption by the Estonian government of the country's first Information Society strategy, the 'Principles of the Estonian Information Policy'. This Policy document – approved by the Estonian Parliament in May 1998 – serves as a basis for making public policy decisions to support the development of the Information Society in Estonia. It is complemented by the **Information Policy Action Plan**, setting annual priority projects with detail of schedules, funding sources and responsibilities for project implementation. The Policy shall be revised every 4-5 years, while the Action Plan shall be updated every year. The Estonian government will adopt an **update of the Information Policy Action Plan** in May 1999. Moreover, a **government-wide backbone network** is launched in October 1998. Named EEBone (PeaTee in Estonian), this network connects all government offices across the country and provides them with secure access to the Internet and to the government's Intranet.

▸ A Databases Act is adopted in March 1997. It regulates the creation and maintenance of digital databases and creates a state register of databases.

▸ The Personal Data Protection Act enters into force in July 1996.

eGovernment Strategy

Main strategic objectives and principles

The two first Estonian 'eGovernment strategy' documents –'Principles of the Estonian Information Policy' and 'Principles of the Estonian Information Policy 2004-2006'– were respectively approved by the Government in May 1998 and during the Spring 2004.

During the year 2006, with the latest strategy (2004-2006) coming to an end, the Estonian Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications started coordinating the elaboration of a new Information Society strategy that would also take into account the objectives and priorities of the new EU-level policy framework, namely: the initiative 'i2010: A European Information Society for growth and employment' and the related 'i2010 eGovernment action plan'. This elaboration work involved all ministries, the State Chancellery, as well as organisations representing the third sector and scientific circles.

As a result, the new '**Estonian Information Society Strategy 2013**' was approved on 30 November 2006 by the Estonian government and entered into force on 1 January 2007. The 'Estonian Information Society Strategy 2013' is conceived as a sectorial development plan, setting out the general framework, objectives and respective action fields for the broad use of ICT in the development of knowledge-based society and economy in Estonia for the period 2007-2013.

Though most of the principles underlying the first Information Society strategies maintained their topicality, the fast development of technology called for several shifts of emphasis. These changes were taken into account into the **new principles** of the current Estonian Information Society strategy. These principles now include the following:

- The development of the information society in Estonia is a strategic choice and the public sector leads the way in pursuing its principles;

- The information society is developed in a coordinated manner in cooperation between the public, private and third sector;

- The public sector is a smart customer, ensuring that as much freedom as possible is left for innovative solutions as regards public procurement;

- The information society is created for all Estonian residents, particular attention being paid to the integration of social groups with special needs, to regional development and to the strengthening of local self-initiative;

- The consistency of the Estonian language and culture is ensured;

- The development of the information society must not undermine people's sense of security. The protection of basic rights, personal data and identity must be ensured, and the mitigation of non-acceptable risks in information systems must be guaranteed;

- The information society and the opportunities it brings are taken into account in the elaboration of all sectoral policies;

- Trends occurring in the EU and elsewhere in the world are taken into consideration. Furthermore, as an active partner, Estonia shares its experience and learns from others;

- The public sector employs the already existing technological solutions (i.e. the eID card, the data exchange layer X-Road) and avoids duplication of IT solutions;

- The public sector re-organizes its business processes so as to ensure a one-off collection of data from citizens, entrepreneurs and public bodies;

- The public sector gives equal treatment to different hardware and software platforms and ensures interoperability of information systems by using open standards;

- The collection of data and the development of ICT-solutions proceed from the principles of re-usability.

Despite the achievement of considerable progress in implementing the previous strategies, the past information society-related activities have been focused on developing the ICT infrastructure and creating systems that were required for putting into action sectorial policies. However and pursuant to the so-called "Vision", the new Information Society strategy now aims to place more emphasis on: the **development of a citizen-centric and inclusive society**, a **knowledge-based economy** as well as a **transparent and efficient public administration**. For each component of the Vision, actions and measures will be taken in three fields, namely:

Action field I: Development of a citizen-centered and inclusive society:

In an information society, most of the information is stored in a universal digital form. In order to ensure citizen welfare, citizens must possess the skills and have willingness to use the opportunities created by the information society while benefiting from a multi-access channel to digital information that suits their needs. By 2013, 75 % of Estonian residents should be using the internet, while household internet penetration should amount to 70%. Moreover, by 2010, all public sector websites should comply with the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) criteria. To such end, the following actions are needed:

1. **Broadening technological access to digital information**

▸ Developing data communications networks in areas of market failure and ensuring their commercialization, so as to make high-quality services available throughout Estonia;

▸ Ensuring favourable environments for the development of new telecommunications technologies and technological convergence, including the take-up of digital TV, with the aim to guarantee the smooth launch of new telecommunications-based services while providing services of similar quality, irrespective of the solutions used for their transmission;

▸ Bringing public sector websites into compliance with WAI quality criteria so as to ensure their accessibility for all, including people with special needs;

▸ Further developing the Citizen portal at www.eesti.ee by making available all public services on the citizens' "virtual office".

2. **Improving skills and widening possibilities for participation:**

▸ Continuous upgrading of knowledge and skills of all members of society in order to ensure their ability to cope in the information society;

▸ Developing and promoting internet-based learning environments (eLearning);

▸ Raising public awareness about the information society by informing the population on internet-based services as well as on information society opportunities and threats;

▸ Digitisation and digital preservation of cultural heritage, making it available via the internet for citizens, and integrating it with eLearning environments;

▸ Widening opportunities for participation in decision-making processes (eDemocracy), by developing internet-based environments for participation while continuing to use eVoting.

Action Field II: Development of a knowledge-based economy

The strategy foresees that by 2013, the productivity per employee in Estonian enterprises will account for 75% of the EU average and that the share of ICT enterprises in the national GDP will amount to 15%. To reach this objective, the following measures will be taken:

1. **Promotion of ICT uptake by enterprises:**

▸ Supporting the ICT uptake and use of eBusiness through business and innovation support measures;

▸ Re-organization of general, vocational and higher education so as to ensure conformity of labour skills to the requirements of knowledge-based economy;

▸ Developing a common service space for the public, private and third sector to facilitate mutual communication;

▸ Widening the opportunities for the re-use of public sector information by the private and third sector;

▸ Ensuring a favourable environment for the development of eBusiness by reviewing relevant legislation, including privacy, consumer protection and information security related aspects.

2. **Increasing the competitiveness of the Estonian ICT sector:**

▸ Bringing IT education in accordance with the requirements of the ICT sector;

▸ Supporting the internationalisation of the Estonian ICT sector;

▸ Facilitating the development of high-quality and innovative information society and media services as well as settling intellectual property related issues;

▸ Elaboration and implementation of principles concerning the outsourcing of services necessary for the functioning of the state information system;

▸ Increasing the role of the Estonian ICT sector in the development of the country's defensive capacity.

Action field III: Development of citizen-centered, transparent and efficient public administration

According to this objective, the administration should function efficiently while collecting, using and managing data necessary for the provision of public goods in a common and systematic manner. Public sector processes must be transparent and easy to understand. In addition, public services for citizens and businesses must be fully available electronically, widely used and oriented on users' needs. By 2013, the strategy sets the objective of 80 % of citizen satisfaction and 95 % of business satisfaction when using public sector eServices. In this light, the following measures will be taken:

1. **Improving the efficiency of the public sector:**

▸ Transforming public sector business processes so as to make better use of advantages and possibilities enabled by the application of ICT, e.g. full eArchiving of public sector documents;

▸ Increasing the efficiency of policy formulation through better use of data and increased research about the impact and challenges of the information society.

2. **Provision of user-friendly public sector eServices**

▸ Integration of the public, private and third sector into one service space to improve the quality of service provision in the public sector. Citizens shall be able to make use of a common secure service space (based on the "single window" principle), allowing them to use public services and communicate in one environment with the state, businesses as well as other citizens;

▸ Identification, development, launch and active implementation of high impact services (eProcurement, eInvoicing etc);

▸ Developing public sector eServices in different fields of life for citizens, businesses and public sector agencies. Relevant information systems will be developed and implemented in order to increase the efficiency of service provision through ICT, including making health and social services available irrespective of one's location;

▸ Opening up of Estonian eServices for the citizens of other countries, especially those from the EU member states.

The implementation of the Estonian Information Society strategy is based on annual **information policy action plans**, drafted at the beginning of each year, setting out activities that different state agencies are planning to initiate for the development of the information society. The action plans, which state responsible authorities, expected outputs and evaluation of finances are submitted to the Government of the Republic for approval before the drafting of the state budget and will be considered when compiling the state budget strategy.

eGovernment Legal Framework

Main legal texts impacting on the development of eGovernment

eGovernment legislation........................

There is currently no specific eGovernment law in Estonia.

Freedom of Information legislation......

Public Information Act (2000)

The Public Information Act (PIA) was approved in November 2000 and took effect in January 2001. The Act covers state and local agencies, legal persons in public law and private entities that are conducting public duties including educational, health care, social or other public services. Any person may make a request for information and the holder of information must respond within five working days. Requests for information are registered. Fees may be waived if information is requested for research purposes. The Act also includes significant provisions on electronic access and disclosure. Government department must maintain document registers. National and local government departments and other holders of public information have the duty to maintain websites and post an extensive list of information on the Web including statistics on crime and economics; enabling statutes and structural units of agencies; job descriptions of officials, their addresses, qualifications and salary rates; information relating to health or safety; budgets and draft budgets; information on the state of the environment; and draft acts, regulations and plans including explanatory memorandum. They are also required to ensure that the information is not "outdated, inaccurate or misleading." In addition, e-mail requests must be treated as official requests for information. The Act is enforced by the Data Protection Inspectorate.

Data Protection/Privacy legislation......

Personal Data Protection Act (1996)

The Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) was passed by Parliament in June 1996 and entered into force on 19 July 1996. The Act protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of persons with respect to the processing of personal data and in accordance with the right of individuals to obtain freely any information that is disseminated for public use. The PDPA divides personal data into two groups – non-sensitive and sensitive personal data. Sensitive personal data are data that reveal political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, ethnic or racial origin, health, sexual life, criminal convictions, legal punishments and involvement in criminal proceedings. Processing of non-sensitive personal data is permitted without the consent of the respective individual if it occurs under the terms that are set out in the PDPA. Processed personal data are protected by organisational and technical measures that must be documented. Chief processors (i.e. controllers") must register the processing of sensitive personal data with the data protection supervision authority (the Data Protection Inspectorate). The PDPA also allows individuals to obtain and correct records containing personal information about themselves held by public and private bodies. The Act was amended in 2003 to be made fully compliant with the EU Data Protection legislation. The PDPA was lastly amended in 2004 and entered into force that same year. In order to map the problems that arose in the course of implementing the act, an expert group was established in 2005 to analyse the Act and draft necessary amendments.

eCommerce legislation.........................

Information Society Services Act (2004)

The Information Society Services Act was passed on 14 April 2004 and entered into force on 1 May 2004. This Act implements EU Directive 2000/31/EC on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market. It provides for the requirements for information society service providers, the organisation of supervision and liability for violation of the requirements.

eCommunications legislation...............

Electronic Communications Act (2004)

The Electronic Communications Act was passed on 8 December 2004 and entered into force on 1 January 2005. This Act implements the new EU Regulatory Framework for Electronic Communications. Its purpose is to create the necessary conditions to promote the development of electronic communications networks and communications services and to ensure the protection of the interests of users of electronic communications services. The Act provides requirements for publicly available electronic communications networks and communications services, radio-communication, management of radio frequencies and numbering, apparatus and state supervision over compliance with the requirements and liability for violation of the requirements.

eSignatures/eIdentity legislation.........

Digital Signatures Act (2000)

Approved on 8 March 2000, the Digital Signatures Act entered into force on 15 December 2000. It gives the digital signature equal legal value as the handwritten one and sets an obligation for all public institutions to accept digitally signed documents.

eProcurement legislation........................

Public Procurement Act (2000)

Public procurement in Estonia is currently governed by the Public Procurement Act, which was passed on 19 October 2000 and entered into force 1 April 2001. Together with the Government Regulation establishing a Public procurement State Register, it covers rules for e-notification of public tenders via the Public Procurement State Register. However, other aspects of eProcurement are not covered. A proposal for a new Public Procurement Act has been drafted to transpose the new EU public procurement directives (Directives 2004/17/EC and 2004/18/EC). The future Act will include legal provisions enabling the further development of eProcurement (e-auctions, dynamic purchasing systems, eCatalogues etc.). This transposition is currently under process before the Estonian institutions.

Re-use of Public Sector Information

The Estonian Public Information Act (in force since 1 January 2001, see above) act covers the provisions of the EU Directive 2003/98/EC of 17 November 2003 on the re-use of public sector information (PSI). Estonia has thus notified full transposition of the PSI-directive.

Other relevant legislation

1. Databases Act (1997)

Passed in April 1997, the Databases Act regulates the creation and maintenance of electronic databases by public sector bodies and creates a state register of databases. The law sets out the general principles for the maintenance of databases, prescribes requirements and protection measures for data processing, and unifies the terminology to be used in the maintenance of databases. The Act also mandates the establishment of a state register of databases that registers state and local government databases, as well as databases containing sensitive personal data maintained by persons in private law. The chief processor of the register has the right to make proposals to the government, to the chief processors of various databases, and to the state information systems. He or she would also be responsible for coordinating authority with respect to the expansion, merger or liquidation of databases, database cross-

usage, or the organization of data processing or data acquisition in a manner aimed at avoiding duplication of effort or substantially repetitive databases. An Act on Databases of the State Information System is under preparation since 2004. It aims to update the current Database Act so as to establish an integral state information system and to sufficiently regulate data services and their use.

2. Identity Documents Act (1999)

Passed on 15 February 1999, the Identity Documents Act entered into force on 1 January 2000. It establishes an identity document requirement and regulates the issue of identity documents to Estonian citizens and to foreigners living in Estonia. It also outlines the functions of the ID card as the primary internal identity document and establishes a State Register of Identity Documents.

eGovernment Actors

Main roles and responsibilities for eGoverment development

National eGovernment..........................

Policy/Strategy

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications holds political responsibility for the development and implementation of the State Information Policy. The Ministry's Department of State Information Systems (RISO) plays a major role in the elaboration and implementation of these policies.

Coordination

Deparment of State Information Systems

The Department of State Information Systems, part of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, is responsible for the coordination of state information systems as well as of the development and implementation of state IT strategies. Estonia is a rather decentralised country concerning the development of information systems, which mostly falls under the responsibility of IT managers in ministries, county governments, boards and inspectorates. The central coordination deals with strategic planning, setting priorities and ensuring

financing for these, creating cooperation networks and ensuring their functionality, drafting IT legislation, as well as elaborating IT standards.

Implementation

1. **Department of State Information Systems (RISO)**

2. **Estonian Informatics Centre** for government-wide information systems The Estonian Informatics Centre, which is a subdivision of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, is the supporting agency for the development of common information systems in the Estonian administration. It develops, implements and operates the main components of Estonia's national eGovernment infrastructure, including the e-government portal eesti.ee, the electronic ID card, the middleware system X-Road, the government backbone network EEBone, the administration system of the state information system (RIHA).

3. **Government Departments and agencies** for departmental projects

Support

1. **Department of State Information Systems (RISO)**

2. **Estonian Informatics Centre**

Audit/Assuarance

State Audit Office

The role of the State Audit Office (SAO) is to promote reforms and to support public bodies in their efforts to create best value for the taxpayers by their activities and services. To do so, the SAO assesses the

performance (economy, efficiency and effectiveness) and regularity of the activities of public administrations, and provides recommendations to help the Parliament and the Government to improve the operation of the State.

Data Protection

Data Protection Inspectorate

The main task of the Data Protection Inspectorate is the implementation of the independent supervision over the legality of processing personal data and of databases, as well as the organisation of data protection activities.

Others

1. **AS Sertifitseerimiskeskus**

AS Sertifitseerimiskeskus (SK) is the Certification Authority (CA) providing certificates to the Estonian electronic ID card and the services necessary for using the certificates and giving legally-binding digital signatures. The company's mission is to ensure the reliability and integrity of the electronic infrastructure behind the Estonian ID Card project, and to offer reliable certification and time-stamping services. It also functions as a competence centre for ID Card and spreads the knowledge necessary for creating electronic applications for the card. To this end, AS Sertifitseerimiskeskus has created DigiDoc, a universal system for giving, processing and verifying digital signatures. DigiDoc can be connected to any existing or new software, but its components are also a stand-alone client program and web portal.

2. **eGovernance Academy**

The eGovernance Academy is a regional learning centre set up by the Republic of Estonia, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Information Program of the Open Society Institute (OSI). The centre, which is a non-governmental, non-profit organisation, aims to promote the use of ICT in the work of governments and in democratic practices. The centre provides training in e-governance and e-democracy, serves as a platform

of exchange of experience and conducts related research. The primary target audience includes civil servants, policy makers and representatives of civil society of the countries of Central Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Balkans.

Regional & Local eGovernment............

Strategy

No information available

Coordination

No information available

Implementation

No information available

Support

No information available

Audit/Assurance

No information available.

Other

1. **Association of Estonian Cities**

The Association of Estonian Cities is a voluntary union established for representing the common interests and arranging co-operation of cities and rural municipalities. Ensuring development of local governments through joint activities is the main goal of the Association. and web portal.

2. **Association of Municipalities of Estonia**

No information available.

eGovernment Who's Who

Main eGovernment decision-makers and executives

Minister responsible for eGovernment...

Name: Edgar Savisaar

Job title: Minister for Economic Affairs and Communications

Picture:

Contact details:

Ministry for Economic Affairs and Communications

Harju 11

15072 Tallinn

Estonia

Tel.: +372 6 256 342

E-mail: info@mkm.ee

Head of eGovernment (i.e. head of eGovernment agency/directorate)...................................

Name: Margus Püüa

Job title: Head of State Information Systems Department, Ministry for Economic Affairs and Communications

Picture:

Contact details:

Ministry for Economic Affairs and Communications

Harju 11

15072 Tallinn

Estonia

Tel: +372 639 7640

E-mail: margus.pyya@riso.ee

Head of eGovernment (i.e. head of eGovernment agency/directorate)...................................

Other key eGovernment executives..

Name: Epp Joab

[17]

Job title: Director of Estonian Informatics Centre

Picture:

Contact details:

Estonian Informatics Centre

Raväla 5

15169 Tallinn

Estonia

Tel.: +372 663 0200

E-mail: epp.joab@ria.ee

Other key eGovernment executives

eGovernment Infrastructure

Main eGovernment infrastructure components

Portal...

Citizen's IT Environment

Estonia's eGovernment portal (eesti.ee), launched in March 2003, provides a single access point to online public information and services. Through authentication by the national ID Card, the portal offers users the possibility to fill in and submit electronic forms, access their personal data, and perform transactions. Every holder of the national ID card has been assigned an official e-mail address Forename.Surname@eesti.ee, which is the main channel for passing electronic information from government institutions to the citizen. Entrepreneurs using the portal are authorised on the basis of data held in the State Commercial Register, which enables them to access transactional services for businesses.

Network...

EEBone

EEBone (PeaTee in Estonian) is the broadband network of data communication between government institutions. All state and local government bodies have the right, though not the obligation, to use it. The network was launched in 1998, and its development was based on the backbone network ASONet elaborated by the Border Guard Administration, the Customs Board and the Police Board in 1993. The use of the backbone network is financed centrally from the state budget and the use is free of charge for subscribed clients. Clients have to pay only for access to the backbone network, and determine the access connection service themselves. Currently there are more than 21.000 computers connected to the EEBone network and more than 1.300 governmental and local institutions are using it. Since 2000 all local governments have access to the Internet (nation-wide project Küla Tee or "Country Road").

eIdentification infrastructure...............

Electronic ID card

Estonia started issuing national ID cards in January 2002. The card fulfils the requirements of Estonia's Digital Signatures Act and is mandatory for all Estonian citizens and permanent resident foreigners over 15 years of age. It is meant to be the primary document for identifying citizens and residents and its functions are to be used in any form of business, governmental or private communications. Issued by the Citizenship and Migration Board, the card is valid for 10 years as an identification and travel document (within the EU). In addition to being a physical identification document, the card has advanced electronic functions facilitating secure authentication and legally binding digital signature for public and private online services. An

electronic processor chip contains a personal data file as well as a certificate for authentication (along with a permanent e-mail address Forename.Surname@eesti.ee for e-communications with the public sector) and a certificate for digital signature. The data file is valid for as long as the identity card. The digital certificates are valid for 3 years and can be renewed for free, but not for longer than the period of validity of the identity card. Three years after their introduction, electronic ID cards have been issued to nearly 50% of the population (over 777.000 ID cards). The Government's objective is to reach one million ID cards issued by 2007. In addition to the national ID card, Estonian residents can also use their Internet banking identification data to access online public services (more than 70% of Estonian residents use Internet banking, the highest proportion in Europe).

eProcurement infrastructure.................

Public Procurement State Register

Established in 2001 and maintained by the Public Procurement Office, the Public Procurement State Register is a simple e-tenders portal, where all public procurement notices are published electronically. The register is using CPV standards in the catalogue, and all the information in the register is publicly accessible over the Internet free of charge. In 2003, the number of public tenders advertised via the Public Procurement State Register was 4.859, representing a value of EUR 663 Million. Estonia has no eProcurement experience beyond e-tendering. In particular, it has no experience with eCatalogues, e-auctions or dynamic purchasing systems. However, the development of ePublic procurement is a priority, and a strategy on ePublic procurement is expected to be formulated shortly.

Knowledge Management infrastructure

There is currently no government-wide knowledge management infrastructure in Estonia.

Other...

1. **X-Road Middleware**

Launched in December 2001, the X-Road is a middle-tier data exchange layer enabling government databases to communicate with each other. It was initially developed as an environment facilitating making queries to different databases in a standardised way. The system allows officials as well as legal and natural persons to search data from national databases over the Internet within the limits of their authority, using a unified user interface. In addition, the system has been further developed to enable the creation of e-services capable of simultaneously using data held in different databases. Several extensions have thus been developed for the X-Road system: writing operations to databases, transmitting huge data sets between information systems, performing successive search operations of data in different data sheets, providing services via web portals etc. By March 2005, the X-road had: 41 databases providing services; 354 institutions and companies using the services; 687 different services. X-road services were used 21.670 times in January 2003, 270.466 times in January 2004 and 1.156.292 times in November 2004. Over 7.75 million queries were made via X-Road in 2004, representing an average of 118.000 queries per day. The number of X-Road queries and services continues to rise in 2005, as more databases are linked to the system and the number of e-services based on data exchange via X-Road increases. Further technical developments are planned to cope with this increasing demand. The development of several gateways is also planned in order to support information exchange between the X-Road and EU information systems.In January 2006, over 355 agencies and 50 state databases had been connected with the secure data exchange layer X-Road.

2. **Administration System of the state information system (RIHA)**

The creation and maintenance of government databases is governed by the Databases Act of 1997, which establishes a state register of databases. At the moment, there are over 100

officially registered databases in the administration system of the state information system (RIHA). This system is in the process of development. The basis of this system is the State Register of Databases, where all the databases and information systems must be registered. The aim of the RIHA regulation is to administer and keep data on the registers of the state and local governments, also their services and procedures of use. RIHA includes metadata about existing public sector databases – beginning from the information about the administrators of the databases to the e-services offered and the technical data concerning the environment/platform. Registration in RIHA is web-based, the user is authenticated and permissions given by using the national ID Card. In the same web-based environment requests to other information systems can be made in order to launch a new X-road based service. RIHA additionally administers two supporting systems of state registers, i.e. the system of classificators and the address data system. Furthermore, RIHA is closely connected to the X-road. The system of integrated registers enables to apply new principles of administrative arrangements:

citizen-orientation, flexibility, fastness, and cost and time effectiveness for citizens as well as the state.

eGovernment Services for Citizens

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Citizens

The information in this section is based on the common list of 20 basic public services (12 for citizens, 8 for businesses) adopted by the Council of the EU in March 2001, and on the methodology used to assess their level of online availability and sophistication in the eEurope benchmarking exercises (see: *eGovernment indicators for benchmarking eEurope*).

The 12 services for citizens are as follows:

1. Income Tax Declaration

2. Job Searches by labour Offices

3. Social Security Contributions

4. Personal Documents

5. Car Registration

6. Application for Building Permission

7. Declaration to the Police

8. Public Libraries

9. Certificates (birth, marriage) Request and Delivery

10. Enrolment in Higher Education

11. Announcement of moving (change of address)

12. Health-related services (e.g. appointments for hospitals)

For each service, the sophistication stage reached is indicated, with reference to the maximum stage possible for the service.

▶ Stage 1 - Information: online information about public services

▶ Stage 2 - Interaction: downloading of forms

▶ Stage 3 - Two-way interaction: processing of forms, including authentication

▶ Stage 4 - Transaction: full case handling, decision and delivery (payment)

1. Income taxes (declaration, notification of assessment)

Responsibility: Central Government, Tax and Customs Board

Website: http://www.emta.ee/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: The e-TaxBoard (e-Maksuamet) enables taxpayers to file, view and correct their income tax returns online, but also to view their VAT returns and submit VAT refund applications, to calculate their social tax and to view their tax account balances. Estonian citizens can use their electronic ID cards as the identification method for accessing e-TaxBoard.

2. Job search services by labour offices

Responsibility: Central Government, Estonian Labour Market Board

Website: http://www.tootukassa.ee/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Information and forms to download.

3. Social security benefits

a. Unemployment benefits

Responsibility: Central Government, Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund

Website: http://www.tootukassa.ee/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Information and forms to download.

b. Family allowances

Responsibility: Central Government, Social Insurance Board

Website: http://www.eesti.ee/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Pursuant to the Parental Benefit Act, the online Parental Benefit service was launched at the beginning of 2004. The service is 100% electronic: persons without Internet access can go to the Social Insurance Board to submit their application, but even there the application is filed electronically with the assistance of Insurance Board employees. The whole process is paperless. Based on the X-road middleware system connecting different state databases, it also removes the need for citizens to submit data already known by the state.

c. Medical costs (reimbursement or direct settlement)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Estonian Health Insurance Fund
Website:	http://www.eesti.ee/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Estonian health insurance relies on the principle of solidarity: the Health Insurance Fund covers the cost of health services required by the person in case of illness regardless of the amount of social tax paid for the person concerned. The Fund also uses the social tax paid for the working population for covering the cost of health services provided to persons who have no income with regard to work activities. There is no refund system in Estonia. Where the health service provider has a contract with the Estonian Health Insurance Fund, all costs are directly paid to it by the Fund. The patient shall pay only a reduced personal contribution, which is not refundable. If the health service provider does not have a contract, the patient must pay for the health service himself/herself. Internet banking clients or holders of the Estonian electronic ID card can use e-services available through the national portal to check the validity of their health insurance, their address (and if necessary correct it), the name of the family physician and the payment of sickness benefits.

d. Student grants

Responsibility:	Central Government, Ministry of Education and Research
Website:	http://www.hm.ee/
Sophistication stage:	1/4
Description:	With the Study Allowances and Study Loans Act (2003), Estonia has established a system of study allowances and created the possibilities to get study loans. The main objective of the system of study allowances, only accessible at a certain level of income and for students who successfully progress in their studies, is to motivate students to study full time and successfully and to complete the study programme within the nominal period. Study loans secured by the state are intended to give students who study full-time but who are not entitled to get study allowances the possibility to finance their studies. The total number of students receiving state grants in the 2003/04 academic year was 17,300, approximately 26% of all students. Applications, attributions and payments of study grants are managed directly by higher-education institutions.

4.   Personal documents (passport and driving licence)

a. Passport

Responsibility:	Central Government, Citizenship and Migration Board
Website:	http://www.mig.ee/
Sophistication stage:	3/3
Description:	Information and application forms to download. Applications must be submitted in person at regional branches of the Citizenship and Migration Board.

b. Driving license

Responsibility:	Central Government, Estonian Motor Vehicle Registration Centre
Website:	http://www.ark.ee/
Sophistication stage:	3/3
Description:	Information only. Applications must be submitted in person at the Estonian Motor Vehicle Registration Centre.

5.   Car registration (new, used and imported cars)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Estonian Motor Vehicle Registration Centre
Website:	http://www.ark.ee/
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	Information and forms to download. Car registration applications must be submitted in person at the Estonian Motor Vehicle Registration Centre (ARK).

6.   Application for building/planning permission

Responsibility:	Local Governments
Website:	http://www.eesti.ee
Sophistication stage:	2/4
Description:	Information only. Planning permission applications are handled by local authorities.

7. Declaration to the police (e.g. in case of theft)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Estonian Police
Website:	http://www.pol.ee/
Sophistication stage:	3/3
Description:	An online crime reporting service is available on the website of the Estonian Police. department on the basis of the place of the crime reported. The user receives a receipt of the notification, which can be used for following-up the request.

8. Public libraries (availability of catalogues and search tools)

Responsibility:	Central Government, National Library of Estonia
Website:	http://helios.nlib.ee/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Online catalogue and reservation facility.

9. Certificates (birth, marriage): request and delivery

Responsibility:	Local Government
Website:	http://www.eesti.ee
Sophistication stage:	1-2/3
Description:	Information only. Requests for certificates are handled by local authorities.

10. Enrolment in higher education/university

Responsibility: Central Government, Higher Education institutions

Website: https://www.sais.ee/

Sophistication stage: 4/4

Description: Enrolment in higher education is managed by Higher education institutions. An enrolment information system called SAIS (SissAstumise InfoSüsteem) has been developed to enable the whole enrolment, processing, decision-making and informing in a single environment on the Internet for participating universities. The system uses national ID-card as authentication tool but can also be entered through one of the Estonian Internet Banks. Students can see immediately if they have been accepted to a participating university, since the results of high school examinations are already in the online database. The system belongs to the Ministry of Education and is managed by the consortium of member institutions.

11. Announcement of moving (change of address)

Responsibility: Central Government (Estonian Population Register)/Local Government

Website: http://w3.andmevara.ee/index.php?lang=rar

Sophistication stage: 3/3

Description: On the Estonian Population Register's website, it is possible for citizens to make the announcement of moving by sending a digitally signed document. By doing so, a person is automatically identified. Consequently, there is no need to present any other identifying document.

12. Health related services (interactive advice on the availability of services in different hospitals; appointments for hospitals)

Responsibility: N/A

Website: N/A

Sophistication stage: N/A

Description: This service is not relevant for Estonia, where it is the general practitioner that book hospital and specialist appointments, not the patients themselves.

Source: The online sophistication ratings are in agreement with the report 'Online Availability of Public Services: How is Europe Progressing?' carried out for the European Commission

eGovernment Services for Businesses

Availability and sophistication of eServices for Businesses

The information in this section is based on the common list of 20 basic public services (12 for citizens, 8 for businesses) adopted by the Council of the EU in March 2001, and on the methodology used to assess their level of online availability and sophistication in the eEurope benchmarking exercises (see: eGovernment indicators for benchmarking eEurope).

The 8 services for businesses are as follows:

1. Social security contributions for employees

2. Corporation Tax: declaration, notification

3. VAT: declaration, notification

4. Registration of a new company

5. Submission of data to statistical offices

6. Customs declaration

7. Environment-related permits

8. Public procurement

For each service, the sophistication stage reached is indicated, with reference to the maximum stage possible for the service.

▶ Stage 1 - Information: online information about public services

▶ Stage 2 - Interaction: downloading of forms

▶ Stage 3 - Two-way interaction: processing of forms, including authentication

▶ Stage 4 - Transaction: full case handling, decision and delivery (payment)

1.　Social contribution for employees

Responsibility:　　Central Government, Tax and Customs Board

Website:　　http://www.emta.ee/

Sophistication stage:　　4/4

Description:　　Estonian employers are required by law to pay 'social tax' for all persons employed. The rate of this tax is 33 % of the taxable salary. 20 % is allocated to pension insurance and 13 % to health insurance. The social tax can be filed and paid online using the e-TaxBoard (e-Maksuamet).

2.　Corporation tax: declaration, notification

Responsibility:　　Central Government, Tax and Customs Board

Website:　　http://www.emta.ee/

Sophistication stage:　　4/4

Description:　　The e-TaxBoard (e-Maksuamet) enables corporate taxpayers to file, view and correct their corporate tax returns online, but also to view their VAT returns and submit VAT refund applications, to calculate their social tax and to view their tax account balances.

3.　VAT: declaration, notification

Responsibility:　　Central Government, Tax and Customs Board

Website:　　http://www.emta.ee/

Sophistication stage:　　4/4

Description:　　The e-TaxBoard (e-Maksuamet) enables corporate taxpayers to file, view and correct their corporate tax returns online, but also to view their VAT returns and submit VAT refund applications, to calculate their social tax and to view their tax account balances.

1.　Social contribution for employees

4. Registration of a new company

Responsibility:	Central Government, Centre of Registers
Website:	http://www.eer.ee/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	The Centre of Registers is a state agency working under the Ministry of Justice. Its main function is the administration of a number of central databases and registers, among which the Estonian enterprises register.

5. Submission of data to statistical offices

Responsibility:	Central Government, Statistical Office of Estonia
Website:	http://www.stat.ee/
Sophistication stage:	3/3
Description:	Data can be submitted electronically to the Statistical Office.

6. Customs declarations

Responsibility:	Central Government, Tax and Customs Board
Website:	http://www.emta.ee/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	The Estonian Tax and Customs Board has developed an e-Customs application (e-Toll) that enables online filing of customs declarations.

7. Environment-related permits (incl. reporting)

Responsibility:	Central Government, Ministry of the Environment, Estonian Environment Information Centre
Websites:	http://klis.envir.ee/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Fully transactional service.

8.	**Public procurement**

Responsibility:	Central Government, Public Procurement Office
Website:	http://register.rha.gov.ee/
Sophistication stage:	4/4
Description:	Established in 2001, the Public Procurement State Register is an e-tenders portal where all public procurement notices are published electronically.

Source: The online sophistication ratings are in agreement with the report 'Online Availability of Public Services: How is Europe Progressing?' carried out for the European Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/egovo