eID
easier access to public services across the EU

European Commission
Information Society and Media

Several barriers to free movement of workers still exist in the EU: for example, it is not easy to access public services while working or living in another country. The European Commission has launched a pilot project to remedy this situation with an EU-wide system for the recognition and authentication of electronic identity (eID via electronic cards or other means). It will enable businesses and citizens to securely use their national electronic identities and get help from public administrations in any Member State they live in or travel to.

At a Glance

Project:
STORK (**S**ecure iden**T**ity acr**O**ss bo**R**ders lin**K**ed) will enable businesses, citizens and government employees to use their national electronic identities in any Member State

Project coordinator
ATOS Origin Sociedad Anonima Española

Member State Partners:
Austria, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and Iceland (EEA)

Duration: 3 years

Total cost: €20M

Programme: ICT Policy Support Programme under the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP)

Further information:
http://www.eid-stork.eu/
eGovernment:
http://ec.europa.eu/egovernment
ICT-PSP: http://ec.europa.eu/ict_psp
CIP: http://ec.europa.eu/cip/index_en.htm

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ELECTRONIC IDENTITY

Digital or electronic IDs are key elements in the identification of a person, and can be based on passwords, qualified certificates, ID cards and PIN codes, or other devices, e.g. mobile phones.

In the i2010 eGovernment Action Plan, EU Member States recognised the importance of electronic identification management. By 2010, they aim to provide secure and convenient electronic systems for European citizens and businesses accessing public services in any country of the European Union. These should work at local, regional or national levels and comply with data protection regulations.

A survey conducted by the European Commission in 2007 showed that a majority (28 out of 32) of the countries use or plan to use, an electronic ID scheme.

While some countries have signed agreements on mutual recognition, eID systems differ from one Member State to another and interoperability across borders is almost non-existent.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The pilot project launched by the Commission aims to achieve the pan-European recognition of electronic IDs. This will be done without imposing one single solution but allowing national systems to work together.

The pilot project will test some of the services that are most useful to the many Europeans working and studying in EU countries other than their own. The participating countries will test a set of services using open standards. These include:

- a common service architecture allowing citizens to use their national eIDs to access e-Government portals across borders,

- a platform for safer online communication using eIDs for children,

- a service facilitating students' mobility across Europe,

- use of eID for cross-border electronic delivery for citizens and businesses,

- and for testing the electronic process of address change for EU citizens that move to other Member States.

PARTICIPANTS

The project consortium consists of 29 participants representing 13 Member States and Iceland. The consortium members include national authorities, non profit organisations, private companies and academic partners. A full list of participants is available at www.eid-stork.eu.

As EU-wide systems cannot be built without the support of industry and the interest of future users, the project aims to create communities of interest involving these stakeholders.

It will set up an industry group that will be consulted on a regular basis and a reference group gathering interested parties and stakeholders.

TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

The project will develop, test and validate common specifications for national eID systems to work together. These will be made freely available. All Member States, including those not participating in the project, will be consulted on the common specifications so that the project can have a wide impact. All industries that would like to develop services for eID in the future will have equal and free access to the common specifications.

Reference materials, guidelines, manuals and educational materials will also be made available allowing the replication and implementation of solutions in other countries. A number of events, workshops and consultations will also be organised during the project.

SECURITY

Security and privacy are serious concerns within the project. All efforts will be made to ensure that mutual recognition of electronic identity makes identity theft extremely difficult. As authentication levels for a given application may differ across Member States, the project will develop "circles of trust" at European scale.

IMPACT

The project will result in the smooth cross-border operation of several key public services. The solution will be scalable to all EU Member States. It will be technology-transparent, robust, with measurable benefits, and will be implemented in such a way that it is sustainable beyond the life of the pilot.

As a building block towards the realisation of an internal market without borders, this project will save time and money with safer transactions, less fraud, better control over personal data and simplified procedures.