

Legislation

■ Canada

The Canadian government has issued a set of proposed regulations, the Secure Electronic Signature Regulations, published in the Canada Gazette, Vol. 138, No. 19 — May 8, 2004. The proposed regulations provide for evidential presumptions in relation to the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act and the Canada Evidence Act.

A copy of the proposed regulations are available at <http://canadagazette.gc.ca/part1/2004/20040508/html/regle6-e.html>

■ Switzerland

On 3 July 2001 the Federal Government submitted to the federal assembly a new draft federal law, Bundesgesetz über Zertifizierungsdienste im Bereich der elektronischen Signatur (ZertES) (Certification Services in the field of Electronic Signature). The ZertES was subsequently approved by the federal assembly (Vereinigte Bundesversammlung) on 19 December 19 2003. The draft law corresponds to the Zertifizierungsdienstverordnung, (ZertDV) vom 12. April 2000 (Stand am 23. May 2000). The ZertES does not necessarily affect the ZertDV, because its provisions are essentially the same as those contained in the ZertDV. It should be noted that although the ZertDV is effectively nationally, it is a federal decree, not a law. The ZertES replaces the ZertDV, which means the ZertES corresponds to the ZertDV to a large extent, and adds a new regulation relating liability (see section 7 and Arts 16,17 & 18)]. The proposed law includes a provision to provide that a document signed electronically will be functionally equivalent to a document signed with a manuscript signature. At present there is no federal law in relation to electronic signatures, and this draft law seeks to bring the law into national effect. The federal assembly determined that a referendum might be initiated with respect to this law up to 8 April 2004. If a referendum is not initiated by this date, the ZertES will become law at the beginning of 2005. The Swiss Federal Office for Communication will be responsible for implementing this new piece of legislation.

Acknowledgment to lic.iur. Stefanie Peters of Staiger, Schwald & Roesle, Zürich (<http://www.ssrzh.ch>) for checking the accuracy of this item.

■ Turkey

An electronic signature law was passed and published in the Official Gazette in Turkey on 23 January 2004. This law, Elektronik Imza Kanunu Kanun No. 5070, will enter into force on 22 July 2004. The law is available in electronic format from http://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/kanunlar.durumu?kanun_no=5070.

See main article.

Digital signatures

■ Italy

The Italian government have announced their intention to encourage the greater take-up of digital signatures. A new initiative anticipates take-up can be encourage by increasing the use of digital signatures in government; providing for secure access to applications and services by using digital signatures; and giving incentives to encourage certain categories of non-government users to use digital signatures. The aim of the Minister for Innovation and Technologies was to issue up to one million digital signatures in 2003 among the public, firms and individuals with suitable levels of authority in government. It is also intended to encourage the use of digital signatures with the distribution of Electronic Identity Cards and National Services Cards. Both of these are smart cards, which can store individual certifying certificates.

http://www.innovazione.gov.it/eng/egovernment/infrastrutture/firma_digitale.shtml

■ Lawseal project concludes

In November 2003 the Council of the Law Society of Scotland debated the future of the PKI encryption technology project, Lawseal. The pilot involved 100 participants from firms around Scotland. The results and evaluation of the pilot project were reviewed. Taking into account the options for Lawseal, including the potential costs and the commercial risks, it was decided to terminate the project because there was not enough demand.

<http://www.lawscot.org.uk/news/2003/161203.htm>

■ Using a digital signature to sign a will

Jeremy Malcolm, a lawyer in Australia, has prepared a will in electronic format. He, together with the two witnesses, have signed the will with digital signatures. Mr Malcolm is relying on s 34 of the Western Australian Wills Act 1970 [which was inserted by No. 69 of 1987 s.9; amended by No. 17 of 1989 s.5; No. 47 of 1997 s.4.] relating to the validity of informal wills: "A document purporting to embody the testamentary intentions of a deceased person is a will of that person, notwithstanding that it has not been executed in accordance with section 8, if the Supreme Court is satisfied that the deceased intended the document to constitute his will." Providing the court is satisfied there is sufficient evidence of the intentions of the deceased person, then a will in electronic format could be considered a legitimate expression of the wishes of the deceased.

News item:

<http://www.zdnet.com.au/news/hardware/0,2000061702,39115755,00.htm>

Testing interoperability in Europe

The European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) tested the interoperability of XML (extended mark up language) Advanced Electronic Signature (XadES) through the ETSI Plugtests TM service between 3 and 7 November 2003 at the ETSI headquarters in Sophia Antipolis in the South of France. The ETSI Technical Specification TS 101 903 provides the specification for the XML format for advanced electronic signatures. The test was organized for those who wished to implement and verify XML electronic signatures, together with implementations that are aligned with the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) Recommendation on XML Signature Syntax and Processing.

The Final Report indicated that further developments were required to fulfil the functionality as specified in the standard. The test was considered to be useful, because it took place during a review of the XadES standard, which means the results of the test could be incorporated into the review process. One issue that came out

of the exercise was the degree of openness of the standard and how to address this issue. A further test was envisaged during 2004.

<http://portal.etsi.org/esi/el-sign.asp>

Electronic voting

■ Romania

Romania used electronic voting for the first time for a national referendum on amending its Constitution which are intended to bring the country into line with EU legislation. The Romanian Government adopted an Emergency Ordinance to implement the electronic voting system on 9 October 2003. This made electronic voting possible for military and police forces on official missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia – Herzegovina and Kosovo.

The General Inspectorate for IT&C administered the voting system, supervised by the Central Electoral Office. Designated voting stations were equipped with computers connected to the E-voting System, using digital certificates. Each voter received a sealed envelope with a user name and password to obtain access to the system and to permit them to enter their vote. It was acknowledged that initiative was not a practical demonstration of electronic voting, so much as a symbolic attempt at remote voting by electronic means.

http://www.edemocratie.ro/Editoriale/eng/edit_evot_101403.htm

Civil registration

■ Ireland

The Department of Social and Family Affairs and the Department of Health and Children in Ireland have initiated a project entitled "eEnabling Life Event Data". The aims are to:

- Modernize and computerize the civil registration process.
- Provide for the automatic processing of child benefit (as a result of electronic birth registration)
- Run an inter-agency messaging service in association with REACH.
- Allocate personal public service numbers to a child as part of the birth registration process.

The project will begin by storing certificates of all births and stillbirths, deaths and marriages electronically in the local Registrars' offices across the country. The aim is for the inter-agency messaging service to permit the General Register Office to send electronic messages containing data on all new births to the Client Identity Services in the Department of Social and Family Affairs. Staff at the Department of Social and Family Affairs enter this data into the Central Records System and assign a personal public service number for each child. The Department of Social and Family Affairs also forward these details internally to the Child Benefit Section in the Department of Social and Family Affairs, and then the intention is to send partially completed child benefit application forms for child benefit to the mother. Where a mother has given birth to their second or subsequent child, the claims are automatically processed and issued.

Staff in Roscommon have already begun to put certificates issued since 1845 into electronic format. When phase two of the project is complete, members of the public will be able to obtain access to the database over the internet, and will be able to search for and request data on-line.

<http://www.welfare.ie/press/pr03/pa071003.html>
<http://www.doh.ie/pressroom/pr20031007.html>
<http://www.reach.ie/new.htm>

Tax filing

■ Philippines

The Bureau of Internal Revenue has added eight new forms to the existing 15 forms to its existing electronic tax filing and payment system (eFPS) at www.bir.gov.ph. This permits more large taxpayers to directly transact with the agency online, officials said. It is estimated that the enhanced system will be used by up to 1,000 taxpayers in 40 computerized revenue district offices of the agency by end of 2003. The system also includes a tools to permit users to calculate taxes, receipts, and confirm payments made. The eFPS is connected to a number of accredited banks, including Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Philippine National Bank, Union Bank of the Philippines, Bank of the Philippine Islands, Security Bank Corporation, Banco de Oro, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company, Equitable PCI Bank and Bancnet.

http://www.inq7.net/inf/2003/dec/15/inf_1-1.htm

Project relating to PKI

It is not well understood why Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) is not being used. As a result, members of the Organization for the Advancement of Structured Information Standards (OASIS), a not-for-profit international consortium working on global standards for e-business, aims to consider low take-up. The consortium has published an Action Plan to help reduce the barriers associated with the use of PKI. The OASIS PKI Action Plan has taken into account the results of a series of surveys conducted by the OASIS PKI Technical Committee. The surveys, conducted with members of staff who have deployed or attempted to deploy PKI solutions, highlighted five main problems:

- Poor or no support in software applications.
- High cost.
- Lack of any understanding of PKI among senior managers and end users.
- Problems with interoperability problems.
- Poor concentration on business needs.

http://www.oasis-open.org/news/oasis_news_02_23_04.php
The Action Plan is available at <http://www.oasis-open.org/committees/pki/pkiactionplan.pdf>

Identity cards

■ Estonia and Finland

AS Sertifitseerimiskeskus is a certification authority in Estonia that maintains a new initiative called OpenXAdES, which is used to provide a digital signature infrastructure. The original idea rests with AS Sertifitseerimiskeskus, who now acts to coordinate the main project and provides quality assurance. The OpenXAdES project is funded by a number of public and private sector sources in Estonia.

The main reason for this project was the introduction of the Estonian identity card and digital signature project in 2002. There is a call for the community to test the system and to provide feedback, including testing the end user applications and portals. Väestorekisterikeskus (Population Register Centre) of Finland has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with AS Sertifitseerimiskeskus, with a view to the application of OpenXAdES within and between Finland and Estonia to facilitate the exchange of digital signatures and documents.

<http://www.openxades.org/community.html>
<http://www.id.ee/pages.php/0303>

■ Spain

On 13 February 2004, the Spanish Council of Ministers approved, by government decree, the creation and distribution to Spanish citizens of electronic national identity cards incorporating a biometric measurement. Among other things, the card is intended to permit people to obtain access to on-line government services and to enable users to have a secure method of identification and authentication for other services, such as internet banking.

The electronic identity cards will contain the following information stored in an embedded microchip:

- An electronic certificate to authenticate the identity of the cardholder.
- A certified digital signature, allowing the holder to sign electronically. The identity of the holder will be verified and a certificate issues by a certification authority, intended to be a public body, that has yet to be appointed by the Spanish Government.
- Keys for its use.
- A biometric measurement of the person's fingerprint.
- A photograph of the holder in digital format.
- An electronic signature in the form of a scanned image of the holder's manuscript signature.
- The current personal data that is also printed on the present version of the identity card, such as date of birth and place of residence.

The aim is distribute the new identity cards gradually. About 29 million people have an identity card in Spain, and approximately 6 million identity cards are renewed each year. It is planned to issue some 100,000 cards during 2004 to test the new card. If successful, it is planned to increase the number of electronic identity cards, ensuring every person is in receipt of an electronic identity card by 2007. The process of authentication will be by way of a personal identity number. Apparently the card is meant to be read by card readers. Software may also be required, which can be downloaded from the internet.

There was no parliamentary debate on the introduction of electronic identity cards and the Commission for Freedoms and Informatics indicated that the new card was imposed without any debate.

<http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/ida/jsps/index.jsp?fuseAction=showDocument&parent=whatsnew&documentID=1552>
http://www.vnunet.es/Actualidad/Noticias/Inform%C3%A1tica_personal/Mundo_digital/20030829041

Legislation

■ Azerbaijan

A Bill on Electronic Signatures and Electronic Documents had its last reading on 9 March 2004 in the Milli Mejlis of Azerbaijan (Parliament) and was signed on the same date by the President. The President issued a decree implementing the law on 26 May 2004 and it was published on 1 June 2004, the date it came into force. The new law provides for electronic signatures to have the same evidential value as manuscript signatures. It also introduces certificate authorities under special agreements between the appropriate executive authorities and people who apply for certificates. The certifying authority will be obliged to enter the relevant certification data on to the consolidated state register. A certification authority can be a legal entity or an individual. They will be required to hold the appropriate licences from the relevant executive authority.

Further information is available at <http://www.ebrd.com/country/sector/law/new/dv04.pdf> and <http://www.nicts.az:8104/index.html>

Additional information from Elmir Velizadeh, Chief of Information Resources and Technologies of the Office of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan

■ Bosnia and Herzegovina

UNDP BiH will assist the Council of Ministers to draft and prepare three laws to regulate e-commerce, namely electronic signatures, electronic business and law on certification agencies aimed at regulating e-commerce in the country.

A news item is available at http://www.fena.ba/uk/vijest.html?fena_id=FSA166052&rubrika=ES

■ China

The Electronic Signature Law of the People's Republic of China was passed on 28 August 2004. The 11th meeting of the 10th Standing Committee of National People's Congress passed the law. It was published in the Official Gazette and in Legal Daily on 30 August 2004, No.6898. The law will enter force on 1st April 2005.

The law is available in Chinese from http://news.xinhuanet.com/it/2004-08/30/content_1925374.htm and <http://news.sina.com.cn/c/2004-08-28/20473521573s.shtml>

A news item in English is available at <http://www.interfax.com/com?id=5751267&item=Chin>

The Shanghai Municipal People's Congress intends to enact an 'Electronic Transaction Ordinance', which will be consistent with the Electronic Signature Law. The scope might be broader than the law. This is because the ordinance will include the liability of the parties in electronic transactions and will such issues as arbitration in relation to electronic transactions. Local governments in Beijing and Guangdong Province also intend to enact similar ordinances.

News items available at http://www.law-lib.com/law/law_view.asp?id=86440 and <http://www.spccs.sh.cn/>

Additional information provided by Minyan Wang, China correspondent

■ Cyprus

The House of Representatives enacted the Law on the Legal Framework for Electronic Signatures and Associated Matters of 2004, Law No. 188(I)/2004 on 30 April 2004. The Act entered into force on the date of its publication in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Cyprus, 30 April 2004.

Up-date provided by Olga Georgiades Van der Pol, Cyprus correspondent

■ Egypt

Law No. 15/2004 on E-signature and Establishment of the Information Technology Industry Development Authority (ITIDA) was adopted by Parliament on Saturday, 17th April, 2004.

A version translated into English is available at <http://www.bakernet.com/ecommerce/egypt-e-signature-law.doc>

■ Nepal

The Electronic Transaction and Digital Signature Act 2004 came in to effect after it received the royal assent as an ordinance from His Majesty King Gyanendra in the autumn of 2004.

A news item is available at <http://asiamedia.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=14934>

■ Poland

On 4 October 2004 the Polish Chamber of IT and Telecommunication (PIIT), www.piit.org.pl, issued an opinion recommending changes to the Polish act on the electronic signature. The Chamber indicates that the definition of the secure signature creation devices (SSCD) used in the Polish Act differs from the definition in the Appendix III of the Directive 93/99/WE. The Polish definition lacks, for example, the requirement that data used for secure signatures may only be repeated once and that their confidentiality shall be secured in adequate way. On the other hand the Polish definition adds a requirement that the device must allow easy recognition of changes in the device that may be important for the security. Additionally, there are implementation provisions of the Polish act that PIIT views as interfering with the technological neutrality of the requirements for the SSCD because they indicate specific encrypting techniques, thus blocking development of other techniques. Furthermore, the Polish act does not specify a body competent to qualify the SSCD as secure, which is required under art. 3 sec. 4 of the Directive. PIIT recommends that the changes to Polish law be made as soon as possible otherwise exposing Polish development of e-society to risk, not to mention the consequences for inadequate implementation of the Directive.

Up-date provided by Tomasz Kozlowski, correspondent for Poland

Electronic signatures

■ Opinions relating to electronic signatures

The Texas Attorney General was recently requested to respond to the following questions:
Re: Whether a county clerk must accept for

recording a paper copy, containing printed images of signatures or a printed image of a notary seal, of an electronic record of a real estate transaction. The four questions were:

1. Does [the UETA] or [the E-Sign Act] require a County Clerk to accept real estate filings which contain printed images of signatures rather than original pen and ink signatures?
2. Does [the UETA] and/or Government Code § 406.013 [pertaining to a notary public's seal] require a County Clerk to accept real estate filings which contain a printed image of a notary seal rather than an original stamped or embossed seal?
3. Does [the UETA] and/or Government Code § 406.013 require a County Clerk to accept real estate filings which are faxed? Is this requirement limited to paper documents purporting to be electronically generated or may any real estate filing be faxed?
4. Is a County Clerk subject to the civil penalty provisions of Property Code § 11.004(b) for refusing to accept an "electronically generated" real estate filing?

Opinion No. GA-0228 is to be found at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/opinions/op50abbott/ga-0228.htm>

■ OECD e-Signature survey

The final version of the OECD e-signature survey was released earlier this year.

The survey report is available at [http://www.oelis.org/olis/2003doc.nsf/LinkTo/dsti-iccp-reg\(2003\)9-final](http://www.oelis.org/olis/2003doc.nsf/LinkTo/dsti-iccp-reg(2003)9-final)

■ Scanned manuscript signatures

Slovakia has begun to issue new driving licences on a plastic card format. The card will include a photograph and the scanned manuscript signature of the person authorized to drive in digital form. Apparently it is intended to integrate biometric features such as fingerprints in the documents at a future date. This is a similar exercise as carried out in Bosnia Herzegovina, where a digital representation of the card holder's fingerprints have been included in the card.

A news item 'Siemens digitising Slovak driver's licence system' by John Tilak, 18 October 2004, Digital Media Europe is available at <http://www.dmeurope.com/default.asp?ArticleID=3781>

■ Digital signatures

Adobe Acrobat

David Becker, staff writer of CNET News.com, reported on 8 June 2004 that Adobe Systems entered into a partnership with Identrus to include secure digital signatures to documents based on Adobe's portable document format (pdf). Apparently Identrus will incorporate its SimpleSign service with Adobe's Acrobat applications for creating files in pdf format.

A news item is available at
http://news.com.com/2110-1012_3-5228673.html

BACSTEL-iP

The automated payment process system by BACS is undergoing a change. As part of a four stage process, BACSTEL-iP is being introduced to obtain access to the BACS Electronic Funds Processing service. The present end-to-end communication protocols, using manually based password systems, is to be replaced. BACSTEL-iP utilizes Internet Protocol and Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) to create a new method of authorizing payments. It is intended that BACSTEL-iP will replace the existing BACSTEL service by December 2005.

End users are sponsored by their host bank, and will be able to submit payments directly to BACS. Individual banks are issued with PKI credentials, and effectively become the Certification Authority for the credentials issued to each customer. BACS becomes the relying party and is required to check the certificate with the host bank. A Trust Service Code of Conduct governs the arrangements, and each customer is required to sign a set of terms with their bank.

More information is available at
<http://www.bacstel-ip.com/direct/>

e-Prescriptions

The United Kingdom government intend to amend the Prescription Only Medicines (Human Use) Order 1997 to permit the use of advanced electronic signatures on prescriptions that are to be transmitted electronically. The proposal (MLX 310 dated 2 August 2004) is to require the use of an advanced electronic signature rather than an electronic signature, because it is asserted that the former is more secure than an electronic signature.

Comments should be addressed to Roy Drepaul, MHRA, Market Towers, 1, Nine Elms Lane, London SW8 5NQ to arrive no later than 29 October 2004.

e-Conveyancing

The Land Title Branch Electronic Filing System (EFS) in British Columbia has introduced a system that enables authorized users to submit Land Title documents electronically for registration. This does away with the need to attend the Land Title Office for this purpose.

The project is an objective of the second goal of the 2002 - 2005 Service Plan, which is available at
<http://www.bcbudget.gov.bc.ca/sp2003/srm/srm.pdf>

Digital signatures: standards and call for European e-signature policy framework

On 7 October 2004 the French Committee for Banking Organization and Standardization announced that it had adopted the PRIS specifications for digital certificates as a common standard for the banking sector. There is also a call for a pan-European e-signature policy framework.

An article by ITR Manager.com dated 8 October 2004 is available at <http://www.itrmanager.com/article.php?oid=31214>, and further information is available at http://www.adae.gouv.fr/article.php?id_article=547&var_recherche=PRIS%2Bv2 and <http://europa.eu.int/ida/en/document/3379/194>

Electronic signature safety seal

The China E-commerce Association and the Material Evidence Validation Center of the Ministry of Public Security (<http://www.esca.cn>) have developed a 'China Secure Electronic Signature System'. It comprises two parts: an electronic seal and a digital signature. This means there will be an electronic seal associated with the document when a person sends the communication. The procedure applying for the electronic signature is as follows:

1. An individual or legal entity requiring an electronic seal and digital signature registers themselves on

- the website at <http://www.esca.cn>.
2. They order a digital signature. It is called 'e-seal'.
When ordering, the individual or the legal entity needs to provide the information required on the application form, select one seal format and make arrangements for payment.
 3. The individual or legal entity must then go to the relevant department to provide suitable documentation to confirm their identity.
 4. If the department is convinced of the veracity of their identity, they will receive the e-seal.
 5. When using the e-seal, the individual or the legal entity only needs to place the e-seal on the computer and enter the password. They need to encrypt the document, and the seal will appear on the document in the correct location. The document can then be sent to the recipient.
- The digital signature employed in this system already meets the requirement by the electronic signature law. This signature is expensive, and it does not cover the whole of China. As a result, the application is limited. The China International Travel Service, China International Economic Consulting Company, and Shanghai Zhongtai Industry Company have adopted this system to sign contracts with overseas businesses.

News item 'Electronic Signature Standards Released' dated 11 November 2005 at
<http://www.chinatechnews.com/index.php?action=show&type=news&id=2097>

Additional information provided by Minyan Wang, China correspondent

Authentication

■ The Netherlands

The Dutch government intends to provide everybody with a generic authentication electronic signature service that will provide for the identification of a user across the systems of different public authorities. The 'Burgerpin' is to be introduced on 1 January 2005. A user will be able to register on-line for a 'Burgerpin', which will comprise a user-name and a password. A user will also be required to provide personal details and to sign a waiver that releases the public authorities from responsibility for any misuse of their data.

Apparently the system is also intended to make it easier for users to interact between public authorities and businesses, as well as between public sector bodies. The Tax and Customs

Administration will provisionally manage the system until an appropriate organization is appointed to run the system.

See a news release by EGEM, the Dutch e-Communes programme 'Congres over legitimatie van burgers via Internet (NAV)' available at
<http://www.egem.nl/egem/index.jsp;sessionid=C406BFF9B73E75A84792D6A07920F963?artikel=1505>. The Burgerpin web site is at
<http://www.burgerpin.nl/>

Voting over the internet

■ Switzerland

In September 2004, 2,723 people in four Geneva suburbs (approximately 22 percent of those eligible to vote and who participated in the referendum) voted by way of the internet on a variety of issues, including naturalization laws, maternity leave and postal reform. Apparently it took 13 minutes and 5 seconds to count the contents of the on-line ballot box.

The voting system used in Geneva used software that the local authorities developed. The system is also the subject of a joint copyright with the Swiss office of Hewlett Packard and the Geneva-based online security firm Wisekey. Every citizen of the four suburbs received a card from the local authority that offered three voting options: in person, by post or by way of the internet. Two codes were included on each card: one code containing 16 characters and second security code containing four characters. Each person using the code has to reveal the code by scratching across the code to reveal the number. A person could then log on to a special web site where they typed in their personal code to establish a secure connection. Once the secure connection was effected, they then received a ballot form in electronic format. The person voting then had to type in the security code and their date and place of birth.

A news item by Jonathan Fowler 'Switzerland Tests Virtual Democracy in National Referendum' Associated Press Writer, September 26, 2004 is available at
http://www.technologyreview.com/articles/04/09/ap_092604.asp?trk=nl

■ France

Members of the French Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI) were elected through an internet voting system in France. The

elections, covering Paris, Grenoble, Bordeaux, Nice, and Alençon, started on 13 October and ended on 3 November 2004. Some 340,000 company managers and shop owners are eligible to vote. Each voter was provided with a personal user identification number and a password that permits the person casting their vote to obtain access the web site in order to cast their vote.

The National Commission for Informatics and Liberty (CNIL) published an opinion on the intended internet voting system on 8 October 2004, in response to a request by the French Government. The opinion was generally positive. The authors requested an additional independent audit to be carried out during the elections to assess the security of the system and to make sure voting was secret. The Commission also asked for a final report after the elections on how the system was implemented and how it functioned.

According to the CNIL, authenticating a voter by way a user by the twin devices of an identification code and a password provides a security level similar to that of postal voting. This is acceptable for elections to professional bodies, but not necessarily for other types of elections. Apparently there are plans for further pilot projects involving internet voting scheduled in France.

The voting web site is available at

<http://www.votez.cci.fr/>

An information notice 'Les CCI pionnières du vote par Internet' is available at http://www.acfci.cci.fr/elections/vote_par_internet.htm

The Opinion, Délibération n° 04-073 du 21 septembre 2004 relative à une demande d'avis portant sur la mise en œuvre d'un système de vote électronique à distance pour l'élection des membres des chambres de commerce et d'industrie, 01 Jul 2004 - Thème(s): Citoyenneté is available at

<http://www.cnil.fr/index.php?id=1673>

A press release by the National Commission for Informatics and Liberty is available at

<http://www.cnil.fr/index.php?id=1675&news%5Buid%5D=203&cHash=7611423484>

Registration cards

■ Belgium

A Royal Decree published in the Belgian Official Journal (BELGISCH STAATSBLAD — 15.09.2004 Ed. 2 — MONITEUR BELGE) on 15 September 2004 has established the legal requirement for every member of a Belgian commune to be required to include his or her personal details on a national register. This decree also refers to the

Royal Decrees of 25 March 2003 concerning the issue of cards and 25 March 2003 concerning transitional measures for the issue of electronic cards, both published in the Belgian Journal on 28 March 2003.

The scheme was initially tested in March 2003. Cards were issued to a group of civil servants working for one of 11 communes involved in the government's pilot project, and subsequently to residents around 70,000 cards were issued. The remaining municipalities (578) will be required to ensure every person is registered by December 2009.

Once registered, a card is issued that is valid for five years. The card will include a microchip that will store the following personal data: date of birth, names of parents, civil status, current and past addresses, and military status. This personal information, linked to the central population register, will be updated using a Public Key Infrastructure. The microchip contains two digital signatures: one to identify the card holder and the second for signing documents in electronic format. The card holder will also be able to affix a digital signature as a means of authentication. Remote authentication and signing of transactions will take place via a card reader connected to a computer.

Telecoms operator Belgacom will operate the network infrastructure and the IT service company Steria will provide the infrastructure and services in order to set up the card system. It is envisaged that a card holder will be able to obtain access to e-government applications with this card. It is also anticipated that other organizations, such as banks, will develop services that can be used with the card.

The Royal Decrees

Dutch:

1 September 2004. - Koninklijk besluit houdende de beslissing om de elektronische identiteitskaart veralgemeend in te voeren, bl. 67527.

1 September 2004. - Koninklijk besluit tot wijziging van het koninklijk besluit van 25 maart 2003 houdende overgangsmaatregelen in verband met de elektronische identiteitskaart, bl. 67528.
French:

1er Septembre 2004. - Arrêté royal portant la décision de procéder à l'introduction généralisée de la carte d'identité électronique, p. 67527.

1er Septembre 2004. - Arrêté royal modifiant l'arrêté royal du 25 mars 2003 portant des

mesures transitoires relatives à la carte d'identité électronique, p. 67528.

General web site for legislation:

<http://www.staatsblad.be>

A press release from Steria is available at

<http://www.steria.com/press/releaseidcardbelg.htm>

A news item 'Belgian e-ID card enters deployment phase' on eGovernment news is available at

<http://europa.eu.int/ida/en/document/3301/194>

Up-date revised by Katia Bodard, Belgian correspondent

■ Malaysia

It is intended to issue a registration card to all Malaysians by the end of 2005. The card, named MyKad, will have a number of purposes, incorporating both government and private sector applications on the same card. The word 'My' is Malaysia's internet address as well as meaning personal ownership, and 'Kad' is a dual acronym of 'Kad Akuan Diri' which means personal identification card and 'Kad Aplikasi Digital', meaning digital application card. In Malaysia, it is a legal requirement for every individual to carry a registration card from the age of 12 years. The card has the ability to function as a registration card and a driving licence. It can also incorporate records relating to immigration status and health care. It can also be used to pay for public transport, toll roads (there is no need for contact when using it for these purposes), and electronic banking.

The card contains a 64K dual interface chip card. This enables the same chip to be used by way of the internet. The card has a built-in antenna, which enables it to be read without the need for the card to be in contact with any reader device. Biometric measurements are taken of the fingerprints of the person who is issued with the card. The measurements are stored on the chip. Each card has a photograph of the person to whom the card is issued. The card also includes a digital signature. An authenticated desktop reader called a Card Access Device controls security to the information stored in the protective area of the card. This in turn is authenticated with a central host using a Host Security Module device. There is also a Mobile Card Acceptance Device. This is a handheld device used by enforcement officers from various government agencies to obtain access to information stored on the card, and to

verify the biometric measurement of a fingerprint. These mobile readers can also be used to update the information stored on the cards, undertake checks via radio frequency and download identity verification of cardholders using biometrics.

A news item 'Malaysia issues dual interface 'MyKad' ID card nationwide' dated Thursday, September 30 2004 is available at <http://www.contactlessnews.com/library/2004/09/30/malaysia-issues-dual-interface-mykad-id-card-nationwide/>

See also https://www.mykadonline.com.my/faq_general.htm

Product

Groove Virtual Office comes from Groove Networks, Inc. (<http://www.groove.net>). This software provides a secure on-line and off-line environment to enable people to collaborate together, such as the sharing of files and projects, to larger-scale sharing of enterprise data and workflow processes. With the nature of work changing and workers becoming increasingly mobile and geographically disparate from each other, one very interesting by-product of this technology is its huge potential to expedite the use of either simple or advanced electronic signatures, or both, either to sign legal contracts or simply to authorise the next step of a business process. The product provides an environment of core capabilities and utilities (such as presence awareness, alerts, personal communication channels and 192-bit encryption security), supplemented by tools and templates (such as calendar, file sharing, document review, discussion, forms and others), each of which can be combined together in different permutations to provide the members of a project team with a virtual workspace appropriate to their needs. The product resides on the hard drive of each user's desktop or laptop computer. The decentralised nature of the product enables a user to continue to use the data, even where they are not connected to the internet. It is claimed that by using the product, it can transform a simple information container into an active workspace where people share, discuss, debate, decide, act and even electronically sign documents.

Further information about Groove in the United Kingdom can be found at <http://www.d2i.co.uk>.