eGON

NEWS
ISSS Special

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eGON´s Heart is Beating

Ivan Langer has an affection which he cannot hide any more. It has become a public secret that he has a soft spot for a two year old being that has a tendency of turning peoples´ lives upside down, not speaking about the Minister. Can you guess who that is? No?? His name is eGON.

When did eGovernment first came to your mind?

I was standing in a line at a public office, looking at the angry people ahead of me and feeling at my back a number of others in the line behind me, who were even angrier. I watched a tired official behind the counter and it came to my mind that yes, these people have to come here because the government asks them to so. But why doesn't the government try to make it a bit less burdening? All we need is a good idea and plenty of good will, I thought … This is exactly what came to my mind when we first started tackling the idea of eGovernment.

eGON is a symbol of Government. Would you tell us in a nutshell about the eGovernment achievements? How do you evaluate the process?

Two and a half years ago, when I came to the Ministry, we drafted a plan which we have been following ever since, step by step. Most people are aware of the first milestone – Czech POINT. The second milestone was KIVS – the public administration communication infrastructure – and the others followed – the eGovernment Act and the project of eBoxes, which is currently reaching its peak. We decided to introduce the eBoxes in order accelerate the services provided to the public and to make them cheaper and more efficient. We are also working on central registers. The registers will keep up-to-date information only and such entries will be considered correct.

Which steps do you consider most important for the future development of eGovernment in the CR?

Setting priorities is hard. Everything matters and individual elements will not function separately. But if I was forced to prioritize, I would say that my priority number one is the eBoxes followed by the central registers and the electronic ID.

Can our approach to eGovernment inspire other European countries? If so, how?

I think that our eGovernment efforts may serve an inspiration for many European countries for they suffer from very similar problems. In brief - the European countries appreciate the complexity of our approach and the ease of communication. For example, I have seen many positive reactions to the Czech POINT. eGON and his principles can be very helpful for the entire EU. The European Commission took him as an inspiration for its new information society strategy.

Our eGovernment goals are quite audacious – is there a point which you personally wish to reach?

I would like to live to see that all my colleagues and I have been working on, all we have been implementing step by step, milestone after milestone, became commonplace for all people. It has already happen to the Czech POINT services which had been perceived by many, only two years ago when the project was first launched, as sci-fi.

I hope I will one day sit down at my home computer and take care of all the necessary „paperwork" directly from my armchair.

We know that you have a soft spot for eGON. What is it about him you like the most?

eGon helps us explain how eGovernment should work. He clearly shows that, in order to function properly, all his body parts have to cooperate. Almost the same as in the human body.

At the moment I am thrilled that his hart is starting to beat. Even though his hands have been working hard, his blood circulation system has been functional and his head is full of great ideas, it has been a being without emotions. It is the heart which will make him, as it does with every being, a true human. It is exactly what we are experiencing now in relation to the eBoxes.

At this year's ISSS, eGON will celebrate his second birthday. What will you wish him?

I wish he did not loose his energy and drive. I wish he remained courageous and enthusiastic to live his life fully and be adventurous. Last but not least, I wish he always had adventures to enjoy.

As a birthday gift, eGON will get the eBoxes. Is it a gift you would with to get, too?

Exactly so. I wish to get one for my birthday, too. I think eGON will be thrilled. The gift will change his life beyond imagination.

Would you adopt eGON?

Yes, I would, if he needed it... But I think that such an independent, courageous and vital being does not need any protection. I think it will be me who will seek the help of the other ☺.

Editors

Introduction

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished conference participants,

Welcome to our conference Internet in Public Administration and Self-Administration 2009. This year, our conference takes place under the auspices of the Czech Presidency, Mirek Topolánek, the Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, Ivan Langer, the Minister of Interior of the Czech Republic, and the Association of Regions of the Czech Republic. Our conference is a traditional gathering of distinguished politicians, representatives of the Czech public administration, IT experts, and suppliers of ICT technologies and services.

The Czech public administration is currently facing a significant challenge concerning the development of eGovernment. We have recently accelerated our steps towards the full use of IT. In July 2009, we await a significant breakthrough due to the Act No. 300/2008 Coll. introducing a remarkable step ahead in our public administration operations – the introduction of eBoxes.

Many speakers plan to focus their speeches and presentations on eBoxes and related matter. Of course, we will have the opportunity to debate a number of other issues. The conference agenda was drafted in the light of the current massive development of ICT technologies and their extended use in many areas of public life, which closely relate to the public administration – health care, justice, tourism, digital TV broadcasting, etc. Many of these fields will be covered in separate presentations.

In the conference agenda, you will find many other traditional activities, such as LORIS – an international conference on twinning and partnership of European municipalities and V4DIS – a Visegrad conference on cooperation within the extended Visegrad region. On Tuesday, the Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic plans to organize yet another international event – a conference on Czech Republic and European citizen's eldentity. Last but not least, we will, as every year, announce winners of our ever so popular contests – Zlatý Erb, Eurocrest, Biblioweb, JuniorErb, or Ministry of Interior of the Czech Republic Award.

RNDr. Tomáš Renčín, Director, ISSS/LORIS/V4DIS 2009

ISSS
Internet ve státní správě a samosprávě
LOCAL AND REGIONAL INFORMATION SOCIETY
Visegrádská konference V4DIS

European Level of eGovernment

On the eve of "eID and Public Registers" a conference to be held in the Czech Republic, we asked Mrs. Lenka Ptáčková Melicharová, the Deputy Minister of the Interior, about the Czech Presidency and the European eGovernment.

eID and Public Registers Conference

In the process of the European integration, we have managed to overcome a number of barriers to the free movement of people, goods, and money. However, the rapid development of eGovernment requires interoperability of individual systems as well as mutual electronic identification to further remove barriers among the member states. Barriers and limitations need to be removed to make Europe into a real „Europe without barriers", offering its citizens full access to the electronic public administration regardless of place and time.

The Czech Republic, thanks to projects such as the central registers or the eGovernment Act bill, has also made a significant progress. That is why the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic decided to organize, under the auspices of the Czech Presidency and in the cooperation with the European Commission, a conference "eID and Public Registers" to share its experience with the rest of Europe.

The conference will take place in the Municipality of Hradec Kralove, ALDIS congress centre, on April 7, 2009. Prior to the conference, on April 6, participants will meet at two STORK projects meeting (an expert meeting of so called reference group on electronic identification and a meetings of representatives of those member states wishing to newly join the project) and have an opening dinner in Prague. The conference, together with the annual gathering Internet in Public Administration and Self-government (ISSS) organized in the Czech Republic at the beginning of April, shall help to improve the public administration performance not only in our country but Europe-wide.

In the Czech Republic, attention is clearly paid primarily to eGovernment projects, such as CzechPOINTs, data boxes, and central registers. What about eGovernment on the European level?

Similarly to the Czech Republic, many EU countries have suffered problems in the context of data sharing, which we decided to solve with the help of central registers. Simultaneously with our launching of „Europe without Barriers", under which we have managed to remove many obstacles, we shall continue removing barriers related to eGovernment. We shall facilitate information sharing on both national and European level. Our freedom of movement needs to be supported by across the border services. An explicit and legally verified identification in electronic communication represents one of the key elements of the development of eGovernment in Europe.

Are these just visions of the European officials, or are there real projects out there?

The mutual recognition of electronic IDs (eID) and the authenticated access to public services across Europe belong to the i2010 Strategy priorities. The European Commission is fully aware of this problem. That is why it took the competitiveness and innovations program (so called programme CIP ICT-PSP) to provide a significant support to STORK, a project intended to create a compatible system of mutual recognition of identity among the EU member states. PEPPOL, yet another European project supported by the CIP ICT-PSP programme, concentrates on aspects related to the public procurement process (so called eProcurement).

The STORK project sounds very interesting. Can you tell us a bit more?

In the first phase, the authorities will review the existing national identification solutions. Based on this analysis, they will propose a model of an electronic exchange of necessary identification data which will be independent of the national solutions. In the pilot phase, the operators will test five model situations, such as the exchange of electronic documents among different states, an online change of address of a person moving to a different country, or safe chat rooms for children where all participants must reveal their true identity.

Will these activities reflect in the Czech Presidency?

For sure. The Ministry of the Interior, in cooperation with the European Commission, organizes a conference on "eID and Public Registers". Here I would refer you to one of the following articles. Let me just say that this conference will take place in synergy with our traditional conference called Internet in Public Administration and Self-government (ISSS) to facilitate discussion on the future of the European eGovernment and to familiarize the Czech public administration with STORK and other important projects.

As far as child safety is concerned, we have planned to organize, on April 20, a ministerial conference on „Making the Internet "Safer Internet for Children". At the conference we will, next to the police cooperation in this field, concentrate on social networks, such as Facebook or YouTube, and grooming, when the Internet anonymity helps perpetrators hide their identity in order to lure minors to dates which may end in sexual abuse.

Would you tell us a bit about the future involvement of the Ministry of the Interior in the European eGovernment?

In relation to the information society, which also covers eGovernment, we should not forget that our Minister of the Interior, Ivan Langer, not only presides over the Justice and Home Affairs Council, but also chairs the Council of Ministers of Telecommunications, which had met in Brussels only a couple days ago.

What were the main points on the meeting agenda?

Most speakers concentrated on the financial crisis, which has had a significant impact on the information and communication technology. The European Commission proposed to fight the crisis with the help of a European Recovery Plan. Under this plan, one billion Euros will be invested into broadband Internet primarily in remote rural areas. The European Commission closely follows the situation in the individual member states to determine how Europe may offer its forces in fighting the crisis. *Mgr. Jiří Průša*

One Year in Schengen

In December 2007, the Czech Republic, together with eight other countries, joined the Schengen area. The founding Schengen agreements were signed in 1985 and at the moment, the Schengen area counts 25 European countries, territories of which enjoy full freedom of movement of people and goods. The Schengen member states are not divided by borders any more. Membership in Schengen is not limited to the EU member states only and not all EU member states belong to the area. Switzerland, a non-EU country, joined Schengen in December 2008.

The Schengen agreement facilitated rapid development of across the border cooperation and further enhanced partnership of neighbouring countries contacts of which are no longer limited to border crossings. There are no restrictions to free movement any more, with the exception of limitations related to the protection of nature and private property and, in some cases, road safety. However, nothing is for free. The free movement within the Schengen area, faster check-in at airports and seaports, and many other advantages require the increased protection of the outer borders of the area. The Schengen member countries have made use of a number of tools to provide for their safety and to control migration. The most important of these tools is SIS – the Schengen Information System – which had been created by the member countries prior to the enlargement (SIS became operational as early as 1995). SIS is a common database which contains data on wanted persons, illegal aliens, or stolen travel documents and vehicles. SIS is a main crime prevention tool. It limits movement of illegal or otherwise unwanted aliens, assists in the border control (by facilitating extraditions), etc. Sharing of information via SIS has proven successful. Many times, SIS has assisted the Czech authorities in searching for people and items (travel documents, weapons, vehicles, etc.).

VIS – the visa information system – is yet another tool to strengthen security and to prevent misuse of visas or international protection.

Pursuant to the Schengen enlargement, the member countries decided to develop a new generation of SIS – the so called SIS II. SIS II should improve the process of data sharing among the members. It is designed as a robust platform to host many new elements of the information system.

SIS against the Car Theft

One may conclude that the free movement of goods and people within the Schengen area will make life easier not only for the EU public at large, but also for those, who tend to violate the law. It is by no means true. The Schengen Information System data may be used for many purposes. As mentioned above, SIS keeps data about persons as well as lost or stolen identification documents, weapons, and vehicles. Let us focus on results of SIS in the area of searching for vehicles. In relation to every stolen vehicle, SIS keeps its VIN (as a vehicle identifier) and three other Europe-wide recognized attributes: the title to the vehicle, the certificate of vehicle registration, and the registration plate. Any motion to register a vehicle of a request to change the registration data submitted to the relevant authorities generate an automatic query into SIS. In case of a hit, the case is forwarded for investigation in cooperation with the Police of the Czech Republic. The table below shows the number of hits indicating a suspicion of unlawful manipulation with a stolen vehicle. 200 of the total of 1511 hits - VIN numbers detected in the Czech Republic and associated to a VIN number registered in SIS – were positive and revealed stolen vehicles. Do you think this number is not high enough? It is about one successfully intercepted stolen vehicle per a work day. There are many successful queries to other vehicle attributes as well. The Schengen area has given us the much desired freedom. On the other hand, SIS undoubtedly made the life much more difficult for those who abuse the Schengen system and violate the law.

Ing. Tomáš Holenda and editors

SIS Stolen Vehicles Hits (March 2008 – March 2009)

Title to the vehicle	381
Certificate of vehicle registration	21
Registration plate	2847
VIN number	1511
Total	4760