e-Experience export

What could other countries learn from Estonia's experience?

- e-Governance is a comprehensive system of organ-izational, regulative and technological measures, not just computer software and hardware. To achieve results, a government must have a vision and a plan realised through good leadership and resources. To make the big leap forward in developing fully func-tional e-governance, the cooperation of the public, private and NGO sectors is crucial.

- The role of the government is to guarantee the exist-ence of the fundamental elements: internet connec-tivity, digital identity, secure data exchange, trusted digital signatures. Once these are in place, services from both the government and private sector will quickly appear. The first premise for the use of solutions is the secure identification of its users, which in Estonia has been resolved using the ID card. The ID card is a mandatory document in Estonia, so it is simple to authenticate citizens remotely.

- Estonia has decided not to build super-databases, or to consolidate sensitive information in one place. Each agency maintains its own databases and is responsible for the quality of the data. The X-road secure data exchange platform integrates data from each registry to facilitate services to the public. The national portal eesti.ee makes a variety of e-services easy to find and use.

- Personal information must be protected. Everyone must be able to check the accuracy of their data, as well as monitor its practical use.

- Governments must be able to guard against cyber attacks to guarantee safe access to the internet through all devices, and to educate and raise aware-ness among users.

In which countries has Estonia helped to develop an information society?

- Estonia has shared its e-governance journey with 60 governments and exported its solutions to over 130 countries around the world. Some examples: Finland, Ukraine, Macedonia, Albania, Moldova, Palestine, Montenegro, Namibia, Tunisia, the Faroe Islands, Georgia, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, India, Cyprus, Oman, Azerbaijan and others.

In addition to faster records management, has e-government also changed how democracy functions?

- There is greater transparency and more information freely available — core prerequisites for a functioning democracy. The Public Information Act passed in Estonia in 2001 was an effective step because it prioritised the creation of websites for every public authority and regulated what information these should include.

- The abundance and convenience of e-services has increased confidence in both the state and tech-nology, which is also a condition and sign of a func-tioning (e)democracy. IT platforms (e-Governance tools such as VOLIS, osale.ee) have made the decision-making process more transparent and this has greatly reduced corruption.

- The option to vote online improves accessibility to elections and also reflects public trust in tech-nology and state. Compared to other electronic voting systems used elsewhere that rely on special voting devices set up at polling stations, the Estonian internet voting solution is convenient and secure, allowing voters to cast their ballots from a location of their choosing (home, office, abroad), without having to go to a polling station. For example, during the 2019 elections, votes were received from 143 countries.

- Nevertheless, even technology has not been able to provide such dialogue between the state and its individual citizens as to facilitate active and direct participation in the decisions that affect them.