

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is on a state visit to Ireland, appeared in Dublin at the Institute of European Affairs with a presentation about e-government and innovation.

“It is paradoxical that Estonia became an e-country “thanks” to nearly a half century of Soviet occupation,” President Ilves said. “When Estonian independence was restored in 1991, there was nothing to be done with the structures that the occupation regime left behind. Many of the features that are characteristic of normal countries, such as banks, were totally missing.”

According to President Ilves, the basic engine for Estonia’s e-revolution was the internetization of all the schools in the course of the Tiger’s Leap project and the development of Internet banking. “This has created a situation in Estonia today, where 66 percent of the population uses the Internet, and over half the households have a home computer, of which 90 percent are connected to the Internet. Whereas permanent Internet connections are available throughout Estonia,” the Head of State said.

The audience was very interested in Estonia’s experiences with conducting e-elections and in the use of ID-cards generally, as well as the possibility of using the e-tax board environment to file tax declarations.

“Although an e-country has clear benefits—savings in time and human resources, and the reduction of corruption—there are also great risks,” President Ilves noted. “Estonia has not experienced any serious system errors, but last year we experienced a massive and coordinated cyberattack against the country with the goal of crippling the work of state institutions, banks and information channels, in order to destabilize the situation in the country.”

“Today, a NATO cybersecurity center will be established in Estonia, although European Union legislation to combat cybercrime and cyberattacks should also be worked out as soon as possible,” President Ilves stressed.

Tomorrow, on the last day of the state visit to Ireland, the Estonian Head of State will visit local historical sights—the Passage Tomb at Newgrange and the ruined monastery at Glendalough.

## **President Ilves spoke about e-Estonia in Dublin**

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On Thursday morning, President Ilves will travel from Dublin to the United States of America to start a working visit there.

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