

"Political will followed by a legal framework and the ability of governments to ensure a secure information technology environment that citizens will trust are required to ensure the availability of e-services throughout the European Union" told the President, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, today in Brussels, in his opening address given at the Baltic Development Forum and high-level Microsoft seminar.

President Ilves gave the ID-card and digital signature as examples that could be used to ensure, safely, different cross-border e-services, such as digital prescription, which would allow one individual to purchase the necessary prescription medication in Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Denmark.

"We need a novel approach to the digital development of Europe, and the co-operation between the public and private sector has key importance here as it allows us to offer our citizens a wider range of e-services, which will contribute, in turn, to the economic development of countries," told President Ilves.

According to President Ilves, a system of e-services, covering the European Union in general, is a long-term and multi-level process. "First of all, Estonia, Finland, Sweden and Denmark should ensure the compatibility of their national e-service systems. From this platform, we could advance to co-operation between the Baltic Sea countries and then set a good example for the rest of the European Union," added the Estonian Head of State.

During the seminar, President Ilves met with Rigmor Aasrud, Minister of Administrative, Reform and Religious Affairs of Norway. The Estonian Head of State shared our experiences with the ID card, e-health and e-elections and invited the Norwegian Minister to Tallinn to have a closer look at the digital services available in Estonia.

This afternoon, President Ilves will give an opening address at a conference organised by the European Parliament focusing on data protection and privacy issues, "Building the Digital Fortress: a Toolkit for Cyber Security". The Head of State will speak about privacy in cyber space, cyber crime and ethical issues related to data protection.

## **President Ilves: the European Union must focus on cross-border e-services**

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