

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves emphasized today at the meeting of the Steering Board of the European Cloud Partnership in Berlin that it is important to protect people from malevolent alterations of databases. "The European Union member states must ensure the safety of the digital data of their citizens," the Estonian Head of State said.

"Online security consists of three factors: privacy or confidentiality; data integrity and accessibility. Recent scandals have brought the issue of digital privacy into public debates; however, violating the integrity of data is even more dangerous, threatening lives and infrastructure essential to the functioning of society - we can for example imagine the damage that can be done by changing people's blood groups or the cycles of traffic lights by simple changes of the data in databases," said the president of Estonia.

According to President Ilves, European Union member states must ensure a safe system for their citizens that can fend off those kinds of malevolent attacks and protects online identity and data integrity. "I would like to use the Estonian X-road as a good example, not necessarily as a technical solution but rather as a way of thinking, a concept that data must be protected by a specific identification system. A crucial factor for all secure and functional e-services is secure online identity. We also need legislation that enables the use of legally valid digital signature; and that prevents the state from asking for the same data more than once. Data protection laws must be updated to the digital age. It is important that the citizen own his own data and have control over who has access to them and what can be done with them," the Head of State added.

The cloud meeting focused on developing EU-wide e-services and related key issues like the possibility of sharing data over state borders.

Last year, at the request of the European Commission, President Ilves became the head of the Steering Board of the European Cloud Partnership, which aims to promote the use of cross-border digital public services in businesses and the public sector across Europe.

The steering board includes several spokespersons and experts of the field, including Lèo Apotheker (former CEO of Hewlett-Packard), Christian Fredrikson (President and CEO of F-Secure Corporation), Hans Vestberg (President and CEO of Ericsson), Werner Vogels (Vice President of Amazon), Thierry Breton (CEO of ATOS), and Bernard Charles (President and

CEO of Dassault Systèmes). The board's last meeting was held this summer in Tallinn.

After the meeting of the steering board, President Ilves gave an opening speech at the cloud computing conference "Readiness for Cloud Computing in the European Public Sector", which was organised by the European Commission.

* Cloud computing means saving data (for example, text files, images and videos) and software in computers located further away, which users can access via the Internet on devices of their choice.

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