Honourable President Alijev,
honourable ministers,
dear friends,

The 21st century has not given us merely threats, but challenges as well. In other words, opportunities. One of them is the challenge to use the opportunities offered by modern information and communications technology for the benefit of our nations, as much as we possibly can.

Estonia set itself the goal of employing modern information and communications technology in the service of the state many years ago. We have understood that the state and the information system of the state must be developed as a whole, that it must support the everyday functioning of the state in the best possible manner and that it must proceed from the interests of Estonian people, businessmen and other people who have contacts with the state.

Estonia has never had an e-state textbook to follow, but our initiative and readiness for new challenges has given us a lot of valuable experience, solutions that make people's lives better, and the chance to create a textbook that could help others.

Estonia has achieved remarkable results in this area to date, some of which are unique in the world. Examples include the data exchange layer XPath, the e-Tax Board, the e-police, our unique e-election system and our ID cards, currently carried by almost all Estonians.

Since Estonia has become an e-state that actually functions as a whole – E-stonia, some call it – we have decided to share our experience with others. We are more than ready to help Azerbaijan in better achieving its goals.

In 2007, Estonian companies created the eGovernance Laboratory, whose goals are to combine Estonia's best e-state experiences into one overview and to place our nationwide solutions in an international context.

One of the solutions that has changed the everyday functioning of Estonia is the secure data exchange layer XPath, which forms the basic infrastructure for the electronic solutions of many public services, such as the e-police, where the police use more than 20 different databases at the same time during ordinary patrols via the XPath.

The information systems of both the public and private sectors in Estonia – banks, insurance companies, utilities companies, telecom companies and so on – form part of the XPath, which more than 100 national databases have joined. The information systems of companies in the private sector communicate with the information systems and databases of the state through the XPath. This situation has made cooperation between different organisations and sectors considerably more efficient, and use of the solution is increasing exponentially from one year to the next.

The secure data exchange offered by XPath guarantees that the state's information system is

highly secure, and that the use of data can be monitored, traced and proven. It also represents added value through standardisation, which in turn makes the creation of new e-state solutions considerably faster, more comprehensive and more economically expedient.

I am certain that both Estonia and Azerbaijan will benefit from cooperation between companies in the two countries. Our dialogue must be bilateral, with Estonian companies trying to learn the best of Azerbaijan's e-state experience. This, in turn, calls for continuous and daily communication instead of erratic communication described by long pauses.

It is in data exchange between information systems that Estonia and Azerbaijan can reach out to one another and become reliable partners. We both want to be modern states worthy of the 21st century.

Thank you!