Main topic of the conference: "Addressing the Challenges of the Technology Company in the Expansion Phase:Â focusing on the needs and requirements of technology companies as they expand beyond theÂ boundaries of the region."

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am glad to be able to speak to the International Technology Law Association here in Tallinn, and just a week after the e-G8 conference on Net freedom. As it happens, since I can not attend physically, I am present via video, but I believe that is only appropriate given the reputation of Estonia in the digital world.

In the context of today's conference, Estonia as a country has just barely grown out of the startup-phase - for we re-appeared on the world map a mere 20 years ago, after an absence of half a century. Today we are recognized as one of the hotbeds of Internet technologies in Europe, be it in communications, e-governance or cyber-security.

By traditional standards, we are an unlikely success story, especially for a small country. Then again when I was in college people thought main-frames were the future. Moreover, most of today's technology giants, began as small start-ups that only after a period of long, hard work, fierce competition and turbulence found themselves in the limelight.

With the "expansion phase" of technology companies as the theme of the conference, it should be clear sitting here in Estonia that for us geographic expansion has never been a goal, but rather something inevitable, imposed by "other players in the market". We realize our physical limitations. Thus, over the centuries to become larger, to "expand", has meant to contribute to the world by virtual means through innovation and creativity. Through literature, music,

sciences, arts, and nowadays - most obviously with innovative software solutions, often in areas where sophisticated information and communication technologies previously have not been applied.

So were I to pick one wish- out of a very long list -for all of you -- the tech companies, entrepreneurs, venture capitalists, government officials and the numerous lawyers in the audience, then it will be in the following spirit: Your contribution to the world is your ultimate evaluation. Your immediate revenues, your rankings in industry charts and large market capitalization and all those other nice and necessary things are inevitable side-effects, and will come in on time, if you think above all about making the world a better place.

And finally a few words about the so-called e-G8. If there is anything a small country like Estonia shows, with its Skype and its e-governance, size has nothing to do with quality in information and communication technology or its legal framework. This is especially true when some members of the G8 that met last week to discuss internet freedom themselves have a rather dubious record, to be polite, about rights and freedom of expression.

Why convene an e-G8 meeting, a meeting of large countries on issues where the size of a country has nothing to do with its sophistication, creativity, talent, its ethical and moral position, not to mention quality of its laws or - equally important their application? Thus I sincerely hope that amidst your more technical discussions you also take time to look at the big issues that we must contend with.

Thank you for choosing for the fourth time already Estonia as the venue for the ItechLaw conference. I hope you enjoy your full conference program over the following days. And I wish good luck to all the startups stepping up in front of you in the elevator pitch contest.

And when you go back to your businesses, I hope that you will remember these days in Tallinn, the capital of the startup country with a bunch of creative startup people on a mission you click well with.