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eEurope Smart Card Charter supports eEpoch Smart Card deployment for secure digital identity and access to government services

- eEpoch project envisioned and initiated by the eEurope Smart Card Charter
- Supported by European Commission DG Information Society funding
- Action research collaboration between participating government and municipal authorities
- Pilot sites in France, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom and participation from smart card industry leaders

November 28, Brussels, Belgium; The e-Europe Smart Card Charter (eESC) initiated this project to demonstrate the practical usability of the Framework model and other detailed documentation of the eESC Open Infrastructure for Smart Cards in Europe. The European Commission is financially supporting the project under the IST 5th Framework program.

eESC applauds the start of the eEpoch project whose kick-off meeting takes place on November 28/29 in Valencia, Spain.

eEpoch is the consortium that will bring deployment of an interoperable European-wide approach to electronic public service identity to the test. Jan van Arkel, eESC Co-Chair and founding father of the eEpoch project welcomed the launch of eEpoch as the first large scale implementation of the eESC model. "Starting with specific projects identified in an application domain, i.e. eGovernment and backed by national governments and municipal administrations the project will provide smart card service provider entrepreneurs with proven minimum technical and business guidelines for technology based improvements in the quality of life for all citizens"

eEpoch will demonstrate interoperable and secure smart card based digital identification systems, which provide the levels of trust and confidence necessary for citizens to interact digitally with their national and municipal administrations and other European institutions. It will enable a citizen of one country or region to use their card to securely transact an e-Government service in a different smart card community or to transact a home service to which they are eligible from within another smart card community. It will provide a 'digital me' for the European citizen.

"eEpoch will help industry and administrations avoid the danger of needless and costly differentiation" confirmed eEpoch Project Manager Mr. Antonio Marques, ETRA I+D Director of New Technologies speaking on behalf of the

consortium. “Our methodology ensures an inclusive approach to all, consensus on best practices for the implementation of public identities, their enabling technologies and applications which will in turn foster European-wide deployment”.

Marques considers the freedom given to the participating sites to be a critical factor in the overall success. “Each site has freedom to choose its own cards, devices, operating systems and servers subject to an eEpoch core-functionality for secure identification, authentication and electronic signature (IAS) and agreed registration and certification authority processes and technologies. IAS will be on the basis of PIN, biometrics, and public key infrastructure (PKI) mutual authentication. The knowledge derived from the pilots, the structured interactions and the specific work on interoperability will be developed during the project. A team of experts will prepare the knowledge base in collaboration with the site pilot representatives and this will be evaluated and improved in six monthly knowledge research and transfer workshops. We are therefore very happy with the hands-on participations of major card industry partners like SchlumbergerSema and Gieseke & Devrient who are working close together on this”.

eEpoch provides increased flexibility in accessing e-government services to the citizen and more efficient and effective harnessing of information and communication technologies for its e-Government information service providers and related industry players. Each site is effectively a case study on approaches to certificate verification for application downloading in a multi-service environment and together their experiences will be combined to determine the direction and scope for further extensions.

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