

## Speaking points on the e-Residency programme launched by the Government of Estonia

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- The Republic of Estonia is **the first country to offer e-Residency - a transnational secure digital identity** available to everybody in the world interested in **running a location independent international business online**.
- E-residents can:
  - Establish and administer a **company online**
  - Conduct **banking online**, e.g. make electronic bank transfers
  - Have access to international **payment service providers** like Paypal, Braintree, etc
  - **Digitally sign documents** (e.g. annual reports, contracts) within the company as well as with external partners
  - Declare Estonian **taxes online**All of this can be done in a cost-efficient and hassle-free way, **without the need to hire any local director or representative** (unless you want to, of course).
- E-residents **receive a smart ID-card (eID)** which enables **secure digital authentication and the digital signing of documents**. The digital signature and authentication are legally equal to handwritten signatures and face-to-face identification in Estonia and between partners upon agreement anywhere around the world.
- e-Residency card is not a physical ID-card or a travel document as it has no photo. Also, **e-Residency does not entail citizenship, tax residency, residence permit or rights of entry** to Estonia or the EU.
- Estonians have been using a secure state-issued digital identity and digital services **for over a decade** already. **Our country is nicknamed e-Estonia**, as we have become one of world's most advanced digital societies. By providing e-Residency and opening up our services globally, Estonia is now moving toward the idea of a country without borders.
- The Estonian government **launched e-Residency to make Estonia bigger**: to grow our digital economy and market with new customers, there-by sparking innovation and attracting new investments. In addition, e-Residency makes life and business easier and more efficient for everybody who already have a business or other relation to Estonia.
- Our **government is developing e-Residency like a start-up**. The way we launched it was fast and agile, and we are constantly working to improve and extend the offering. e-Residency is now in a **public beta phase**: everybody is invited to apply for it and help us cater it best to the needs of users by giving feedback.
- We work with the private sector and government agencies to add new services and improve the current ones. For example, it takes the help of virtual office providers to establish a company with a legal Estonian address. We plan to make services like this more user-friendly soon.
- E-residents applying for an Estonian bank account have to come to Estonia and have a "face-to-face" meeting with a bank official. However, as the necessary laws have already been passed, e-residents will soon be able to **apply for a bank account** the same way they take advantage of other Estonian services: **digitally!** Hopefully soon our partner banks will be able to "meet" with applicants who want to open bank accounts virtually via secure video chat.
- The next big step for e-Residency program is to **add new services** for e-residents. The government of Estonia is **welcoming more developers and service providers** to enter the scene and integrate the secure and simple e-Residency **open ID-platform** into services requiring digital authentication and document signing. It is very important that the new customer base is recognized by the developers and service providers, who may already offer their services to e-residents.
- As Estonia is globally known for advanced cybersecurity competence, **we take good care to mitigate the possible risks** of e-Residency. The e-resident eID itself as well as the services are

built on **state of the art technological solutions** (e.g. 2048-bit public key encryption). **Procedures and practises** are in place to ensure the safety of e-Residents' data and limit ways for misuse.

- A digital identity itself does not bring along new risks (e.g. money laundering). Instead, it **makes existing risks more visible and manageable** as digital footprints are easily traceable – although we will make use of it only upon suspicion. We also check the background of applicants to make sure we can trust them as future e-residents.
- We **launched e-Residency on 1 December 2014**. As of 15 March 2017, over **18,300 people from 136 countries worldwide have applied for** and over 17,300 have received the eID. As of today more than 1,400 e-residents have established a company and there are over 2,700 companies connected to e-residents (owners, board members).
- **Since May 2015**, it has been **possible to apply for e-Residency online** and once the application is approved, just one face-to-face meeting is required to get the card.
- To start, go to our website ([e-resident.gov.ee](http://e-resident.gov.ee)), fill in the online application, upload your document photo and a photo of your identity document, state your reason for applying and pay a 100 euro state fee. Starting from February 1, 2016 the application fee for e-Residency is 100 euros. (The increase from 50€ to 100€ directly reflects the growing demand for e-Residency and the cost of scaling up services to meet that demand. The raised application fee will help us provide the 50,000th e-resident with the same level efficiency and personalized service we provided the 5000th. Specifically, we'll be bringing on additional support staff and automating key aspects of the application process.)
- Once your application has been submitted, wait for the result of your background check, which should take about 10 working days. Once your application is approved, you will be invited to your chosen pick-up location to identify yourself, give fingerprints and collect your e-resident eID (it comes with a card reader). **The whole process should not take more than a month, but may vary based on demand and pickup location.**
- You can pick up the card **from our foreign representations (embassies and consulates) in 35 countries around the world** or the Police and Border Guard Board service points in Estonia. The Estonian **honorary consuls do not issue e-Residency**.
- The e-Residency application process is the result of **an exceptional cross-governmental collaboration** between the Ministry of the Interior and its IT and Development Centre, Police and Border Guard Board, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Estonian embassies and consulates worldwide, Ministry of Finance, Information System Authority, Office of the President of the Republic of Estonia, Government Office of the Republic of Estonia, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications, Enterprise Estonia and others.
- Since the launch of e-Residency, we have received a **vast amount of positive feedback**. We have learned that people from around the world see e-Residency **as an opportunity to fulfill their dreams**, venture across the borders, and become free from bureaucracy.
- **Our vision is to offer every world citizen, regardless of nationality or location, a hassle-free way to run a trusted company online**. Then e-Estonia could be a community of 10 million e-Residents by 2025 - if not more :)
- With e-Residency, you can become part of the digital society revolution taking place in our dynamic Northern European country. **You can become an e-Estonian!**
- **Statistics** about e-Residency: <https://goo.gl/O5cQwl>
- More information at [e-resident.gov.ee](http://e-resident.gov.ee) or follow us on Twitter **@e\_Residents**
- All e-residents are welcome to join **eResNetwork** - [www.eresnetwork.eu](http://www.eresnetwork.eu) - the first networking platform for e-residents to ask for advice, glimpse at various opportunities and generate fruitful connections with other e-residents, potential business partners, investors, and customers. eResNetwork is a private sector initiative offering the world's safest community for digital citizens.