Luc SMET-Belgian Federal Public Service Home Affairs

The National Register, the Belgian eID-card, and some lessons learned

The National Register

- **WHY?** → Too many administrations asked for the same data over and over again. Too many different data bases. Too many errors.
- **The National Register of natural persons** was based upon the birth files since 1968 , and was constituted on an empirical and voluntary basis.
- **The success** was based on a win-win situation for all stakeholders.
- A law was needed to oblige the municipalities to participate and distribute the data to third parties. **The law of 8th August 1983** , published in the Belgian Law Gazette of 21 April 1984, 16 years later, offered the National Register of natural persons a legal existence

Objectives of the National Register

- The first article of the law of 8th August presents the National Register as a system for treating information that assures, in conformity with the arrangements of the law, « the registration, the memorisation and the communication of information related to the identification of natural persons ».

Objectives of the National Register

The National Register offers the authorities, organisations and persons mentioned by article 5, a national file with the possibility to:

- **Facilitate information exchange** between the administrations;
- **Permit automatic updating** of public files in matters of general information on citizens, as far as the law, the decrees or the prescriptions permit this;
- **Simplify certain administrative formalities** demanded from citizens.

Description of the information

1. Name and surnames;
2. Place and date of birth;
3. Gender;
4. The nationality;
5. Main residence;
6. Place and date of death;
7. Profession;
8. Civic state;
9. Family composition;
10. Mention of register of inscription;
11. Administrative situation of people registered in the « waiting register »;
12. If the case, existence of an identity or signature certificate
13. Legal cohabitation.

Description of the information

- The population registers and the registers of foreigners are kept up to date by the **municipal administrations**;
- For persons with the Belgian nationality who are not registered in the population registers of a Belgian municipality because they live abroad the registers are kept by the **diplomatic posts and Belgian consulates abroad** ;
- The waiting registers for which **the Foreigners Office** has the general know-how to keep these files updated.

A unique identification

An identification number is attributed to each person on initial registration of his data in the National Register. The composition of this number was fixed by the Royal Decree of April the 3rd 1984 (M.D. of 21/4/1984) and modified by the Royal Decision of November the 11th 1997(M.D. 21/4/1984).

This number is constituted of **11 figures**. The first six represent **the date of birth.**

The **three following figures constitute the « order of inscription »** represent a serial number. This number represents the order of inscription of a person in the category of persons of the same sex, born the same day. This number is even for a female person and odd for a male person.

The last two characters are a control number permitting verification.

Usage of identification number and access to information

The law of August the 8th 1983 establishes the **difference between access to registered data at the National Register and the authorisation to use the identification number** (directed by article 8).

The authorisation to access information as well as the authorisation to use the identification number is given by the **sector committee of the National Register** to **Belgian public authorities**, to **public organisations** or to **private organisations under the Belgian public law** if the information is needed to accomplish tasks of general interest which they are confided by means of law, decree or prescription, or for tasks that are explicitly accepted by the sector committee, **to natural or moral persons** who act as **subcontractor of these authorities** or organisations respecting certain conditions fixed by law

Usage of the identification number and access to information

To notaries and bailiffs for information they are supposed to know according to a law, decree or prescription, to **the congregation of pharmacists** with the goal to communicate to their members the principal residence of a client to whom a medicine dangerous for his health could have been delivered, to **the three congregations of barristers**, with the only goal to communicate to the solicitors the information needed to perform their tasks as Judicial assistants.

The sector committee of the National Register

(art. 15 of the law)

- The committee, created within the Commission of Protection of Private Life , is specifically charged to deliver access authorisations to the data and to the usage of the identification number ;
- The committee consists of three members of the Commission, one of them being the President (or someone designed by him) and of three external members designed by the Parliament.

The sector committee of the National Register

(art. 15 of the lawi)

Beyond the right to give access to information and the usage of the identification number, the sector Committee also performs a number of **control tasks**, and advisory tasks concerning:

- the legal dispositions organising the National Register of natural persons;
- the legal and regulatory dispositions concerning identity documents

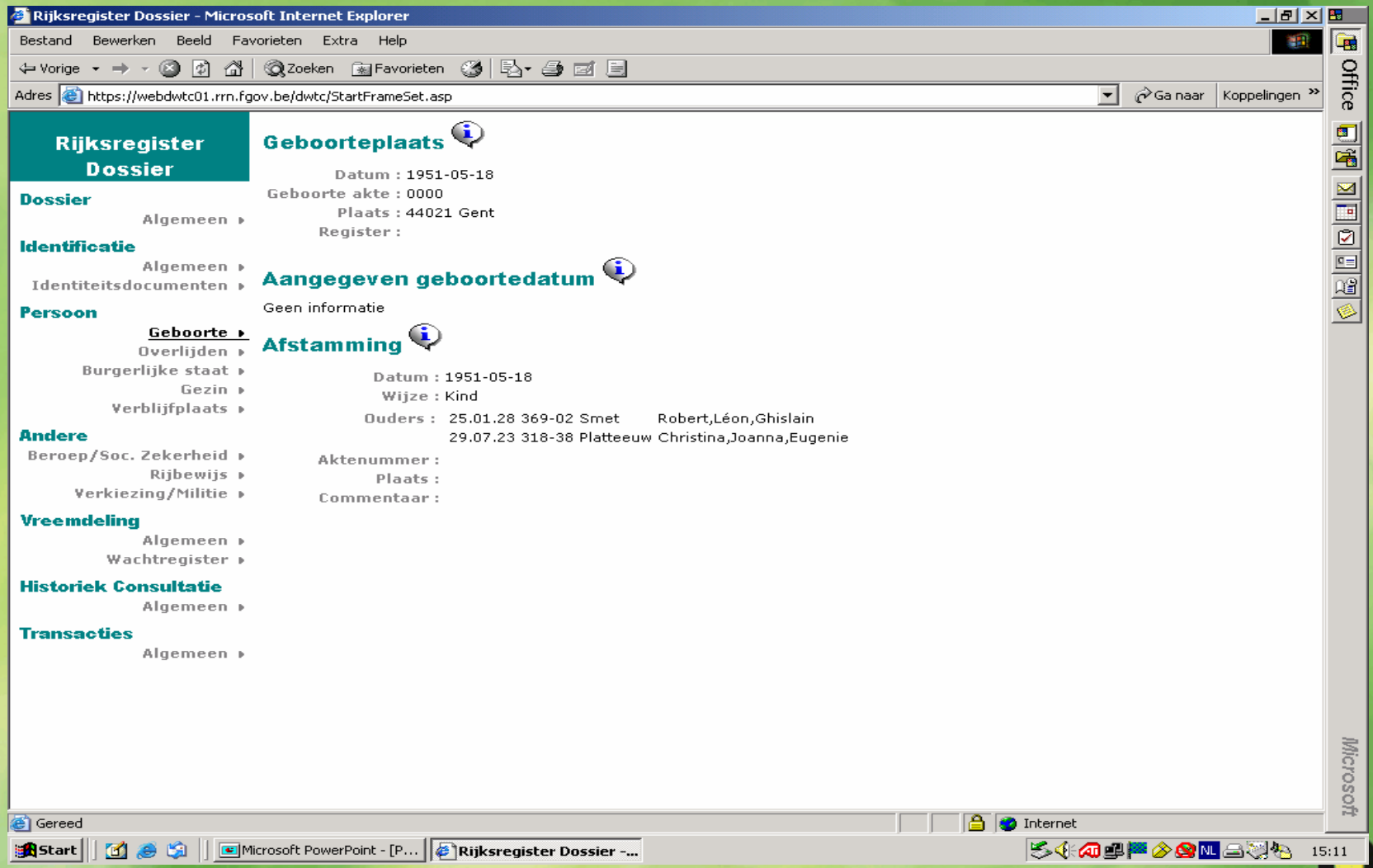
Transparency, communication and rectification

The law of August the 8th 1983 and its executive decisions, as well as the law of December the 8th 1992 concerning the protection of private life related to matters of personal character, contains many **protective measures of private life** by submitting access to the information to strict rules, and by organising the right of access and rectification of your personal data registered in the National Register.

Transparency, communication and rectification

Moreover, conform the article 6, §3, of the law of July the 19th 1991, concerning the population registers and the identity cards **any holder of an identity card** has the right, by means of this card, to consult his data registered in the National Register and the population registers **and ask for rectifications** to the municipal authorities of data who would not have been registered correctly, completely or exactly, and **he can also take notice** of all organisations or persons who have consulted or changed his data in the population registers or the National Register during the last six months (with the exception of administrative or judicial authorities charged with the discovery or suppression of crime, the general services of investigation of the Belgian army, and the State Security Office).

The application ‘ MY FILE ’



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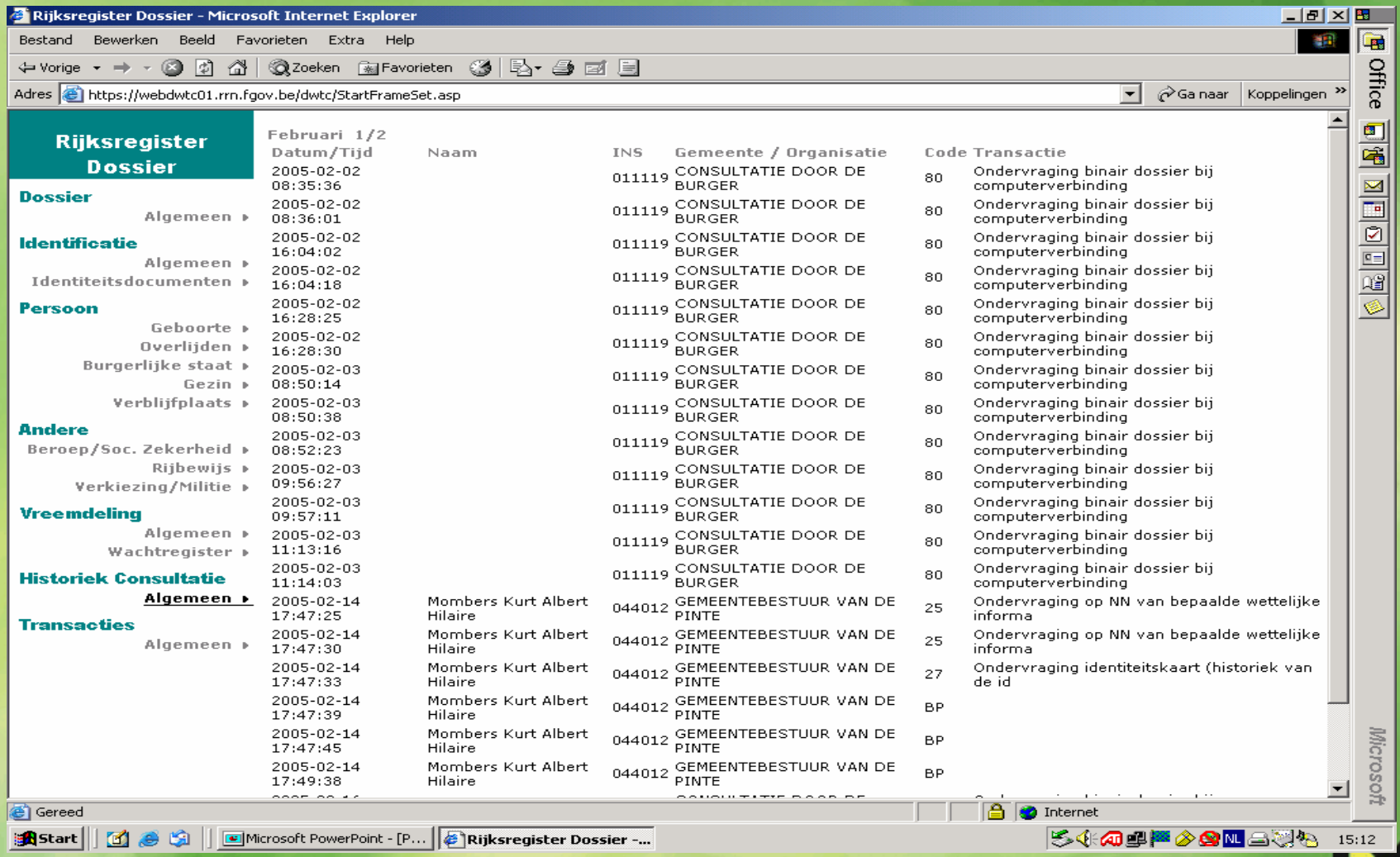

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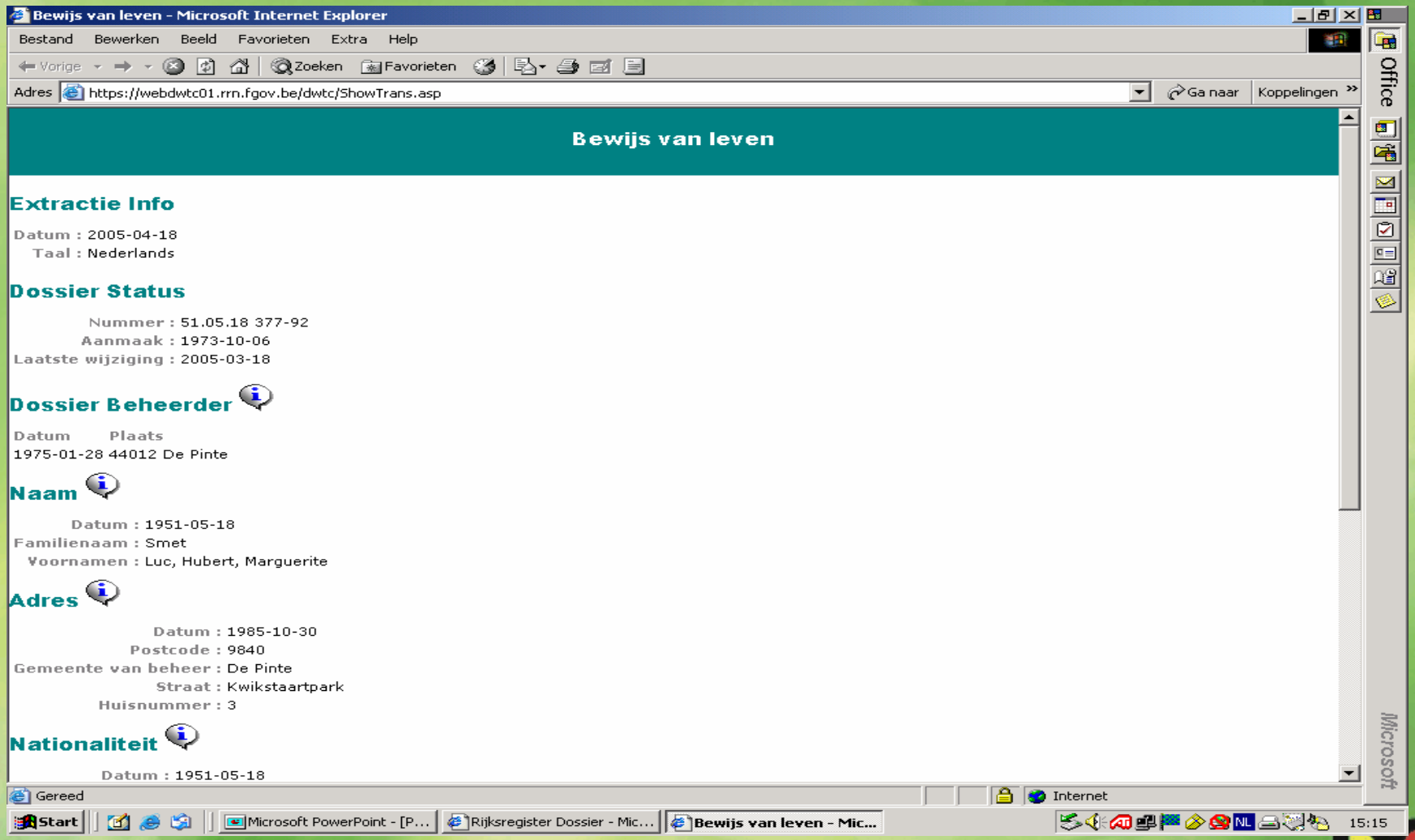


The (electronic) identity card is an extraction of the population register

Legal and regulatory basis

- The law of July 19th, 1991 related to population registers as it has been modified by the law of March 25th 2003 (M.D. 28/3/2003)
- Royal Decision of March 25th 2003, related to the identity cards (M.D. 28/3/2003)
- Royal Decision of March 25th 2003 on transitory measures related to the electronic identity card (M.D. 28/3/2003)

History of the eID

Why a new identity card? For reasons of security

Why an eID? E-gov (collaboration with FEDICT)

May 2003 : Start of a pilot with 11 municipalities

February 2004 : generalisation

February 2004 – September 2004: roll-out of infrastructure

September 2004 – June 2005: switch-over in 4 waves from former IC to the eID-card

More than 3,200,000 cards distributed (160,000 cards/month)

In 2009 every citizen older than 12 should possess his eID-card

The eID card: what do I see?

- Format: bank card format
- Main function: personal identification
- Visible information on the card: name, first name, place and date of birth nationality, card nr, validity, signature, national number, place of issue, signature civil servant, ICOA optical lecture strip
- Address is not visible

The eID card: what is in the chip?

- microchip = active element (security !)
- Present on the microchip:
- identity information same as visible information
- Address
- Photo
- Identification key (PIN code) + certificate
- Signature key (PIN code) + certificate

Security aspects of eID card

- Rainbow and guilloche printing
- Changeable laser image
- Optical variable ink
- Alphagram
- Relief and UV print
- Laser engraving

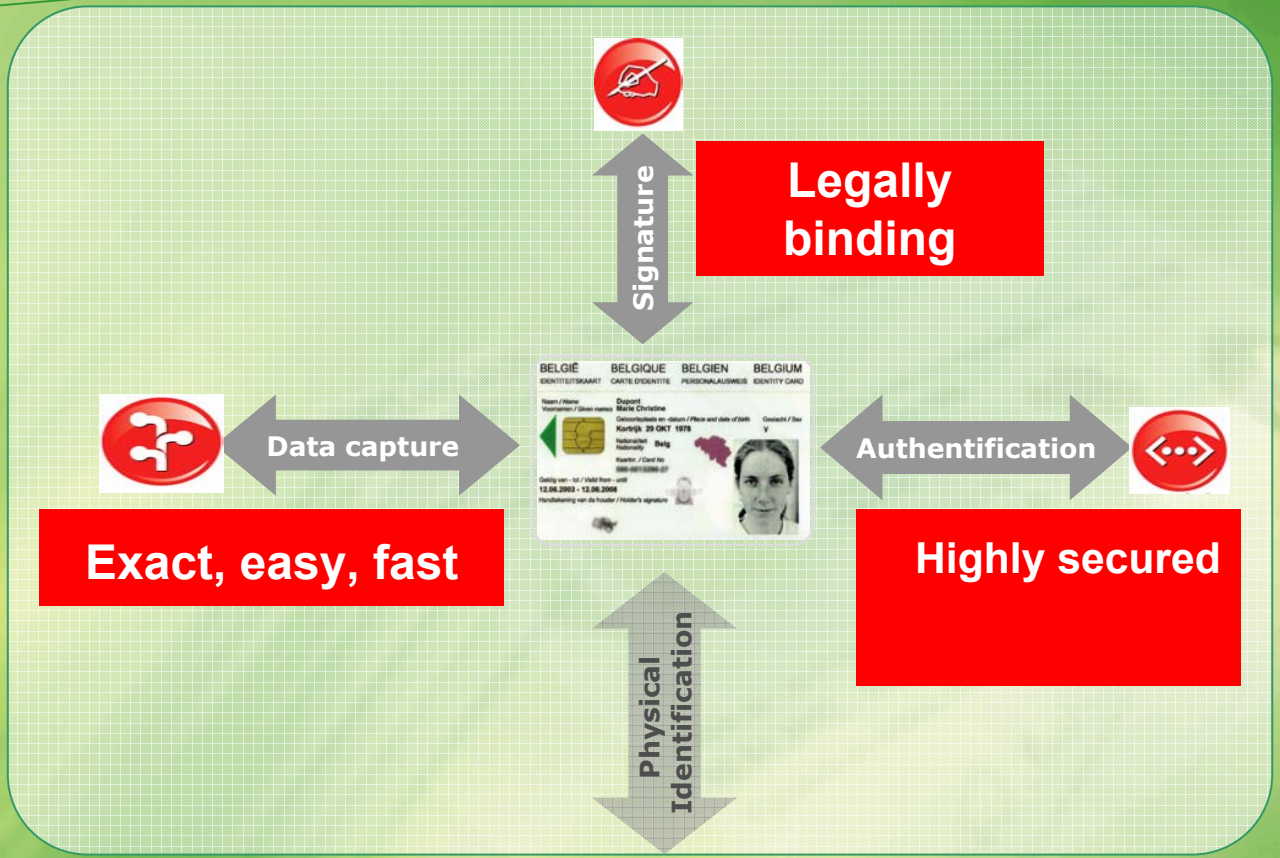
Security aspects of the eID Card

- Electronic security elements

  - Microchip: contains same elements as visible elements on card (extra control and security element) + laser photograph

  - certificates: only usable with card + PIN code

Basic functions of the eID card



Examples of existing applications

- Visualisation of card contents
- Access to personal files in the National Register
- BELPIC: usage of the eID card by civil servants in the process of delivering the eID card to the citizen
- GOCA: automatic registration of persons presenting themselves for a driver's licence exam
- Tax on Web
- electronic signature of e-mails

Examples of existing applications

- electronic signature of documents (MS Office, Acrobat,…)
- digital e-window (municipalities of Ghent, Bornem, Woluwe-St-Pierre)
- Banks: reading of cards+ integration in certain cases
- VSecurity: access control big events
- Forum on www.Seniorennet.be
- Safer chat: for 12-15 years old
- Access control buildings
- Access control network

Basic data of the project

- 589 municipalities (of which 11 were in the pilot)
- 722 supplementary FTE for the distribution of the eID-cards in the municipalities. This personnel does not cost anything to the municipalities
- 58 FTE for the eID project on national level (General Direction Institutions and Population)
- Infrastructure in the municipalities
- 1.415 “RA-PCs” operational
- 226 back-up configurations

Basics of the project: process of deliverance

Card producer

ZETES

Codes

Certipost
Belgacom & De Post / La Poste

Certificate Authority

National Register

Municipal administration

Citizen: convocation or personal initiative

.be

Communication and assistance

- Websites:

eid.belgium.be or www.eid.belgium.be
www.cardreaders.be
www.registrenational.fgov.be

- Folders
- Radio spots
- Helpdesk (24/7)
- Local coordinators

Lessons learned

- The **legal base** is important.
- Be very attentive to **privacy concerns** and if possible proactively use privacy enhancing technology and procedures.
- **Transparency** is vital to gain trust and enhance quality of data.
- A **never ending** story

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- **Interoperability:** juridical and technical normalisation and partnerships agreed before the start-up are very useful and eventually vital.
- A structured technical and situational platform for **information exchange** is useful. **Prototyping** and monitoring are vital.
- Electronic personalisation techniques like the use of biometrics are somehow **cultural bounded**. They need to be above any doubt and usable through standardised interfaces.
- The **added value** of the eID-card has to be evaluated for each stakeholder before the introduction of the product.
- **Information exchange** platform during pilot phase.
- **Win-win situation** for all stakeholders to obtain full collaboration. Keep in mind: the citizen is a client and we offer services
- **Communication** towards the citizen/enterprises etc…
- **Human resources!**

Future projects

- Identity document for children under 12 years old.
- Identity document for foreigners living in Belgium.

Questions

www.eid.belgium.be

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