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To the media

**12th conference of the international Porvoo Group in the city of Grosseto, Tuscany, Italy
18–19 October 2007:**

**SEVERAL PROJECTS AIMING FOR INTEROPERABLE ELECTRONIC IDENTITY UNDERWAY
IN THE EU**

Interoperable electronic identity (eID) and the security and future of e-services are the focus of much attention in Europe as well as the world over. There are currently several international projects underway to realise a transboundary electronic identity; the EU, for example, has set the goal of a working, interoperable transboundary eID by the year 2010, and the European Commission has encouraged Member States to develop e-services especially in public administration.

The international Porvoo Group will convene in the Tuscan city of Grosseto in Italy on 18–19 October 2007. The conference, focusing on developments in the sectors of electronic identity and e-services, will be attended by delegates from several European countries as well as the US and Japan. The 12th conference of the Porvoo Group is organised by the city of Grosseto and the Population Register Centre of Finland.

The conference widely addresses the topic of electronic identity interoperability in Europe. Topics of interest also include the development of e-government, issues relating to identity management and population registers required for identification, and national ID card projects in Italy, Austria, Belgium, Estonia and Germany, among others. Other items on the agenda concern preparations underway within the EU, usability aspects, benefits to cardholders (e.g. access to services), standardisation, biometrics, mobile electronic signature and identity authentication in online services and time stamp services.

The conference also features presentation of a local case study concerning the development of electronic identity and e-services in Italy and particularly the city of Grosseto, where interoperability testing of electronic identification with chip ID cards issued at least by Belgium, Estonia, Finland and Italy has been a focal area of study.

The Porvoo Group actively monitors the eID administration Large scale pilot project seeking to agree on safe shared electronic identification methods and provide the framework for the use of authenticated electronic documents in the EU by the year 2010.

Besides European developments, the conference will also review the current status and future outlook of electronic identity and identification in the US and Asia. At the initiative of the EU Biometric Forum, the Porvoo Group will in future establish closer communication and exchange of information between Europe and the US.

Certificate use growing more prevalent in Europe and across the globe

Chip ID cards have probably been most widely introduced in Estonia, where the card is mandatory and is provided to citizens at subsidised prices. The 2005 local government elections in Estonia were the first known opportunity for online voting in national elections. Voters used their chip ID

cards to cast their ballots online. Online voting was also an option in this year's parliamentary elections.

Besides Estonia, chip ID cards are also in use at least in Austria, Belgium, Finland, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. Several other EU Member States are also preparing to introduce chip ID cards. In Norway, eID has been a focal area of development while in Slovenia, certificates are available to citizens free of charge.

EU Member States are currently gathering experiences of interoperability testing on biometric identifiers in documents issued by the authorities. The harmonisation of identification procedures is also being studied.

The Asian IC Card Forum, a body corresponding to the European Porvoo Group, expresses its vision as "One Card, One Asia". The body counts among its members the continent's most advanced nations in terms of e-services. Plans are currently underway for the introduction of several chip ID cards in Asia. Japan is launching a project in the health care sector, while China and India are nations of high volume. The United States is also involved in the development of standardisation together with Europe and Asia and has started to adopt federal employee ID cards (Personal Identity Verification cards) pursuant to a Homeland Security Presidential Directive.

The Porvoo Group supports the deployment of electronic identity in Europe

The Porvoo Group is an international cooperation network coordinated by Finland and established in the Finnish city of Porvoo, as the name suggests, in April 2002 in connection with the eEurope 2002 programme. The primary goal of the Group is to promote a trans-national, interoperable electronic identity based on PKI technology (Public Key Infrastructure) and smart cards and chip ID cards as well as secure e-services in Europe.

The Porvoo Group has seen constant expansion. It is widely recognised as a significant actor and relevant contributor to informed public dialogue in this area. The majority of its members represent their respective national authorities but representatives of the business community as well as the European Commission and the UN have also contributed to its work. The US and Asia are closely involved in the Group alongside nearly thirty European nations. Porvoo Group conferences have been attended by as many as one hundred delegates.

The Porvoo Group holds biannual conferences across Europe. The Porvoo 13 conference will be held in spring 2008.

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Conference agenda and other materials on the internet: www.porvoo12.net and www.fineid.fi/en -> What's going on around the world -> Porvoo Group

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