

**PRESS RELEASE – 13 October 2000**

## **VOTE IN TOTAL CONFIDENCE VIA THE INTERNET!**

**The European Commission launches the €3.2 million CyberVote project to demonstrate over the next 3 years fully verifiable on-line elections guaranteeing absolute privacy of the votes and using fixed and mobile Internet terminals.**

### **Context of the project**

CyberVote, “an innovative cyber voting system for Internet terminals and mobile phones”, is a research and development (RDT) project being funded by the European Commission, with additional funding from the companies and organisations undertaking the work. It is part of the Information Society Technologies (IST) 1999 programme for research, technology development and demonstration under the fifth framework programme (5th PCRD). It is attached to Key Action “Systems and Services for the Citizens”.

### **Project description**

The goal of the CyberVote project is to develop and demonstrate an on-line voting system integrating a highly secure and verifiable Internet voting protocol, and designed to be used at local, regional, national or European elections.

The project will analyse the laws in force in the participating countries in order to identify the requirements the system shall meet but also to study possible amendments to allow its use in the legal framework in Europe.

This system will allow voters to cast their vote through the use of Internet terminals such as PCs, handheld devices and mobile phones. It will rely upon an innovative voting protocol, designed within the project, that uses advanced cryptographic tools. This protocol will ensure authentication of the voters, integrity and privacy of their vote when sending it over the Internet and during the vote counting and auditing process.

This system will be tested in 2003 during trial elections that will be held in Germany, France and Sweden. These trials will involve more than 3000 voters and will allow full assessment of the system before any potential product launch.

The CyberVote project officially started on 1 September 2000 and will end on 1 March 2003.

### **Social objectives**

This project aims to achieve an improvement of the democratic process by increasing voter participation and thereby increasing the number of votes. On-line voting should lead to an increase of citizens taking part in numerous types of elections.

The project will evaluate to what extent on-line voting influences voter participation. CyberVote should improve the voting process for all voters, but examples of citizens who should particularly benefit from CyberVote include people with limited mobility (the disabled, the ill, hospital patients, the elderly, etc.), people travelling during the election day, and expatriates. The system will satisfy their requirements by allowing them to cast their vote without the need to go to their usual polling station. However, voters will still have the option to vote via the usual paper procedure.

This system relies upon a flexible and innovative approach. It will facilitate an increased and equal participation in democratic processes. It will likely lead to a substantial cost reduction in the electoral process for both the

citizens and the affected administrations. It will emphasise the transparency in a convenient and user-friendly approach.

CyberVote will be simple to use, accessible and affordable for all voters and candidates.

## **Security**

CyberVote will allow the voters to cast their vote in total confidentiality by preserving their privacy during the whole voting procedure.

As this goal cannot be achieved by a simple combination of off-the-shelf cryptographic primitives, special-purpose cryptographic protocols will be used to implement this unique set of security properties. The fundamental problem addressed involves the simultaneous fulfilment of absolute ballot secrecy and full auditability of the voting system.

## **Technology**

The implemented system will offer on-line voting through different kinds of Internet access. It will allow voters to use commercially available equipment (PCs, handheld devices or mobile phones) or existing public equipment (self-service Internet access terminals, Internet booths, polling station equipment, etc.).

## **Partners involved**

The CyberVote project is carried out by a consortium led by EADS Matra Systèmes & Information and grouping together European partners. This consortium comprises:

### **Industrial partners:**

- EADS Matra Systèmes & Information of France, <http://www.matra-msi.com>
- Nokia Research Centre of Finland, <http://www.nokia.com>
- British Telecommunications of the United Kingdom, <http://www.bt.com>

### **University partners:**

- K.U.Leuven Research & Development of Belgium, <http://www.kuleuven.ac.be/kuleuven/>
- Technische Universiteit Eindhoven of The Netherlands, <http://www.tue.nl>

### **User partners:**

- Freie Hansestadt Bremen of Germany, <http://www.bremen.de/info/statistik>
- Mairie d'Issy-les-Moulineaux of France, <http://www.issy.com>
- Kista Stadsdelsnämnd of Sweden, <http://www.kista.com>

This consortium has been set up to allow the project to benefit from all the necessary expertise needed for its realisation (experts in fixed and mobile Internet architectures, researches in cryptography and security, experts in legal questions and voter rights) and its experimentation during local, regional or national elections.

CyberVote will be assessed in Sweden in the borough of Kista/Stockholm, in France by the city of Issy-les-Moulineaux and in Germany in the state of Bremen.

## **Point of Contact**

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