Abstract: <u>How the new Slovak eGovernment law impacts business entities</u>

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eGovernment is a topic that is on focus of many EU activities. The main problem in implementing eGovernment services is not a technical issue, the main problem is in legislation. All eGovernment processes have to be supported by legislation defining how electronic communications and the execution of public authority in electronic form is to be fulfilled.

In the Slovak republic some areas of public authority have been enabled also for electronic usage. These areas were based mainly on EU initiatives – electronic customs and single window, electronic company register, electronic taxes, points of single contact, etc. However, these solutions are not built in a consistent way – legislation governing these processes is inconsistent. An example is the electronic delivery process, which is different in customs processes and in tax processes.

To face such a situation a legislative intent of the general eGovernment law was prepared in 2010. Even though there were changes in the political government, the preparation of the eGovernment law has been supported by all governing political parties. Currently a proposal of eGovernment law is prepared and presented for the formal approval process. This presentation describes the basic goals and ideas incorporated into the Slovak eGovernment law (the law on electronic execution of public authority).

eGovernment law is covering the processes provided both by state administration and self-administration bodies. It should provide a general framework for all processes provided by these bodies, unless specific legislation defines differences from these general principles. Basic principles incorporated into the law can be summarized in following areas:
- eGovernment is defined as electronic execution of public authority via electronic communication, this communication is based on structured data (electronic forms)
- electronic and „paper-based" processes have the same legal validity
- all public administration bodies shall execute public authority electronically („paper documents" are results of conversion of electronic documents)
- users can decide how to communicate – electronically or „paper based" in each step
- public administration bodies may not require data, that is accessible in reference registers (e.g. companies register, citizens register etc.)

The eGovernment law covers the following areas:
- definition of the eGovernment architecture and basic modules used,
- electronic identity and authorization,
- electronic mailbox and electronic delivery,
- electronic execution of public authority,
- guaranteed conversion of electronic and paper-based documents,
- electronic payments,
- reference data and reference registers.

The above-mentioned areas are more precisely described in the presentation.

The eGovernment law influences not only public authority bodies, but also all business entities. Main impacts are the following:

- all agendas may be executed in electronic form, so business entities can perform all interaction with governmental bodies electronically
- it reduces the administrative burdens put on business entities – reducing the provision of many paper documents (reference data) and confirmations
- reducing costs – fees for electronic services are reduced and there is a reduction for communications costs, as paper-based documents are reduced and to sent via postal services.

However, electronic delivery is automatically applicable to all business entities. Business entities have to implement interfaces to their electronic mailbox and support such electronic delivery processes.

The impact on business entities is not complete, as the electronic communication covers only interaction between business entities. Further legislative acts have to be implemented to codify electronic communication in business processes due to EU prepared legislation and standardization.