

accerta appointed as national Registration and Certification Authority

accerta has been appointed by the Government of Malta to manage and administer the national Registration and Certification Authority, a new independent body responsible for registration, verification and authentication of electronic identities.

The consortium behind accerta is made up of Computime and datatrak IT Services Ltd, two of Malta's leading providers of IT business solutions, and Fenlex Corporate Services Limited, a Management Service Company associated with Fenech & Fenech Advocates.

The principal objective of the new Certification Authority is to build confidence in e-systems through ensuring confidentiality, integrity, availability and authenticity to all users of such applications. accerta will play a vital role in making Internet transactions more secure and appealing for citizens, as well as for organisations in the public and private sector willing to offer their services via an electronic medium. Another fundamental role of the creation of a Registration and Certification Authority is to ascertain that personal data used for online transactions remains confidential.

This will be achieved through e-id - an electronic version of our current National identity card - allowing citizens to securely access and use online services. Through the developments within the eGovernment framework, using e-id one will be able to file tax returns, lodge complaints, handle their social services and licence applications - all from the comfort of their homes or offices.

Services offered through the eGovernment Portal will require different levels of authentication dependent on the level of security required by the service provider. Thus, whilst a basic service such as the Bus Routes Finder service can be accessed by, the online submission of a VAT return would require the system to positively identify the user and accept that user's credentials.

accerta's appointment is key to ensuring authenticated, secure and non-reputable communications and transactions, by providing a Total Managed Solution for Registration and Authentication services. Other third-party service providers will also be able to benefit from use of the e-id system as a method of identity verification.

Registration for e-id is free and will be done through registration offices scattered around Malta and Gozo. In order to assure the highest and most trustworthy level of service possible, accerta has set up a Head Office in Valletta to verify and authenticate electronic identities. accerta will also offer ancillary services for the lifecycle of the e-id, including a 24X7 helpdesk, in order to assist all users.

e-id is the basic level of authentication that will be offered by accerta. Work is already in progress on the next levels of authentication which will also cater for the registration and authentication of internationally recognised digital signatures. It is envisaged that these systems will be in place before year end.

Joe Fenech Conti, CEO at datatrak IT services ltd., said "Datatrak is particularly pleased to form part of accerta. Together with all stakeholders we have worked towards a common goal - that of developing a secure online vehicle which instils trust and confidence - with the conviction this will kick start e-services and e-commerce in Malta."

Tonio Fenech, managing director at Fenlex Corporate Services said "accerta is made up of like-minded people who seek to provide service levels that are second to none. We have managed to team up with two excellent companies to form accerta. We all have our areas of expertise, which when combined formed the perfect solution for this project. We are looking forward to developing online business in Malta through the services offered by accerta."

Karl Diacono, General Manager at Fenlex Corporate Services stated, "Time was ripe to introduce digital ID's and Signatures in Malta, and Fenlex has done a lot of ground work which served accerta tremendously. accerta shall ensure that a sterling service is given to the citizen and business community alike."

Andrew Borg, Director at Computime said, "Together with our partners, we are pleased to be contributing our technical and business experience to this initiative which is one of the fundamental building blocks of e-Government in Malta."

Vincent Micallef, marketing manager at datatrak IT services ltd is "confident that the pick up for e-

id would be significant, especially with the gradual rollout of e-government and business services.”

Antonio Ghio, from the IT Law and e-commerce Department of Fenech & Fenech Advocates, stated that the new system shall finally make use of the legal framework provided for in the Maltese E-Commerce Act in order to start bridging the divide between physical authentication and its digital counterpart.

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