

Belgian National Elections on 18 May 2003: Over 3.2 million Belgians voted electronically

Submitted by: Pleon

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Issy, 23 May 2003 - Steria, a major European end-to-end IT services partner, launched the Digivote electronic voting system for the Belgian federal government. The system was used for national elections on 18 May 2003 in towns, which chose to provide electronic voting. This service enabled 44% of Belgian voters (3.2 million citizens) to elect 150 deputies to the Chamber and 40 senators electronically.

Belgium introduced electronic voting in 1991 to resolve problems stemming from the complexity of the Belgian electoral system (mandatory voting, up to 5 simultaneous elections, 3 different languages, up to 87 candidates per list and per election, preference voting authorisation). This system involved time-consuming manual checking and counting processes, which were tedious and left a considerable margin for error. To overcome these difficulties, Belgium chose a simplified system, replacing the paper ballot with a magnetic card, which did not modify the existing process but took into account IT and physical security aspects. The Digivote system developed by Steria was used in the most recent Belgian municipal and federal elections.

For the national elections on 18 May 2003, Steria developed the new applications used to prepare the electronic voting process in optimal security conditions. Thanks to this system, the first results were announced fifteen minutes after the closing of polling stations, thus cutting time previously needed for manual counting and providing more reliable results.

"The electronic voting system works very well in Belgium and perfectly overcomes the problems linked to the complexity of our electoral system. Our surveys have shown that citizens are pleased with the system. Our goal is for all Belgian voters to vote electronically by 2006, and we are on track to meet this target. Belgium remains the European forerunner in electronic voting," said Luc Van Neste, Managing Director of the Bureau of Census and Statistics at the Belgian Ministry of the Interior.

"Steria is a major player in large-scale modernisation projects for Belgian government administrations. Having provided biometrics expertise to set up Eurodac, an asylum request processing system for the European Commission, and implementation of the Belgian ID card project, we are very proud to now be contributing to the success of electronic voting for the Belgian national elections on 18 May," added René Luyckx, CEO of Steria Belgium.

Electronic voting for the disabled

In addition to the launch of the Digivote electronic voting system, Steria, as a corporate citizen, helped Toemeka, a socio-cultural training body, to familiarise the disabled with electronic voting during the elections held on 18 May. Steria is working in conjunction with Toemeka, to provide training for approximately 300 disabled people, and prepare test versions, training instructors and voting machines. Steria's work is in line with actions carried out in France by the Steria-Institut de France Foundation, whose aim is to provide IT technology to everyone.

Steria and e-government

Steria, an end-to-end IT services partner, has sound knowledge of the public sector and provides a comprehensive offer, combining its skills in consulting, systems integration and managed services. This enables it to play a pioneering role in European e-government. Steria's ability to manage large-scale IT projects with commitment to results and to take control of its customers' IT infrastructures makes it a trusted partner for governments.

Over 50 ministries and 60 public bodies work with Steria in Europe, including the Danish and Norwegian customs authorities, the Norwegian and Swedish police, the Spanish ministries of Labour, Economy and Health, Norwich City Council in Great Britain, the French Navy, the Belgian Ministry of the Interior, the British Ministry of Justice and the French Ministry of Economy and Finance, to name but a few.

About Steria: (www.steria.com)

With 2002 revenue of €1.018bn and more than 8000 employees, Steria is one of the top ten IT services companies in Europe. Present in 12 countries worldwide, the Group is positioned as an end-to-end IT services partner thanks to the mastery of its three core businesses: consulting, systems integration and managed services. Its acknowledged expertise in managing large-scale projects and its range of industrialised solutions in Europe enable Steria to offer its customers a reliable service with commitment to cost and risk control. The Group has strong sector-based expertise in the Public Services, Banking and Insurance, Industry-Utilities-Transport and Telecommunications markets.

Created in 1969, the Steria group is a pioneer in employee shareholding, with 31% of its capital being held by employees. Steria is listed on the Premier Marché of the Paris Stock Exchange and in the SBF 120 index.

For further information, contact:

Ghezala Beg/Casey Balkham

Brodeur Worldwide (for Steria)

Tel: +44 (0)20 7298 7063/7043

Mail to: gbeg@uk.brodeur.com/cbalkham@uk.brodeur.com