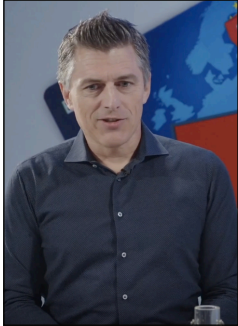


“The voluntary nature of the e-ID is being undermined through the back door”

Interview by HOCH2TV with IT entrepreneur Josef Ender*



Josef Ender.
(Picture Screenshot)

In a referendum in 2021, the Swiss people clearly rejected the e-ID. But apparently, parliament is not interested in that. It seems to have its own agenda and therefore adopted an e-ID law with an overwhelming majority in December 2024. A referendum was launched against it by several committees – which currently still needs significantly more support if it is to be successful. The collection period runs until 19 April 2025.

In the HOCH2 interview with Regina Castelberg, IT entrepreneur Josef Ender explains why it might make sense to campaign against the e-ID. This interview was transcribed and slightly abbreviated and edited as a donation for HOCH2. You can watch the full video interview on HOCH2.¹

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Regina Castelberg: Good afternoon, dear viewers, I warmly welcome you to this interview on the topic of e-ID here on HOCH2. The e-ID, the electronic identity, is a global topic. Today, we will mainly focus on the Swiss e-ID, but not only, so it will certainly be a very interesting topic for all international viewers as well. Josef Ender, it's great to have you here.

Josef Ender: Thank you for having me.

You are an IT entrepreneur with 30 years of professional experience, president of the Action Alliance of the Cantons of Central Switzerland and now also very active in providing information about the planned e-ID. It should be noted that in 2021, the e-ID was very clearly rejected by the

Swiss people, with 65 per cent voting against it. Three years later, parliament passed a new e-ID law. Referendums were launched by various committees to oppose it. But what exactly is the e-ID in Switzerland?

In principle, it is an electronic ID card, similar to the ID card or passport that we know, for the purpose of digital identification online, instead of in the physical world, where you show your ID. I think in principle you can roughly compare it to that.

So, it's about identifying yourself in the digital world. Am I right?

Exactly. It's about identification, which is a very important point. It's not about authorisation or authentication, but about identification.

What's the difference?

Authentication is when I enter the username and password. This proves that I also know specific details. When I show my e-ID or passport, it is only identification, it could also be someone else. So, in addition, I would have to prove that I am really the person concerned.

Now it is often argued in such digitalisations that everything would be much easier and more convenient. In your opinion, is this true or is there another reason why this e-ID is being pushed against the will of the people?

I have been looking into the e-ID intensively over the past few weeks. However, I am still looking for a meaningful use for it today. Even the population is having the same thoughts. A political scientist compared it to the motorway vignette vote. The population said: whether I pay 40 or 100 francs, the motorways remain the same. The

* Josef Ender, born 1970, grew up in Central Switzerland on his parents' farm in Ried-Muotathal (Canton Schwyz). He completed an apprenticeship as an agricultural machinery mechanic and in 1996 turned his hobby into a new profession: self-taught computer science. He has been an independent entrepreneur since 2004 and today, with Ender Informatics GmbH and six

employees, he looks after the IT infrastructure of SMEs in Central Switzerland. As an independent, he also represents the political concerns of the people of Schwyz in a fact-oriented and independent manner.

On 7 March 2025 an information event to the e-ID took place, *organised*, among others, by Josef Ender.²

same thing happened with the e-ID; no significant advantage for the population could be demonstrated. When you compare the analogue and digital worlds, you wonder when the e-ID will actually be used. In the analogue world, I need my passport, for example, when crossing a border or picking up a parcel. That's all. In the digital world on the internet, there are no borders. I don't have to show any ID there. There may be services on the internet where I must identify myself, but I haven't yet found any actual use for the e-ID.

The e-ID mainly affects private individuals. Mr Ender, you are an IT entrepreneur and service provider yourself. How do you assess the e-ID in relation to working life in companies?

I haven't been able to identify any need for it so far. I do all my business digitally and even send invoices digitally. I submit my VAT, withholding tax and tax returns digitally. However, I have never had the need to identify myself personally. There is no requirement for this either, because companies do not receive an e-ID, only private individuals. But there will be no advantage to it anywhere.

A spontaneous question on this point. It's about paying. CBDC, i.e. central bank money and accounts, are increasingly being discussed. Could there be an intention here to link the e-ID to such a central account sooner or later?

Yes, that's probably what will happen. When central bank money is introduced, the e-ID will already be there. In general, in the future it will be possible to say that if we already have the e-ID, we can also use it for this or that. And so, voluntariness will be undermined through the back door. The e-ID will be used wherever some kind of identification is required, or we are told that it is necessary.

What danger is there if an e-ID is linked to a central bank account? The goal, as rumoured, is to have only one account.

I consider the danger of a central account to be much greater than the e-ID. For me, the e-ID would not be a direct danger, but rather to have a central account that can be blocked or restricted at will.

It reminds me a bit of the time of the coronavirus measures, when you didn't have to prove that you had had a certain treatment with an e-ID, but



Josef Ender interviewed by Regina Castberg.
(Picture Screenshot)

sometimes with this QR code. Perhaps the QR code was a precursor to getting people used to the idea of having to show identification in restaurants as well. Is it surveillance or a step towards joining the EU? What do you think the real reason for this e-ID could be?

There are many reasons, but I will come back to two of them in more detail. So, the first reason is surveillance. This is clearly the big danger, that you will ultimately have to show your e-ID everywhere. The question of whether it is a step towards the EU can be answered with a yes, and it is truly tragic because from the outset, it was said that *privacy by design*, privacy and data protection must remain guaranteed. Now, I would say it was on the sly, the Federal Council made in December the decision at the technology conference that the EU version would now be adopted. And that does no longer include *privacy by design!* There is no information about this technology decision in the official press release, only on the English-language page "GitHub". That alone is scandalous to me. Otherwise, it is always said that one must communicate in all four national languages.

The Federal Council did say that we would donate a million francs to research into development so that *privacy by design* could be achieved again. Unfortunately, this will no longer be possible. Such a fundamental decision in technology is irreparable; the last few decades have shown us that.

As an IT specialist, you are in an ideal position to judge that. Then it is probably no longer possible to switch off certain things in Switzerland?

No, because the technology decision has been made. This unique token (*Editor's note: a "token" is defined as a digital unit that exists on a blockchain and represents a value or a right*) will then also be sent with the Swiss version in the future

and it will no longer be possible to simply deactivate it.

Could this be the reason for the rush to introduce the e-ID?

I think there is a lot of pressure behind it. There is an organisation called *ID 2020*, which is striving for these global digital IDs.

Is the e-ID forgery-proof?

An important principle of IT security is that there are always weak points. In the example of the current technology decision, the weak point is overall security. And potential attackers find these weak points. As a comparison, I'll take the German digital patient file. They said that this was one of the largest IT projects in Europe and that it was the most secure project. And then two so-called *white hat hackers* – in other words, good hackers – looked at the security of programmes, including this patient file in Germany. And yes, it wasn't that secure after all, because the two hackers attacked various locations or vulnerabilities and gained access to all 70 million patient files containing all confidential information.

This simply shows that security cannot be prescribed just because a law is passed. That is the reality. And perhaps a second example: Germany already has an online ID card. The government boasted about how forgery-proof it is. Well, the app may be forgery-proof. And yet, someone has simply created a virtually identical app. This means that people can use this fake app to create an e-ID with a different identification. The government then admitted that this vulnerability is very difficult to solve.

This is called identity theft. Incidentally, the electronic patient record mentioned is also an issue in Switzerland. Is this related to the e-ID?

Unfortunately, yes. We were told that the e-ID is completely voluntary. But that is not the case because the electronic patient record is to be introduced now. And that is not voluntary.

There's a lot of window dressing. I compare it to the whole cookie story. When I go to a website today, I must somehow confirm data protection and cookie guidelines, and many website operators always refer to the Data Protection Act. That's not true at all. We don't have a law in Switzerland that requires any kind of confirmation of a cookie policy or a data protection policy.

There is something in the Telecommunications Act, but not in the Data Protection Act. There is actually something in there about cookies. It is somehow forced on people and of course the federal government can rub its hands and say that we haven't made a law that prescribes it. But you can see it, on every website you must confirm these stupid cookies, and I think it will be exactly the same with the e-ID.

Then you will simply have to transfer your e-ID automatically to every website because the operators say there is a law somewhere that requires it, and they must check whether these are really the people. I fear that all the chats, forums, etc. will only be accessible via e-ID. Everything will be controllable! The result could be that complaints and grievances will accumulate.

This could lead to the criminalisation of ordinary citizens. Criminals will always find ways to circumvent the law. Once again, it is the law-abiding citizen who is nannied, who does everything by the book and is afraid of doing something wrong.

I would like to briefly return to the electronic patient record. I see that digitalisation in eastern countries is in some cases much more advanced than it is here. In Hungary, for example, an electronic patient record is mandatory. However, I have heard that there is now an initiative called "Right to an analogue life". I think we still have a chance in Switzerland to fight to prevent it from coming to that. In your opinion, how would you have to proceed if you wanted to maintain the "right to an analogue life"?

I would say that it is very important to point out the potential dangers and the lack of benefit of an e-ID and an electronic patient record, which is likely to be very difficult. I am in favour of digitalisation in general, there are many useful things, but there are also many abuses. I have experienced this in my profession over the last 30 years. New things are constantly coming onto the market, they are hyped for two to three years, and then they disappear again.

Aren't we also facing high costs as far as the introduction of the e-ID is concerned?

To be honest, I'm a bit at a loss when it comes to the costs. What I don't like at all is that the federal government has already set up an entire department and hired people to work on this e-ID. And this even though the law has not yet been passed. I think that's unacceptable. I would also

like to point out that for us, the e-ID only provides a false sense of security. As I said, it only affects private individuals and not companies like DHL or Swisscom. There are so many cases of fraud in this area, but we have no way of checking the companies, nor are they subject to the identification requirement, and that is the real problem. Unfortunately, no one talks about this.

It's about control and surveillance, that's my impression. You've touched on something that many people have experienced: if you want to contact companies or have a complaint, it's almost impossible to reach anyone. We at HOCH2 are also experiencing something similar now: someone is claiming an account from us that doesn't belong to them. It's absolutely criminal. We wanted to contact YouTube, Google, etc. No chance!

Exactly. Unfortunately, you can't use laws to make criminals stop being criminals. The laws that are in place are used to harass the law-abid-

ing citizen, but not the perpetrators. The government doesn't even consider the idea of making laws to intimidate criminals. It's a sad state of affairs. [...]

Mr Ender, you have the last word.

I think it's like with everything: you must critically question things and be careful about what you buy. The topic of security is very important here. All this surveillance is dangerous, you should really keep an eye on it and remain critical. Analogue life is much more important than digital life. I think we should invest more in it.

Source: <https://hoch2.tv/beitrag/it-unternehmer-josef-ender-die-freiwilligkeit-der-e-id-wird-durch-die-hintertuer-ausgehebelt/>, 15 March 2025

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

¹ <https://hoch2.tv/sendung/it-unternehmer-josef-ender-ueberzeugt-die-freiwilligkeit-der-e-id-ist-bereits-jetzt-schon-nicht-mehr-gegeben/>

² <https://www.josefender.ch/eid-ch-ch/>