



Council of the
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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Digital Justice: e-evidence
c) e-Evidence Digital Exchange System: state of play

Delegations will find attached an information paper drawn up by the Presidency, in liaison with the Commission services, on the state of play of the e-Evidence Digital Exchange System.

The e-Evidence Digital Exchange System (eEDES)

State of Play

1. Background

The Council, in its June 2016 conclusions on improving criminal justice in cyberspace, asked the Commission to develop a secure online portal for electronic requests and responses in order to increase the efficient use of the standardised forms and procedures for obtaining electronic evidence in the context of mutual legal assistance.

2. The eEDES

The Commission organised an expert working group (EG) with one legal and one technical representative from each Member State, and the General Secretariat of the Council. The EG's task was to discuss, review and agree on the identified requirements, use cases and specifications of the IT system to be built. It was established that the scope of the first version of the system would be EIO/MLA exchanges between competent authorities.

Twelve meetings took place over a period of 11 months (March 2017–February 2018) to analyse and agree on the architecture of the system, legal aspects, security aspects, process model, workflows, messages and transmission of large files. The expert group approved the function analysis and functional architecture documents in February 2018. Following this, the development of the system has started and the first phase was completed. Further, various meetings have been held, including on the testing of the system with the Member States.

The Member State experts were firm in requesting a decentralised architecture for the system, meaning that one secure portal will be installed and operated in each Member State (in the national language). These national installations of the portal are to be interconnected through a secure information channel. For the communication channel, Member State experts opted for the internet and the eCodex Connector and eDelivery gateways to secure the information exchange.

The resulting IT system, the e-Evidence Digital Exchange System (eEDES), was conceived in the spirit of the European Commission Digital Strategy to reuse several Commission IT building blocks: the EU User Interface, eDelivery, EU Login, eSignature, eTranslation, and ISA eDocuments.

Support for Member States in operating the eEDES

The Commission has provided comprehensive support for the implementation of the system at national level and for the subsequent operation. The measures comprise:

- financial support through the Justice Programme and the Connecting Europe Facility;
- technical support from the contractor that built the system;
- technical documentation;
- training;
- a multilingual demo website accessible to all competent authorities upon request that already enables practitioners to use the IT systems for training and evaluation purposes.

3. National implementation plans

According to the national implementation plans the Member States have submitted to the Commission, they should be ready to go live according to the following timeline:

- BG, IT, MT, AT, PT and FI in the first half of 2020;
- BE, DE, LV and LU in the second half of 2020;
- EE and SE in the first semester of 2021.

The successful rollout of the eEDES also depends on whether the Member States have the business preparedness to use the system.

Member States are invited to make all the necessary national arrangements to implement the eEvidence Digital Exchange System at national level without delay.