

ENISA's 5th anniversary, an interview with the Executive Director, Mr. Andrea Pirotti

In the following article the Executive Director of ENISA, Mr. Andrea Pirotti talks about the development of ENISA and its 5th anniversary.



Andrea Pirotti, Executive Director of ENISA

Mr. Pirotti, you've been the Executive Director of ENISA since 2004, how has ENISA developed since then?

ENISA is now a well-established Network and Information (NIS) Agency and a point of reference within the NIS Stakeholders community. It has become a major player in the international arena. This is a brief overview of its history so far:

2004 - October, general start up the Agency's activities in Brussels.

2005 - The first part of the year was devoted to recruitment and administration procedures, setting up of the Permanent Stakeholders Group as well as preparing the move to our host location, Crete, in August.

2006 - We implemented the first yearly Work Programme based on the tasks listed down in art 3. of the ENISA Regulations. The second phase of setting up the Agency was challenging, but the recruitment and internal functioning proved successful.

2007 - ENISA is to focus its activities on three major areas of NIS lasting for at least three years thus calling them Multiyear Thematic Programmes, or MTPs. ENISA faced a disturbing moment when some actors sought after it to be merged to a new Telecom Agency, which thankfully never saw the light. An inspecting-visit of the European Parliament to ENISA in Crete showed evidence of the necessity of ENISA

as a Centre of Expertise in NIS and confirmed its good work. The Commission proposal for the closure of ENISA was thus rejected.

2008 - The Agency implemented its first Work Programme based on the 3-years MTPs programme. Activity was focused and impact increased. The EU Parliament in agreement with the Council extended the mandate of the Agency by three more years until March 2012.

The Stakeholders sent clear signals that the Agency was to increase its technical competence. ENISA established an Internal Control Process that has been judged by the EU central Institutions as the best control system within the Commission thus requiring the Agency to present it to the Commission General Directorates and to other Agencies in more than one occasion.

The first NIS Summer School, hosted by ENISA and FORTH, took place in Hersonissos Crete, resulting in a clear success.

2009 - ENISA is implementing its second year of the MTPs Work Programme. EU Institutions and Member states have indicated with no doubt that they needed more technical work from the Agency and suggested additional tasks for the Agency. Thus, administrative staff was resized and technical staff was increased in the organigramme. Construction-works started for the new premises of ENISA, which will be ready by the end of 2012, to fit a larger ENISA.

The Hellenic Government kindly offered the Agency a Branch near the International airport of Athens; it is a proper *Bureau de Passage* for meetings including the Management Board and the PSG. This makes our Agency one of the best established among the existing 25 Agencies.

The second NIS Summer School took place in the same location as in 2008, repeating the success of its first edition.

Our new website was launched, with more secure and interactive applications.

What are the main NIS challenges today and what are the main challenges for the future in the area of NIS?

I believe that the foremost challenges are:

- Creating an aware and proactive community that is capable of recognising and responding to evolving threats in a practical way.
- Building on secure infrastructure in order to achieve secure services at the national and pan- European level.

- Recognising technological trends and ensuring that their architectures are protected by appropriate security models.

In short, I believe that ENISA' efforts, combined with the Member States' ones, can be much stronger than the attackers, provided that short-term European politics does not thwart the competence of the Agency.

During these five years, have you seen any change in the Member States' and other countries approach to NIS?

Yes, the general attitude of MS has changed indeed. There are two kinds of Countries in the EU concerning NIS: the well equipped countries and those whom are catching up.

The first ones, well prepared, have transferred their know-how to ENISA in order to help the Agency assess the levels in NIS of different international stakeholders. Those catching-up have devoted more resources to NIS in all fields, establishing new CERTs, making Awareness Raising campaigns, etc.

What do you think is the key for ENISA to stay up to date with the latest security information?

ENISA must continue increasing its technical competence remaining linked to the major players in NIS, and look beyond the horizon to alert Europe on future risks.

What are some of ENISA's greatest achievements so far, according to you?

ENISA, with the external support of its hosting Research Institute (FORTH), has established the yearly tradition of the NIS Summer School in Crete. Its mandate has been prolonged until March 2012 to ensure security in Europe.

Our reports, studies and position papers are fast becoming the solid basis of the NIS society. We aim for concrete results thus giving the European taxpayers a good return for the money they invested in ENISA, by keeping them safe online.

What will ENISA do to celebrate its 5th anniversary?

We are professionals who work towards an ever-changing future. We shall celebrate the entry into the 5th year of operations of ENISA in our premises with a relaxed lunch and a brief memory-speech. The good work done is the best celebration for us.

I am leaving the command of the ENISA "ship" this year as my five year mandate is coming to an end. I shall hand-over to the next Executive Director, Dr. Udo Helmbrecht (from Germany) an Agency that is well positioned to cope with future NIS challenges with increased technical capability and re-calibrated administration.

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