

Interview – Slawomir Gorniak

ENISA Security Expert Slawomir Gorniak is the editor of the recently launched ENISA report on the state of pan-European eID initiatives.



Slawomir, what is the background to ENISA conducting this report and who is it for?

Over the past decade, European Member States and EEA countries have gradually rolled out identity management solutions for improving administrative efficiency, improving accessibility and user-friendliness, and above all, the reduction of costs. These goals could be advanced by improving the interoperability of electronic identification/authentication solutions being offered at the national level. Significant efforts have been made in recent years to chart the European interoperability difficulties related to eID and to propose solutions to these problems. The pilot studies and models are now transformed into actual working systems.

This report, the Agency’s first experts’ snapshot of Europe’s state of play in eIDM, charts the origins and scope of the ambitions for European eID interoperability, and looks specifically at how these are reflected in three specific initiatives, namely the eID Roadmap, the recently launched STORK project (an EU project focusing on eID) and the implementation of the Services Directive (which requires Member States to put electronic points of single contact in place by 28 Dec. 2009).

The purpose of the report is to provide persons involved or interested in European eID policies with an overview of some of the main initiatives in this field.

What do you hope to achieve with this report?

Hopefully the document can serve as a useful tool for informing policy makers, indicating how existing efforts might evolve, and perhaps helping identify future policy priorities.

Why is interoperability so important in terms of eID solutions?

By improving the interoperability of eID solutions, European citizens and businesses would be able to use applications in any European country, thus potentially benefiting citizens, businesses and administrations alike.

What are the goals in terms of eIDM in Europe and how are these goals to be reached?

Europe has imposed extremely ambitious short-term eIDM goals, which has resulted in a significant number of relevant initiatives, all of which bring their own piece of the puzzle to the table. Concrete, the European goal in relation to eIDM is that in 2010, European businesses and citizens should be able to securely identify and authenticate themselves towards applications in other Member States. One of the keys to reaching these goals is ensuring that the solutions chosen and preferred by the national administrations would be able to operate across borders.

What are the main challenges within eIDM in the future?

One of the key challenges for the future will be to integrate the outcomes of all of these different aspects into an updated global vision for European electronic identity interoperability. Apart from the three initiatives that this report is focusing on there are several others and it is clear that no single initiative has defined the sole valid solution to European identity management issues. A coordinated approach combining the benefits of these proposals will need to emerge in future years.

Finally, what are the main policy priorities in terms of eIDM?

First of all the eID will be reviewed and updated. Another priority is how to expand the pilot infrastructure into a full-scale system as well as examine the results of the STORK project.

When there is an interoperability infrastructure the Member States need to decide on the security requirements of their applications and finally it is crucial to give users sufficient personal control over their identity, i.e. to emphasise the citizen-centric approach to eID.

For full report:

http://www.enisa.europa.eu/doc/pdf/deliverables/enisa_eID_management.pdf

For FAQs:

http://www.enisa.europa.eu/doc/pdf/faq_eIDM.pdf

For press release:

http://www.enisa.europa.eu/pages/02_01_press_2009_01_29_eID_management.html

For further information please contact:

Slawomir Gorniak, ENISA Security Expert, eid@enisa.europa.eu

Ulf Bergstrom, Press & Communications Officer ENISA,

press@enisa.europa.eu, Mobile: +30 6948 460143