



**Wesign - implemented by Chambers of Commerce in 9 countries – aims at enhancing the access of SMEs to digital certificates. These certificates allow SMEs to sign documents electronically or to access eGovernment services.**

Enterprises want to do business with innovative techniques while keeping full control of confidentiality, user authentication, integrity of the message, non-repudiation of transactions, and legitimate availability of services and information. The market for electronic certificates in Europe is however far from maturity. Regardless of the regulatory effort, digital signatures have so far seldom been used and when they have, almost exclusively, it was in closed environments such as in e-Banking and e-Government.

Wesign provides businesses with the technical infrastructure required to achieve this objective and linking with an increasing number of eBusiness and eGovernment applications. As far as the process is concerned, the business representatives first prove their identity and the power they have in the company to a local Chamber of Commerce and Industry within the network. They are granted a digital certificate generally stored on a USB key or a smartcard and a password to ensure strong security. With this certificate they are entitled to sign emails, contracts, invoices or access VAT declaration and many other eGovernment applications.

The WESIGN objectives are the following:

- To bring partners with few or no experience in digital certificates to an operational level of delivering them to companies.
- To validate the interest of companies in various types of digital certificates via a number of applications: signed email, customs documents, e-Invoice or more generally the e-Signature of documents.
- To develop a sustainable business model for Chambers of Commerce for the selling of those digital certificates.
- To contribute to the interoperability of e-Signatures at European level.

Wesign aims at demonstrating to companies how electronic certificates can help them secure their business in a number of applications. Several pilot companies will be equipped with digital certificates and will test in real conditions their potential.

Wesign partners will validate the service in a two-step-process. First, they will conduct a situation analysis following the 5Cs method (company, customers, competitors, collaborators and climate analysis). Second, Wesign partners will carry out an in-depth investigation of the needs of target users which are companies using e-Business methods, e-communication or e-Government services. This second analysis is made in two cycle including trainings performed offline and online which are concluded by surveys feeding the market validation analysis.

By the end of the project, each partner will build its business model aiming at ensuring the sustainability of the service. ChamberSign is the umbrella organisation which will be empowered to pursue the integration of the service at European level.

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