What is eID?

CEF eID and the eIDAS Regulation

The CEF eID building block is a set of services (including software, documentation, training and support) provided by the European Commission and endorsed by the Member States, which helps public administrations and private Service Providers to extend the use of their online services to citizens from other European countries. This is realised through the mutual recognition of national electronic identification (eID) schemes (including smartcards, mobile and log-in), allowing citizens of one European country to use their national eIDs to securely access online services provided in other European countries. The mutual recognition of eID schemes across Europe is mandated by the eIDAS Regulation. The Regulation states that by 29 September 2018 all online public services requiring electronic identification assurance corresponding to a level of 'substantial' or 'high' must be able to accept the notified eID schemes of other EU countries. Public administrations offering online services that match these requirements are therefore obliged to comply.

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CEF eID primarily supports the Member States in the roll-out of the eIDAS Network (the technical infrastructure which connects national eID schemes). Service Providers (public administrations and private sector organisations) may then connect their services to this network, making these services accessible across borders and allowing them to enjoy the legal recognition brought by eIDAS. This cross-border eID, in line with the eIDAS Regulation and enabled by the CEF eID building block, is termed eIDAS eID.

What is the eIDAS Network?

The eIDAS Network consists of a number of interconnected eIDAS-Nodes, one per participating country, which can either request or provide cross-border authentication. It is the responsibility of each country to implement their eIDAS-Node. Each country should also support the connection of national Identity Providers and Attribute Providers to the eIDAS-Node, thus making their national eID schemes accessible to cross-border online services.

Find out more about the actors involved or learn more about how the eIDAS solution works.

Why are CEF eID and eIDAS important?

Today's world is increasingly globalised and connected. Within the EU, more people than ever are living, working and travelling across borders. While there is freedom of movement and business, the administrative burden of accessing public and private services in other countries is still high. More than twenty European countries currently have eID systems in place, however they all have varying security mechanisms for identification and authentication, and are based on different philosophies which lack cross-border recognition and validation. Looking to the future, the pan-European availability of widespread and secure access to online services is essential for continued economic growth in Europe, and is thus a cornerstone of progress towards the Digital Single Market (DSM).

By helping Member States comply with the eIDAS Regulation, CEF eID therefore contributes significantly to achieving the DSM. European citizens will have the freedom to access numerous online public services within the EU with unprecedented ease, while governments and businesses will be able to extend their reach further than ever before. Furthermore, governments, businesses and citizens can have confidence in the standards and assurance of eID schemes on the eIDAS Network.

Find out more about the benefits of eIDAS and CEF eID.

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