

PRESS RELEASE
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Council adopts electronic identification rules

The Council today adopted¹ a regulation which lays down conditions for **mutual recognition of electronic identification**; sets rules for **trust services**, in particular for **electronic transactions**; and creates a legal framework for **electronic signatures, seals and time stamps, electronic documents** as well as **electronic registered delivery services** and certificate services for **website authentication** ([PE-CONS 60/14](#); statement: [11733/14 ADD 1](#)).

Today's final adoption of the legislative act by the Council follows an agreement reached at first reading with the European Parliament earlier this year.

The regulation will enter into force 20 days after its publication in the EU Official Journal, which is expected to take place within the next few days.

Easier and more secure cross-border transactions

The new regulation provides a common foundation for secure electronic interaction between businesses, citizens and public authorities. It seeks to increase the effectiveness of public and private online services, electronic business and electronic commerce in the EU and to enhance trust in electronic transactions in the internal market. Mutual recognition of electronic identification and authentication is vital, for instance in making cross-border healthcare for European citizens a reality.

System for mutual recognition of electronic identification

The new rules require member states to recognise, under certain conditions, means of electronic identification of natural and legal persons falling under another member state's electronic identification scheme which has been notified to the Commission. It is up to the member states to choose whether they want to notify all, some or none of the electronic identification schemes used at national level to access at least public online services or specific services.

¹ The decision was taken at the General Affairs Council.

These rules only cover cross-border aspects of electronic identification, and issuing means of electronic identification remains a national prerogative.

Timeline for mutual recognition

Those member states which so wish may join the scheme for recognising each others' notified e-identification means as soon as the necessary implementing acts are in place. This is expected to take place in the second half of 2015. The mandatory mutual recognition is expected to kick off in the second half of 2018.

From e-signature to trust services

Until now, there were EU provisions only on electronic signatures, laid down in the 1999 [e-signature directive](#), which is repealed with effect from July 2016.

In addition to enhancing and expanding these provisions, the new regulation also introduces, for the first time, EU-wide rules concerning trust services, such as the creation and verification of electronic time stamps and electronic registered delivery services, or the creation and validation of certificates for website authentication. Trust services which comply with the regulation can circulate freely within the single market. In addition, an EU trust mark will be created to identify trust services which meet certain strict requirements. The use of the trust mark will be voluntary.

- [Digital agenda for Europe: Trust services and electronic identification](#)
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