



Project co-funded by the
CIVIL JUSTICE PROGRAMME
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General Description of the iSupport Project

The EU 2009 Maintenance Regulation and the 2007 Hague Maintenance Convention have the potential to benefit millions of children and adults in Europe and around the world by facilitating the effective cross-border recovery of maintenance obligations, while at the same time reducing State welfare and social security dependency. To ensure that these instruments are used to their full potential and facilitate the fast, efficient, easy, cost-effective and results-oriented international recovery of maintenance obligations, advances in e-government and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) must be exploited. The iSupport Electronic Case Management and Secure Communication System (ECMSCS) will provide States with the ICT needed to achieve these goals.

iSupport will address all major challenges raised by cross-border recovery of maintenance, such as:

- large volume and long duration of cases
- high volume of communication between authorities
- numerous repetitive actions, including electronic transfer of funds
- secure communications
- language barriers
- real time access to information across time zones

iSupport will overcome these challenges by providing an ICT bridge/platform between Central Authorities of different States to communicate and process data under both the 2009 Regulation and the 2007 Convention.

Once implemented, iSupport will:

- greatly facilitate communication between Central Authorities
- alleviate translation problems by operating in different languages and using the language and medium neutral forms developed under the 2009 Regulation and the 2007 Convention
- provide for electronic transfer of funds and their monitoring
- ensure consistent practices at both the European and global level
- allow States to implement paperless case management

By accomplishing the above objectives, States will provide effective access to justice to their citizens and realise considerable savings. The time and money saved through the operation of iSupport is expected to exceed rapidly the costs relating to its development and implementation.

iSupport will build on experiences with existing national electronic case management systems and ICT systems that provide for secure electronic cross-border transmission of dematerialised documents such as e-Codex (www.e-codex.eu).

Development of iSupport will be undertaken by Working Groups (WG) comprised of various subject matter experts, including maintenance Central Authority experts, government and private sector electronic secure communication and fund transfer experts, government data protection experts and government financial and public procurement experts. The Permanent Bureau (Secretariat) of the Hague Conference will coordinate the work of these groups with the assistance of a team of four highly qualified experts hired for the project.

The WG will develop a stand-alone: (1) ECMSCS; and (2) electronic transfer of funds system. That means under both Stages (1) and (2) the development of front and back ends and database. iSupport will also include instructions and technical requirements for States that want to ensure interoperability / mapping / connectivity of iSupport with their existing electronic case management systems that they will continue to use. iSupport is based on a decentralised approach that will consist of an e-delivery platform, a gateway, ECMSCS and national connectors combined with national systems where they exist. A WG will be tasked with the identification of an integrator (ICT service provider) to provide a gateway to connect iSupport databases between participating jurisdictions and developing a related business model, including the possibility to provide these services on a fee recovery basis. iSupport's further capability to generate statistics and integrate the e-country profile developed under the 2007 Convention (completed in 2012) are not part of the present grant and will be implemented later (development stages (3) and (4)).