



Project co-funded by the  
CIVIL JUSTICE PROGRAMME  
of the EUROPEAN UNION

**iSupport**

cross-border recovery  
of maintenance obligations  
*pour le recouvrement  
transfrontière des  
obligations alimentaires*

## **iSupport Functional Requirements Working Group (1) – Meeting (9) – 17 March 2015 Meeting**

### **Draft Report of Meeting n°9**

---

#### **List of Participants**

<b>Experts</b>	<b>iSupport Team</b>
Natasha BUTLER (France) - substituted Cameron COWPER (Canada) Daphne De WIT (The Netherland) Paulo GONCALVES (Portugal) Alisha GRIFFIN (United States of America) Arnaldo JOSÉ ALVES SILVEIRA (Brazil) Anna-Lena HALTTUNEN (Finland) - substitute Petra HUBOVÁ (Czech Republic) - substitute Pietari KORTEKANGAS (Finland) Haldi KOIT (Estonia) Tanja NIEMI (Finland) - substituted Marketa NOVAKOVA (Czech Republic) -substituted Inese PLONE (Latvia) Tobias PLUM (Germany) Marielle RICHERT (France) - substitute Siri RISNES (Norway) - excused Hannah ROOTS (NCSEA)	Philippe LORTIE Brigitte VOERMAN - excused Juliane HIRSCH (Chair) Marie VAUTRAVERS Chad TURNER (intern)

---

#### **1. Introduction**

1. Philippe Lortie, First Secretary, welcomed the participants to the ninth meeting of the Functional Requirements Working Group and opened the meeting with a roll-call.
2. Juliane Hirsch, Legal Consultant to the iSupport Project, thanked an expert from the United States of America for her submission of an overview document on the structuring of iSupport.
3. An expert from Estonia asked about the envisaged steps following the conclusion of this last Working Group meeting. In particular, she was interested to know whether the Working Group might be reconvened to assist at further stages of the iSupport project. Philippe Lortie explained that, as a next step, the Deliverables Document will be amended to reflect the result of all Working Group meetings and to serve as a basis for the tender. He detailed that on 2 April 2015 the Deliverables Document will be published on

the iSupport website and that comments could be given until 15 April 2015. He announced that a reconvening of the Functional Requirements Working Group was indeed planned for Monday, 13 April 2015 to discuss the Working Group's final feedback on the functional requirements described in the Deliverables Document. He noted that a similar process could be undertaken with respect to the Governance Working Group and that the final call for tender is expected to be published on 1 May 2015 with economic operators being invited to tender before 1 June 2015.

## **2. Follow-up – Last Meeting**

4. There were no follow-up matters raised.

## **3. Items for discussion / decision**

### **Task list - continuation of the discussion of the tasks**

5. Juliane Hirsch stated that the lack of time had, unfortunately, made it impossible to circulate an updated task list. She sought any further feedback from the Working Group on the task list circulated for the previous meeting. She noted that for the drafting of the Deliverables Document the detailed description of the functionality of the task list is of primary importance. She added that there will be the opportunity to provide further comments on task list items to be included once the Deliverables Document is finalised.

### **Adapted definitions for the statuses of a case**

6. Juliane Hirsch referred to the Working Document circulated to the Working Group in advance of the meeting and reminded the Working Group of previous discussions on the definitions of statuses of a case in iSupport. She noted that changes had been made in accordance with the Working Group comments and that case statuses will now be divided into three primary categories: "open", "closed", or "archived". A number of sub-categories will be available for "open" and "closed" cases with the sub-categories to be used at the discretion of each Central Authority. She confirmed that each Central Authority will determine the status of a case independently of the way the other involved Central Authority determines the status. Therefore, the status determination in the described categories is principally for internal purposes only.

### **Status open, Status closed, Status archived**

7. Juliane Hirsch read the definitions of each of the primary categories of statuses as found in the Working Document. There was general agreement in the Working Group with the suggested definitions.
8. An expert from the Czech Republic asked how a request for a specific measure, for example, concerning an inquiry as to whereabouts of the debtor would be dealt with. Juliane Hirsch indicated that for the request a case would be opened and that a later application for recognition and enforcement would be dealt with under the same iSupport case number. As concerns the status of that case, she noted that case will remain open until all steps of work have been concluded. Philippe Lortie agreed that in the example of the expert from the Czech Republic the category would be set to "open" and suggested that the sub-category could be set to "incomplete" since the Central Authority would still be looking for information concerning the application.
9. An expert from Estonia noted that it may be good to have a separate category for "specific measures", since in her view "incomplete" did not appropriately capture the status. Juliane Hirsch agreed that the term "incomplete" could cause confusion since it would not be entirely clear whether it would be referring to the specific measure or was meant to indicate "incompleteness" concerning the future application. She noted that this will have to be clearly addressed in the status definitions.

### **Adapted case definition and composition of the functional iSupport number**

10. Juliane Hirsch noted that throughout the meetings of the Working Group it had become evident that the definition of what will be considered “a case” in iSupport was no easy task. She explained that following the discussions of the previous Working Group meeting the case definition had been adapted once more and she expressed the hope that this definition would be satisfactory for all Working Group members. Giving the reasoning for this change, she explained that a case in iSupport would now be defined as a case concerning the same debtor and person(s) for whom maintenance is sought and involving the same requesting and requested State. She highlighted that in accordance with this new definition incoming and outgoing applications will be dealt with under two different iSupport numbers, which can be connected in iSupport.

11. Juliane Hirsch stated that following this adaption of the case definition the functional iSupport case number will be composed out of:

- the abbreviation of the requesting State (& sub-unit),
- the abbreviation of the requested State (& sub-unit),
- the year in which the case was set up in iSupport,
- a 7 digit running number, and
- the abbreviation of the State (& sub-unit) in which the iSupport number was issued.

12. Juliane Hirsch highlighted that the new case definition and composition of the iSupport number made it possible to immediately see which State is the requesting State and which one is the requested State. Provided both States have implemented iSupport, it will always be the requesting State that creates the new iSupport number. She noted, however, that in the beginning not all States will have iSupport and therefore sometimes the requested State will be the first one to enter data into iSupport and create the case number. She explained, that in order to not compromise the clear identification of requesting and requested State in the functional iSupport number, it had been decided that a Central Authority setting up a case in iSupport would be asked to identify the requesting State and requested State before the iSupport number would be created. Therefore the State that creates the new case, will not always be shown as the first State mentioned in the number. She clarified that to avoid confusion, it had been decided to add the abbreviation of the State creating the number at the end of the functional iSupport number.

13. Juliane Hirsch noted that with a view to creating iSupport with sufficient flexibility to adapt to the different options of implementation of the Convention, in particular, in States with territorial sub-units, it had been necessary to come back to the idea of including territorial subunits in the iSupport number. She explained that this would allow States with territorial or functional sub-unit to use autonomous iSupport systems in each unit.

14. An expert from Estonia asked what would happen if a State initially not using iSupport adopts iSupport while casework on a particular case is ongoing. Juliane Hirsch responded that the existing iSupport number that has been created in the other State for this case will be used by the State now using iSupport. She noted that as the functional iSupport case number will now list the State in which the number was created, this will avoid possible confusion of between cases caused by States implementing iSupport at different times. Philippe Lortie added that the possibility of a plug-in that would allow for data to be easily migrated from relevant States to the State newly implementing iSupport is being explored.

15. There was general agreement in the Working Group with the suggested approach. An expert from the public body in Finland noted that in their system a new case is created the moment the applicant changes even though the debtor and the person(s) for whom maintenance is sought remain the same. Juliane Hirsch indicated that in iSupport this would be considered one case, but that States are, of course, not forced to change their internal case numbering system. The iSupport case can then be connected with both internal case numbers. An expert from the Czech Republic noted that their system works similarly to what has been proposed for iSupport. She detailed that in their system, the change of the

applicant would not bring about the opening of a new case. An expert from the United States of America indicated that the suggested approach for iSupport was satisfactory for her State.

16. An expert from the public body in Finland added that their internal reference numbers serves at the same time as payment references and wondered how this matter could be solved in iSupport. Juliane Hirsch noted that iSupport would have to be able to cite individual payment references. She recalled that, at this stage, iSupport will not contain a transfer of funds function. The Working Group was in general agreement that the definition and composition of a case number as contained in Section II of the Working Document was satisfactory.

#### **Monitoring of funds - Composition of the monitoring of funds page - Currency exchange rate & indexation**

17. Juliane Hirsch recalled that for several States an efficient tool to monitor funds in iSupport is of crucial importance. This concerns, in particular, States that are involved in the transfer of funds concerning incoming and / or outgoing cases. She reported that following earlier Working Group discussions, the German Central Authority had reiterated in writing the importance of such a tool. She referred to the screen example circulated in the Working Document explaining that this was meant to serve as a basis for discussion of the monitoring of funds.

18. Juliane Hirsch highlighted that it will be important for the monitoring of funds to include the ability to show both the currency of the original debt, *i.e.* the currency noted in the decision or court settlement *etc.* and the currency of the State of the Central Authority where the enforcement is taking place. She stated that the system would need to be able to assist in calculation. She added that there would also need to be the possibility of showing indexation, perhaps through the use of a separate table. An expert from Estonia indicated that it would also be important to include now defunct currencies, for example, when a European State has adopted the Euro, but the decision is in an out-dated currency. Juliane Hirsch agreed.

19. An expert from the Netherlands noted the problem of volatility and fluctuation of currencies and asked how the problem would be dealt with in iSupport. Juliane Hirsch noted that iSupport would offer the administrator the ability to set the exchange rate on a periodic basis aligned with the State's current practice. Philippe Lortie noted that the issue of currency conversion is dealt with differently in every State with time periods between updating the rate varying from 1 month to 1 year, for example and that the iSupport system would need to be flexible in this regard. An expert from the Czech Republic asked if the system would do the currency conversion automatically and explained that in her State the exchange rate is recalculated on a daily basis. Juliane Hirsch confirmed that the administrator of the system could update the rates as frequently as necessary and that eventually it would be nice to have an interface that pulls the exchange rates from a source specified by the State to make the system more automated. Philippe Lortie indicated that at the programming stage this could be discussed in further detail, but that the exchange rate could for instance be provided through an RSS (or any similar format) feed.

20. An expert from the Netherlands asked if it would be possible to see a grand total for maintenance owed to all persons in a given case in addition to per person totals. This was noted.

21. An expert from Portugal indicated that his country, which at this stage gets involved in distributing fund for cases falling under the bilateral agreement with the United States of America only, was currently contemplating having a bank account made available for transfers and fund monitoring for all international maintenance cases. The expert also underlined the need for flexibility of States concerning the setting of exchange rates and interest within the iSupport system. He noted that in the discussions around the recommended EU arrears form, it had been impossible to agree on the inclusion of a conversion schedule.

22. Philippe Lortie asked the Working Group to submit, if feasible, screen shots of their current fund transfer monitoring systems in French, English, German or Spanish or if not in one of those languages with a brief translation of the terminology displayed in the screen shot.

23. An expert from the United States of America suggested that it may be helpful to have a fiscal notes column, similar to case notes, that would go along with the payments. She recommended that fiscal notes and case notes be kept separately. This was noted.

24. Juliane Hirsch referred to the recommended EU arrears form, which had been, circulated to the Working Group in advance of the meeting. She indicated that this form would be integrated into iSupport and that an adapted version of the form would be used for Convention cases. She encouraged non-EU States to send in comments on the form if they had any.

### **Particular safeguards for accountant work**

25. Juliane Hirsch noted the need of some States, particularly those involved in the transfer of funds, to have extra safeguards in their electronic case management system to prevent fraud. She referred to an example that had been given by the expert from the United States of America stating that in her system the editing of payment information and the editing of an address cannot be done by the same person. Juliane Hirsch noted that for this particular requirement, the granting of access rights to certain profiles should be sufficient to implement the needed safeguards. She inquired whether the Working Group wished other safeguards to be implemented in iSupport. The Working Group was in agreement that the safeguards currently envisaged were sufficient.

### **Profiles of access rights**

26. Juliane Hirsch introduced the final changes to the profiles of access rights. She referred to the tables listed in the Working Document and indicated that the suggestion contained two options for access rights. One option allows for profiles to be combined and the other does not. She noted that a registrar role had been added. The registrar role would be for new cases and applications and the allocation of work on these cases. She highlighted the changes made to the accountant role, which now no longer allows editing of address information. She asked if the registrar role should be changed to include the ability to view, but not edit, case information for domestic violence and restricted access cases. The Working Group did not think that the registrar role would need to be changed.

27. Juliane Hirsch explained that the Deliverables Document will describe the second set of profiles of access rights, i.e. the non-combinable profiles, as a "Must Have" requirement, while the most likely more costly solution of combinable profiles would be classified a "Could Have". She asked the Working Group for comments and, in particular, whether all the different profiles noted in the second table were sufficient or whether further profiles would have to be added.

28. Most experts of the Working Group considered that the suggested profiles were sufficient. An expert from the public body in Finland noted that the manager would need to be stripped of access to financial rights and that such rights should only be for the accountant. Juliane Hirsch noted the need to create a set of manager and caseworker profiles without financial rights.

29. Philippe Lortie came back to the registrar role and asked the Working Group if it would be helpful for the registrar to be able to create new cases and close and archive cases. Juliane Hirsch agreed that in some Central Authorities the allocation of who will work on a case and the opening of a case in the electronic case management may be done at the same time so the combining of these rights would be important. There was general agreement in the Working Group with this suggestion.

30. An expert from the Czech Republic stated that, in her Central Authority, closing a case needs to be authorised by the caseworker and the manager and that then the case is closed by the registrar to ensure that the case is not accidentally closed. Juliane Hirsch noted that certain internal rights and hierarchies might not be reflected as such in the

profiles of access rights. It may be that in iSupport, as is the case in some current electronic case management systems, a member of the Central Authority has access rights that surpass that person's work tasks. She noted that this will have to be addressed through internal procedures to ensure the use of the system in accordance with internal guidelines and hierarchies in each State.

### **Statistics**

31. Juliane Hirsch indicated that iSupport would be set up in a way that statistics required by the EU Regulation and the Convention could be produced. She inquired if other statistics, such as overall statistics or customised statistics would be a priority for any State and indicated that currently they are thought of as an extra. An expert from Portugal suggested that iSupport include the capacity to export data to an excel spread-sheet. Then each Central Authority could use the data to create the statistics it needed. An expert from Finland inquired about the ability to see how many applications had been sent from a certain country. Juliane Hirsch responded that such data would be in the overall statistics, and if iSupport cannot provide for customised statistics because of financial constraints then the suggestion of the expert from Portugal would allow States to extract this information from the overall excel spread-sheet.

### **4. Other items for discussion**

32. Juliane Hirsch noted that, regrettably, there was not enough time to discuss the annotations of the Convention forms in more detail. She recalled that for the EU Regulation forms the guidance from the EU will be implemented into iSupport. She noted that more detailed work would be undertaken with regard to the forms in preparation of the programming of iSupport and invited the Working Group to submit any comments on this subject.

33. An expert from the Netherlands noted with regard to the recommended EU arrears form that there was no mention of the exact day of start of the calculation. Juliane Hirsch explained that this arrears form when used in iSupport, would give a snapshot of the status of arrears at a given moment. The system would, of course, contain all the detailed information including the exact start dates. An expert from Portugal noted that in the discussions around the drafting of the EU arrears form there had been no consensus on the inclusion of the exact date in the form, which is why only the month is showing.

### **5. Closure of the Meeting-Next Meeting 13 April 2015, 15h00 UTC (16h00 ETC)**

34. Juliane Hirsch thanked the participants for their very helpful comments and their time. She noted that following Philippe Lortie's suggestion, another meeting would be scheduled for 13 April 2015 at 15h00 UTC (16h00 ETC) with a confirmation to be sent prior to the meeting.

35. Philippe Lortie thanked the participants for their aid during the nine meetings of the Working Group. He noted that during the meeting of 13 April 2015 there will be a follow-up conducted on queries arising from the draft tender and indicated that the Working Group will be looked to for help throughout the programming phase and beyond as iSupport is designed and implemented. He asked the participants to maintain availability to help in the next steps of the iSupport project and closed the meeting at 17h30 ETC.