



Project funded by the European Union's
Justice Programme (2014-2020)

iSupport

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

iSupport Governing Body, 12 April 2019 Summary of discussions

Participants

The meeting was chaired by Floor de Jongh Bekkali representing Norway. In attendance were representatives of Austria, Brazil, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United States of America. France was excused. The Permanent Bureau (PB) was represented by Philippe Lortie, Charlotte Darbas and Jean-Marc Pellet.

A recording of the meeting is available here:

<http://assets.hcch.net/docs/41facbcd-afbc-48f9-959b-b6d324b17b2c.mp4>

I. New requirements

Protech produced a first document showing their understanding of the requested improvements on form generation. The iSupport coordinator remarked that this document still requires some clarifications before being circulated. Once it is circulated, a meeting of the Working Group will be held.

An additional requirement was discussed with Finland. In Finland, both the public body (Kela) and the ministry of justice send outgoing applications under the EU Regulation. Some Convention applications are prepared by Kela, but sent by the ministry of justice. Finland would be using separate iSupport databases for Kela and the ministry of justice, but this does not provide a solution for those Convention cases prepared by Kela within the database of the Ministry of Justice. A proposed solution would be to create ministry of justice profiles for some Kela workers in addition to Ministry of Justice profiles *per se*. In order to restrict access for these caseworkers only to the Convention cases concerned, Finland would make use of the "limited access" possibility. Currently, this feature restricts access to case data to managers and to the caseworker who created the case. In order to accommodate Finland's requirements, it is proposed to change that to managers and to the primary case worker. Participants are invited to indicate whether they agree with this change (it is a change that can be done quickly and simply by Protech).

II. State of play of developments

Progress has been made with the new e-CODEX set-up. The iSupport coordinator reported that the new connector and gateway are now functioning. What remains is to test the

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connection between the two iSupport sandboxes to make sure there are not remaining issues. He thanked Austria for their continued support.

The encryption version is also available in the sandboxes. Technical documentation is being updated and circulated, some adjustments to the documentation and the software may still be necessary. The iSupport coordinator remarked that it was important for participants to review the documentation and make sure their national requirements were serviced. He also remarked on the need to put processes in place for certificate management. A Working Group will quickly be convened to discuss these two aspects.

Given that some extra work may still be required on the encryption version and provided the e-CODEX connection can be re-established quickly, the iSupport coordinator commented that some participants may find it useful to effectively start using iSupport with the August 2018 version (non-encrypted), which includes the separation of jurisdictions, a US requirement that may also be useful for other States. This may also require that recent corrections already made in the encryption version be included in that version. Norway and Portugal indicated that this would be an acceptable solution for them. Brazil agreed too, on conditions that its technical preparations can be finalised in time.

III. Budget consumption

The iSupport coordinator presented an overview of the budget consumption since September 2019.

IV. Options for the continuation of the project

The iSupport coordinator presented two options that are available in terms of European funds.

There is an e-justice call, which is open until 13 June:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/just-2015-jacc-ag-e-ju;freeTextSearchKeyword=justice;typeCodes=1;statusCodes=31094501,31094502,31094503;programCode=JUST;programDivisionCode=null;focusAreaCode=null;crossCuttingPriorityCode=null;callCode=Default;sortQuery=openingDate;orderBy=asc;onlyTenders=false;topicListKey=topicSearchTablePageState>

A forthcoming Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) will also include connection to iSupport:

<https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-telecom/apply-funding/2019-cef-telecom-calls-proposals> (European e-justice).

For the e-justice call, possible content could include connection to iSupport (for citizens, competent authorities and enforcement authorities) and further improvements to the user friendliness. In this respect, the Netherlands mentioned they already have a solution for national applications. Germany remarked that an applicant, in all circumstances, first has to go to a court before addressing the Central Authority. It also remarked that it would be difficult to involve all of its competent courts.

The First Secretary invited countries to be in any case ready to fully fund iSupport in September 2020 in the case where European funds were not to be available. The Netherlands remarked that, in the long-term, it is essential to have more countries on board in order to decrease maintenance costs for all.

Addition after meeting

Below are estimates of the iSupport costs apportioned between participants according to different options.

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EU Action Grant covering certain costs	
Total project costs	€ 411,000
Part to fund	€ 45,000
Average per participant (covering Sept. 2020 to Aug 2022) - same number of participants	€ 3,000

Maintenance costs	
Annual maintenance costs	€ 75,000
Contribution units of countries using iSupport in Sept. 2020	186
Annual cost for country with 10 contribution units*	€ 4,032

Situation 1: Action Grant covering certain costs, including new developments, maintenance to be paid separately

Total iSupport costs (maximum)	€ 220,000
Contribution units of countries using iSupport in Sept. 2020	186
Annual cost for country with 10 contribution units*	€ 11,828

Situation 2: all iSupport costs covered by participants

*Please see list in Annex II

Participants are invited to indicate whether they could fully cover Situation 2 as of September 2020. It is to be noted that both solutions would provide for software development possibilities.

The iSupport coordinator will consult bilaterally with participants in order to prepare a first draft of the application as part of the e-justice call. Consulted States will be expected to indicate the amount of funding they are ready to contribute knowing that the actual contribution would have to be made before August 2022. Participants are also invited to think about countries that could be approached for the CEF call.

In view of the above, a meeting of the Governing Body could be convened around 30 May to discuss the application to the June call.

V. Application for the European Public Sector Award (EPSA) 2019

The deadline for this application has been extended until 5 May. Participants agreed that it would be good publicity for iSupport. Norway agreed to provide a reference. Another reference would be welcomed. The application will be circulated to participants for comments. Thanks in advance for additional references to be communicated to the iSupport Coordinator as soon as possible.

The chair thanked the participants for their attendance and concluded the meeting.

Annex I – list of actions (iSupport coordinator)

Circulate EPSA application	17-Apr - done
Organise working group on updated requirements	19 April for meeting in late April / early May
Organise working group on encryption	19 April for meeting in late April / early May
Circulate a first draft of the application for the June call	13-May
Organise Governing Body meeting	End of April for meeting around 30 May

Annex II – Indicative list of participating countries in Sept. 2020 and their HCCH contribution units

Brazil	20
Czech Republic	5
Estonia	1
Finland	10
France	33
Germany	33
Greece	3
Netherlands	15
Norway	10
Portugal	5
Slovakia	3
Switzerland	15
USA	33
Total	186

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