iSupport Governing Body 4 February 2021 online meeting Minutes

Present were representatives from Austria, Belgium, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, the United States of America and the National Child Support Enforcement Association. France was excused. The meeting was chaired by Floor de Jongh Bekkali representing Norway. Present for the PB were Philippe Lortie (PL), Jean-Marc Pellet (JMP) and Charlotte Darbas.

Reference is made to the background note that was circulated before the meeting.

I.   Work on certificate management in iSupport

1.   JMP explained it is difficult to obtain quotes from commercial providers for the provision of private certification authority services. A new version of the document will be circulated.

II.   State of play of iSupport installations and connections

2.   JMP presented the state of play. A representative from Portugal announced Portugal had been able to send an iSupport message to Germany, but that Germany still needed to investigate why it could not read the message. A representative from Germany remarked on the usefulness of current weekly coordination meetings.

III.   Promotion of iSupport

3.   A representative from Portugal presented the advantages of using iSupport as a case management system only (without using the secure communication function), and how this frees time for caseworkers. The built-in checks and the fact that party details only need to be entered once help to minimise the risk of errors. Completing Annex V of the EU 2009 Maintenance Regulation takes less than one minute (in one language) in comparison to more than three minutes on the EU Justice Portal. Completing the same form in another language for transmission purposes is as fast if not faster. The statistical report for the EU Regulation can be generated at the click of a button, instead of hours spent collecting information.

4.   PL thanked Portugal for its presentation and invited all participants to install iSupport as soon as they can. The e-CODEX connection is of great benefit, but takes longer to install and fine tune, whereas iSupport can be installed in a matter of weeks if not days. Installing iSupport first would allow participants to benefit sooner from the savings highlighted by Portugal. PL also remarked that it is important to convince the European Union that appropriate provisions need to be made for iSupport in relation to eu-Lisa and e-CODEX (see point V.), which will be easier as more countries use iSupport. Finally, PL emphasised the relevance of a step-by-step approach to digitisation *i.e.,* installing iSupport first then e-CODEX once comfortable with the former.

IV. Budget

5. JMP indicated that the Slovak Republic kindly got in touch to inform the PB it would take steps to pay its contribution to iSupport PM.

6. In relation to the iSupport ISD budget, JMP indicated that the PB would monitor the situation. He also remarked that some flexibility would be provided through the budget for other direct costs, initially thought to be higher because of videoconferencing.

V. e-CODEX Regulation and consultation on e-justice

7. JMP presented developments in relation to the proposed EU Regulation on e-CODEX and invited participants to be in touch with their representatives in Brussels.

8. The Governing Body approved the following message in response to the EU consultation on the digitalisation of cross-border judicial cooperation:

> The Governing Body of iSupport welcomes the initiative.
>
> It would like to underscore the need to ensure the coordination between the EU Regulation (Council Regulation (EC) No 4/2009 of 18 December 2008 on jurisdiction, applicable law, recognition and enforcement of decisions and cooperation in matters relating to maintenance obligations) side and the Convention (Convention of 23 November 2007 on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance) side of iSupport, as a divergence could be created by different technical requirements between the Convention and the Regulation.
>
> While making e-CODEX the standard for cross-border exchanges in the EU is welcome, there is also a need to find satisfactory solutions to clarify the perimeter of eu-LISA on the one hand, and that of States outside of the EU on the other hand.
>
> Finally, the iSupport Governing Body also remarks that the EU is making e-CODEX the standard for its Service and Evidence Regulations, which also have corresponding HCCH Conventions. Finally, iSupport is an example that could be relied upon for further development of applications to support cross-border communications in other areas than maintenance obligations.

VI. Next steps – future developments in iSupport

9. JMP announced the creation of Working Groups to discuss the updated design for the iSupport application (to start in March 2021) and the provision of information to applicants and caseworkers (to start in April 2021).

10. JMP confirmed that work on statistics for the Convention in iSupport would start after the Special Commission, the meeting of which is hoped for September 2021.

VII. Any other business

11. JMP indicated he is preparing a Preliminary Document on iSupport for the attention of the Council on General Affairs and Policy. The document will be finalised during the week of 8 February and will cover all of the aspects of iSupport including current and future developments,

budget, potential savings and developments in relation to e-CODEX. Participants are invited to share any ideas they would have. This can also be done when the document is updated for the Special Commission.

VIII.   Chair of the iSupport Governing Body

12.   Floor de Jongh Bekkali announced she would be stepping down as chair of the iSupport Governing Body, after two and a half years and in light of her co-chairing the Administrative Cooperation Working Group.

13.   PL thanked Floor for her diligent chairing and interest in the work of the HCCH. He added that the PB would like to propose Paulo Gonçalves, head of the Portuguese Central Authority, as new chair, in recognition of Paulo's unrivalled experience with iSupport.

14.   Participants welcomed Paulo as the new chair of the iSupport Governing Body.