iSupport Governing Body 18 April 2024 online meeting
Summary of discussions

The meeting was attended by representatives of the European Commission, Brazil, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, the European Union Bailiffs Foundation (EUBF) and the National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA). The Permanent Bureau (PB) was represented by First Secretary Philippe Lortie (PL) and iSupport coordinator Jean-Marc Pellet (JMP). The meeting was chaired by Karin Honorato dos Santos (Sweden).

I. Chair of the iSupport Governing Body

1 Paulo Gonçalves announced that he was stepping down as chair of the iSupport Governing Body in the light of his workload and time spent on the position. Karin Honorato dos Santos was elected as the new chair.

II. Implementation agreement and sharing of maintenance costs

2 Germany indicated that it would prefer to receive payment requests at regular and predictable intervals. PL invited participants to indicate whether they would prefer a relationship with Protech or with the HCCH for the purposes of the implementation agreement and payment of the maintenance costs. He pointed out that there was a public call for tender in 2015 for the choice of subcontractor, which was approved by iSupport participants. He also indicated that in the case of an existing product, if it is unique or competition is absent for technical reasons, a tender may not be needed under the applicable law to use this product. It can also be added that annual maintenance costs may fall under thresholds for having to publish a call for tenders.

➔ JMP will circulate the amended implementation agreement and open it for signature.

➔ Participants are invited to state their preference for the other party to the agreement (Protech or the HCCH).

III. Renewal of Protech's contract

3 JMP stated that Protech's performance continued to be very satisfactory, even in the light of recent security issues, which Protech was able to correct quickly. The opportunity costs of switching to another contractor would also be quite high. There was no opposition to the renewal of the contract.

IV. Procedure in case of incidents in iSupport and transfer to eu-LISA

4 JMP reported that the transfer to eu-LISA has gone smoothly. Sweden presented a proposal for handling communications in case of issues with iSupport, mostly to inform other participating countries. JMP also proposed that HCCH act as a point of contact with eu-LISA for issues related to e-CODEX.

➔ Participants are invited to create a functional email address for iSupport (for instance isupport@domain.xx).

➔ JMP will investigate the possibility of creating email addresses linked to a mailing list.

➔ JMP will review Info Doc No 7 of 2015, which outlines procedures for incident management.

V.   Time plan for other countries to use iSupport

5   Germany indicated that it is working on a best practice guide for countries implementing iSupport. Finland indicated not being in a position to implement iSupport during 2024. It will continue to evaluate the product. France stated its continued commitment to iSupport and reported recent difficulties with staffing which have slowed progress. From September a more stable team should be in place.

➔ Participants are invited to communicate their timeline for installing iSupport to JMP with the objective to possibly make a significant announcement on 1St September 2024 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the iSupport project. Participants are also invited to share their time plan so that other states can make necessary arrangements such as train staff or discuss how to work together in iSupport.

VI.   Archiving in iSupport and data protection

6   JMP summarised the reasons that led to keeping residual data in iSupport and the applicable provisions in EU law. Sweden and Norway indicated that operating another system in relation to iSupport creates a difficulty in that respect. Germany stated that its national data protection requirements compel it to destroy residual data 10 years after closure of a case.

➔ JMP will investigate the feasibility of 1) users being able to choose which data should be kept as residual data in iSupport and 2) the possibility of completely erasing that residual data and making it easier to erase data in the archival database.

VII.   Role with access to non-disclosure cases

7   Sweden explained why it is proposing the creation of a specific role with access to both "limited access" and "non-disclosure" cases.

➔ JMP will explore the feasibility of creating such a role.

VIII.   Budget update and future developments

8   JMP stated that there is flexibility in the budget, but that developments in relation to the handling of payments will have to be prioritised from a time and budgetary perspective. It is hoped that the budget for those developments can be shared soon.

9   Germany indicated its interest in developments in relation to the Application Programming Interface (API). JMP clarified that developments on the API have to wait until the start of the iSupport R2G project. However, any suggestions to improve the existing API are welcome in the meantime.