

## Electronic signatures

The eSignature Directive established the legal framework at European level for electronic signatures and certification services.



A reliable system of electronic signatures that work across EU countries is vital for safe electronic commerce and efficient electronic delivery of public services to businesses and citizens.

The eSignature Directive established the legal framework at European level for electronic signatures and certification services. The aim is to make electronic signatures easier to use and help them become legally recognised within the Member States. The Directive does not favour any specific technology.

However, in order to ensure the security and legal validity of an electronic transaction in cross-border scenarios is the same as at national level, the eSignature was certainly important but not sufficient.

Other trust services are used alongside the eSignature to ensure validity, including:

- **time stamping**: the date and time on an electronic document which proves that the document existed at a point-in-time and that it has not changed since then
- **electronic seal**: the electronic equivalent of a seal or stamp which is applied on a document to guarantee its origin and integrity
- **electronic delivery**: a service that, to a certain extent, is the equivalent in the digital world of registered mail in the physical world
- **legal admissibility of electronic documents** to ensure their authenticity and integrity
- **website authentication**: trusted information on a website (e.g. a certificate) which allows users to verify the authenticity of the website and its link to the entity/person owning the website

Without certainty on the legal validity of all these related services, businesses and citizens will remain reluctant to use digital interactions as their natural way of interaction because they will be unsure of the issue of a possible dispute.

This is the intention behind the eIDAS Regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market. The provisions applicable to trust services set by the eIDAS Regulation apply directly in all 27 Member States.

Q&A: Trust services

eSignature Directive

Member states implementation of eIDAS

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## Latest

PRESS RELEASE | 03 June 2021

Commission proposes a trusted and secure Digital Identity for all Europeans

The Commission has proposed a framework for a European Digital Identity which will be available to all EU citizens, residents, and businesses in the EU. Citizens will be able to prove their identity and

share electronic documents from their European Digital Identity wallets with the click of a button on their phone. They will be able to access online services with their national digital identification, which will be recognised throughout Europe. Very large platforms will be required to accept the use of European Digital Identity wallets upon request of the user, for example to prove their age

DIGIBYTE | 24 July 2020

Digital identity and trust: Commission launches public consultation on the eIDAS Regulation

The Commission has launched a public consultation on the revision of the rules on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market, the eIDAS Regulation.

PRESS RELEASE | 05 March 2020

Eurobarometer survey shows support for sustainability and data sharing

Europeans want their digital devices to be easier to repair or recycle and are willing to share their personal information to improve public services, as a special Eurobarometer survey shows. The survey measured attitudes towards the impact of digitalisation on daily lives of Europeans in 27 EU Member States and the United Kingdom. It covers several different areas including digitalisation and the environment, sharing personal information, disinformation, digital skills and the use of digital ID.

DIGIBYTE | 20 November 2018

EU Blockchain Roundtable paves the way for Europe to lead in blockchain technologies

The EU Blockchain Roundtable: "Bringing industries together for Europe to lead in blockchain technologies" took place on 20 November in Brussels in presence of the Commissioner for Digital Economy and Society,

Mariya Gabriel and the Director-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, Roberto Viola. The Roundtable's objective is to gather support among EU industry leaders and policy makers for a comprehensive EU strategy to boost innovation and exploitation of blockchain technology.

Browse Trust services and eidentification

## **Related Content**

### **Big Picture**

Trust Services



The EU has introduced rules to strengthen trust services and ensure our online activity is secure across the EU.

## **See Also**

EU Trusted Lists

Member States have the obligation to establish, maintain and publish trusted lists of qualified trust service providers and the services provided by them.

Electronic Identification

Electronic identification (eID) is one of the tools to ensure secure access to online services and to carry out electronic transactions in a safer way.

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**Source URL:** <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/policies/esignatures>