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.

Secure electronic identification is an essential aspect of daily life in the digital world. It is used to check email, shop online and even unlock phones. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of this further, as governments and private companies decreased physical interactions to the bare minimum.

Electronic identification can guarantee the unambiguous identification of a person and ensures the right service is delivered to the person who is really entitled to it, for example for banking purposes. However, the lack of a common legal basis has prevented Member States from recognising and accepting electronic identification schemes issued in other Member States. The insufficient cross-border interoperability of national schemes prevents citizens and businesses from benefitting fully from a digital EU.

The Commission set out a number of targets and milestones for electronic identification in its Communication 2030 Digital Compass: The European Way for the Digital Decade (.pdf). For example, by 2030, all key public services should be available online, all citizens will have access to electronic medical records; and 80% citizens should use an electronic identification solution.

eIDAS Regulation

The Electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services (eIDAS) Regulation provides the basis for cross-border electronic identification, authentication and website certification within the EU.

EU Member States may notify and recognise, on a voluntary basis, national electronic identification schemes in their Member States. The recognition of notified electronic identification became mandatory in 2018. Already 60% of Europeans can benefit from the current system but take up is low, their use is cumbersome and business cases are limited.

Yet, there is no requirement for Member States to develop a national electronic identification and to make it interoperable with those in other Member States. This has led to discrepancies between countries.

European Digital Identity Regulation

The new proposal for a Regulation on digital identity will address shortcomings in eIDAS by improving the effectiveness of the framework and extending its benefits to the private sector.

Member States will offer citizens and businesses digital wallets that will be able to link various aspects of their national digital identities. These may be provided by public authorities or the private sector, if they are recognized by the Member States.

Consumers should also be able to access services online without having to use private platforms or unnecessarily sharing personal data. They will have full control of the data they share.
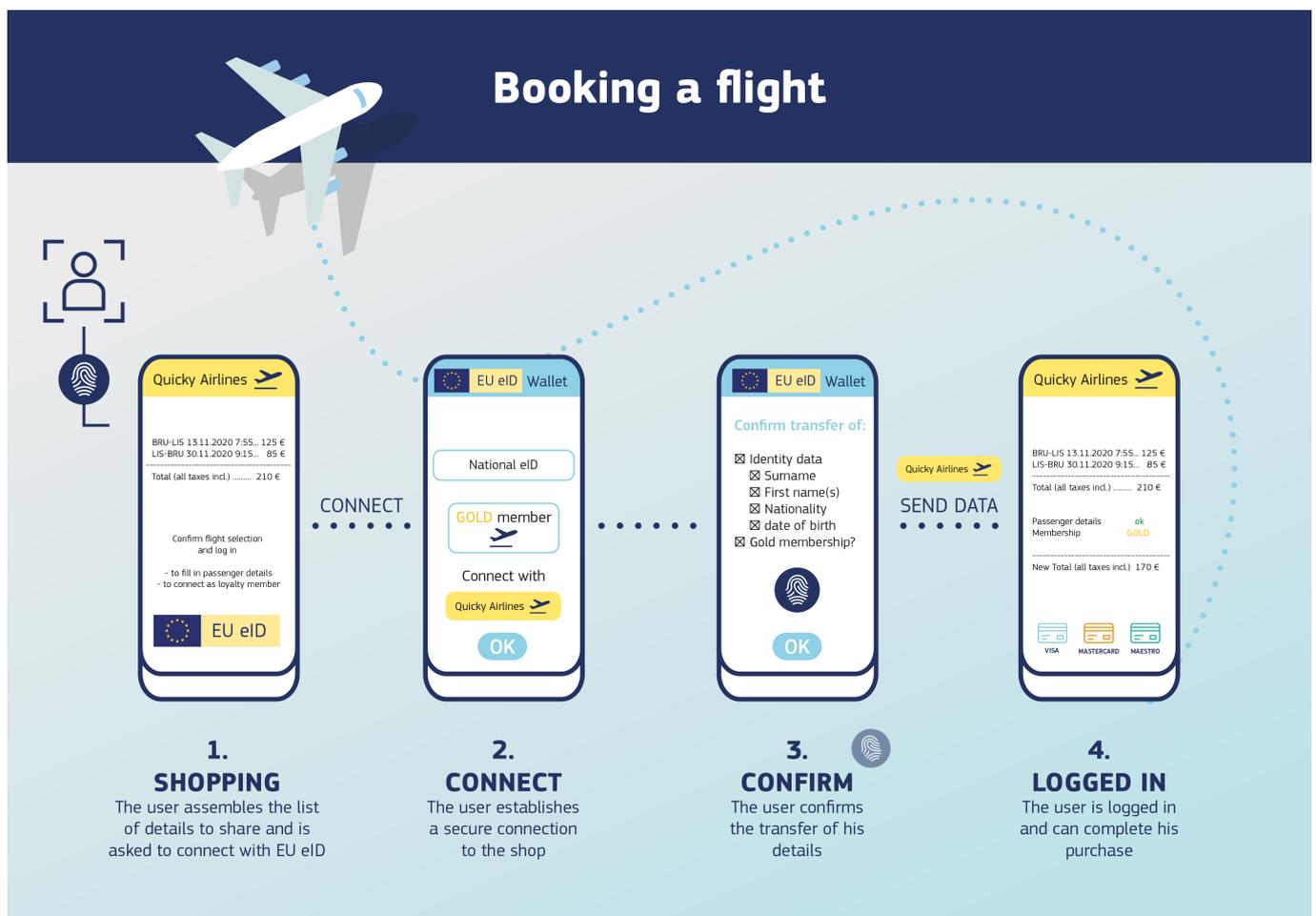
The European Digital Identity will be:

- **made available to anyone who wants to use it**: Any EU citizen, resident, and business in the EU who would like to make use of the European Digital Identity will be able to do so.
- **used widely**: European Digital Identity wallets will be used as a way to identify users when

providing them with access to public and private digital services across the EU.
- **controlled by users**: The European Digital Identity wallets will enable people to choose and keep track of their identity, data and certificates which they share with third parties. Anything which is not necessary to share will not be shared.

The Recommendation

To make it a reality as soon as possible, the proposal for a Regulation is accompanied by a Recommendation. The Commission invites Member States to establish a common toolbox by September 2022 and to start the necessary preparatory work immediately. This toolbox should include the technical architecture, standards and guidelines for best practices and will allow a smooth entry into force of the Regulation once it is approved by the European Parliament and Council.

European Digital Identity Regulation

European Digital Identity Recommendation

Learn more: European Digital Identity

Press Release 3/6/2021: European Digital Identity

Q&A: European Digital Identity

Evaluation: eIDAS Regulation

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Follow the Commission's work on trust services and eID @eID_EU

Latest

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. Use of the European Digital Identity wallet will always be at the choice of the user.

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 signatures

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