



A new mandate for ENISA to face the challenges of network and information security in the EU

An agreement between the European Parliament and the Irish Presidency on a new seven-year mandate to strengthen and modernise the European Network and the Information Security Agency (ENISA) was approved by the Industry Committee on Wednesday.

"Cyber crime and cyber terrorism together form one of the greatest threats to our prosperity, security and safety. Both the risks and the threats are evolving continually, and so must our defences. That is why we have decided on the package of these measures to enhance ENISA's resources and role. ENISA can play a key role in the EU's fight only if it has a practical base for its operations", said rapporteur Giles Chichester (ECR, UK).

The new seven-year mandate proposed by MEPs to coincide with the EU's long-term budget for 2014-2020, will take effect on 13 September 2013. It aims to strengthen the agency to enable it to cope with network and information security challenges. Consequently, an increase in financial and human resources allocated should be made to correspond to its enhanced role and tasks, states the text.

Computer Emergency and Response Teams

The agreement gives the agency a clear mandate to support the establishment and functioning of a full-scale European Union Computer Emergency Response Team (EU CERT) to counter cyber-attacks at EU level, as requested by the Industry Committee.

National bodies and EU institutions and agencies could request expertise and advice from ENISA in the event of a security breach or loss of integrity with a significant impact on the operation of networks and services, says the text.

Athens branch office

ENISA has its seat in Heraklion (Crete). However, MEPs and the Council agreed that it should set up a "branch office" in Athens with operational staff, in order to improve the efficiency of its networking activities. Administrative staff should be based in Heraklion, underlines the compromise.

Better governance

Parliament's request that ENISA should have an executive board and be made more accountable to Parliament was also approved by both parties.

An executive board will be established to enable the management board to focus on issues of strategic importance and thus improve ENISA's effectiveness. The Executive Director will be appointed after obtaining the approval of the European Parliament.

Next steps

The agreement needs endorsement by Parliament in plenary session.

Procedure: co-decision, first reading

Voting results: 48 votes in favour, 2 against

Vote in plenary: April 2013

Committee on Industry, Research and Energy:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/itre/home.html>

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