

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT VOTES ON eIDAS, AVERTING THREAT TO WEB SECURITY

Brussels, 29 February 2024 – Today, the European Parliament plenary adopted the eIDAS revision and a supplementary Commission statement, providing much-needed clarity on article 45 and QWACs that had been lacking in the original trilogue agreement. The vote marks a victory for web security, protecting web users by preserving the fundamental cybersecurity protocols set in place by root store operators.

Since [Mozilla](#) and the security community [raised the alarm](#) about the privacy and security risks of the provisional eIDAS regulation, Parliament has taken notice and voted to adopt new safeguards in the [text of the law](#)¹ to protect the security and privacy of web users. The European Commission has also made a [formal statement](#), adopted as an annex to the law, supporting these safeguards and committing to respecting them during the implementation of the law in technical standards.

During the plenary debate yesterday, Commissioner Breton said, “the new obligation for web browsers does not restrict their security policy in any way, since web browsers will be able to apply their own procedures and criteria to preserve the security of online communications, without interference with the way in which they will authenticate cryptographic keys.” Browsers can also decide on the methods to display identity information.

This recognition and clarification of article 45 in today’s vote is a crucial step in safeguarding the security for EU citizens browsing the web, as advocated for by the [Security Risk Ahead campaign](#), Mozilla and countless cybersecurity experts and civil [society voices](#). Namely by enshrining in the law the flexibility web browsers have to implement and adhere to their own security measures, the highest standards for user privacy, data protection, and web security are maintained.

However, once eIDAS is ratified by the Council, these vital principles must be reflected in the technical standards that will implement the new regulation. Mozilla is working closely with other key stakeholders at the European standards body ETSI to ensure the final technical standard for QWACs respects the commitments made by the commission and enshrined in the regulation.

Karen Melchior, Member of the European Parliament working on eIDAS, said: *“The wording of the law, along with the Commission’s declaration is unequivocal: governments should not be allowed to upend security architecture of the internet. And this is thanks to you, who have raised awareness on this issue. It has made all of the difference. Now Parliament will make sure that the Commission keeps a promise.”*

Alexis Hancock, Director of Engineering at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, said: *“This vote is a positive compromise. You risk creating cybersecurity ceilings when you go in with a myopic viewpoint. Once you start thinking about the internet as a global space, then you can start creating web security policy that creates a floor.”*

Mozilla’s Head of EU Policy, Tasos Stampelos said: *“We’re relieved to see today’s news, which would not have been possible without the incredible effort of the European Parliament and the wider cybersecurity community over the past two years. Mozilla is deeply grateful to everyone who contributed their time and energy to highlight these issues. The addition of the Commission statement today has put to bed many of our concerns around the different interpretations of article 45 before this*

¹ Recital 65: Recognition of QWACs means that the providers of web-browsers should not deny the authenticity of qualified certificates for website authentication for the sole purpose of attesting the link between the website domain name and the natural or legal person to whom the certificate is issued and confirming the identity of that person. The obligation of recognition, interoperability and support of QWACs is not to affect the freedom of web-browser providers to ensure web security, domain authentication and the encryption of web traffic in the manner and with the technology they consider most appropriate.

vote. Mozilla will continue to engage with the relevant stakeholders throughout the implementation phase to ensure eIDAS will not enable surveillance and interception of web traffic, and ensure the secure access of EU citizens to the internet."

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