Rostock, 01 April 2021

In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and increased demand for the use of digital tools in partner reporting the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (MA/JS) introduce the **possibility to use the electronic signatures for:**
- **partner reports** (signed by the given project partners and their controllers)
- **first level control reports and checklists** (signed by the controllers)
- **partner declarations**
- **state aid self-declarations**.

The following guidance explains, which types of electronic signatures are acceptable in the Interreg Baltic Sea Regions Programme, further requirements such e-signature must fulfil, the format, size and the legal basis for them.

1. **Electronic signature acceptable by Interreg Baltic Sea Region**

The Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme accepts any of the nationally acceptable standards of electronic signature from the category
- **Advanced Electronic Signature or**
- **Qualified Electronic Signature.**

The e-signature used must comply with the Regulation No 910/2014. The e-signature can be used for submission of the partner reports and the FLC reports and checklists together with the progress reports to the MA/JS.

I M P O R T A N T
When using any of the above mentioned acceptable standards of electronic signature it is important that MA/JS can check whether the document was signed, by whom and if the e-signature was valid at the moment of signature of the document. When the validation of e-signature cannot be run by the MA/JS due to the technical limitations, i.e. a file signed with an e-signature is not in PDF, ASiCe, ADoc, BDoc, EDoc, and XADES format and there is no open-access online validation tool available in the country concerned, the e-signature validation data has to be provided in the same file together with the document that has been signed with e-signature. The file with the signed document and e-signature validation data should be uploaded to BAMOS as PDF, ASiCe, ADoc, BDoc, EDoc, or XADES format file.

Other digital signatures that do not qualify as "advanced" or "qualified" electronic signatures in the given country cannot be accepted by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region. The use and acceptability of the electronic signature must be in line with the national rules.

2. **E-signature files (containers) used**

There are several types of files/data container with different file extensions.
On the EU level is common **"ASiCe"** file data container which contains a group of file objects and digital signatures. Technical specification of ASiCe have been updated and standardized by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute.

Further associated signature data container fulfilling the standards are for example **"ADoc", "BDoc", "EDoc" or "pdf".**

A partner report and FLC report and checklist files signed with e-signature can be uploaded to the section "12. Documents" of a project progress report in BAMOS in their original formats: PDF, ASiCe, ADoc, BDoc, EDoc, and XADES. In case a partner report has been signed with e-signature by a project partner and its FLC separately and two separate files with e-signature have been created, additional files with e-signature can be uploaded to the subsection "Additional documents" in the section 12 of a project progress report. The maximum size of the file that can be uploaded is 20 MB.

In case of any difficulties with documents signed with e-signature and their upload in BAMOS please contact the MA/JS (rostislav.zatloukal@interreg-baltic.eu).

3. Legal basis

The EU Regulation No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market (eIDAS) gives the basis for the electronic signatures, describes the concepts and electronic signature types.

There are three concepts that are key to understanding eIDAS and its benefits:
- E-Signatures are legal in the EU, regardless of their underlying technology
- eIDAS defines multiple electronic signature types for use in the EU, and each is useful when using e-signature across your business
- Following EU technical standards for e-signature is the EU-recommended way to comply with eIDAS and minimize the legal risk for your business

There are three e-signature types defined under eIDAS:

Electronic Signature

Data in electronic form which is attached to or logically associated with other data in electronic form and which is used by the signatory to sign (eIDAS Article 3, Section 10)

Advanced Electronic Signature

shall meet the following requirements:
a) it is uniquely linked to the signatory;
b) it is capable of identifying the signatory;
c) it is created using electronic signature creation data that the signatory can, with a high level of confidence, use under his sole control;
and
d) it is linked to the data signed therewith in such a way that any subsequent change in the data is detectable.

(eIDAS Article 26)

Qualified Electronic Signature

An advanced electronic signature that is created by a qualified electronic signature creation device, and which is based on a qualified certificate for electronic signatures (eIDAS Article 3, Section 12)