

Introduction

Welcome to the 3rd Edition of the IDQEUC Project newsletter. This newsletter provides an update on the work of the Improving Data Quality of EU Criminals Project and the ERIC Reference Tool

We have now held 4 partner country meetings in France, Spain, Romania and the UK. We have also held 6 Project Board Meetings and held the launch of ERIC in Heathrow where over 100 delegates attended from 24 European countries.

Romania partner country meeting

The 4th Partner Country meeting was held in Bucharest during November and provided the opportunity to see how our partners were progressing towards implementation of ERIC.

Some interesting data was provided which clearly demonstrated that countries need information beyond that mandated in the rules governing ECRIS. For example, Spain definitely require the second family name and Romania require the identity number in order to make accurate identifications.



Contact

For further information or to schedule a meeting, please contact Vicky Sampson, Paula Bagley or Phil Boswell at:

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Progress Update

Since our last newsletter the build of ERIC has now been completed and is now officially available for everyone to use. We have held the ERIC launch event in London which was a great success.

We are now undertaking an awareness raising programme for the product with law enforcement practitioners in each EU Member State.

The Library version, or Aide Memoire, is available to all users on any mobile device, including personal phones. It has been upgraded to work directly from the user selecting their home country flag and then selecting the subject's language rather than having to scroll down through the various language options.

EU Member States can access the library/ aide memoire freely. Access to the interactive version of the Tool is limited by the outgoing IP address of the agency wishing to access it at this time. However, please see the section for EU Member States below.

So far Romania and Lithuania have provided the necessary IP address and have been registered.

Spain partner country meeting

The 3rd Partner Country meeting was held back in April and hosted in Madrid at the Ministry of Justice. This was a good opportunity to show our partner countries the reference tool – ERIC the European Request Information Capture. At this stage the Reference Tool was in test stage but we were able to demonstrate its functionality and potential.

Part of the meeting was to discuss how each partner country will use and implement ERIC into their current processes.

Promoting ERIC

We have been working hard to promote ERIC now that it is available. So far visits have been made to the Italian, Maltese, Croatian, French, Spanish and Romanian Central Authorities. We are keen to support all the Member States with the implementation of ERIC.

The benefits for front line officers and staff in making successful requests to other Member States include officer and staff safety, decision making as to the best way to deal with the offending behaviour and for bad character and sentencing. An additional benefit is to ensure that all EU citizens are treated fairly and equally through the justice system.

Data that we have obtained shows that significant numbers of requests are being rejected, either prior to sending by the local Central Authority or by the receiving Central Authority.

In the UK we have managed to promote ERIC by presenting at regional Foreign National Offender meetings, visiting local law enforcement departments and providing information literature at conferences.



EU Member States

Although the Tool is available EU Member States, we require their organisational IP address in order to provide security for the information being transmitted over the internet.

Unlike the UK, where the .PNN and .PSN are secure networks, there is no such capability between individual EU law enforcement agencies. This requirement has presented an issue to some countries and we are working on a solution, which we have identified, that will provide the necessary security but allow easier access. We will contact you once the solution has been implemented and you can freely access the Reference Tool.

Romania has integrated the Tool within their internal IT infrastructure and Spain are looking at a similar solution.

We are keen to support countries who are genuinely interested in the tool and we are willing to visit in order to discuss how we can offer that support and assist with the implementation.

Library functionality update

The Aide Memoire, or Library, functionality has been updated so that users, by selecting their home country flag, will be taken directly to the relevant pages in their language. By then selecting the language of the subject, they will be taken to the page which shows the requirements for the subject's country in both the user and subjects languages. This saves the necessity to scroll down through the pages to find the relevant page.

This is particularly useful where the user does not have access to the secure internet capability or integrated systems that have an in-built functionality, or where a reminder is helpful prior to entering data on to a system.

UK Police

The interactive Reference Tool is now available to all users on approved secure networks in the UK. This includes both PNN and PSN. An issue with it sending an error message to the user has been rectified.

We have also introduced a system whereby the information captured in the Tool can be emailed directly to ACRO without the need to double key on to another form. However, this facility is only available if this method is approved by the user's force. It is not intended to bypass any internal processes.

We are keen to support forces who are genuinely interested in the tool and we are able to visit in order to discuss how we can offer that support and assist with the implementation.

ERIC Launch

On the 7th/8th of September we officially launched ERIC.

The event was held at the Park Inn Hotel in Heathrow, UK. It was a great success with just under 100 delegates including representatives from 24 of the EU Member States. The launch began with a Gala dinner on the 7th of September for delegates to attend. Ian Readhead (ACRO Chief Executive) and Philip Boswell (Project Manager) opened the evening to introduce ERIC and the importance of accurate criminal conviction exchange. This provided the delegates with a chance to meet up and network with old faces and meet some new people.

The second day was the launch itself, with speakers from the UK and the Netherlands covering a variety of issues. These included the need to accurately identify the offender at a face to face encounter, to obtain any conviction history that may be useful in deciding what course of action to take, and providing bad character evidence to support a prosecution or ensuring that the sentencing takes account of any foreign convictions.

One presentation, importantly, focused on the problems with names and the different naming conventions within the 28 EU Member States, the ease with which names can be changed and the use of aliases.



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