

## EML PROGRESS REPORT BY JOHN BORRAS TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE REVIEW MEETING ON 24 NOVEMBER 2006

Version 4 of EML was finally approved and released in February of this year and incorporated all the additional requirements that were gathered together during the work of this group in 2002/4. Many thanks to everyone who contributed; we now have a much more robust version of EML.

Since then we have had further input from USA with regard to the handling of their ballot forms, additional requirements for voter registrations from the UK including capturing signatures and dates of birth<sup>1</sup>, new requirements arising from the Flemish local elections in October<sup>2</sup>, and very recently some additional needs from Norway following a review of EML by one of Gerhard Skagestein's students at the University of Oslo. We are now updating the XML schemas and associated documentation to accommodate all the new requirements and will be releasing version 5 early next year. We will then take that version into ISO – the International Standards Organisation – to become an ISO standard. This will place EML at the same level of international standardisation as the security standards referred in the Explanatory Memorandum eg ISO 17799.

We now have an annual update process which starts with the gathering together of new requirements and requested changes in a Wishes List. This list at a given point during the year is then reviewed by the technical committee and agreement is reached on which changes to include in the next version and which ones to reject. The criteria for acceptance are requirements that can be considered to be of use by more than one administration. If the requirement is very specific to a local administration we would suggest that is handled as a localisation by that administration. To accommodate the unique needs of every local administration would make EML unmanageable and unworkable – it has to be kept at a generic level and allows for local extensions and modifications. Following the committee's review the XML schemas and documentation are updated and the new version is then put through the OASIS approval processes.

Mention was made during yesterday's discussions of the need for standards for DRE voting machines. The IEEE organisation is producing a set of standards, see <http://grouper.ieee.org/groups/scc38/1622/index.htm>, but primarily based on the USA's use of DRE equipment. We have been working with them and when they release their standard next year it will include an EML profile that is fully compatible with EML v5.

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<sup>1</sup> The UK's CORE voter registration system now requires all inputs and outputs to be EML conformant.

<sup>2</sup> **EML used in Flanders Local Elections:** EML was used in the local elections in Flanders on 8th October 2006. "The process worked flawlessly and the results have never been collected as fast" quoted one of the system suppliers.