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Authentication Profile for Traditional X.509 Public Key Certification Authorities with secured infrastructure

Abstract

This Authentication Profile is based on the EUGridPMA Guidelines Document on minimum requirements, version 3.2.

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1 About this document

This document is an Authentication Profile (AP) of the International Grid Federation (IGF), and is subordinate to the IGF Federation Document.

This AP defines traditional X.509 Public Key Certification Authorities (traditional PKI CAs) that issue long-term credentials to end-entities¹, who will themselves possess and control their key pair and their activation data. These PKI CAs act as an independent trusted third party for both subscribers and relying parties within an infrastructure.

These authorities will use a long-term signing key, which is stored in a secure manner

In this document, the key words 'must', 'must not', 'required', 'shall', 'shall not', 'should', 'should not', 'recommended', 'may', and 'optional' in this document are to be interpreted as described in RFC 2119.

2 General Architecture

There should be a single Certification Authority (CA) organisation per country, large region or international organization. The goal is to serve the largest possible community with a small number of stable CAs. To achieve sustainability, it is expected that the CAs will be operated as a long-term commitment by institutions or organisations rather than being bound to specific projects.

The CA structure within each country should not follow the conventional hierarchical model, but there should be a single end-entity issuing CA. A wide network of Registration Authorities (RA) for each CA is preferred. The RAs will handle the tasks of validating the identity of the end entities and authenticating their requests, which will then be forwarded to the CA. The CA will handle the actual tasks of issuing CRLs, signing Certificates/CRLS and revoking Certificates when necessary.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 1]

3 Identity

Any single subject distinguished name must be linked to one and only one entity. Over the entire lifetime of the CA it must not be linked to any other entity.

It is not contrary to the above requirement for a single entity to have more than one associated subject name, e.g., for different key usages.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 3.2]

3.1 Identity vetting rules

The authority must recognize the role of registration authority, and these registration authorities are responsible for the identity vetting of end-entities, both natural persons and network entities.

In order for an RA to validate the identity of a person, the subject should contact the RA face-to-face and present photo-id and/or valid official documents showing that the subject is an acceptable end entity as defined in the CP/CPS document of the CA.

In case of host or service certificate requests, the CSR be delivered to the RA by the person in charge of the specific entities using a secure method.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 3.1]

The RAs must record and archive all requests and confirmations.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 3.3]

The RA must communicate with the CA with secure methods that are clearly defined in the CP/CPS. (e.g. Signed emails, voice conversations with a known person, SSL protected private web pages that are bi-directionally authenticated)

¹ long-term is defined as lasting more than 10 million seconds, i.e., more than approx. two weeks.

[source: *EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 3.4*]

3.2 Removal of an authority from the authentication profile accreditation

An accredited authority may be removed from the PMA and the federation if it fails to comply with this authentication profile document, or with the IGF Federation Document, via the voting process described in the Charter of the PMA to which this authority is accredited.

4 Operational Requirements

The CA computer, where the signing of the certificates will take place, needs to be a dedicated machine, running no other services than those needed for the CA operations. The CA computer must be located in a secure environment where access is controlled, limited to specific trained personnel and must be kept disconnected from any kind of networks at all times. In case the CA computer is equipped with at least a FIPS 140-1 level 3 Hardware Security Module or equivalent, to protect the CA's private key, the CA computer can be connected to a highly protected/monitored network, possibly accessible from the Internet. The secure environment must be documented and that document or an approved audit thereof must be available to the PMA.

[source: *EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.1*]

The CA Key must have a minimum length of 2048 bits and for CAs that issue end-entity certificates the lifetime must be no less than two times of the maximum life time of an end entity certificate and should not be more than 20 years.

The private key of the CA must be protected with a pass phrase of at least 15 elements and that is known only by specific personnel of the Certification Authority. Copies of the encrypted private key must be kept on offline mediums in secure places where access is controlled.

[source: *EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.4*]

4.1 Certificate Policy and Practice Statement Identification

Every CA must have a Certification Policy and Certificate Practice Statement (CP/CPS Document) and assign it a globally unique object identifier (OID). Whenever there is a change in the CP/CPS the OID of the document must change and the major changes must be announced to the accrediting PMA and approved before signing any certificates under the new CP/CPS. All the CP/CPS under which valid certificates are issued must be available on the web.

[source: *EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.3*]

4.2 Certificate profile

The accredited authority must publish a X.509 certificate as a root of trust.

The CA certificate must have the extensions `keyUsage` and `basicConstraints` marked as critical.

[source: *EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.5*]

The authority shall issue X.509 certificates to end-entities based on cryptographic data generated by the applicant.

The EE keys must be at least 1024 bits long and must not be generated by the CA or the RA. The EE certificates must have a maximum lifetime of 1 year plus 1 month and must not be shared among end entities.

[source: *EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 4*]

The end-entity certificates must be in X.509v3 format and compliant with RFC3280 unless explicitly stated otherwise. In the certificate extensions:

- a Policy Identifier must be included and must contain an OID and an OID only
 - CRLDistributionPoints must be included and contain at least one http URL
 - keyUsage must be included and marked as critical
 - basicConstraints should be included, and when included it must be set to 'CA: false' and marked as critical
 - if an OCSP responder, operated as a production service by the issuing CA, is available, AuthorityInfoAccess must be included and contain at least one URI
 - for certificates bound to network entities, a FQDN shall be included as a dnsName in the SubjectAlternativeName
- [source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 4.1]

The message digests of the certificates and CRLs must be generated by a trustworthy mechanism, like SHA1 (in particular, MD5 must not be used).

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 4.1]

The CA should make a reasonable effort to make sure that end-entities realize the importance of properly protecting their private data. It's upon the user to protect his private key with a pass phrase at least 12 characters long.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 4]

4.3 Revocation

The CA must publish a CRL. The CA must react as soon as possible, but within one working day, to any revocation request received. After determining its validity, a CRL must be issued immediately. For CAs issuing certificates to end-entities, the maximum CRL lifetime must be at most 30 days and the CA must issue a new CRL at least 7 days before expiration and immediately after a revocation. The CRLs must be published in a repository at least accessible via the World Wide Web, as soon as issued.

Revocation requests can be made by end-entities, Registration Authorities and the CA. These requests must be properly authenticated. Others can request revocation if they can sufficiently prove compromise or exposure of the associated private key.

End-entities must request revocation if the private key pertaining to the certificate is lost or has been compromised, or if the data in the certificate are no longer valid.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.6]

4.4 CA key changeover

Please do consider to change this to "If the CA's cryptographic data needs to be changed, such a transition shall be managed thus: from the time of distribution of the new cryptographic data, only the new key ..."

The CA's private signing key must be changed periodically; from that time on only the new key will be used for certificate signing purposes. The overlap of the old and new key must be at least the longest time an end-entity cert can be valid. The older but still valid certificate must be available to verify old signatures – and the secret key to sign CRLs – until all the certificates signed using the associated private key have also expired.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.8]

5 Site security

The pass phrase of the encrypted private key must be kept also on an offline medium, separated from the encrypted keys and guarded in a safe place where only the authorized personnel of the

Certification Authority have access. Alternatively, another documented procedure that is equally secure may be used.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.4]

6 Publication and Repository responsibilities

Each authority must publish for their subscribers, relying parties and for the benefit of distribution by the PMA and the federation

- a CA root certificate or set of CA root certificates up to a self-signed root;
- a signing policy file limiting the signing subject name space;
- a http or https URL of the PEM-formatted CA certificate;
- a http or https URL of the PEM or DER formatted CRL;
- a http or https URL of the web page of the CA for general information;
- an official RFC822 contact email address for inquiries and fault reporting

Furthermore, the CA shall provide to a trust anchor repository, specified by the accrediting PMA, their trust anchor via the method specified in the policy of the trust anchor repository.

The repository must be run at least on a best-effort basis, with an intended availability of 24x7.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.9]

The originating authority shall not claim any intellectual property rights on the information provided to the PMA and must grant to the PMA and the Federation – by virtue of its accreditation – the right of unlimited re-distribution of this information.

7 Audits

The CA must record and archive all requests for certificates, along with all the issued certificates, all the requests for revocation, all the issued CRLs and the login/logout/reboot of the issuing machine.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.7]

The CA must keep these records for at least three years. These records must be made available to external auditors in the course of their work as auditor.

Each CA must accept being audited by other accredited CAs to verify its compliance with the rules and procedures specified in its CP/CPS document.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.10]

The CA should perform operational audits of the CA/RA staff at least once per year. A list of CA and RA personnel should be maintained and verified at least once per year.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 2.11]

8 Privacy and confidentiality

Accredited CAs must define a privacy and data release policy compliant with the relevant national legislation. The CA should keep sufficient information regarding the subscribers to allow tracing the subscriber to a recent physical address. The CA is not required to release such information unless provided by a valid legal request according to national laws applicable to that CA.

9 Compromise and disaster recovery

Minimum requirements need to be defined for these events.

9.1 Due diligence for subscriber induced compromises

The CA should make a reasonable effort to make sure that end-entities realize the importance of properly protecting their private data. It's upon the user to protect his private key with a pass phrase at least 12 characters long.

[source: EUGridPMA-minreq-classic-3.2, section 4]