COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 20 May 2011

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LIMITE

CIS 5
CSC 25

COVER NOTE

To:	Delegations
Subject:	Establishment of a "Preconfiguration team" of a CERT (Computer Emergency Response Team) for EU institutions, bodies and agencies

Delegations will find attached a copy of a letter from European Commission Vice-Presidents Kroes and Šefčovič on the above-mentioned subject.

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

NEELIE KROES
VICE-PRESIDENT

MAROŠ ŠEFČOVIČ
VICE-PRESIDENT

Ares(2011) 519587
Brussels, 1 3 MAI 2011

Dear Secretaries General,

We are writing to ask you to proceed with the necessary step to establish a "Preconfiguration Team" of a CERT for the EU institutions (Computer Emergency Response Team), as it was announced in the Digital Agenda for Europe[1]. Recent cyber-attacks targeting our organisations have highlighted the need to act swiftly in this matter.

On 7 February 2011, Commission President J. M. Barroso sent a letter to the EU institutions, bodies and agencies, forwarding a copy of the Report of the *"Rat der IT Weisen"* containing recommendations for the establishment of an EU CERT, of which the Preconfiguration Team is a first step.

On 28 February 2011, we chaired a high-level inter-institutional meeting which showed the strong support of your organisation on this initiative. To address practical arrangements for setting up the Preconfiguration Team, a Project Team has since examined its remit, composition, logistics, infrastructure and the role of the Steering Board in the scheme (Annex). Our joint objective is that the Preconfiguration Team shall take up its duties as from 1 June 2011.
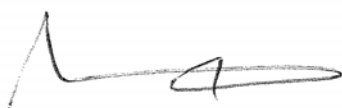
The Preconfiguration Team will be chaired by Mr. Freddy Dezeure from the European Commission and the Steering Board will be chaired by the Council of the EU.

Most of the names of the members of future Preconfiguration Team have been communicated informally or will be known ahead of 1 June. We would therefore be grateful if you could take the necessary steps to formally proceed with the nomination of the Preconfiguration Team and the Steering Board member(s) under your responsibility.

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[1]   COM(2010)245 of 19 May 2010.

In such an important matter, time is of the essence. We trust that the Preconfiguration Team will significantly contribute to reinforcing the capacity of our respective EU institutions and bodies and quickly join the community of national/Governmental CERTs to fight effectively against cyber-attack threats in Europe.

Yours sincerely,

NEELIE KROES

MAROŠ ŠEFČOVIČ

Encl.: Annex

Ms Catherine DAY, Secretary General, European Commission
Mr Klaus WELLE, Secretary General, European Parliament
Mr Pierre DE BOISSIEU, Secretary General, Council of the European Union
Mr Alfredo CALOT ESCOBAR, Registrar, Court of Justice of the European Union
Mr Eduardo RUIZ GARCIA, Secretary General, Court of Auditors
Mr Martin WESTLAKE, Secretary General, European Economic and Social Committee
Mr Gerhard STAHL, Secretary General, Committee of Regions
Mr Alfonso QUEREJETA, Secretary General, European Investment Bank
Mr Jukka TAKALA, Head of the Agencies Network
Mr Pierre VIMONT, Secretary General, European External Action Service

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**ESTABLISHMENT OF A "PRECONFIGURATION TEAM"
OF A CERT FOR EU INSTITUTIONS, BODIES AND AGENCIES**

1.   ROADMAP

The initiative to establish a CERT for the EU institutions was announced in the Digital Agenda for Europe[1] (Key Action 6), to enhance the cyber security of all EU institutions, bodies and agencies.

In November 2010, the '*Rat der IT Weisen*', a group of high-level experts[2] established by Commission Vice-Presidents Neelie Kroes and Maroš Šefčovič to advise on the establishment of a CERT for the EU institutions, submitted its report. The CERT for the EU institutions should advise and liaise with internal teams responsible for IT security in the respective institutions/bodies, react to incidents affecting the networks and systems of the associated EU institutions and monitor the threat landscape and issue timely alerts in order to prevent incidents. It should not be a "super-CERT" for the EU, but provide a single point of contact for the "outer world." The key recommendation in the report of the "Rat der IT Weisen" is to immediately create an inter-institutional "Preconfiguation Team", which should be evaluated within 12 months to pave the way for further developments.

On 7 February 2011, Commission President Barroso sent a letter to the EU institutions, bodies and agencies, forwarding a copy of the Report of the "Rat der IT Weisen", and inviting them to participate in the establishment of CERT for the EU institutions and to join its Preconfiguration Team.

On 28 February 2011, Commission Vice-Presidents Kroes and Šefčovič chaired a high-level interinstitutional meeting to assess the willingness of the institutions and bodies to contribute to setting up such a CERT and follow up on the report's recommendations.

It was also decided to establish a Project Team to prepare the establishment of the Preconfiguration Team in terms of logistical support and scope of mandate. The Project Team met on 17 March and on 11 April 2011.

A letter from Vice-Presidents Kroes and Šefčovič summarising the outcomes of these inter-institutional discussions (high level meeting and project team) and formally proposing the setting up of the CERT Preconfiguration Team as a pilot project will be sent to the Secretaries-General for approval.

The CERT Preconfiguration Team will start its work on 1 June 2011. It will be located at Rue Montoyer 34 in Brussels. It will be evaluated within 12 months.

By 1 April 2012, three assessments will be drawn up and submitted to the Steering Board from:

- the CERT Preconfiguration Team itself, including a plan for implementing future activities of the CERT for the EU institutions,

- the 'clients', i.e. the institutions, bodies and agencies participating in the project and receiving services from the CERT Preconfiguration Team,

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[1]   COM(2010) 245 of 19 May 2010.
[2]   U. Helmbrecht, R. Posch, P. Pailloux, J. Suffolk.

- national/governmental CERTs in EU Member States that have advised the CERT Preconfiguration Team.

Upon these assessments, the *Rat der IT Weisen* will be invited to submit an overall evaluation report on the pre-configuration phase and containing recommendations for the next phase to the Steering Board. The report should be made available by 1 June 2012.

The report along with the Steering Board's own assessment will be submitted to the Secretaries-Generals of all EU institutions, bodies and agencies by 30 June 2012.

2. THE PRECONFIGURATION TEAM'S REMIT AND COMPOSITION

In view of the principal and long term objectives of a fully operational CERT, the following activities define the remit for the CERT Preconfiguration Team's services to all EU institutions, bodies and agencies:

a) **Alerts and warning:** disseminating to the constituent information on cyber attacks or disruptions, security vulnerabilities, intrusion alerts, computer virus, and providing recommendation for tackling the problem;

b) **Incident handling:** receiving, classifying, and responding to requests and reports, and analysing incidents and events. In addition, guidance will be defined on how specific actions to handle and recover incidents (i.e. protection measures; mitigation strategies; monitoring and network traffic filtering; workarounds, etc.)

c) **Incident Analysis:** examining available information, date and evidence in order to identify the nature and scope of the incident; the potential damage; and last but not least, the response and recovery strategy.

d) **Incident response support:** providing technical assistance (in particular on data interpretation; external support; mitigation and recovery strategies) on how to recover from an incident;

e) **Incident response coordination:** providing support in coordinating, whenever needed or requested, the response to incidents. An essential part of this activity would be to advise on how to cooperate with other services (such as legal, security or communication services) the support of which may be needed in the response.

f) **Announcements**: providing information (e.g. on threat landscape, published vulnerabilities, new attack tools or artefacts, security/protection measures, etc.) needed to protect systems and networks.

The Preconfiguration Team´s concrete range of activities will be defined by a work plan developed by the Team and adopted by the Steering Board. Given the limited initial resources and the available timeframe, it is suggested to initially focus the CERT Preconfiguration Team services to all EU institutions, bodies and agencies, on the activities under (a), (e) and (f). Services under (b),

(c) and (d), for which responsibility for implementation lies primarily with each institution and agency, should not be considered as critical indicators for the evaluation of the Preconfiguration Team.

In developing and providing its services, the following key support functions will have to be ensured:

a) act as a central point of contact with Member States' government CERTs and liaise with CERTs and other relevant authorities inside and outside the EU;

b) serve as a pool of unclassified information relating to IT security incidents provided by EU institutions, bodies and agencies as well as EU Member States' and third parties' CERTs;

c) analyse, present and distribute information in a useable format to departments responsible for IT security in EU institutions, agencies and bodies;

d) facilitate sharing among the institutions of practical information about measures being taken to protect their systems and networks, thereby encouraging implementation of good practice.

Given that sensitive data will be handled and processed by the Team, possible security implications and measures should be duly considered from the beginning and a risk assessment should be performed by the Team as soon as possible.

As a starting point the composition of the CERT Preconfiguration Team will be as follows :
- 1 Team Leader from the European Commission
- Team Members :
  - 2 nominees from the European Commission,
  - 1 nominee from the General Secretariat of the Council,
  - 1 nominee from the European Parliament,
  - 1 nominee from ENISA
  - 1 nominee from European Economic and Social Committee/Committee of the Regions[1]
- 1 administrative Assistant from the European Commission.

Seconded National Experts may also be appointed: as a starting point, 1 SNE will be provided by the Commission and 1 SNE by the General Secretariat of the Council.

The experts will be at the full-time disposal of the CERT Preconfiguration Team, but remain administratively attached to their institutions of origin; any staff-related costs will be borne on a "costs lie where they fall" basis (e.g., missions, mobile phones, etc.). The experts will be evaluated according to the standard practice in the European Institutions, bodies and agencies.

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[1]   Part-time

3.   COMPOSITION AND ROLE OF THE STEERING BOARD

The CERT Preconfiguration Team will operate under the strategic oversight of an inter-institutional Steering Board. The Steering Board will:
- oversee its work and provide strategic direction;
- adopt a work plan on the basis of a proposal by the Preconfiguration Team,
- monitor its implementation;
- take any measures necessary to facilitate the effective functioning of the Preconfiguration Team.

The Board will be composed, at senior-level, of 2 representatives from the European Commission, 1 representative from the General Secretariat of the Council, 1 representative from the European Parliament, 1 representative from the EESC/CoR and 1 representative from ENISA (representing the Agencies). Meetings of the Steering Board will be open to attendance by all EU institutions, bodies and EEAS.

The Steering Board will be chaired by the General Secretariat of the Council ; it will report to the Secretaries-General of the EU Institutions and Bodies. Its membership is linked to contributions in staff to the Preconfiguration Team by the relevant Institutions/Bodies.

4.   LOGISTICS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Preconfiguration Team will be located in Brussels in offices made available by the European Commission, which will also provide the necessary logistics. Bearing in mind the pilot nature of the project, the minimum infrastructure should include:

a) Adequate office space and standard office furniture and stationery;
b) Fixed-line telephones with international lines (ideally with one dedicated line);
c) An isolated unclassified IT network and necessary IT workstations
d) Standard IT office tools
e) Specific software (to be seen)
f) Safes
g) Internet access via a dedicated line (i.e. if the Commission's network suffers an outage (denial of service) the CERT should continue to have internet access)
h) A dedicated domain e-mail address
i) A photocopier (either offline or connected only to the dedicated network)
j) A shredder
k) Printers
l) (to the extent necessary), mobile phones or PDAs (provided by the institution of origin);
m) Any missions will be paid for by the institution of origin.

The European Commission will operate and maintain a website for the Preconfiguration Team hosting relevant technical information in accordance with international practice.

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