EASEE-gas

European Association for the Streamlining of Energy Exchange - gas

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Explanatory Notes CBP 2017-002/01

Subject: Explanatory notes accompanying CBP 2017-002/01 "Secure communication over the internet".

Summary

About EASEE-gas

The European Association for the Streamlining of Energy Exchange-gas or EASEE-gas was created by six founding members in Paris on March 14th, 2002. EASEE-gas' aim is to support the creation of an efficient and effective European gas market through the development and promotion of common business practices (CBPs) that intend to simplify and streamline business processes between the stakeholders.

The formation of EASEE-gas was prompted by the success of the Gas Industry Standards Board in the United States and has been modelled on it. The GISB has now evolved into the North American Energy Standards Board. The creation of EASEE-gas is a project that is fully supported by the European Commission and by the European Regulators through the so-called Madrid Forum. It was achieved through the work of a dedicated Task Force supported by EFET, Eurogas, Eurelectric, GEODE, GTE, OGP and the Edigas group.

The association is fundamentally based on company membership and voluntary contribution towards the development of common business practices.

Full membership in EASEE-gas is open to all companies, European or other, that are involved in the European gas business, from producers to end users, and to companies that are their service providers. Companies can subscribe to full membership in one or more of the eight gas industry segments.

Associate membership in EASEE-gas is open to government agencies, e.g., regulators, through to organisations such as gas business trade associations and to individuals that may contribute to the benefit of EASEE-gas. Associate members do not pay annual fees, nor do they have voting rights.

The development of common business practices within EASEE-gas is organised through working groups under the supervision of an executive committee that is representative of the various gas industry segments. Participation in the working groups is limited to members only.

1. INTRODUCTION

The CBP on "Secure communication over the internet" states to use at least TLS v1.2 for securing internet communication.
The CBP was conceived because the security of the TLS or SSL protocol needs guidance to keep it:

1. Secure: Select a minimal version which is considered secure;
2. Practical: Select a set of cipher suites to ensure interoperability and also the appropriate security level.

This document will explain the process of the CBP and also gives some implementation guidelines. In general it follows the ENTSOG recommendations.

2. ORGANISATION

The CBP was developed by the EASEE-gas TSWG (Technology Standards Working Group). The following segments were involved: TSOs, Shippers, Producers and Service providers. The nationalities represented were: B, D, F, I, N, NL and GB.

3. GENERATION PROCESS

The CBP is created because most parties in the gas market will use secure connections over the internet. The CBP follows the general security guidelines in the ICT market.

Alternatives

There are no practical alternatives for TLS v1.2, in future it is expected new standards will follow up on this standard (e.g. TLS v1.3).

Pros and Cons

Only the use of the latest version of TLS with the right cipher suites while disabling older versions ensures an appropriate level of security.
For B2B systems it is important maintaining current best security practices.

Final approach

It is advisable to implement TLS v1.2 as the minimal supported version with the proposed set of cipher suites before the end of 2017.

4. IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

Prior to changing your systems know your own configuration settings, check TLS versions and cipher suites which are in use. This must be done from incoming and outgoing systems, depending on the used infrastructure TLS end points/starting points can be on different systems, e.g. firewalls, communication systems, load balancer, etc. Align settings with all counterparties to ensure connectivity.

TSWG will review the cipher suites and protocol version annually and update the CBP accordingly.

EASEE-gas encourages members to share relevant information and/or testing results with the TSWG.

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