The New UKCA Online Submission Form

EU Member States

December 2022

Online Submission Form

The United Kingdom Central Authority (UKCA) will be launching an online submission form in summer 2023 for mutual legal assistance (MLA) and Extradition requests to coincide with the introduction of an enhanced case management system. This will provide all requesting authorities the option to submit requests online to the UKCA via Gov.uk.

Background

The UKCA has commenced a Digital Transformation Programme (which will run from 2019-2025) to enhance its handling of MLA requests. Building on the successful implementation of Egress Workspace, an encrypted file sharing platform that facilitates the secure transmission of materials relating to requests from the UKCA out to partner authorities overseas, UKCA is developing a new case management system and intends to transform its interactions with partner nations with regards to processing requests.

Why are we doing this?

The UKCA receives over 8,400 MLA requests a year. It is one of the largest central authorities, by volume of requests, in the world. Digital submission through the online submission form will reduce errors, provide improved accuracy of data capture, and ensure that all required information to enable a full legal consideration has been included at the point of submission.

What's the solution?

- The standard form for requests for mutual assistance made under the 1959 Convention supplemented by the Trade and Cooperation Agreement will be introduced in 2023 and has allowed us the opportunity to offer a bespoke online route for EU requesters.

- The completed standard form for requests will be uploaded online, and the covering information will be extracted. Any missing information required to consider the request will be flagged prior to submission to allow requesters the opportunity to provide all details and prevent any delays in consideration and subsequent execution.

- Once submitted via Gov.uk, the request will go directly to our new case management system. The request will be automatically processed, with an acknowledgement and case reference number immediately sent to the requester. Gov.uk (owned and run by the UK government's Cabinet Office) acts as a platform where data is routed securely and directly into the relevant department's owned systems. Your requests will therefore be sent directly into Home Office internal systems. For further information please see the Gov.uk Privacy Notice link below.

- Traditional routes (hard copy submission and email) will still be available however we anticipate that partners will, over time, come to prefer a faster, cheaper, secure and auditable online route.

Benefits for Requesting Authorities

- **Efficiencies through digital transformation**: the UK's Government Digital Service (GDS) suggests that "*around £1.7 billion per year can be saved through smarter use of digital technologies.*"

- **Reduced processing time:** historically, all MLA requests were submitted primarily by post or email; processing was resource intensive and time consuming.

- **Reduced requests for further information**: currently 35% of all incoming MLA requests from European Union Member States require additional information or further clarification; the average delay when further information is requested is around 130 days.

- **Increased data security:** digitally secure transmission removes layers of human involvement in the submission of MLA requests. This reduction in data handling improves security and compliance with data protection legislation.

- **Clearer process:** the online submission form will seamlessly interact with our new case management system, where automated reminders and enhanced communications will seek to improve execution times.

- **Swifter justice for the victims of crime:** all aspects of the UKCA operating model are being redesigned; request submission, case processing, and evidence sharing. Our primary objective is to execute requests more efficiently, which in turn will better support domestic and international criminal proceedings.

- **Enhanced cooperation between the UK and our international partners:** lessons learned, new updates and developments, improvements and results will be shared with partners to encourage better cooperation and sharing of knowledge.

What happens next?

- The new online submission form and the new case management system are being developed in tandem and will be launched in summer 2023.

- Prior to the launch, the UKCA's Digital Transformation Programme outreach team will embark upon a programme of engagement with our European partners giving further details as to how these important improvements will be implemented.

- A prototype version of our online submission form will be available early next year for partners to trial and test. We look forward to receiving your comments and feedback.

- If you would like to discuss potential in person or online engagement opportunities, please get in touch using the contact details below.

Useful Links

[UK Digital Strategy (2017)](#)

[Privacy notice - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)

[Digital Efficiency Report - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)

[eGovernment benchmark 2021 | Shaping Europe's digital future (europa.eu)](#)

[GDS Advisory: get help with public sector digital transformation - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)

[Egress instruction guide (publishing.service.gov.uk)](#)

[EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#)

[MLA guidelines for foreign authorities - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#)

For further information or any queries, please contact

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