

Euralarm contributes to development of standardization framework for Monitoring and Alarm Receiving Centers

Secretariat Euralarm
Gubelstrasse 22
CH-6301 Zug (Switzerland)
T: +49 (0)89 8137 939655
E: secretariat@euralarm.org
W: www.euralarm.org

Zug, Switzerland - With the increasing scope of activities performed in Monitoring and Alarm Receiving Centers, these centers become integrated centers for Customer Service, Monitoring and Object Management based on highly developed technology and remote system access. This requires a standard that incorporates management, process, technology and physical infrastructure aspects. Euralarm is contributing continuously to the development of such a standard. This article gives an overview of the progress.

Background

Monitoring and Alarm Receiving Centers (MARC) have been in use since decades for monitoring and handling intrusion and hold-up alarms. The technological basis resided in standalone alarm systems connected to a MARC via an ordinary or prioritized switched telephone line. More recently the technological development has permitted to add new communication channels and to extend the scope of the traditional MARCs into complete Customer Service, (Alarm) Monitoring and Object Management Centers. These centers do not only handle a larger scope of applications but significantly contribute to a higher productivity within the center, and also on the customers' side by performing many tasks remotely on the basis of technology instead of having to conduct time-consuming and disruptive on-site interventions.

New activities and requirements

This development towards Customer Service, Monitoring and Object Management Centers results in new activities and requirements, be it in relation to the operator capabilities at the Centre, in relation to the technologies used or in relation to the needs concerning European standards as well as certification. The traditional MARC operator was focused on handling alarms according to a predefined "call-out list". The extended scope requires significantly more initiative to proactively manage systems and interactions with the customer and also a heightened technical competence from the operators. In addition the extended scope calls for the ability to deal with an increased number of technologies (for applications, for connectivity and for interoperability across applications) and with a larger diversity of contact persons.

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Finally such extended Customer Service, Monitoring and Object Management Centers have to handle a much larger span of technical and management standards in order to fulfill their tasks in a responsible manner.

Political change

The creation of well-functioning Customer Service, Monitoring and Object Management Centers require a political change of course. The current predominantly national standards and regulations are limiting this process and therefore should be lifted as soon as standards which provide for adequate and homogeneous quality levels become available. Especially since threat patterns and risks do not have national boundaries. For the security and threat resilience of the European citizen, of the European economy and of the European society it is urgent to adapt several operational framework conditions in particular for Customer Service, Monitoring and Object Management Centers.

Framework conditions

First of all, a coherent, efficient and comprehensive European standardization framework for electronic fire safety and security products, systems and services is urgently needed. Apart from that a legally binding pan-European certification has to be established and must include products, systems, as well as services. Finally, the EU Service Directive has to be fully implemented in order to foster the development of an open market with competitive and technology based remote services.

These changes do not only enhance the security levels for the society but also permit to overcome the perennial fragmentation (and hence weakening) of the European fire safety and security industry. This counts even more for areas where technology is the basis for strength and differentiation.

Standardization progress

The standardization framework has to encompass “pure” Monitoring and Response services as well as Remote Technical services. The Monitoring and Response services standard EN50518 is currently in revision with an extended scope that includes all aspects of fire and security monitoring as well as video surveillance applications and remote access control applications. It covers management, process, technology and physical infrastructure aspects. The Remote Technical services aspect is addressed by a newly developed standard developed by the CEN/CENELEC TC 4. Both standards also deal with the integrity requirements of a security chain that is open to IT access and to cross border service activities.

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Due to the more encompassing and international scope of Monitoring/Response services as well as of Remote Technical services the certification schemes need to be reworked altogether and have to be extended beyond the comparatively simple verification of technical product specifications.

Certification has to include entire systems and services as well as the underlying processes and management principles. In addition this extension also needs to consider that systems and services may be implemented in a cross-border manner. Hence there is a need for a single pan-European certification scheme.

In order to stay competitive, Europe has to overcome the fragmentation of its electronic fire safety and security industry by facilitating the provision of related services in a cross-border (within Europe) and even in a global manner. Only a sufficiently large internal (home) market can put the European Security Industry on a level foot with its competition from overseas.

Over the past years the European association in the field of fire safety, electronic security and related services, broadened its scope from pure regulatory activities to lobbying in Europe and worldwide. This has brought a more public light shown on Euralarm. Euralarm wants to 'set the standard' when it comes to defending the security and safety of citizens and businesses in Europe. This requires an association that can influence the positive growth of markets and the added value of companies that are serving these markets.

About Euralarm

Euralarm represents the electronic fire and security industry, providing leadership and expertise for industry, market, policy makers and standards bodies. Our members make society safer and secure through systems and services for fire detection, intrusion detection, access control, video monitoring, alarm transmission and alarm receiving centres. Founded in 1970, Euralarm represents over 2500 companies with an estimated cumulated revenue of 18 bn Euros. Euralarm members are national associations and individual companies from more than 17 European countries.

www.euralarm.org

More information

Press office Euralarm

T. (+31) 70 4275200

E. pressoffice@euralarm.org