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**Electronic Signatures and Infrastructures (ESI);
Associated Signature Containers (ASiC);
Part 1: Building blocks and ASiC baseline containers**

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Foreword

This European Standard (EN) has been produced by ETSI Technical Committee Electronic Signatures and Infrastructures (ESI).

The present document is part 1 of a multi-part deliverable specifying Associated Signature Containers (ASiC), as identified below:

Part 1: "Building blocks and ASiC baseline containers";

Part 2: "Additional ASiC containers".

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Modal verbs terminology

In the present document "**shall**", "**shall not**", "**should**", "**should not**", "**may**", "**need not**", "**will**", "**will not**", "**can**" and "**cannot**" are to be interpreted as described in clause 3.2 of the [ETSI Drafting Rules](#) (Verbal forms for the expression of provisions).

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Introduction

When signing data, the resultant signature needs to be associated with the data to which it applies. This can be achieved either by creating a data set which combines the signature and the data that was signed (e.g. by enveloping the data with the signature or including a signature element in the data set) or placing the (detached) signature in a separate resource and have some external means for associating the signature with the data to which it applies. While there are some advantages to the use of detached signatures, most significantly their non-modification of the original data objects, there remains a risk that the signature becomes separated from the data to which it applies and so losing the association. Therefore, many application systems have developed their own technique for combining a detached signature with the signed object in some form of container so that they can be more easily distributed and guarantee that the correct signature and any relevant metadata is used when validating. The same requirements apply to associate time assertions (i.e. time-stamp tokens or evidence records) to their associated data.

The present document defines a standardized use of container types to establish a common way for associating files containing data objects with files containing digital signatures and/or time assertions. Using a common container form and associated information will facilitate data interchange and interoperability among various signing and validation services.

Whilst ZIP [5] provides a basic container structure that can associate files containing data objects (file objects) and the signature(s) that apply to them, there is a recognized need for additional structure and metadata about the association, for example to link a particular signature with the file object to which it is applied. Other formats have already been specified for the use of ZIP based structures to bind together a number of file objects with related metadata. This includes OCF [4] which was originally designed for use by eBooks but has been adopted as the basis for other containers, for example ODF [6]. The present document builds on this work specifically addressing the requirements of associating a digital signature with any type of data, independent of the needs of any particular document or data type.

The present document is intended to cover containers including digital signatures and time assertions supported by PKI and public key certificates, and aims to meet the general requirements of the international community to provide trust and confidence in electronic transactions, including, amongst other, applicable requirements from Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 [i.3].

The present document is part of a rationalized framework of standards (see ETSI TR 119 000 [i.9]). ETSI TR 119 100 [i.1] provides guidance on how to use the present document within the aforementioned framework.

1 Scope

The present document specifies Associated Signature Containers (ASiC) which bind together into one single digital container based on ZIP [5] either detached digital signatures or time assertions, with a number of file objects (e.g. documents, XML structured data, spreadsheet, multimedia content) to which they apply.

The present document specifies general purpose ASiC containers building blocks and a limited set of baseline containers.

ASiC supports the following signature and time assertion formats:

- CAdES object incorporating CAdES signatures (ETSI EN 319 122-1 [1] and ETSI EN 319 122-2 [11]);
- XAdES signatures (ETSI EN 319 132-1 [2] and ETSI EN 319 132-2 [12]);
- IETF RFC 3161 [3] and updated by IETF RFC 5816 [13] time-stamp tokens; and
- IETF RFC 4998 [8] or IETF RFC 6283 [9] evidence records.

NOTE 1: No restriction is placed on time assertions eventually used within CAdES signatures or XAdES signatures.

The building blocks defined in the present document support additional features not supported by the aforementioned formats, such as time-stamping and CAdES signing of multiple content and XAdES parallel signatures, that can be used in other contexts.

The present document defines baseline containers which provide the basic features necessary for a wide range of business and governmental use cases for electronic procedures and communications to be applicable to a wide range of communities when there is a clear need for interoperability.

The present document aims at supporting associated signature containers in different regulatory frameworks.

NOTE 2: Specifically, but not exclusively, ASiC Associated Signature Containers specified in the present document aim at supporting electronic signature and electronic seal as per Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 [i.3].

The present document defines four levels of ASiC baseline containers addressing incremental requirements to maintain the availability and integrity of the containers over the long term, suitably profiled for reducing the optionality as much as possible, in a way that a certain level always addresses all the requirements already addressed at levels that are below it.

The present document does not address the identification of the validation policy to be used for verifying a container that contains time assertions.

2 References

2.1 Normative references

References are either specific (identified by date of publication and/or edition number or version number) or non-specific. For specific references, only the cited version applies. For non-specific references, the latest version of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

Referenced documents which are not found to be publicly available in the expected location might be found at <http://docbox.etsi.org/Reference>.

NOTE: While any hyperlinks included in this clause were valid at the time of publication, ETSI cannot guarantee their long term validity.

The following referenced documents are necessary for the application of the present document.

- [1] ETSI EN 319 122-1: "Electronic Signatures and Infrastructures (ESI); CAdES digital signatures; Part 1: Building blocks and CAdES baseline signatures".