SSI-WG-Interop-Background

The European Commission's DG INFSO set proliferation and interoperability of eIDs as a key target in its ICT work programme and have been funding several projects to promote the topic. The flagship project is the STORK large scale pilot that aims for providing cross-border interoperability between national eID schemes. For the technical protocol STORK chose SAML WebSSO as template and modified it to the needs of the pilot.

SAML was developed by OASIS as a flexible framework that supports a broad field of use cases related to delegated identity management in the web. However, these OASIS standards are too general to make products fully compatible. This is where interoperability profiles step in.

Kantara Initiative, as successor of Liberty Alliance, have been a key contributor to SAML standardization for many years. Kantara's yearly full matrix interoperability tests helped to drive convergence of SAML implementations in the industry. As a result of the best practices and most common features Kantara published the SAML eGov Interoperability Profile. The higher education sector and several governments in Europe and elsewhere had created deployment profiles[1] based on this profile. It is currently the best practice for scalable federations in both public and private sectors.

The Kantara Federation Interoperability Working Group gives and overview on the relationships of SAML standards profiles on its wiki[2].

Footnotes:

1. Deployment profiles specify configuration options and constraints for particular federations.
2. SAML Interoperability and Deployment Profiles