Qualified Electronic Signatures in National Emissions Trading

Overview

National emissions trading in Germany – who is affected?

The national emissions trading system (nEHS) regulates CO_2 pricing in the heating and transport sectors. It covers fuels that cause climate-damaging emissions (e.g. petrol, diesel, heating oil, natural gas and, from 2023, also coal). The nEHS started in 2021. Its legal basis is the Fuel Emissions Trading Act (BEHG).

Participation in the nEHS is mandatory for parties placing large quantities of fuels on the market. These include, for example, fuel wholesalers, fuel manufacturers with wholesale distribution that place fuels on the market, and companies that import fuels into Germany, i.e. introduce them within the meaning of energy tax law.

How national emissions trading works

The German Emissions Trading Authority at the German Environment Agency (DEHSt) coordinates the procedure and provides detailed information on its website[1]. Core elements of the nEHS are:

- Opening a compliance account in the DEHSt nEHS registry. The compliance account is needed to acquire, hold and surrender nEHS certificates.
- By 31 July: entry of the actual fuel emissions of the previous year.
- By 31 July: submission of the previous year's emissions report to the DEHSt with a qualified electronic signature.

Submitting the emissions report with a qualified electronic signature

Participating companies must submit their emissions report electronically by the deadline. For this purpose, you set up a VPS mailbox (virtual post office of the DEHSt). In addition, you must have a qualified electronic signature. When obtaining the signature equipment, please note the following:

- The DEHSt recommends qualified signature cards in which an organisational affiliation is entered in addition to the cardholder (natural person).
- Please consent to publication of the certificates in the online directory service when applying.
- Suitable signature software is provided in the DEHSt portal. You do not need any additional licences.
- The signature card must be issued in the holder's real name. Pseudonyms are not permitted for this use.

Ordering

D-Trust signature cards are suitable for participation in the nEHS. Please apply for your signature card via an IHK offering a signature service[2]. Alternatively, you can apply using the PostIdent procedure[3]. The signature cards are valid for two years. In addition to the signature card, a card reader[4] is required. When ordering, please allow for processing and delivery times of about three weeks.

Any further questions?

If you still have an open question or need our help, you can reach the D-Trust sales team by email at vertrieb@d-trust.net.

[1] https://www.dehst.de/DE/Nationaler-Emissionshandel/nationaler-emissionshandel_node.html · [2] https://www.de-coda.de/en/ihk-signaturkarte · [3] https://www.de-coda.de/en/ihk-signaturkarte#gs-postident · [4] https://www.chipkartenleser-shop.de/bdr_hw

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