SAFEHORIZON Project Officially Launched

The SAFEHORIZON project has officially commenced, marking a significant milestone in the fight against cybercrime. This multidisciplinary research and development initiative is spearheaded by an international consortium comprising 13 partners from Romania, Spain, Finland, France, Moldova, the Netherlands, Cyprus, Portugal, Luxembourg, Poland and coordinated by the Athena Research Center from Greece.

SAFEHORIZON is a three-year project running from September 2024 to August 2027, and is co-funded by the European Union under the Horizon Europe Program with a budget of 3,998,925€.

The formal launch took place during a kick-off meeting on 30th September 2024 in Athens, attended by over 30 representatives from partner organisations. These included law enforcement agencies (LEAs), research centres, universities, and businesses from across Europe, alongside a representative from the European Commission.

The meeting served as a platform for discussing each partner's contributions based on their areas of expertise. Participants reviewed the project's objectives and structure, addressing crucial issues such as ethics, privacy, and data protection while clarifying expectations from the European Commission.

Innovations in Combatting Crime-as-a-Service Operations

SAFEHORIZON aims to tackle the emerging threat of Crime-as-a-Service (CaaS) by harnessing intelligence from various sources including the clear web, deep web, dark web, public dumps, and law enforcement datasets. By integrating these data streams with machine learning technologies, the project seeks to extract actionable evidence for legal use.

CaaS represents a worrying evolution in the cyber threat landscape, transforming criminal activities into organised and commercialised enterprises. Similar to legitimate Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) platforms, CaaS offers on-demand illicit services such as malware rentals and fraud platforms. This shift lowers barriers to entry for cybercriminals, enabling individuals without technical skills to engage in activities like identity theft and payment card fraud through digital means. The consequence is a significant amplification of criminal operations' scale and impact.

“*SAFEHORIZON will provide LEAs, emergency response teams (CERTs), and computer security incident response teams (CSIRTs) with a comprehensive toolbox of underdevelopment and enhanced open-source solutions that are designed to be user-friendly and easily adaptable*.” as explained by Dr Constantinos Patsakis from Athena Research Center, the project coordinator.

This project has received funding from the European Commission
under grant agreement No. 101168562

Key Objectives of SAFEHORIZON

The primary objectives of the SAFEHORIZON project include:

- Delivering a user-friendly toolkit of interoperable tools along with a monitoring platform for integrating outputs from these tools.
- Providing datasets and notebooks to EU law enforcement agencies and vetted organisations for streamlined data processing.
- Supporting the harmonisation of cybercrime legislation across EU member states by developing policy toolkits.
- Upholding European societal values and fundamental rights throughout all project activities.

SAFEHORIZON is poised to make significant strides in enhancing cybersecurity measures across Europe while fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders in the fight against cybercrime:

SAFEHORIZON is a part of the LEAs Cluster of Projects, which is spearheaded by Privanova, one of the project's partners. This initiative aims to enhance collaboration among associated projects by establishing a robust network of practitioners. Through the LEAs Cluster, SAFEHORIZON is also linked with the Interpol Cybercrime Knowledge Exchange Network, facilitating vital information sharing and coordination in the fight against cybercrime.

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact the project coordinator, Dr Constantinos Patsakis via email: kpatsak@athenarc.gr.

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