

Digital sovereignty you can verify — not just declare.

True digital sovereignty is **democratic control over digital infrastructure** — not only owning the data centres, but being able to **independently check** that a named, accountable human, not a foreign vendor's black box, was in control of a consequential decision. This note describes an open, vendor-neutral property that turns "a human oversaw this" and "public money was properly authorised" from claims Europe must trust into evidence Europe can verify.

THE SOVEREIGNTY GAP

When automated systems act on Europe's behalf — moving public funds, deciding on benefits, changing records — "a human was in control" is today an assertion held inside the operator's systems, often a non-EU platform's. There is no artifact a competent authority, a court, or a citizen can check **without trusting that operator**. Sovereignty that cannot be independently verified is sovereignty in name only.

WHAT A VERIFIABLE AUTHORISATION RECEIPT IS

Before a high-risk action executes, a **named, accountable person** approves that exact action on their own device, and the system emits a cryptographic **receipt** verifiable **offline, by anyone, without access to or trust in the operator**. Alter it and verification fails by construction. For the most consequential actions, the receipt can require a **quorum** of distinct named approvers — the two-person rule, made checkable.

WHY THIS IS SOVEREIGNTY, NOT DEPENDENCE

- **Owned by no platform.** It is an **open standard** (Apache-2.0). Any European institution, member state, or vendor can implement and run it — the control does not sit with, and cannot be withdrawn by, any single company or country.
- **Democratic control you can check.** Oversight stops being "trust us" and becomes a portable, tamper-evident record an authority or citizen verifies themselves — accountability that does not depend on a foreign black box.
- **Cross-border by design.** A receipt verifies identically in any member state, with no central service to trust — fitting a Union of 27 competent authorities.
- **Capture-proof & durable.** It specifies an *outcome* (checkable evidence), not a product, so it favours no incumbent and does not go stale as tools change.

A CONCRETE APPLICATION: PUBLIC INVESTMENT CREATING PUBLIC VALUE

WHERE AUTOMATED DECISIONS MOVE PUBLIC MONEY

As agents and automated systems increasingly touch the disbursement of EU funds — cohesion, recovery, benefits — verifiable authorisation gives national authorities and the **European Public Prosecutor's Office** independently-checkable proof of **who authorised each high-risk action**, before it executed. It turns anti-fraud oversight of public money from logs that must be trusted into **evidence that can be verified** — years later, by an outside party, without trusting the body under review. "Public investment creates public value" becomes something Europe can demonstrate, not merely assert.

WHERE IT ALSO MAPS IN THE AI ACT

PROVISION	HOW A VERIFIABLE AUTHORISATION RECEIPT PROVIDES THE EVIDENCE
Art. 14 — Human oversight	Turns "a human oversaw this" from an unfalsifiable claim into checkable proof that a named person authorised the specific action before it took effect.
Art. 12 / 26 — Logging & deployer duties	A tamper-evident, portable record of the authorisation event — not a log held and editable by the party under examination.
Art. 86 — Right to explanation	An affected person (or their counsel) can independently verify who authorised the decision — not take the deployer's word.

What this evidence proves — and doesn't. A verifiable authorisation receipt proves, independently, that the required named person(s) approved a specific action under a stated policy and that the record is unaltered. It does not by itself prove the decision was *correct*, establish the real-world *identity* behind an enrolled approver (an enrolment/identity-proofing layer), or replace an authority's own assessment — it makes those things *auditable*. Offered as an open reference (IETF Internet-Drafts *draft-schrock-ep-authorization-receipts* and *draft-schrock-ep-quorum*; verifiers in three languages; a peer-reviewed preprint) to show the requirement is concrete and achievable today — not as a product to specify.