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Economic Operators under the Cyber Resilience Act: Roles and Responsibilities

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OSCRAT Open-Source Cyber Resilience Act Tools

Context

CRA defines who is responsible for cybersecurity at every stage of a product's life cycle.

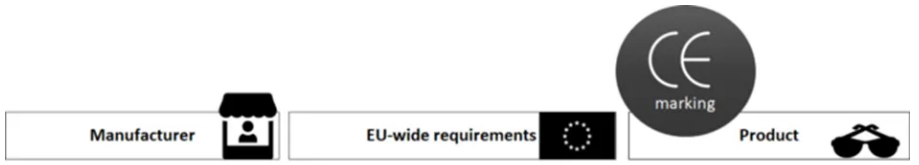
Introduce the three key actors: **Manufacturer, Importer, Distributor**.

Why Economic Operators Matter

- Cybersecurity accountability must exist across the supply chain.
- CRA closes the gap between product design, import, and distribution.
- Links to the EU's *"secure-by-design and by-default"* principles.
- Reference ENISA's statement: *"Security cannot stop at the factory gate."*

Overview of Roles

- **Manufacturers.**
- **Importers.**
- **Distributors.**



Manufacturer: Primary Responsibility

Full responsibility for product compliance.

Tasks:

- Design and develop according to essential cybersecurity requirements (Annex I).
- Prepare **Technical Documentation**.
- Conduct **Conformity Assessment**.
- Issue **EU Declaration of Conformity (DoC)**.
- Affix **CE marking**.
- Ongoing duty to monitor and fix vulnerabilities.

Manufacturer: After Placing on the Market

- Post-market surveillance and incident response.
- Reporting vulnerabilities to **ENISA** and national authorities (within 24 hours if actively exploited).
- Provide software updates during the support period.
- Maintain records and cooperate with authorities.

Importer: Gatekeeper to the EU Market

- Product has **DoC** and **CE marking**.
- Manufacturer followed CRA obligations.
- Technical documentation is available in EU language.
- Cannot place product on market if non-compliant.
- Ensures traceability (contact details, batch numbers, etc.).

Distributor: Last Link to the User

- Checks visible compliance: CE marking, labeling, instructions.
- Must act if a product seems unsafe or modified.
- Must cooperate with manufacturers/importers during recalls or incident handling.
- Communication role – must inform users and authorities when risks are found.

Shared Responsibilities

- Cybersecurity is **collective**: each operator contributes to the same product lifecycle.
- Duties overlap – communication and traceability are key.
- All operators must support vulnerability handling and updates.
- Visual: Venn diagram of shared obligations (Security | Compliance | Reporting).

Information Flow & Traceability

1

ENISA model: “Information must flow both upstream and downstream.”

2

Importance of clear contacts, version control, update channels.

Conformity Assessment & Documentation

- CRA, Annex VI – self-assessment vs. third-party certification.
- When a **Notified Body** is required (for critical products).
- What documentation each operator must store and for how long (10 years).

Vulnerability Reporting Duties

- CRA, article 11 – mandatory vulnerability handling process.
- Timeline for notification (ENISA / CSIRTs).
- Coordination between manufacturer and distributors for patches.

DISCOVERY → REPORT → FIX → NOTIFY

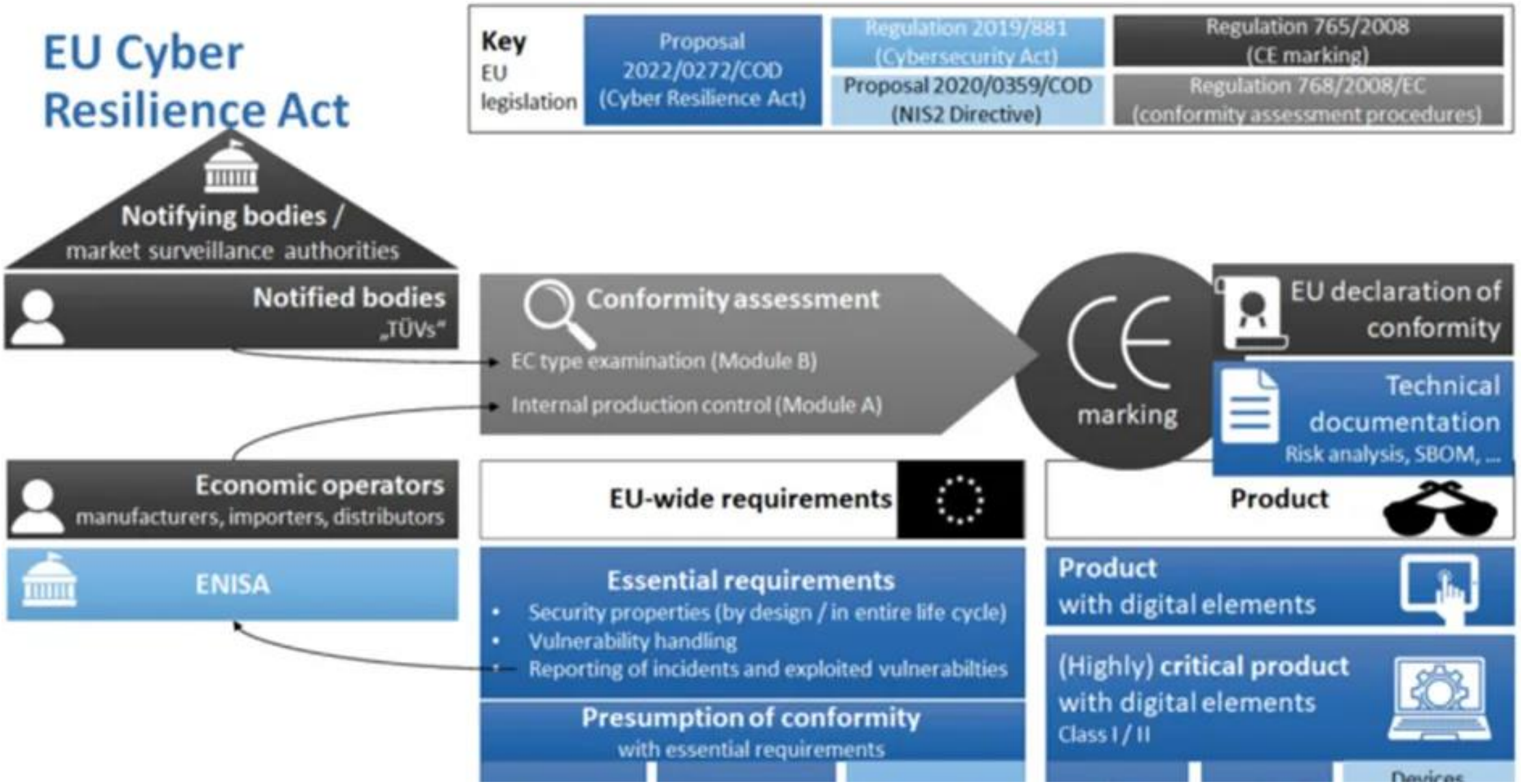
Who Does What – Responsibilities Across the Product Lifecycle

Who	What (Main Responsibilities)	When (Timing / Condition)
 Manufacturer	• Design and develop product according to cybersecurity requirements (Annex I). • Prepare Technical Documentation & EU Declaration of Conformity (DoC). • Affix CE marking. • Set up vulnerability handling & update process. • Report exploited vulnerabilities to ENISA & CSIRTs. • Keep records & cooperate with authorities.	▶ Before placing on the market (design, documentation). ▶ After placing – monitor, patch, report.
 Importer	• Verify CE marking & Declaration of Conformity. • Ensure manufacturer follows CRA. • Check technical documentation (EU language). • Maintain traceability (contact, serials). • Stop sale if non-compliant.	▶ Before placing on EU market. ▶ During issues – inform manufacturer & authority.
 Distributor	• Check visible compliance (CE mark, instructions). • Don’t sell unsafe or modified product. • Cooperate in recalls or incidents. • Inform users & authorities about risks.	▶ Before sale – verify compliance. ▶ During distribution – monitor security & recalls.

Market Surveillance & Enforcement

- National authorities' role.
- Powers to request documentation, stop sales, or order recalls.
- Sanctions under Article 53 – penalties proportional to turnover.
- Example from ENISA: alignment with the EU Market Surveillance Regulation 2019/1020.

EU Cyber Resilience Act



Practical Examples

- Case 1: Importer finds missing documentation → cannot release product.
- Case 2: Distributor reports exploited vulnerability → manufacturer issues patch.
- Case 3: Authority inspects conformity documentation after complaint.

Key Takeaways

Manufacturers → design and maintain security.

Importers → verify and ensure documentation.

Distributors → monitor, communicate, cooperate.

Shared goal: a trustworthy digital single market.

Thank you!

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