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IXIM 163
JAI 1068
FRONT 256
SIRIS 73
SCHENGEN 39
VISA 165
EURODAC 14
ASIM 77
ASILE 81
MIGR 263
COSI 138
ENFOPOL 349
ENFOCUSTOM 92
COPEN 283
COMIX 354

NOTE

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Subject: Summary of the 45th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group

Delegations will find in Annex a summary of the 45th meeting of eu-LISA's VIS Advisory Group.

Summary of the 45th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group 1 June 2023

European Union Agency for the Operational Management
of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom,
Security and Justice (eu-LISA)

**Summary of the
45th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group of eu-LISA**

1 June 2023, Tallinn (hybrid meeting)

At the meeting of the **Visa Information System Advisory Group (VIS AG) of eu-LISA, held on 1 June 2023**, eu-LISA presented the summary of the operational activities and statistics of VIS and gave a status update on the development of the Entry-Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). The Agency also presented the planning of the development of the interoperability architecture. Thereafter the European Commission provided the status of preparing the VIS Implementing and Delegated Acts. In addition, eu-LISA provided an update on the Shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS) project and the sBMS User Software Kit (USK) pilot. Further, the Agency reported on several Project Management Forum (PMF) meetings – VIS-EES PMF, Revised VIS PMF and VIS-Interoperability PMF. The Agency reported about the test environments, provided information on the status of a regular VIS questionnaire and updated VIS AG about the VIS Exercise 2023. eu-LISA also presented the results of the Customer Satisfactory survey 2022. Under AOB, it was announced that a technical workshop on facial images will take place at the end of June.

Under the first discussion point, eu-LISA presented the **summary of VIS operational activities** covering the reporting period from 1 January to 30 April 2023. The system kept performing well and by April around 15.7 million operations had been performed, which is in accordance with the seasonal expectations. In March and April, more than 800 000 visa applications were created and this is almost equal to the pre-COVID level. The top countries where visa applications were lodged were India, Turkey, China (increasing), Morocco, Russian Federation and Algeria. Under this agenda point, a long discussion and exchange of views was also held between VIS AG members and eu-LISA on different operational issues related to VIS, such as its data quality, statistics and preconditions for the go-live of EES.

Next, eu-LISA provided a regular **status update on the implementation of EES and ETIAS**. The EES-ETIAS AG Chair also explained in detail the eu-LISA Management Board decision about EES and interoperability taken at the extraordinary meeting on 31 May 2023. The Chair introduced the EES and interoperability New Resolution Strategy, a step-by-step approach to technical readiness through an Intermediate Product / Minimum Viable Product (IP/MVP) as well as the EES Core timeline related to the MVP. Moreover, VIS AG members were informed about the **planning of the development of the interoperability architecture** as discussed and agreed in the same eu-LISA Management Board meeting. A new phased approach will be taken towards the implementation of the interoperability architecture, which should lead to a final endorsement of a new roadmap in the end of 2023.

The Commission briefed the VIS AG about the **progress of nine Implementing Acts (IA) and three Delegated Acts (DA)**. Most of the acts are adopted or in a stable state, only two IAs and one DA are still in process. The Commission is aiming to have stable versions of the acts by the summer.

Thereafter eu-LISA reported about the **Shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS) project**, including an update on the **sBMS User Software Kit (USK)** pilot project. The Agency presented the agenda of the Biometric Working Group (BWG) meeting planned for 9 June 2023, gave an overview of topics discussed in March with Member States who use the external service provider and highlighted issues observed during compliance testing of sBMS. The Agency also introduced the content of the sBMS USK Kit 9 and invited all VIS AG members to consult the dedicated SharePoint space to be informed about the most recent updates in the supporting documentation.

eu-LISA also provided an overview of the status of the VIS ICD implementation project and the outcomes of the **VIS-EES PMF, Revised VIS PMF and VIS-Interoperability PMF meetings** all of which had a good participation rate. The work in the Revised VIS PMF and VIS-Interoperability PMF is held back because some of the necessary secondary legislation has not been adopted yet.

Thereafter, the Agency reported about the **test environments**. In February 2023, a workshop was organised to discuss the comprehensiveness of the testing and the availability of test environments. After the workshop, Member States were invited to send their feedback on a comprehensive test document but due to low participation (replies from 14 Member States) and inconsistent feedback, the input cannot be considered conclusive and work on the test document needs to be continued.

Next, eu-LISA reported about the state-of-play of a regular **VIS questionnaire** to be filled in by the Member States. The questions will now focus on organisational aspects related to interoperability while other sections (project management, technical and operational aspects) will be developed later when more information on the evolution of interoperability and the revised VIS legislation is available.

Furthermore, eu-LISA updated the VIS AG about the **VIS Exercise 2023** which will involve four delegations as members, two as observers and two external teams. The kick-off meeting was held on 30 May and the execution is planned to the beginning of October 2023. The Chair underlined the usefulness of the exercise to increase VIS security at national level through learning about risks as well as practices to handle security incidents.

Finally, eu-LISA presented the **results of the Customer Satisfactory survey 2022** which contained 25 questions about five topics. The participation was relatively high (20 out of 26 stakeholders replied) and the overall satisfaction rate was very high (97,5%). The areas with room for improvement (such as more communication regarding the maintenances and non-production environments and a need to provide information more frequently on the progress of resolving incidents) will receive special attention.

Under AOB, it was announced that a **technical workshop** on proposals concerning facial images will take place at the end of June 2023. Related documentation will be provided to the Member States on time.

The next meeting of the VIS AG will be held as a hybrid meeting on **21 September 2023** in Strasbourg.