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LIMITE

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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Implementation of interoperability – revision of timeline

The European Union is currently developing the most complete and modern border management architecture. The latter comprises the Entry/Exit System (EES), the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), the renewed Visa Information System (VIS) and the (ECRIS-TCN). All these systems, together with the existing VIS and SIS will be made interoperable via the associated IO components, i.e. the ESP, the CIR, the sBMS and the MID. The reporting and statistics aspect will be covered via the CRRS, while the industry (carriers from all business areas (air, land, sea)) will be supported via the associated web-services for EES, ETIAS and Revised VIS. The objective of this new IT architecture is to improve border controls, pave the way towards an integrated border management, cope with the increasing number of travellers, ensure a high level of security in the Schengen area, and thus ensure free movement in this area without internal border controls.

This new IT architecture will be delivered by eu-LISA in several waves according to the following roadmap:

- <u>Wave 1 Q3/24 to Q4/24</u>: entry into operation of EES + the shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS: first component of the Interoperability) for EES and VIS;

- <u>Wave 2 Q1/25 to Q2/25</u>: entry into operation of ETIAS + European Search Portal (ESP) and Common Identity Repository (CIR) (second and third components of the Interoperability);

- <u>Wave 3 Q2/25 to Q3/25</u>: entry into operation of ECRIS –TCN + European Search Portal (ESP) and Common Identity Repository (CIR) and sBMS for the ECRIS-TCN;

- <u>Wave 4 Q3/26 to Q4/26</u>: entry into operation of the renewed VIS + Completion of the Interoperability architecture (delivery of the MID – Multiple Identity Detector: last component of the Interoperability) and start of the MID Transitional Period.

In parallel to these developments at central level, Member States are modifying their national border systems, as well as the other national systems supporting other business areas (visa, immigration and law enforcement), to enable them to work with the systems implemented by eu-LISA.

The consultation by eu-LISA of its Advisory Groups (technical experts and project managers of Member States, Commission and other relevant EU Agencies) on this new roadmap has resulted in a wide support. At the end of September, eu-LISA's Management Board, taking due consideration of the outcome of the Advisory Groups consultation, has validated the roadmap.

The Entry/Exit System is the first system that will be delivered in Autumn 2024. In parallel to the Entry/Exit System, the shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS), the first component of the Interoperability, will also enter into operation, together with the updated VIS. This will be followed, six months later, in Spring 2025, by the European Travel and Information Authorisation System (ETIAS). The latter will come together with the ESP and the CIR.

After being confronted with delays on the part of its contractor, eu-LISA has delivered over the course of the summer the first two versions of the Entry/Exit System that are now successfully in use by Member States' authorities for testing their national developments necessary for operating the EES at various business areas, such as at the national border crossing points, the consulates, and the immigration and law enforcement authorities. This successful launch of the first versions of the EES gives increased confidence and assurance as to how realistic the interoperability roadmap will be.

The delivery of the final version of the core system is scheduled for early 2024. This milestone will trigger the start of the formal testing of the system by Member States' authorities. The successful completion of this formal testing as well as the Member States' declarations of readiness to use the system are two necessary conditions for the entry into operation of the Entry/Exit System.

In addition to the biometric devices (fingerprint scanners and cameras) that must be installed at each border crossing points, major border crossing points should be equipped as much as possible with self-service kiosks, automated gates and automated border control systems to facilitate and speed up controls.

If the use of the Entry/Exit System will enable automation of border controls, its implementation will result also in a major change for the management of these controls as the system requires the registration of all non-EU travellers crossing the border for a short stay. In light of the need to keep our borders open and to maintain reasonable waiting times for border controls, the entry into operation of the EES should be prepared in detail and measures that prevent border crossing points becoming congested will be required. Potential technical issues resulting from the complex architecture, linking the central system to national border systems and to all border crossing points, have also to be considered. In addition, the MS must test, rehearse and finetune all associated business and operational processes and train their border guards on the use of those processes in a timely manner. For these reasons, an additional measure has been identified and is related to the capturing and storing of biometrics in the Entry/Exit System; the latter could be activated progressively and thus derogation measures will be available for activation at individual border crossing points to prevent long waiting times. The date that will be retained for the entry into operation will be outside periods of major events and high travel times.

The Entry/Exit System may enter into operation only after all Member States have declared their readiness. Delay by one Member State will delay the entry into operation for all. It is important that Member States confronted with difficulties during their preparation will report them immediately. Both the Commission and eu-LISA have stated they remain available to provide support to Member States in managing such difficulties.

The Presidency:

- **invites delegations to endorse the roadmap calendar outlined above, and**

- **informs delegations that this calendar will be submitted for endorsement to the JHA Council on 19 October 2023.**