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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Delegations

Subject: Improve the quality and effectiveness of border checks, by using existing systems to their full potential: a look at indicators on the Schengen Information System

I. Background

Modern, state-of-the-art solutions are crucial for improving border management. They play a key role in detecting risks and threats to the proper functioning of the Schengen area without internal borders, while also facilitating smooth crossings for *bona fide* travellers. However, Schengen evaluations continue to reveal deficiencies in the overall quality of border checks, including in the use of large-scale IT systems at the borders.

For that reason, Ministers agreed as **one of the priorities for 2025-2026 Schengen Council cycle to “Improve the quality and effectiveness of border checks by using existing systems to their full potential”**.¹

This issue was discussed at the 20 October Working Party for Schengen Matters meeting. Delegates reflected on deficiencies in the use of large-scale IT systems, including SIS and VIS. They notably focused on challenges linked to the lack of adequate and sufficient resources and infrastructure limitations in Member States such as limited internet connectivity, as well as on the excessive use of targeted checks and relaxation of border checks.

Moreover, there were reflections about the need **for Member States to have a clearer overview of relevant datasets and indicators, which are essential to assess whether systems are being used as required and to their full potential to ensure high quality border checks.**

In line with its mandate to monitor the implementation of large-scale IT systems, the **Working Party on JHA Information Exchange (IXIM) can play a role** in addressing this issue, in turn supporting important discussions on improving border checks. This is also in the spirit of the Information Management and Exchange Framework (IMEF) to monitor the use of existing tools.

II. The Presidency’s objective

The **Schengen Information System (SIS)** is currently the most widely used and largest fully rolled-out information sharing system for the management of the external borders.

In view of the above, the Presidency aims at consolidating and evaluating **a short list of key indicators on the use of the Schengen information System already available at EU level**. These indicators would help establish a baseline situation and contribute to assessing the quality and effectiveness of border checks.

¹ 9380/1/25 REV1

Establishing a baseline at both Member State and Schengen-area level, and assessing it regularly, would **support future evidence-based discussions** within the Council and its preparatory bodies. In particular, this would allow to effectively report to the Schengen Council on the measures taken to improve the effectiveness and quality of border checks, and ultimately, contribute to the quality of border control. They would be considered at regular intervals to enable comparison and trend analysis.

III. Proposed list of key indicators available at EU level for assessing the effective use of the Schengen Information System for border check

The list below reflects that it is not always possible to “isolate” the SIS checks performed at the border, as opposed to in-land. Therefore, some of the proposed indicators serve as proxies, insofar as they are good “border checks enablers”.

1) Use of relevant alerts

- 1.1. Number of alerts on refusal of entry or stay *at a certain date e.g. on the first day of the month*, and number of hits on a *yearly basis, overall and by MS*
- 1.2. Number of return alerts at a certain date e.g. on the first day of the month, *monthly and yearly, overall and by MS*
- 1.3. Number of return hits at the border, on a *quarterly (for operational situations for which quarterly data is available) and yearly basis, overall and by MS*

2) Completeness and quality of relevant alerts (*not generated regularly, can be retrieved at central level on an ad hoc basis*)

- 2.1. Number and percentage of the abovementioned alerts that include identification documents, and the mention to existing *alias monthly on the first day of the month, overall and by MS*
- 2.2. Number and percentage of the abovementioned alerts that include photographs, *monthly on the first day of the month, overall and by MS*
- 2.3. Number and percentage of the abovementioned alerts that include dactyloscopic data, *monthly on the first day of the month, overall and by MS*

3) Follow-up actions and measures to alerts

- 3.1. Average response time for SIS queries with fingerprints, *monthly and yearly, overall and by MS*
- 3.2. Number of alerts where required measures were taken (SIRENE G and R forms), *yearly, overall and by MS (provided by MS to eu-LISA and the Commission as per the SIRENE Manual)*
- 3.3. Number of alerts where required measures were not implemented at the border (SIRENE H form), *yearly, overall and by MS (provided by MS to eu-LISA and the Commission as per the SIRENE Manual)*

IV. Questions for delegations

At the 24 November IXIM meeting or in written form, delegations will be invited to answer the following questions:

1. Do you agree with all the proposed key indicators available at EU level included in part III of the document?
2. Which scope, limitations and caveats do you see related to the relevance and use of the indicators and what procedures can be applied to improve the existing gaps?
3. Are there other/additional indicators you would like to propose? These could be either other/additional indicators available at EU level, or indicators available at national level that MS could be ready to share on a regular basis.
4. Would you volunteer to supply additional relevant indicators that you may have at national level?
5. What methodology can be established to define a baseline situation and ensure regular assessments?
6. How do you see a possible synergy between the IXIM Working Party and the Schengen Matters Working Party in strengthening the evidence-based discussions a political level?