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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Summary of the 46th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group

Delegations will find in Annex a summary of the 46th meeting of eu-LISA's VIS Advisory Group.

Summary of the
46th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group
21 September 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

46th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group of eu-LISA

21 September 2023, Strasbourg (hybrid meeting)

At the meeting of the **Visa Information System Advisory Group (VIS AG) of eu-LISA, held on 21 September 2023**, eu-LISA presented the status update on the Entry-Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). The VIS AG gave its positive opinion on the strategic approach for the implementation of the interoperability (IO) roadmap as well as on the merge of the Revised VIS and VIS-IO programs. The Agency also presented the summary of the operational activities and statistics of VIS, invited the VIS AG to submit a new list of authorities for the test environment, and presented the results of a Comprehensive Test Approach Questionnaire. The European Commission provided the status of preparing the VIS Implementing and Delegated Acts. In addition, eu-LISA presented the results of VIS questionnaire, invited the VIS AG to contribute to the draft Single Programming Document 2025-2027 and reported on several Project Management Forum (PMF) meetings – VIS-EES PMF, Revised VIS PMF and VIS-IO PMF. The Agency also provided an update on the Shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS) project and the sBMS User Software Kit (USK), gave a presentation on the accuracy of facial-images-based searches and updated the VIS AG about the VIS Exercise 2023. Finally, the VIS AG adopted a positive opinion on the updated VIS Operator Manual.

Under the first discussion point, eu-LISA presented the **status update on the EES and ETIAS implementation**. A good progress was reported regarding the EES – minimum viable products (MVP) 1 and 2 have been made available, the platform upgrade performed and many encountered issues resolved. The EES is in the testing phase now. Regarding ETIAS, an iterative approach is followed for the development and efforts are currently made to make shared components available in October.

The Agency also presented the **strategic approach for the implementation of the IO roadmap** (waves approach) to which the VIS AG gave its positive opinion. The VIS AG also agreed on **the merging of the Revised VIS and VIS-IO programs** which according to the roadmap is expected to be delivered in Q3-Q4 2026.

Then eu-LISA presented the **summary of VIS operational activities** covering the reporting period from 1 May to 31 August 2023. The system kept performing well and the usage of the system is back to the pre-COVID level with around 20 million operations. The top countries where visa applications were lodged were China, India, Turkey, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and Morocco.

eu-LISA explained to the Member States that **the list of authorities** in the production environment cannot be replicated to the test environment and thus invited the Member States to submit a new list.

Thereafter, the Agency presented the results of **the Comprehensive Test Approach** Questionnaire and informed the VIS AG members about a launch of a technical internal impact assessment regarding VIS playground (PGD).

The Commission briefed the VIS AG about the **progress of Implementing Acts (IA) and Delegated Acts (DA)**. Although some advancement has been made since the last VIS AG meeting, two IAs and one DA are still in the pipeline.

Then eu-LISA presented the results of the **first VIS questionnaire** which was open to the Member States between 18 August and 11 September 2023. Apart from three Member States and the EU Agencies, all VIS users updated the questionnaire within the given timeframe. The deadline for the next update of the questionnaire was set at 22 November 2023.

The Agency presented to the VIS AG also its planning work and invited its members to contribute to the **draft Single Programming Document 2025-2027** to be distributed in October. The VIS AG members are expected to focus on the VIS activities planned for the annual work program 2025.

Next, eu-LISA provided the outcomes of the last **VIS-EES PMF, Revised VIS PMF and VIS-IO PMF meetings** all of which had a good participation rate. For Revised VIS, the Interface Control Document (ICD) based on the existing secondary legislation is expected to be released in November to be followed by a dedicated workshop. ICD for the VIS-ETIAS / VIS-IO project has been accepted.

Thereafter eu-LISA reported about the **Shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS) project**, including an update on the **sBMS User Software Kit (USK)**. The Agency presented the agenda of the Biometric Working Group (BWG) meeting of 22 September 2023 and outlined the progress made in relation to the USK (Work Package 4 launched, results of a pilot related to the improvement of the fingerprint quality available and a revision of USK features made).

Then the Agency gave a presentation on **the accuracy of facial-images-based searches**. Revised VIS will bring along new quality checks and thus facial image quality in the system is expected to improve. As technology has significantly evolved during the last five years, its application should be investigated further.

Furthermore, eu-LISA updated the VIS AG about the **VIS Exercise 2023**. Preparatory meetings took place in June and September when exercise scenario was refined; Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Strategies aligned and the final timeline presented. The exercise took place on 5 October 2023.

Finally, the VIS AG adopted a positive opinion on **the updated VIS Operator Manual** as submitted to the meeting.

The next meeting of the VIS AG will be held as a hybrid meeting on **30 November 2023** in Strasbourg.