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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Working Party on Information Exchange and Data Protection (DAPIX)
Subject:	UMF 3 Project - State of play

This note sets out the recent progress made in line with the UMF3 project management plan on the three UMF3 work streams.

1. Enhancement of the UMF standard (WS 1):

The supplementation of the UMF standard is ongoing and will be available by the end of April 2018. On the basis of the first version “Information Model V1.0”, the next version (V1.1) had been generated and disseminated to all UMF3 partners in early 2017. This V1.1 covered all known requirements in relation with the consultation of Europol’s EIS via their QUEST interface. In more detail, current EIS enquiries relate to personal data and firearm data in UMF compliant format.

One more call for additional requirements to all 23 partners in work stream 1 resulted in a specific Focus Group Meeting on “person description” and “organization” in December 2017. Results of the Focus Group work and a number of pending requirements are currently being incorporated into a final version V2.0. V2.0 will comprise the descriptive “Information Model” and the technical model (i.e. XML schemas) necessary to implement UMF in the operational IT world.

In summary, the UMF3 project team is working on the commonly agreed UMF V2.0 in order to achieve the deadline of April 2018. Nevertheless, UMF is a “living standard” to be further enhanced with new requirements even after the UMF3 has phased out.

2. Preparation of a UMF Governance Structure (WS 2):

The preparatory work on a future UMF Governance Structure within the EU has been accomplished according to schedule. The final document V2.0 has been shared with all UMF3 partners. Results are already reflected in the proposals of the 2 recent EU regulations on “establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems”.

In short, work stream 2 can be considered closed.

3. Implementing UMF at Europol (QUEST) and in 5 piloting Member States

The implementation at Europol and in Estonia, Finland, Greece, Poland and Spain consists of two major phases. The first phase was an analysis and test phase and was successfully completed by all 6 partners. The second phase, the so called “going-live” in an operational environment under daily work conditions, is still not finished.

Already in summer 2017, there were first indications that some Member States will face difficulties with the accreditation of their connection to QUEST in an operational environment. Currently, Europol’s protection rules require the “EU restricted” - security level when Europol information is processed or transmitted via national networks to LEA staff in the field. For the time being, this requirement cannot be fulfilled by the majority of the participating Member States. Since most of the information to be shared with field officers is not “highly confidential”, Europol has worked out a “basic protection level (BPL)” - solution waiting for implementation in Europol’s IT environment. In Q4/2017, the UMF3 team tried to escalate this subject without success. The pending BPL implementation does not only affect the UMF3 project but also other EU interoperable solutions in the pipeline (e.g. PNR, PCCC connectivity, ESP).

Practically speaking, this means that only Spain and probably Estonia (final confirmation pending) will become operational under daily work conditions before the UMF3 project ends. The other three partner Member States may be technically ready, but will not go live to the extent initially planned.

Experience made under work stream 3 is valuable in so far as the subject raised awareness of the current protection level situation when communicating with Europol more broadly. Apart from piloting Member States under the UMF3 project, a number of non-participating Member States are in a similar situation when it comes to EU-wide large-scale information exchange where Europol is involved.

In summary, the UMF3 project will achieve most of defined goals but not all.

Outlook: follow-up project "UMF3plus"

On 8 February 2018, Germany received an invitation from DG Home to work out a proposal on a follow-up project (e.g UMF3plus). The invitation defines,

- “Activities that can be funded include: extending the UMF standard to the next level of interoperability for cross-border information exchange; support the process of establishing a central EU governance structure for a steady maintenance and promotion of the UMF standard; carry out work to assist in the implementation of the ESP interface using UMF as communication interface both on the Member State side and the central side; extend the number of operational Member States using Europol’s QUEST interface to more parties; carry out some dissemination of information /promotion of the standard /training/workshops where relevant to promote and encourage the use of the standard amongst Member States and potential partners.”
- “The maximum grant envisaged in the ISF Police Annual Work Programme 2017 for these activities is 3 000 000 € and this grant cannot exceed 95 % of the total eligible costs of the proposed project.”
- “Your project application cannot be scheduled to last more than 36 months.”

At this point of time, only a few Member States expressed their interest to participate, namely AT, DE, FI and NL.

Member States are invited to get in touch actively with the UMF3 project coordination team at IT-UMF@bka.bund.de. Since the deadline to send a concerted proposal to DG Home is tough, please send your expression of interest by **5 March 2018** at the latest. In parallel, the UMF3 team will contact potential partners such as DG Home's agencies, respectively Europol, eu-LISA and Frontex.
