Council of the European Union

NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on JHA Information Exchange
Subject:	Structure and main principles of the roadmap for standardisation for data quality purposes
	- Presidency discussion paper

INTRODUCTION

At the initiative of the Croatian Presidency, the recently established Working Party on JHA Information Exchange (IXIM) held a comprehensive discussion on the need for further standardisation in certain technical and operational areas. During its first meeting, on 26 February 2020, it was broadly acknowledged that in recent years, the EU has been facing an evolving threat to internal security and a growing number of challenges related to migration and border management, as clearly demonstrated by the terrorist attacks in recent years and the increasing number of irregular border crossings. In order to support efforts to develop an adequate response, there is an urgent need to further strengthen and develop information exchange, which is instrumental in ensuring an effective response to such threats.

Developing the existing and new information systems for border management and internal security and making them interoperable will help to eliminate information gaps, which are currently preventing the identification of persons involved in terrorist or serious criminal activities. It will also allow for a more efficient approach in the context of migration and border management. This will be achieved through the systematic cross-checking of information contained in the different EU information systems, ensuring that the relevant information is made available, where it is needed, in a timely manner.

Over the past year, eu-LISA has started to implement several new legal instruments with the aim of delivering a new, interoperable information architecture for border management and internal security by 2024. However, once deployed, the ability of the new information architecture to deliver the anticipated political objectives and related operational benefits will depend largely on the quality of the data fed into the systems and on timely and facilitated access to the information extracted from that data.

In that regard, the first IXIM Working Party meeting agreed that a critical success factor for the implementation of interoperability is the ability to collect high-quality data and to share information among all relevant actors in a structured and harmonised way. Furthermore, the development, endorsement and implementation of common standards and data categories, in several areas, is another key success factor.

It was also concluded that the efficiency of the new interoperability architecture depends on two major factors:

– the ability of the Member States to feed high-quality data into the relevant EU information systems;
– the ability of the Member States and relevant EU agencies to get access on the ground to the information provided via the new interoperability architecture.

To address these factors, in parallel with the technical implementation efforts, it was agreed that it would be necessary to invest in the development, endorsement and implementation of common standards in the following five areas:

- quality of biometric data;
- quality of alphanumeric data;
- devices for the acquisition of raw biometric data;
- mobile devices and solutions for access to information available through the new interoperability architecture;
- cybersecurity.

Based on the discussions, developing a comprehensive and coherent roadmap seems to be considered the most efficient way of addressing the existing needs in these interlinked areas. The roadmap should incorporate all the relevant actions contributing to guidance on, and implementation and monitoring of, various activities aimed at improving the exchange of relevant information, seeking synergies and avoiding overlaps. In this sense, eu-LISA agreed to coordinate the preparation of the roadmap and, where relevant, lead its implementation. The draft tool should be submitted by the Presidency for discussion and possible endorsement by the IXIM Working Party.

Before starting to draw up the roadmap itself, prior consultation of the Members States and relevant EU agencies concerning the following aspects will be required:

a) development approach: main principles and structure;
b) implementation approach: delivery and reporting.

DEVELOPMENT APPROACH: MAIN PRINCIPLES AND STRUCTURE

According to eu-LISA, the roadmap should be drawn up based on the following main principles:

– complementarity;

– consolidation;

– stakeholder integration and synergies between the relevant actors.

The roadmap would provide for mapping of the progress made so far in the different areas, as well as the ongoing activities. On the basis of such mapping, the roadmap would then elaborate on short-term and mid-term actions needed in order to complement the current efforts and address existing gaps. Hence, its objective would be to consolidate efforts and resources in the above areas and to provide an end-to-end view and follow-up on the actions and activities that need to be carried out in order to achieve an optimal level of standardisation and harmonisation in the areas outlined above. In this regard, eu-LISA proposes the following structure for the roadmap:

– The roadmap would cover three thematic areas, where the different actions would be identified according to the objective to be delivered:

    i. data quality standards and processes for biometric and alphanumeric data;

    ii. whitelisting of devices and solutions for the acquisition of data and access to information;

    iii. cybersecurity.

– Each thematic area would be structured as follows:

    i. *Review of the current situation*

    This section would reflect current processes and ongoing actions in a structured manner and would elaborate on progress made so far in the area in question, as well as on the existence of operational/governance bodies for the coordination of efforts. The analysis would take into account factual quality measurements of existing systems or exchange mechanisms.

ii. *Description of the future status*

This section would define the desired future situation and possible actions to address identified shortcomings and existing gaps in the area in question and the need to consolidate/establish operational/governance bodies to streamline and coordinate efforts.

iii. *Stakeholders*

This section would deal with the relevant stakeholders, reflecting their prominent role in the context of the above-indicated areas, including current and new actors, where relevant, and their potential contribution to developments in the area in question.

iv. *Actions to be implemented*

For each action, the roadmap would outline the following information:

- the objective of the action;
- a description of the action (including estimated means);
- the primary actor(s) responsible for its implementation;
- other relevant actor(s) contributing to its implementation;
- the timeline for implementation;
- the Council body (or bodies) responsible for monitoring progress.

IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH: DELIVERY AND REPORTING

Once the roadmap is finalised and endorsed by the Council, delivery of its actions can start. eu-LISA would be responsible for the overall coordination of the implementation of the roadmap, including regular reporting on progress, e.g. twice per year.

The individual actions would be implemented by the agreed primary actors, supported by the other relevant actors identified.

Outcomes of implementing the roadmap should be taken into account as much as possible in any future development of centralised or decentralised systems and solutions at central and national level.

QUESTIONS

1. Do IXIM delegates agree with the proposed main principles, structure and implementation approach for the roadmap?

2. Do IXIM delegates consider that there are any other relevant elements that might need to be addressed by the roadmap?

3. Do IXIM delegates agree with the proposed implementation approach, including the delivery of regular progress reports?

4. Which EU agencies should be involved in this process?

Delegations are invited to send their replies to the Presidency (dsadaric@mup.hr, imarag@mup.hr, matea.petkovic@mvep.hr) and to the Council Secretariat (ixim@consilium.europa.eu) by **8 May 2020** at the latest.

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