



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 31 March 2022
(OR. en)

7698/22

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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	5069/22
Subject:	Summary of the 40th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group

Delegations will find in Annex a summary of the 40th meeting of eu-LISA's VIS Advisory Group.

Summary of the
40th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group
15 February 2022

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
40th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group of eu-LISA

15 February 2022, videoconference

At the meeting of the **Visa Information System Advisory Group (VIS AG) of eu-LISA, held on 15 February 2022**, the Agency presented the summary of the operational activities and statistics of VIS, gave a status update of the development of the Entry/Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) as well as reported on the 9th meeting of the joint VIS–EES Testing Expert Group. eu-LISA also gave an overview of VIS training activities and provided information on the organisational outlook of the VIS–Interoperability project. The European Commission provided information on the status of Implementing and Delegated Acts of VIS Recast. eu-LISA presented the VIS Release Plan 2022 as well as the state-of-play of the Shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS) and the User Software Kit (USK) projects, and of VIS ICD implementation. Under AOB, the next eu-LISA Management Board meeting on 23-24 March 2022 was announced.

First, eu-LISA presented the **summary of VIS operational activities and statistics** covering the reporting period from 1 November to 31 December 2021. The system kept performing well and in line with the Service Level Agreement. During the reporting period, there was one planned 8-hour service unavailability in November 2021 due to the migration of VIS Oracle to the Common Shared Infrastructure. The migration was successful and improved the global performance of all VIS operations significantly. The **usage of VIS** is in line with the seasonal expectations and the situation caused by COVID-19. The overall usage of VIS is around 10 million operations per month. Asylum-related and law enforcement operations have increased compared to the same reporting period in the pre-COVID era. The top countries where visa applications were lodged have remained broadly the same: Russia, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco and India.

Next, the Chair of the EES-ETIAS AG provided an **update on the implementation of EES and ETIAS** and on the main outcomes of the last meetings of the EES-ETIAS AG, the EES and ETIAS Programme Management Boards (PMBs) and the Management Board. Regarding entry-into-force of EES, a comprehensive plan was under assessment and would be delivered once finalised. The number of **Carriers** registered with eu-LISA has increased since the last Carriers Working Group, however, their engagement is not yet to the expected level. In order to speed up the registration and increase visibility at all levels, actions in addition to the Carriers Working Group and a communication campaign on carriers registration are being taken: a joint letter by eu-LISA and Frontex to the Management Board of both Agencies asking MS to take appropriate measures at national level; organising *ad hoc* technical meetings upon request; and holding regular awareness sessions for both registered and non-registered carriers.

At **ETIAS** level, the activities are ongoing as planned in terms of development and management of requirements. Due to mutual dependency, delays with EES will also affect ETIAS. A growing concern is about the infrastructure, as some hardware supply is delayed.

Thereafter, eu-LISA reported on the **9th meeting of the Testing Expert Group (TEG)** held in joint VIS and EES composition on 27 January with more than 75 participants. The project status of both systems and the state-of-play of the different phases of testing were presented. Plans for a joint EES-VIS Provisional System Acceptance Testing (PSAT) in June/July 2022 were introduced and MS were asked to express their interest in taking part in it via the Management Board secretariat.

eu-LISA also gave an overview of the Agency's **training activities in 2021** and presented the **Training Plan for 2022**. The COVID-19 pandemic consolidated the trend towards e-learning activities. The overall number of training activities in 2021 increased to 34 (while 21 training activities had been organised in 2020). The participation in all training activities increased from 1214 people in 2020 to almost 3900 people in 2021. The overall satisfaction rate was very good (5.6 out of 6). As regards **VIS training**, there were three training courses delivered in 2021, with 687 participants. For planning of trainings, MS needs are collected through the Training Needs Analysis questionnaire every year around summer to gather input to next year's planning. In 2022, three VIS training courses are planned, all in the second quarter.

Next, eu-LISA presented the **organisational outlook of for the VIS-Interoperability project**. It was decided that for the time being the monthly VIS-EES Project Management Forum (PMF) will be extended by one hour to cover VIS-Interoperability (IO)-related matters (VIS-IO PMF). These back-to-back PMF meetings, which follow the existing time schedule of VIS-EES PMF, will have separate mandates and separate membership. Under the same agenda item, eu-LISA and the contractor presented the plans and a mock-up for a VIS-IO-related questionnaire that VIS AG members will be asked to fill in regularly.

The European Commission briefed the participants on the **status of VIS Recast Implementing and Delegated Acts**. Progress with the drafting and approval of the acts is made at a steady pace. The next meeting regarding these acts was going to be held on 8 March 2022.

eu-LISA introduced its **VIS Release Plan 2022**, which would include three releases. It was noted that the timing of the 3rd release, VIS4 (for EES) depends on the go-live of the EES. VIS AG adopted a positive opinion on the plan as presented.

eu-LISA presented the **Shared Biometric Matching Service (sBMS) project, the sBMS User Software Kit (USK) roadmap for 2022** and the **sBMS USK pilots**. The **sBMS project** is in the development and testing phase but work related to transition-into-operation to address the requirements for entry-into-operation has been launched. The design for the integration of ECRIS-TCN and SIS into sBMS has been launched. Updated Data Protection Impact Assessments were submitted to the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) on 4 February 2022. The **roadmap** for different versions **of the sBMS USK** to be released in 2022 and the status of the **current pilots** was presented. A pilot project concerning the capture of fingerprints was launched on 8 February 2022 in 275 workstations worldwide and another one concerning facial quality assessment is scheduled to later in 2022.

The Agency provided an overview of the status of the implementation of the **VIS Interface Control Document (ICD)** and the outcomes of the most recent Project Management Forum meetings.

Last, the AG was reminded of the obligation to fill in the **Conflict of Interest form and the Public Statement of Commitment** by 31 March 2022 at the latest.

The next meeting of the VIS AG will be held on **3 May 2022** as a face-to-face meeting in Tallinn.