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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Summary of the 40th meeting of the Eurodac Advisory Group

Delegations will find attached a summary of the 40th meeting of eu-LISA's Eurodac Advisory Group.

Summary of the
40th meeting of the Eurodac Advisory Group
1 March 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 Eurodac Advisory Group of eu-LISA

1 March 2022, videoconference

At the meeting of the **Eurodac Advisory Group (EAG) of eu-LISA, held on 1 March 2022**, eu-LISA provided a regular overview of Eurodac operations as well as of the implementation of the Eurodac Minimal Upgrade project and the Eurodac Release Plan 2022. The European Commission informed the EAG about the state-of-play of the negotiations of the recast Eurodac regulation. The Agency briefed the participants about the forthcoming Eurodac-Interoperability questionnaire and presented follow-up information about the future migration of the DubliNet community to stronger security certificates. In addition, the Agency updated EAG about the implementation of an EDPS recommendation related to Eurodac, reported on the eu-LISA trainings 2021-2022, and presented plans for the next capacity upgrade of Eurodac.

First, eu-LISA provided an **update on the Eurodac operational status** covering the reporting period from 1 November 2021 to 31 January 2022. By the end of January 2022, storage in the Eurodac database reached 5,836,473 records, *i.e.* 83.38% of the total capacity of 7 million records - almost equal to the pre-Brexit storage level. Since June 2021, the storage has steadily increased, amounting to 30 000 - 40 000 records per month. The effect of COVID-19 on new transactions can no longer be observed. Most peaks of the daily average incoming traffic were noted in November 2021.

Next, the Agency presented the **implementation status of the Eurodac Minimal Upgrade project**. The project aims to upgrade the system to standards needed for running the operations in the coming years. The critical functionalities are planned to enter into operation at the end of 2022 and the other ones in the first quarter of 2023. The project is facing some challenges, such as the need to replace more hardware than initially foreseen in a short timeframe, and budgetary constraints.

The Agency thereafter presented the **Eurodac Release Plan 2022, which** contains a single release this year. It encompasses an upgrade of hardware and software components that are reaching the limit of support, and an upgrade of application software for compatibility. This release does not change functionalities for MS and thus does not require testing with them. Provisional deployment of the release is October 2022 with post-release activities planned to last until January 2023. EAG adopted a positive opinion on the Eurodac Release Plan 2022.

Furthermore, the European Commission provided a status update on the **state-of-play of the negotiations on the recast Eurodac Regulation**. The Slovenian Presidency of the Council tried to de-link the Eurodac regulation from the Asylum and Migration Pact, however, there was opposition from some MS to get the mandate for negotiations with the European Parliament. The French Presidency has declared Eurodac a priority and will be specifying the way forward.

Next, eu-LISA informed EAG about the upcoming **Eurodac-Interoperability questionnaire**. Despite the lack of progress with the adoption of the Eurodac recast regulation, Interoperability-related development activities are ongoing and require preparations of the Eurodac community. The reporting on the preparations will be included as a fixed item in the EAG agendas.

eu-LISA then provided information about the future **migration of the DubliNet community to stronger security certificates**. Following a recommendation from EDPS resulting in the need to implement stronger encryption certificates, eu-LISA conducted a survey to understand the readiness of MS to migrate to stronger encryption. Considering that not all MS are ready to migrate to new encryption keys during the certificates renewal campaign of February 2022, there will be a roadmap according to which MS will have up to one year to update their National System to stronger certificates. eu-LISA and the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA) will collaborate in providing support to MS in this matter.

The Agency also presented an **update on an EDPS recommendation** related to automatic deletion of fingerprints made during the Eurodac audit in 2019. eu-LISA is working closely with EDPS and the Commission to find a solution to address this recommendation. A follow-up meeting with EDPS is scheduled for March to present a solution, which will need the agreement of both EDPS and EAG.

In addition, eu-LISA 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 were organised in 2020). The participation in all training activities increased from 1214 people in 2020 to almost 3900 people in 2021. For Eurodac, three webinars and three new online courses were organised in 2021. Since there is no change in Eurodac functionalities, in 2022 only one training course is planned.

Under AOB, eu-LISA provided information on forecast and simulations for the **next capacity upgrade of Eurodac**. It was noted that there is no good forecast of the future evolution. In normal circumstances, the Eurodac maximum capacity of 7 million records would be reached in 2025, but now it could be a matter of a few months before Eurodac reaches its limits if most Ukrainian refugees start to request asylum. Thus, eu-LISA will perform a capacity upgrade to 9 million records, benefitting from the new solutions provided by the Eurodac Minimal Upgrade project.

Last, EAG members and observers were 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 EAG meeting will take place on **5 May 2022** as a face-to-face meeting in Tallinn.