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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Reporting of Schengen Information System hits on terrorism-related alerts to Europol

DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (01.07.2025)

1. Introduction

The Schengen Information System (SIS) is a key pillar in the exchange of information for countering terrorism and ensuring a high level of security within the area of freedom, security and justice.

By enabling the real-time exchange of alerts on wanted persons and objects, SIS strengthens operational cooperation between national competent authorities, such as police, border guards, security services, customs and immigration authorities. It serves as an indispensable tool for the prevention, detection, investigation, and prosecution of terrorist offences, allowing authorities to identify, track, and apprehend individuals and objects linked to terrorism swiftly and effectively across Member States and at our external borders.

The vital role of SIS in information sharing for counter-terrorism purposes has been underlined in the Council Conclusions of 2022 and 2024, which also invite reflection on the potential for further sharing of SIS post-hit information¹.

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- the new SIS Regulations² introduced an obligation to report terrorism-related hits to Europol. This obligation is applicable from 8 March 2021.

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2. Procedure

The new SIS Regulations introduced an obligation for Member States to report terrorism-related hits to Europol.

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By facilitating the identification of cross-border links, enhancing information-sharing, and providing analytical support, Europol strengthens Member States' ability to identify connections, support investigations, and take appropriate operational measures, in particular in terrorism related investigations.

¹ Council Conclusions: 'Protecting Europeans from Terrorism: Actions Taken and Next Steps' (9 June 2022) and Council conclusions on future priorities for strengthening the joint counterterrorism efforts of the European Union and its Member States – Council conclusions (12 December 2024).

² Article 17(2) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1860 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the use of the Schengen Information System for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals (*OJ L 312, 7.12.2018, p. 1*).
Article 35(8) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1861 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of border checks, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement, and amending and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006 (*OJ L 312, 7.12.2018, p. 14*).
Article 48(8) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1862 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 November 2018 on the establishment, operation and use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, amending and repealing Council Decision 2007/533/JHA, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1986/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Decision 2010/261/EU (*OJ L 312, 7.12.2018, p. 56*).

No information is processed or shared with third countries or international organisations that do not have access to SIS, unless the specific consent of the alert-issuing Member State has been obtained.

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3. The role of Europol

Europol also plays an important role in the fight against terrorism, in compliance with its mandate under Regulation (EU) 2016/794³. Europol provides analyses and threat assessments to support the investigations by competent national authorities.

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Europol fulfils its role in the fight against terrorism also through its use of the Schengen Information System and through the exchange of supplementary information with Member States on SIS alerts.

Authorised staff at Europol have had full access to the SIS since 2020.

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This development aims to support and strengthen Member States' action to prevent and combat terrorism and other serious forms of crime.

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³ Regulation (EU) 2016/794 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2016 on the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) and replacing and repealing Council Decisions 2009/371/JHA, 2009/934/JHA, 2009/935/JHA, 2009/936/JHA and 2009/968/JHA (*OJ L 135, 24.5.2016, p. 53*).

4. **Reporting figures**

Since the obligation to report terrorism-related hits to Europol was introduced in 2021⁴,

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Nonetheless, the experience to date clearly demonstrates the operational added value of Europol's involvement for national authorities. On several occasions the content of hits reported to Europol has resulted in relevant connections found among subjects of alerts related to terrorism, their contacts and suspects of investigations for terrorism and organised crime contributed via SIENA to Europol by Member States and third countries.

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5. **Discussion questions**

1. *Has sharing terrorism-related SIS hits with Europol and Europol's ability to analyse and crossmatch this information helped your authorities in their work (e.g. in investigations, analysis, or cooperation)?*

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⁴ No statistics available for 2021.