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MEETING DOCUMENT

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Visa Working Party
N° Cion doc.:	8568/22
Subject:	European Visa Application Platform (EU VAP) - The inter-linkages between the common EU platform and existing national visa systems

Delegations will find attached the presentation made by eu-LISA at the meeting of the Visa Working Party on 19-20 January 2023 on the above-mentioned subject.

European Visa Application Platform (EU VAP)

The inter-linkages between the common EU platform and existing national visa systems

eu-LISA

Disclaimer:

This presentation is based on the Commission proposal for the digitalisation of visa procedures and ongoing discussions with Member States in the context of the Visa Working Party and Presidency compromise text, as well as the visa platform prototype carried out by eu-LISA.

As the negotiation on the Commission proposal is ongoing, further changes to the legislative text could take place that would affect the functionalities, architecture and technical specification of the EU VAP. In particular, the contents of this presentation should not prejudge the outcome of the negotiation between the Council and the Parliament that will take place after the two institutions have adopted their negotiation mandate.

Agenda

1. EU Visa application platform (EU VAP)

2. High level architecture of the new visa process with the EU VAP

3. Integration Layer and its high-level functionality
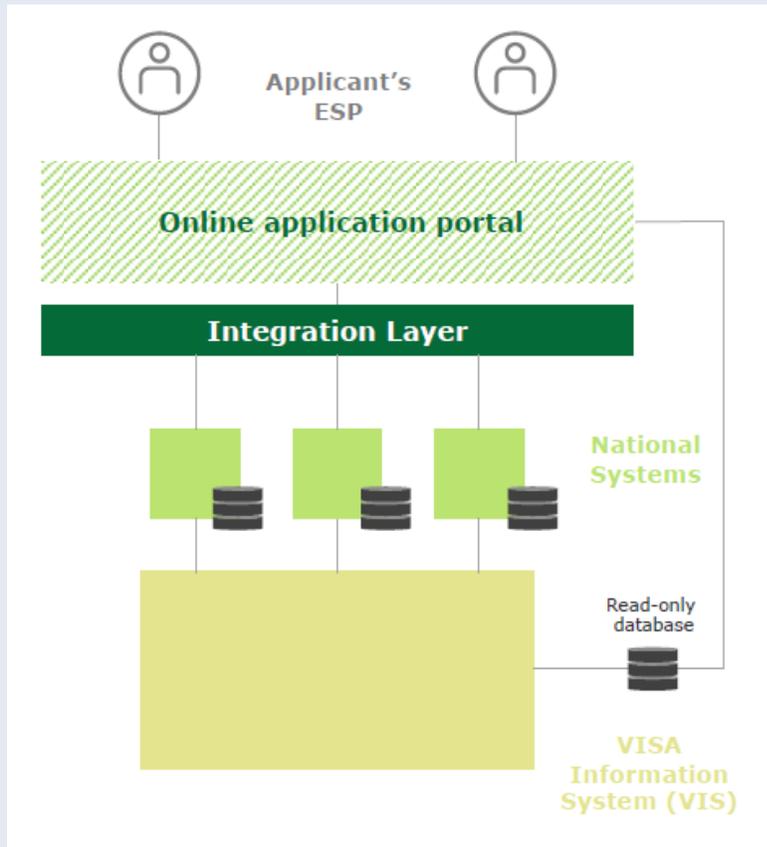
4. Demo of VAP prototype

eU-LISA

The **EU Visa Application Platform,** as proposed*, will be built by eu-LISA, for the facilitation of the short-stay visa application process.

- Online application form and Secure Account service

- Appointment tool and Payment tool

- Chat bot

- Secure account service

- Digital visa verification tool for visa holders and third-parties

- External service provider (ESP) gateway

- Interconnection with VIS and National Visa Systems

- Functionalities:

  - Automated pre-checks for compliance and pre-determining competent MS;

  - Check existence of biometrics in VIS (within 59 months)

As per proposed Regulation COM(2022) 658 final

High level architecture of the new visa process with the EU VAP

Hybrid Solution:
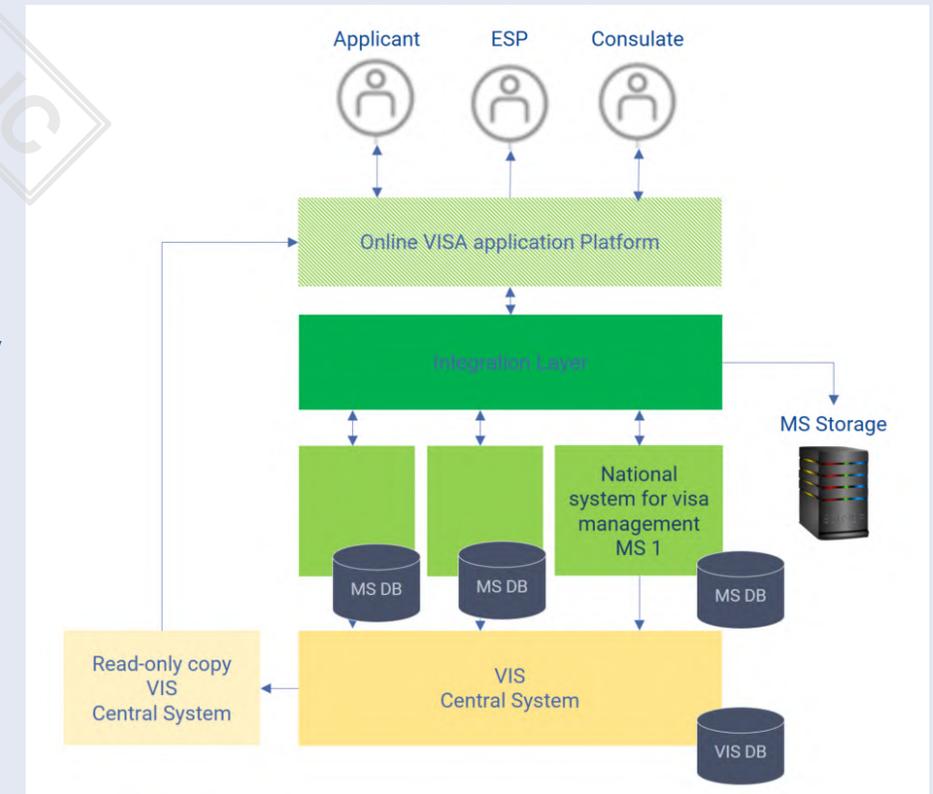Central portal and decentralised storage

- Applications temporarily stored at central level.

- Includes partial applications, saved to be completed later, and applications that are not yet marked as admissible, i.e. they still need to be checked by an authority for quality and completion. Once marked as admissible, the application is sent to the respective Member State and deleted from the temporary storage

- Following the same principles currently applied (storage of entire application files at national level)

(1) Feasibility study on digitalisation of visa procedures (2019)

High level architecture of the new visa process with the EU VAP

With the new **EU VAP, the "usual" workflow will be:**

(1) Creation of online application by the applicant*

(2) Consulates and ESPs interact with the EU VAP platform via a standard web browser

(3) Once the application has been deemed admissible following automatic checks by the platform and the Consulate has confirmed they were competent, the data is pushed by the EU VAP to the MS storage and the National System has to import it in its own database using a dedicated interface exposed by the integration layer

(4) After the application has been successfully received by the National System, it informs the EU VAP by using a dedicated operation of the integration layer

(5) Application is deleted from the EU VAP temporary storage

(6) The National System registers the visa application into the VIS *as it is already done today*

(7) The decision and issuance process stays as-it-is

(8) The applicant uses the EU VAP to check the status of an requested and granted visa by querying the VIS read-only copy
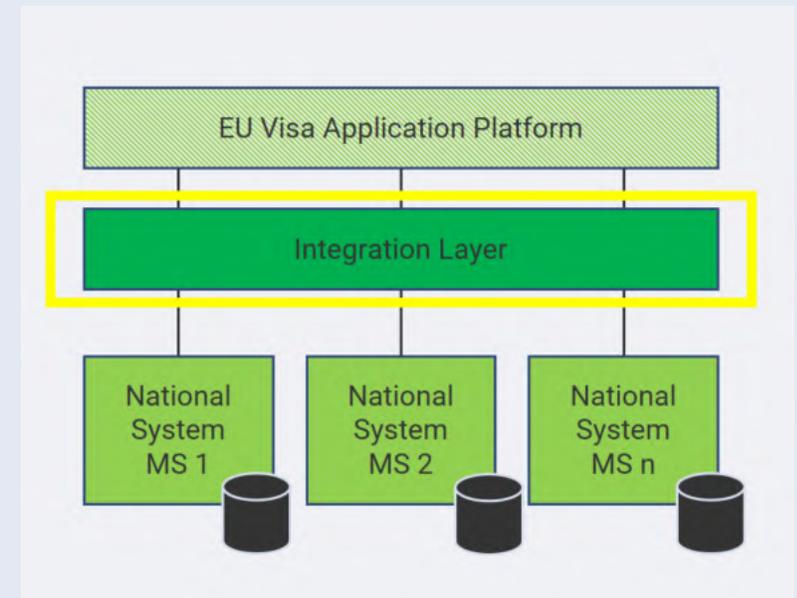

Note: it is assumed that the applicant is data controller when the application is in the VAP

Integration Layer and its high-level functionality

The integration layer: manages the interaction between the EU Visa Application Platform and National Systems. It is developed and maintained on central side.

- The purpose of the integration layer is to introduce the required abstraction level in order to strictly provide all the required functionalities to MS using state of the art technologies. Consequently the required adaptations on national side are kept as minor as possible.

- The complexity of the workflow will be handled by the core of the integration layer under central responsibility and MS will only have to deal with connecting to the limited set of functions offered by the integration layer.

- During the design phase all MS will be involved to express their expectations and needs, the integration layer will be tailored accordingly.

- Main processes managed by the integration layer are the following:

  - Import of the visa application into the national system
  - Acknowledgement of the successful storage into the national system of the visa application
  - Import of supporting documents from the national storage into the national system for decision purposes

→After online visa has been stored in the national system <u>the process stays as it currently is.</u>

→Any update of the EU VAP regarding the decision process will be <u>fully handled by VIS</u>.

Benefits of European online VISA Application Solution

For the Applicant

Providing a harmonised digital and seamless visa procedure

- One unique platform for all EU short-stay visa applications

- A user-friendly personalised visa information and navigation

- A personal space in a secure environment

- A simple, fully digital and harmonised visa application management experience

- Easy access to digital visas or refusals

For the Member States

Providing an efficient application management & collaboration with external stakeholders

- Secure and effortless resource/consul management for Central Authorities

- Improved data quality and smooth application processing

- Seamless integration with VIS and existing national systems

- One common platform for all Member States

- Standardised flow of applications between ESPs and consulates or Central Authorities

- Dynamic and flexible configuration possibilities in order to cope with all MS constraints and rules

- The flexibility of the integration layer allows MS to keep their existing national processes and visuals

- Interaction with the portal based on web browser by any workstation connected to Internet

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Thank you !

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the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

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