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9265/16

SIRIS 87
COMIX 385

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	Working Party for Schengen Matters (SIS/SIRENE) - Mixed Committee (EU-Iceland/Norway/Switzerland/Liechtenstein)
On:	20 May 2016
Subject:	Summary of discussions

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda as set out in CM 2553/1/16 REV 1 was adopted, with no new items added under AOB.

2. Report by the Presidency

The Presidency reported on the relevant issues addressed at different meetings, including:

- The COSI/SCIFA meeting of 10 May 2016 and COSI meetings on 17 May 2016, where the Presidency discussed the draft Roadmap to enhance information exchange and information management including interoperability solutions in the Justice and Home Affairs area, with a view to submitting it to the Council on 10 June 2016.
- The Frontiers Working Party on 11-12 May 2016, where the Presidency reported to the Working Party on the progress and latest developments and steps taken in relation to the proposal on the European Border Guard.

- The Working Party for Schengen Matters (Schengen Evaluation) held on 3 May 2016, at which the proposal for a Council Recommendation addressing the deficiencies identified in the 2015 evaluation of the application by the Netherlands of the Schengen acquis in the field of the Schengen Information System was presented.
- Communication on a stronger and smarter information system for border and security of 6 April 2016: the presentation focused on the terms of the Communication, which sets out options on how existing and future information systems could enhance both external border management and internal security in the EU.

The Presidency also provided the Working Party with practical information about the meeting of Heads of SIRENE that would take place in the Hague on 16-17 June 2016.

3. SISNET

- The WP took note of the presentation by the General Secretariat of the Council (GSC) of the 2015 SISNET accounts, on the basis of 7543/16. The GSC reported that the accounts had been drawn up in accordance with the SISNET Financial Regulation and that a positive budget outturn had been reached, resulting mainly from amounts reserved for eu-LISA services in 2013 and 2014 and not invoiced.

The GSC also informed the WP that, in accordance with the SISNET Financial Regulation, the 2015 SISNET accounts would be sent to the Court of Auditors.

- On the basis of 8773/16, the GSC presented to the Working Party Amending budget No 1 for the 2016 SISNET budget (VISION). The GSC informed the WP that no budget would be presented for 2016 and that this would therefore be the last budgetary document on the functioning of SISNET and VISION.

The document was endorsed by the Working Party and would be forwarded to COREPER and the Council for adoption by the Member States.

- On the basis of 8298/16, the GSC presented information regarding the termination of the WAN/SCH+ Agreement. The Working Party endorsed the approach presented by the GSC and authorised the Member States to dispose of or re-use the VISION-related devices of their national SAPs.

4. Roadmap to enhance information exchange and information management in the Justice and Home Affairs area; follow-up of the SIS/SIRENE and Terrorism Working Party cooperation on countering Foreign Terrorist Fighters

The Presidency initiative, set out in 8437/16, is aimed at establishing actions to improve information management and cross-border exchange of information, including interoperability of systems. The purpose is to support operational investigations, especially in counter-terrorism, and to swiftly provide front-line practitioners such as police officers, border guards, public prosecutors, immigration officers and others with comprehensive, topical and high quality information to cooperate and act effectively.

The Working Party welcomed the Presidency initiative and had an exchange of views on the basis of the actions indicated.

CZ took the floor to thank the Presidency for its initiative, particularly the focus given to the end users, the role of SIRENE, the use of the SIS at the border and the importance of better use of the existing systems. However, no reference had been made to resources and the increased workload for SIRENE, an issue that should be emphasised in all situations.

The Commission took the floor to thank the Presidency for the comprehensive list of actions presented. The Commission also questioned the Working Party about the possibility of having mandatory information regarding the type of offence in the alerts, which in practice would mean that this information would be available to all users of the system. The exchange of views that followed was not conclusive; however, all agreed that alerts should carry more and clearer information.

The Presidency concluded by requesting the Working Party to coordinate internally with the respective representatives in COSI in order to make further contributions, where necessary, for the completion of the Roadmap.

5. Enhancing the Schengen Information System (SIS) - Information from the European Commission

The Commission took the floor to present 6720/16 containing the report from the Commission, adopted in February 2016, on the availability and readiness of technology to identify a person on the basis of fingerprints. The Commission concluded in its report that AFIS technology had reached sufficient levels of readiness and availability in order to be integrated in SIS; however, data quality requirements would be fundamental to allow this new functionality of the system. Implementation would be a two-step process, and until 2017 AFIS would be available in the SIS with minimal requirements.

RO welcomed Commission's statements and pointed out that the projects for the implementation of this functionality at national level entailed costs.

In reply, Commission informed the WP that financing was available to Member States through the Internal Security Fund - Police.

The Commission also informed the WP of the state of play regarding the evaluation of SIS II. The final evaluation report had been presented to the SIS/VIS Committee at its meeting of 10 May 2016. A more concise version of the evaluation report with all the major findings was being prepared and should be sent to the Council and the European Parliament by October 2016.

One of the conclusions of the evaluation was that increasing use was being made of the SIS (3 billion queries to the system in 2015) and that the weak point of the system was the implementation by the Member States.

The SIS was identified as the best tool for controlling and monitoring immigration and secondary movements within Schengen and in the future the scope of the SIS would be extended to include the return decisions issued in accordance with the Return Directive and categorisation of refusal of entry alerts (currently a national competence).

CZ took the floor to point out that the extension of the scope of the SIS would lead to an increased workload for the SIRENE Bureaux.

Commission indicated that the SIS had been selected for this purpose due to its greater availability and coverage in the field.

6. Strengthening SIS and SIRENE Cooperation on Missing Persons

On the basis of 9017/16, the Presidency gave an overview of the work carried out in the framework of the Presidency initiative on Strengthening SIS and SIRENE Cooperation on Missing Persons.

The discussions and contributions of the Member States had provided greater clarity on the need to strengthen cooperation in solving missing persons cases and in particular on the way forward in strengthening the SIS and SIRENE cooperation. This contribution also demonstrated that Member States supported the setting up of a European platform for missing persons. However, further discussion was needed in order to establish the criteria for setting up such a platform.

This issue would be included in the agenda of the Heads of SIRENE meeting, on 16-17 June 2016, for further debate.

Several Member States pointed out that, although the creation of this platform and harmonisation of procedures for missing persons cases was a welcome development, it was still necessary to improve the harmonisation of procedures and increase cooperation at judicial level.

7. SIRENE Core Tasks

The Working Party had a exchange of views regarding this issue. Delegations agreed that the workload of the SIRENE Bureaux was increasing and that this situation would continue in the future.

Several delegations (AT, DE, CZ) considered that the solution could be to focus on developing SIRENE's actual core tasks, i.e. the exchange of information. Other delegations (LU, RO) focused on the need to identify the main issues hindering the work carried out by the SIRENE Bureaux and, at the same time, improve the quality of the information exchanged. IT also pointed out that awareness of this issue should be raised at political level.

8. Political escalation procedure in case of calamities with the SIS

The Presidency presented 8581/16, a revised version of the political escalation procedure in case of calamities with the SIS, building upon an initiative first presented under the Luxemburg Presidency. The Working Party agreed that the procedure should be set up as indicated in 8581/16 and the Presidency concluded by informing the meeting that the document would be sent to COREPER for adoption.

9. Coordination mechanism for implementation of EU and UN sanctions: state of play and further involvement of SIS/SIRENE

The GSC took the floor to provide updated information concerning the latest developments in establishing a coordination mechanism for the implementation of EU and UN sanctions and general information concerning the procedure leading to the sanctions. The Working Party took note of the information.

10. Slovak Presidency presentation

SK presented the SIS/SIRENE Presidency team for the second half of 2016, as well as the programme and the calendar.

11. AOB

- The GSC took the floor to inform the Working Party that a revision of the Guide for exercising the right of access in the SIS, from the SIS II Supervision Coordination Group, had been issued and was set out in 7898/16.

12. Confirmation by the Working Party for Schengen Matters (SIS/SIRENE) of the decisions prepared in the Mixed Committee

The following documents were adopted by the Working Party:

Agenda item	Document adopted
3	8773/16 SIRIS 77 VISA 138 COMIX 351
3	8298/16 SIRIS 73 VISA 118 COMIX 314
8	8581/16 SIRIS 74 IPCR 4 COMIX 333
