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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
No. prev. doc.:	13977/1/17 REV 1
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on the development of the SIRENE Bureaux in the framework of the Schengen Information System

1. On 3 July 2017, the Working Party for Schengen Matters (SIS/SIRENE) held a discussion on the SIRENE tasks and the capability building of the SIRENE Bureaux (see 10690/17).
2. On the basis of these discussions, the Member States answered a questionnaire (see 11594/17) on this subject. The outcome of the questionnaire (see 13545/1/17 REV 1) was analysed by the Working Party at its meeting on 25 October 2017. In this context, the Working Party agreed to submit draft Council conclusions on this matter to the Council.
3. The draft Council conclusions were discussed by the delegations during the meeting of the Heads of SIRENE in Tallinn on 9 and 10 November 2017 and by the JHA Counsellors on 29 November 2017. During this latter meeting, it was agreed that if no objections were received by the Presidency until 1 December 2017, the draft Council conclusions would be forwarded to Coreper.
4. COREPER is therefore invited to agree to the draft Council conclusions, as set out in the Annex, and to submit them to the Council for adoption.

**DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SIRENE BUREAUX
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SCHENGEN INFORMATION SYSTEM**

The Council,

Recognising that the Schengen Information System (SIS) and SIRENE Bureaux co-operation are the most successful tools for effective cooperation between, police, customs, immigration and judicial authorities in the EU and the Schengen associated countries and that they play a crucial role in facilitating the free movement of people within the Schengen area and in safeguarding the security of Europe, including combatting terrorism,

Taking note that in 2016 the SIS was accessed four billion times by the Member States' competent authorities, that it contains more than 70 million alerts and that more than five hundred and fifty persons or objects are found via the SIS and SIRENE Bureaux co-operation each day throughout the Schengen area,

Recalling the Council Conclusions of 6 April 2009¹, which, *inter alia*, called for the use of the Schengen Information System to be further enhanced and appealed to the Member States to take appropriate and prompt measures to cope with this development and to ensure the rapidity and high quality of cooperation between SIRENE Bureaux,

Taking note of the statistical analysis that shows that the total number of alerts in SIS has practically tripled in eight years and that the number of hits processed by the SIRENE Bureaux has substantially risen, especially since SIS II entered into operation in 2013 and new functionalities to fight terrorism were introduced in 2015,

¹ See 8107/09 (http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-09-83_en.htm?locale=en)

Recognising that the SIS' legal bases that are currently under discussion and other new initiatives – particularly the EES and ETIAS, but also interoperability as a whole – may only be successfully adopted if the exchange of supplementary information, which is to be provided by SIRENE Bureaux, is fluent,

Acknowledging that in the near future a rapid increase in the number of alerts and hits is expected, and hence the subsequent SIRENE workload should be taken into account and relevant measures taken,

Taking note of the outcome of research on SIRENE capability-building, which shows that despite the increased workload, there has been a marked decrease in SIRENE staff levels, while other measures are not being provided in an optimal manner,

Recognising that the Member States could nonetheless further optimise the operational contribution of SIS, even though the growth in the workload of the SIRENE Bureaux related to the increase in the number of alerts and hits in SIS and also to other tasks (EAW, etc.) has not been covered by a corresponding increase in numbers of staff and automation of workflow, and that this situation has a substantial negative impact on SIRENE's operational ability and should be dealt with expeditiously,

- (1) *Welcomes* the considerable contribution of the Schengen Information System, including SIRENE cooperation, in protecting the area without internal border checks, especially in the context of the current challenges of migration and terrorism within the Schengen area;
- (2) *Welcomes* the statistics on alerts and hits in the Schengen Information System provided by the Member States and eu-LISA and *urges* the Member States to establish a unified annual assessment of the SIRENE capacity-building, with a view to ensuring a fluent and continuous support to end-users, on a 24/7 basis. It *tasks* the Working Party for Schengen Matters (SIS/SIRENE) with following up this effort, which would be focused in particular on a balanced workload and available resources, bearing in mind automation processes and accessibility of supplementary information at national level;

- (3) *Calls on* the Member States to take steps to further examine internal possibilities for setting caps on information flows and to find optimal solutions expeditiously;
- (4) *Notes* the significant growth in the workload at SIRENE Bureaux and *appeals* to the Member States to take appropriate and prompt measures:
- to cope with the abovementioned developments, especially in the area of interoperability;
 - to ensure the rapidity and high quality of cooperation between SIRENE Bureaux;
 - to improve the cooperation, at national level, between the SIRENE Bureaux and the competent authorities in Member States;
 - to grant appropriate human resources and pertinent workflow systems to the SIRENE Bureaux.
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