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NOTE

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To: Delegations

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Subject: Summary of the 37th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group

Delegations will find in Annex a summary of the 37th meeting of eu-LISA's VIS Advisory Group.



PUBLIC

Summary of the 37th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group 4 May 2021

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
37th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group of eu-LISA
4 May 2021, videoconference

At the meeting of the **Visa Information System Advisory Group (VIS AG) of eu-LISA, held on 4 May 2021**, the Agency presented a summary of the operational activities of VIS, gave a status update of the development of the Entry/Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), presented the report of the second VIS Testing Expert Group's meeting held in March 2021 and provided an overview of the VIS Security and Business Continuity Plans. Furthermore, eu-LISA informed the participants about the status of the VIS-EES Interoperability project, gave an update and live demo of the e-VISA project, presented the outcome of the VIS Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020 and the status of the User Software Kit (USK). The European Commission updated the AG about the developments related to the adoption of revised VIS Regulation.

First, eu-LISA presented the **report of the Testing Expert Group's (TEG) meeting** held in VIS and EES composition in March 2021. At this meeting the Agency had presented the project status of both systems and demonstrated the basic functionalities of the test tools. It was noted that the compliance test environments were available as of end of March 2021. The next TEG meeting is scheduled to 25 May 2021.

The Chairperson of the EES-ETIAS AG gave a **status update on the implementation of EES and ETIAS**. It was noted that all activities to reach the Entry into Operation (EiO) of EES by May 2022 are advancing at full speed. The pre-Compliance Testing for Member States has started at EES level in March 2021 and will continue until the summer. Formal Compliance Testing is scheduled to start in September 2021, expected to be completed in four different slots by the end of 2021. Provisional System Acceptance Testing (PSAT) is scheduled to run from January to February 2022, followed by the transition in March and April 2022, encompassing the rehearsals for the operational activities of the go-live. The Chairperson reminded about the importance of reporting on the EES preparation issues in timely and accurate manner, to enable eu-LISA and the European Commission to offer support for resolving any issues. The preparations for ETIAS EiO by the end of 2022 are also well on track, with the planning and implementation deadlines being further specified. To address the ETIAS related preparations at the carriers' level, the cooperation with carrier associations will be intensified by increasing the frequency of the Carrier Working Group meetings.

Next, eu-LISA presented the **highlights of VIS operational activities and statistics** in the reporting period from January to March 2021. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is still clearly visible - the overall usage of VIS in the reporting period was at about 17,5% of the expected throughput. The system is performing well, and two technical maintenances were carried out in February. The smooth increase of all metrics in the reporting period follows seasonal expectations. The top countries where visa applications were lodged from were Ukraine, Russia, Turkey, the Philippines and Belarus. In parallel, the amount of visas issued at the borders is also increasing.

The Agency introduced the state of play of the **VIS Security and Business Continuity Plans**. The previous plans date back to 2015 and had to be renewed. The new versions of the plans will differ greatly from the existing ones, shifting from strategic approach to operational, procedural and technical nature. Recommendations from the inspection of European Data Protection Supervisor and the VIS Security Exercise of 2017 are taken into account. The plans are aligned with the new ETIAS Implementing Act on model Security and Business Continuity plans, used for all systems. The new plans will be adopted by the Management Board at its meeting of June 2021.

In addition, eu-LISA presented **the status of the VIS-EES Interoperability project** as discussed during the two Project Management Forums (PMF) held since the last VIS AG meeting. Phase 2 of the project progresses well, with activities in five work streams practically being completed. The national project status is green for the majority of the Member States and Europol, orange for nine Member States and red for one Member State.

The European Commission provided an overview on the **state of play of the revised VIS Regulation**, recalling that political agreement was reached in December 2020 and endorsed by COREPER and the European Parliament's LIBE Committee in January 2021. The text is expected to be formally adopted before the summer break. The Commission confirmed that the implementation deadline of the revised Regulation is the end of 2023, and proposed to inform the VIS AG about the progress of the formal adoption in writing.

Thereafter, eu-LISA presented the **state of play of the e-VISA portal**, highlighting the project timetable, risks and changes. The project is fully on track, being in the final stage of developing the prototype. The first round of testing sessions with Member States was completed successfully and the second round will start at the end of May. The presentation was followed by a demonstration of the current version of the prototype from an end-user perspective.

VIS AG was informed about the **Customer Satisfaction Survey 2020**, highlighting that 25 out of 26 Member States using VIS expressed a very high satisfaction rate (97%), which is the highest since the inception of the survey. The areas that need improvement will receive special attention. An action plan was defined, the implementation of corrective measures has started and will continue throughout the year.

Finally, eu-LISA provided an update of the **User Software Kit (USK)** project and associated activities. The VIS AG members were encouraged to take part of the USK pilot project for VIS.

The next VIS AG meeting will take place on **14 October 2021**.
