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NOTE

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Subject:	Summary of the 38th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group

Delegations will find in Annex a summary of the 38th meeting of eu-LISA's VIS Advisory Group.

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Summary of the 38th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group 14 October 2021

European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA)

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR THE OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF LARGE-SCALE IT SYSTEMS IN THE AREA OF FREEDOM, SECURITY AND JUSTICE

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Summary of the

38th meeting of the VIS Advisory Group of eu-LISA

14 October 2021, videoconference

At the meeting of the **Visa Information System Advisory Group (VIS AG) of eu-LISA, held on 14 October 2021,** the Agency presented a summary of the operational activities and statistics of VIS, gave a status update of the development of the Entry-Exit System (EES) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) as well as reported on the 7th meeting of the Testing Expert Group (TEG) and the 8th meeting of the Biometrics Working Group. eu-LISA also informed the participants about the project status of the VIS ICD implementation and the outcome of the Project Management Forum (PMF) meetings, the state of play of the Interoperability, the sBMS (Shared Biometric Matching Service) and the User Software Kit (USK) projects, and presented the outcome of the e-VISA prototype. In addition, eu-LISA introduced the new Demand Management process, Communication Infrastructure Strategy and its Security and Business Continuity Plans, gave an update on the draft Single Programming Document 2023–2025 and the Contact List Validation Campaign. The European Commission updated the AG about the developments related to the state of play of the revised VIS Regulation and the declaration of readiness regarding the VIS-EES Interoperability project.

To start with, eu-LISA presented the **summary of VIS operational activities and statistics** in the reporting period from 1 April to 31 August 2021. The system kept performing well. The overall usage of VIS in this period was in line with the seasonal expectations and the situation caused by COVID-19, being at about 30% of the expected throughput. The top countries where the visa applications were lodged from were Russia, Ukraine, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Morocco. In parallel, the amount of visas issued at the borders was also increasing.

Next, eu-LISA reported on the **7th Testing Expert Group's (TEG) meeting** held in VIS and EES composition on 16 September 2021. The project status of both systems and the state of play of the different phases of testing were presented. The next TEG meeting will be held on 4 November 2021.

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Further to that an update on the **implementation of EES and ETIAS** was provided by the Chairperson of the EES-ETIAS AG. It was acknowledged that there is a risk for the Entry into Operation (EiO) of EES and ETIAS to be postponed, without affecting the deadline of implementation of the new interoperability architecture by the end of 2023. The AG also took note of the Management Board's (MB) request to take all measures to continue testing and to advance preparations at national and central level. The MB will review the situation during its regular meeting in November.

In addition, the AG was informed about the **status of the VIS ICD implementation and the outcome of the Project Management Forum (PMF) meetings** held since the previous VIS AG meeting in May 2021. The status was green for one-third and yellow/orange for two-thirds of the Member States.

The European Commission provided an overview on the **state of play of the revised VIS Regulation,** introducing the relevant Implementing and Delegated Acts. eu-LISA and the Commission are in close cooperation regarding the planning of the activities at central and national level, in order to meet the implementation deadline of the revised Regulation.

In addition, the Commission updated MS about the **declaration of readiness regarding the VIS-EES Interoperability project**, informing the AG that a Standard Form is being prepared for MS to be able to report on their readiness for the VIS-EES project (timeline to be announced in the coming weeks).

eu-LISA presented the overall **status of the Interoperability project**, addressing the revised VIS and the migration of VIS to the Common Shared Infrastructure (CSI). Information was also provided on the VIS-ETIAS interoperability and the Interoperability components (ESP, CIR, MID, CRRS).

Besides, eu-LISA introduced the **outcome of the e-VISA prototype,** the online visa application platform. The development of the prototype was finalised in June, followed by testing in MS. The high participation and involvement of MS contributed to the creation of an unprecedented EU digital application prototype. The outcome of the pilot project will serve the Commission to prepare a legal proposal for visa digitalisation.

Thereafter, eu-LISA presented the **state of play of the sBMS (Shared Biometric Matching Service) and the User Software Kit (USK) projects.** sBMS remains in the Development and Testing phase, configuration of equipment and infrastructure is ongoing. Final sBMS USK configuration for all the MS and the sBMS is scheduled for spring 2022.

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The VIS AG took note of the **report of the 8th meeting of the Biometrics Working Group**, held on 28 September with over 100 participants from the MS, the Commission, Europol, Frontex and eu-LISA.

Furthermore, eu-LISA introduced the new **Demand Management process**, which will replace the Change Management process. The four key elements of the new process concern the communication channel (the Management Board Secretariat), the role of the AG in the process, the Demand Management form and the fact that Service Manager 9 will no longer be used for logging demand requests. MS opinion will be requested via written procedure prior to the Agency's MB meeting in November.

The VIS AG took note of the **Communication Infrastructure Strategy – Merging the SIS and VIS Domains,** where the design phase is planned for 2022 and the migration for 2023. The VIS AG members were requested to give their opinion on one of the three presented scenarios for merging the domains.

Besides, the Agency's Security Officer introduced the status of the **Communication Infrastructure Security and Business Continuity Plans**. The MB will be invited to adopt the draft after the review by the Security Officers Network (SON) and the SIS II and VIS AGs' positive opinion in December 2021.

In addition, eu-LISA presented the annual priorities for 2023, using a new approach of the activities being structured around portfolios and programmes. The Agency is currently considering the proposals received from the Advisory Groups and consulting the European Commission on the **draft Single Programming Document 2023–2025**. The AGs will be provided with the updated document by mid-October for comments.

Finally, the Agency launched a periodical **Contact List Validation Campaign**, starting in November 2021, in order to validate the contact list of the Service Desk related to VIS.

The next meeting of the VIS AG will take place on **2 December 2021**.

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