
Security Union: political agreement on strengthened Schengen Information System

- New ‘alerts’ on terrorist threats and children at risk
- ‘Return’ decisions on people illegally staying to be better enforced
- More automatic and efficient information-sharing between member states

New measures to step up the EU fight against terrorism, cross-border crime and irregular migration got a first green light from EP and Council negotiators.

Parliament and Council negotiators adopted three regulations to update the Schengen Information System (SIS): in the field of police cooperation and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, in the field of border checks and for the return of illegally staying non-EU nationals.

Main points of the agreement:

Alerts

- a member state is obliged to share the details of a terrorist act with all other member states;
- the obligation to create alerts on terrorism will be immediately applicable;
- exchange of further information (so-called “Supplementary information”) will be immediate when related to children and terrorism;

- new preventive alerts on children at risk of gender-based violence, such as female genital mutilation, forced marriages or parental abduction and alerts on foreign fighters and those who have been radicalised;
- a new alert for so-called 'unknown wanted persons', to identify suspects of serious crimes and terrorism.

Data

- increased use of biometrics, including on fingerprints, palm prints, facial images and DNA with all national law-enforcement authorities;

Access to data

- stronger rules on Data Protection, including more means and supervision of Data Protection Authorities;
- Europol will have further access to SIS, including when terrorists are found;
- the European Border and Coast Guard will have greater access to statistics to produce risk analysis.

Information-sharing on the return of irregular migrants

To help enforce decisions by a member state on returning an illegally staying non-EU national to his or her country of origin, negotiators also approved:

- an obligation for member states to enter all return decisions issued into the SIS;
- a new alert system will inform national bodies whether the period for 'leaving voluntarily', during which the person is asked to leave the EU, has expired;
- a requirement for national authorities to inform the member state that launched the alert that a non-EU national has left the EU.

Currently, there is no system in place to automatically provide information on return decisions, which are now shared on a voluntary basis.

Quotes

Rapporteur Carlos Coelho (EPP, PT): “SIS is the spine of information exchange in Europe. The improvements voted on by the Parliament and agreed today with Council prepare the System for the future, improve security and ensure freedom of movement. SIS will remain the biggest, most used, best-implemented database in the area of freedom, security and justice, while delivering more security to our citizens now”.

Rapporteur Jeroen Lenaers (EPP, NL): “Member States at the moment don’t exchange information on whether a third country national has received a return decision or not. Due to this lack of information exchange, a third country national with the obligation to return can easily avoid this obligation, by going to another Member State. Return policies should be more efficient, otherwise it will be very difficult to maintain support for receiving those asylum seekers that are in need of our help”.

Next steps

The agreed text now needs to be formally approved by the Civil Liberties Committee, Parliament as a whole and the Council before entering into force.

Background

The Schengen Information System (SIS) is a centralised, large-scale information system that supports border controls at the external Schengen borders and law enforcement and judicial cooperation in 30 countries throughout Europe. The Schengen Information System was set up in 1995 to contribute to maintaining internal security and fighting cross border crime and irregular migration, following the abolition of internal border controls.

SIS II was established in 2006 and became operational in 2013. In December 2016, the European Commission proposed a legislative package to reform SIS II.

Procedure: Co-decision (Ordinary Legislative Procedure)

Further information

[Border control: strengthening security in the EU \(press release after the Committee vote\)](#)

[Civil liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee](#)

[EPRS: Revision of the Schengen Information System for law enforcement](#)

[EPRS: Use of the Schengen Information System for the return of illegally staying third-country nationals](#)


[EPRS: Revision of the Schengen Information System for border checks](#)


[European Commission's press release:](#)

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