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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

**PROGRESS REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECOND GENERATION
SCHENGEN INFORMATION SYSTEM (SIS II)**

July 2011 - December 2011

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1. INTRODUCTION

This progress report describes the work carried out in the second semester of 2011, concerning the development of the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) and preparations for migration from SIS 1+ to SIS II. It is presented to the Council and the European Parliament in accordance with Article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1104/2008 of 24 October 2008¹ and of Council Decision 2008/839/JHA of 24 October 2008² on migration from the Schengen Information System (SIS 1+) to the SIS II.

2. PROJECT STATUS

2.1. Overview of progress during the period under review

The end of 2010 and the first half of 2011 witnessed considerable activity at both Central SIS II and Member State levels with the implementation of the final technical specifications that govern the interaction of the central system and the national systems. This was a pre-requisite for finalising the technical development of the project. The second semester of 2011 saw steady progress on the intensive testing of the coherence between the central and the national systems.

As in any other IT project of similar nature, such intensive testing identified a number of issues both at central and national levels. The sources of the issues related to three key areas:

(i) at national level, several Member States experienced issues or delays during the performance of their Compliance Tests Extended (CTE). In order to accommodate additional testing time or late starts in carrying out CTE, the schedule for these tests had to be extended;

(ii) at central level, the performance of the Central System Qualification Tests (CSQT) without Member States took longer than initially planned. The impact on the Global Schedule was however absorbed shortly after;

(iii) the unavailability of sufficient resources for the SIS II project at the French Data Centre in Strasbourg (C.SIS) triggered lengthy discussions on the timely preparation and validation of the SIS 1+ test tools which had been described in the Council Conclusions of 4 June 2009, in relation to the performance of the second Milestone Test. This matter caused concern as it could result in either a delay in the overall schedule that could not be mitigated or the need for renouncing the SIS 1+ tools.

In order to address these issues, the Commission worked together with experts from the Member States within both the Global Programme Management Board (GPMB) and SIS-VIS Committee to identify the mitigation solution that would allow, inter alia, the project

¹ Council Regulation (EC) No 1104/2008 of 24 October 2008 on migration from the Schengen Information System (SIS 1+) to the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) (OJ L 299, 8.11.2008, p. 1).

² Council Decision 2008/839/JHA of 24 October 2008 on migration from the Schengen Information System (SIS 1+) to the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) (OJ L 299, 8.11.2008, p. 43).

stakeholders to maintain the go-live date in the first quarter of 2013. A wide majority of Member States supported this mitigation solution.

2.2. Technical framework for finalising the project

Tests

By this reporting period, the SIS II project reached a stage where a series of thorough testing campaigns could be carried out to prove the stability, proper functioning and performance of both the national and central systems. The approach consists of testing the national and central systems' components first separately (during this reporting period), and then together (starting in the following reporting period).

Following the implementation of the necessary technical updates at national level, Member States began verifying the compliance of the national systems with the SIS II specifications during the CTE phase. As the performance of this test phase was slower than envisaged in the Global Schedule, further national testing will be carried out in 2012. Moreover, contractual and technical problems at national level prevented two Member States from starting their tests in 2011. In order to address these delays, the Commission initiated dynamic management of testing slots, by allocating testing environments to Member States as soon as they became available. Whilst, by the end of 2011 the delay in CTE testing was not considered to be on the critical path for project delivery, all Member States must finalise their CTE campaigns by 24 May 2012 so as to allow the Comprehensive Test to start in accordance with the timeframe provided in the Global Schedule.

During the same period, qualification tests (CSQT without MS) were scheduled to take place at central level. This test campaign was due by the end of September but was re-scheduled and finished by 14 December 2011. The delay was caused by a problem with the link between the Central Unit (CU) and the Back-up Central Unit (BCU), which was slowing down the synchronisation and exchange of data between the two units and caused deterioration in performance. Technical adaptations were necessary in order to overcome this difficulty. The adaptations guaranteed that the BCU contained the same data as the CU, in case of a failure in the CU. The nature of these adaptations did not change any of the system's technical requirements, including those related to availability, resilience and performance of the system and did not have any impact on national systems.

The subsequent phase consists of carrying out further central system qualification tests with the participation of a number of Member States (CSQT with Member States), this being planned to commence on 16 January 2012 and to run throughout the first quarter of 2012. All eight participating Member States made good progress in their compliance tests (a prerequisite to enter the subsequent testing phase) to the degree that there were no concerns regarding the possibility of starting the CSQT with Member States on time.

The impact of the delays at both Member States and central levels, as described above, was already absorbed within the project schedule. The Commission, together with the Presidency and the GPMB, identified ways to mitigate, absorb or compensate for these delays so as to ensure that the go-live date for SIS II would remain unchanged.

2.3. Preparations for the second Milestone Test

Substantial preparatory activity for the second Milestone Test took place in several work-streams. In particular, the target date for the reference document detailing the relevant test cases was set for early 2012. With regard to the validation of test results, and pursuant to the June 2009 Council Conclusions, in May 2011, the relevant Council Working Party mandated the SIS 1+ contractors and the French authorities to undertake the necessary work towards ensuring the validation and availability of the C.SIS measurement tools for the test.

In the course of September 2011, France (C.SIS) and the SIS 1+ contractors announced in the Working Party that they would not be able to validate or operate the tools for the second Milestone Test within the scope and timeline set out in the Global Schedule. The Presidency and the Commission organised several technical meetings with C.SIS and SIS 1+ contractors to work out concrete solutions and the matter was further discussed at Council Working Party level.

Faced with the unavailability of the SIS 1+ tools, Commission and Member States' experts analysed all possible solutions. A vast majority converged towards the option based on the use of the available SIS II tools (i.e. the two testing tools that were developed for the SIS II project by the Commission's main development contractor and quality assurance contractor). It should be stressed that these SIS II tools were also explicitly mentioned in the June 2009 Council Conclusions, alongside the SIS 1+ tools, and were already used during the successful first Milestone Test. Moreover, this solution also foresaw that upcoming testing phases and activities would be rearranged so as to allow the completion of national testing by May 2012 and the start of the second Milestone Test in April 2012.

This was the solution that would best preserve the shared objectives of the project: undertaking credible testing campaigns, maintaining the go-live date in the first quarter of 2013 and avoiding a negative impact on SIS 1+ by easing the pressure on resources within C.SIS. It received the support of a large majority of delegations in the SIS-VIS Committee of 7 November 2011.

However, taking into consideration the concerns that continued to be expressed by some Member States, at the JHA Council on 13 December 2011, the Commission aimed to reinforce the common interest in a credible second Milestone Test by inviting any Member State still having doubts on the specifications and reliability of the SIS II tools to participate in their validation.

Notwithstanding this, the test tools developed by France for SIS 1+ can be retained for later testing if they become available.

2.4. Preparations for the Comprehensive Test

The migration legal instruments describe the Comprehensive Test³ as confirming, in particular, the completion by the Commission and the Member States participating in SIS 1+ of the necessary technical arrangements to process SIS II data and the demonstration that the level of performance of SIS II is at least equivalent to that achieved with SIS 1+.

³ Common Article 8 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1104/2008 and of Council Decision 2008/839/JHA.

Accordingly, the reporting period saw considerable discussion on the matter and marked the beginning of the preparation of the plan for the Comprehensive Test. This will be thoroughly reviewed and refined in the first semester of 2012, with a view to the Comprehensive Test taking place in the second semester of 2012, prior to the activities dedicated to migration.

2.5. Preparations for migration

Testing the converter

In order to successfully perform the migration from SIS 1+ to SIS II an interim migration architecture will be put in place. This will include a converter designed to convert data in two directions between the current C.SIS and central SIS II and keep both systems synchronised for the period of time required for Member States to move from one system to the other⁴.

Such a key component of the migration architecture requires significant testing. In order for this to take place a SIS 1+ test environment was required. Given C.SIS inability to provide such an environment, as initially foreseen, a new environment had to be purchased by the Commission and a number of tests had to be completed and validated.

With regards to the converter itself, it passed Factory Acceptance Tests in October 2011. After this acceptance, the converter was deployed to Strasbourg and tested against SIS II (System Solution Testing – SIS II) in anticipation of further testing with SIS 1+. Additionally the Commission installed and tested the necessary SIS 1+ communication components in the converter itself, a required step prior to linking the converter to SIS 1+. Preparations were made to connect the converter to the test environment for the start of 2012.

In the first half of 2012, the converter will be tested against SIS 1+ (Qualification Tests), with a view to testing the converter against both systems at the same time in the summer of 2012. This work is the precursor to carrying out rehearsals with the Member States. Following rehearsals, the next step will be live data migration from SIS 1 to SIS II early in 2013.

Planning the migration

On 23 February 2011, the SIS-VIS Committee delivered a favourable opinion on three important documents paving the way for the migration activities, namely the SIS II Migration Plan, Test Strategy and Test Plan.

Of these, the Migration Plan is designed to meet the technical needs of Member States by reflecting their favoured technical approach. This approach was not fully in line with the migration legal instruments. The Commission intends to propose, in early 2012, an amendment to the legal framework, with a view to aligning the legal provisions with this technical approach.

There is still a heavy responsibility on the Member States to ensure that attention is given to the issue of data quality. Indeed, only data meeting the data quality rules of SIS 1+ can be migrated to SIS II. Data which are not compliant with SIS 1+ data quality rules must be "cleansed" prior to the switchover to SIS II as they cannot be transferred in a non-compliant

⁴ Common Article 10 (3) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1104/2008 of 24.10.2008 and of Council Decision 2008/839/JHA of 24.10.2008.

format. The Polish Presidency made data cleansing a priority for the second half of 2011. A dedicated meeting demonstrated the approaches that several Member States had taken to this important activity.

The Commission is working closely with the Member States in writing the Migration Manual, a document setting out in detail the steps which had been outlined in the Migration Plan. The Manual will define roles and responsibilities throughout the process and describe the detailed schedule for the migration of real SIS data. This task, which commenced in December 2011, must be finalised by the end of 2012.

At Working Party meetings, Member States raised the issue of SIRENE migration. This is the change from the Member States' existing SIS 1+ SIRENE Bureaux systems to their new SIS II SIRENE systems. The migration legal instruments provide that the Member States participating in SIS 1+ shall conduct a test on supplementary information (functional SIRENE tests)⁵. The Commission supported Member States in their preparations to review the technical specifications of data exchange between the SIRENE Bureaux, an activity to take place in the first half of 2012.

2.6. SIS II network

The SIS II project includes the provision of a wide area communications network, meeting the requirements of availability, security, geographical coverage and level of service, to enable the central and national systems to communicate.

For operational purposes Member States have both main and back-up interfaces with the network. During the reporting period, a number of Member States' back-up interfaces were reactivated in order to prepare for tests involving switching between main and back-up sites. This reactivation process is to continue into 2012.

The SIS II basic legal instruments describe the communication infrastructure dedicated to SIS II data and the exchange of data between SIRENE Bureaux⁶. Following the Member States confirmation of the technical specifications of the SIS II SIRENE mail relay, the Commission finalised the procurement procedures. The mail relay will be installed in the first half of 2012, in anticipation of the Member States' test on supplementary information.

2.7. Operational management

Following joint statements of the Council and the European Parliament when adopting the SIS II and VIS legal instruments, in June 2009 the Commission proposed to set up an Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice. The Regulation establishing the Agency was adopted on 25 October 2011⁷.

⁵ Common Article 9 (1) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1104/2008 and of Council Decision 2008/839/JHA.

⁶ Common Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1987/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on the establishment, operation and use of the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) (OJ L 381, 28.12.2006, p. 4) and of Council Decision 2007/533/JHA of 12 June 2007 on the establishment, operation and use of the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) (OJ L 205, 7.8.2007, p. 63).

⁷ Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 establishing a European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (OJ L 286, 1.11.2011, p.1)

The Agency will take up its responsibilities as regards the operational management of VIS and EURODAC on 1 December 2012, whilst, with regard to the operational management of SIS II, it will do so once this system is brought into operation. In future, the Agency could also be entrusted with other large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice if so provided by the relevant legislative instruments.

2.8. Security

The study on additional network security for SIS II was presented to the SIS-VIS Committee in the previous reporting period. A technical solution, complying with all requirements, was identified and a pilot project subsequently commenced. The necessary equipment was purchased and a first phase was run between October and December 2011 in a controlled environment. All technical options for the deployment of a solution were validated. The next step of the pilot project will be to perform a further test, for which the participation of three volunteer Member States will be needed. Germany and Austria have already put themselves forward to participate and a further volunteer is sought. The goal is success during the security audit of the system, due to take place in the summer of 2012.

3. MANAGEMENT

3.1. Financial aspects

SIS II budget

By the end of the reporting period, the total budgetary commitments made by the Commission on the SIS II project since 2002, amounted to EUR 148 283 233. The corresponding contracts include feasibility studies, the development of the Central SIS II itself, support and quality assurance, the SIS II network, preparation for operational management in Strasbourg, security, biometrics preparations, communication and experts' mission expenses.

Of this amount, EUR 95 414 354 had actually been paid between 2002 and the end of December 2011. The main expenditure items were development (EUR 52 336 641), the network (EUR 24 983 117), support and quality assurance (EUR 9 492 497) and preparation for operational management in Strasbourg and Sankt Johann im Pongau (EUR 7 077 303).

Budget execution				
	From 2002 to December 2011		From July to December 2011	
<i>(EUR)</i>	Commitments	Payments	Commitments	Payments
Development (HP/Stéria)	80 593 047	51 072 141	134 184	16 204 913
Development (Atos)	3 535 041	1 264 500	3 535 041	1 264 500
Support & quality assurance	13 092 269	9 492 497	2 129 015	900 319

Network	38 526 008	24 983 117	6 150 053	3 462 496
Operational management preparation	8 965 894	7 077 303	1 290 179	841 246
Security	1 358 310	217 712	4 027	0
Studies / Consultancy	961 131	942 261	0	0
Information Campaign	33 373	33 373	0	0
Experts Mission Expenses	1 203 286	316 577	0	79 711
Others	14 874	14 874	0	0
TOTAL:	148 283 233	95 414 354	13 242 499	22 753 185

Additional financing for Member States' national development

The October 2010 Council urged the Commission to make the necessary arrangements to make the European External Borders Fund (EBF) available to the Member States to support the completion of national system developments.

Accordingly, a significant reallocation of resources towards SIS II national projects was undertaken within the framework of the 2011 programming for the EBF. In most cases, it was possible to accommodate the extra financial needs related to SIS II in the annual programmes for 2011. However, this was not possible for eight Member States either because of the limited size of their EBF allocations and/or by the need to cover other pressing, and equally strategic, priorities in their annual programmes. It was therefore decided to meet these needs from the Community Actions part of the EBF.

By the end of 2011, all grant agreements had been signed by the Commission and the Member States concerned and an advance payment of 75% of each grant had been made to the respective Member State.

3.2. Project management

3.2.1. Global Programme Management Board (GPMB)

The amendments to the migration legal instruments adopted on 3 June 2010 formalised the GPMB as an advisory body for assistance to the central SIS II project to facilitate consistency between central and national SIS II projects⁸. The GPMB has neither decision-making power nor any mandate to represent the Commission or Member States.

⁸ Council Regulation (EU) No 541/2010 of 3 June 2010 amending Regulation (EC) No 1104/2008 on migration from the Schengen Information System (SIS 1+) to the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) (OJ L 155, 22.6.2010, p. 19) and Council Regulation (EU) No 542/2010 of 3 June 2010 amending Decision 2008/839/JHA on migration from the Schengen Information System

The GPMB met 20 times during the period covered by this report.

3.2.2. SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II)

The Commission is assisted in the development of SIS II by the SIS-VIS Committee. There were five meetings of the SIS-VIS Committee on SIS II technical matters in the period July – December 2011. Several key approvals were achieved on migration and testing.

In addition to regular SIS-VIS Committee meetings, working groups of the Committee and workshops, involving Member States' experts, are organised to discuss detailed technical issues. These meetings generally focus on issues arising from specific project deliverables:

- The Test Advisory Group (TAG), provides the SIS-VIS Committee with an opinion on issues related to the organisation, implementation and interpretation of tests. This group held 23 meetings in the reporting period.
- The Change Management Board (CMB), provides advice on classification, qualification and the potential impact of correction of reported issues. Due to the amount of effort expended on agreeing the updated technical specifications of the central system in 2010-11 and the subsequent stabilisation of requirements, this working group, which also reports to the SIS-VIS Committee, was not formally convened during the reporting period; neither were any SIS II Migration Workshops/meetings held during this period.

3.2.3. National planning and coordination

A working group composed of the Member States' national project managers (NPM) is organised to advise the Commission project team. The purpose of the NPM meetings is to deal with detailed planning issues, risks and activities both at the central and national project levels. During this reporting period four NPM meetings took place.

3.2.4. Council

Overall a positive and cooperative atmosphere characterised the meetings in the Council. Given the very technical nature of the project, the Commission paid particular attention to transparency, for example through the provision of a detailed letter to the Presidency in November 2011. On subjects where Member States sought additional clarification, the Commission held bilateral meetings in order to ensure that a common base of understanding is achieved. This is also pursued through the Council's SIS II Task Force, of which the Commission is a member, which provides an overview of preparations at Member State level to the Council. Additionally, the Member States recognised the need to review a key technical document on data exchange between SIRENE Bureaux and to establish a structure to plan and manage the SIRENE functional tests. Ad hoc groups were established accordingly, with the Commission being invited to both.

As expressed in Council Conclusions and in line with the wishes of all parties in the project to maintain complete transparency, the Commission keeps the Council informed, regularly, on the implementation of the Global Schedule for SIS II and expenditure on the central project.

(SIS 1+) to the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) (OJ L 155, 22.6.2010, p. 23) introducing an Article 17a into the migration legal instruments.

The Commission takes part in the meetings of the preparatory bodies of the Council responsible for the Schengen Information System and of each Council of Ministers session where SIS II is included on the agenda. The Commission has presented reports on the state of play of the SIS II project and the next steps envisaged.

The Commission circulates a weekly flash report, summarising technical developments, to colleagues engaged in the project at national level.

3.2.5. European Parliament

At the end of 2011, the European Parliament decided to put into the reserve part of the appropriations for the SIS II project in the EU General Budget. The Commission keeps the European Parliament informed on the state of play of SIS II. In addition to fulfilling the reporting obligations provided by the SIS II legal instruments⁹, the Commission provided the European Parliament with further information on financial, contractual and scheduling matters and the status of the project in the context of the discussions on the release of SIS II appropriations for 2011 from the reserve. Finally, the Commission responded to seven parliamentary questions on SIS related matters.

4. PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

During the next reporting period, January to end-June 2012, there will be seven principal areas of activity:

- the finalisation of CTE testing at national level;
- the finalisation of CSQT with Member States;
- the preparation for and the carrying out of the Provisional System Acceptance Tests (PSAT);
- the preparation for and the carrying out of the second Milestone Test;
- the preparation for the Comprehensive Test;
- the pilot project on security and preparation for the subsequent test and audit;
- the installation of the SIS II SIRENE mail relay in anticipation of the Member States' test on supplementary information.

5. CONCLUSIONS

As is to be expected during a period of intensive testing, issues were found which had to be resolved in relation to both the central and national systems. However, through a cooperative and pragmatic working style, these issues were addressed and solved and the SIS II project remains on track. These actions provided the foundations for a series of critical tests to be

⁹ Common Article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1104/2008 and of Council Decision 2008/839/JHA.

carried out throughout 2012, namely the PSAT, the second Milestone Test and the Comprehensive Test.

At national level, Member States will, during the first semester of 2012, continue to ensure that they can make use of the installation of the new SIRENE mail relay for the test on the exchange of supplementary information between Member States.

The Commission and Member States will continue to work together to ensure that SIS II complies with the requirements of the security audit, due in the summer of 2012.

Finally, on the basis of tests on the converter which have already been carried out, preparation for migration between SIS 1+ and SIS II will continue.

Annex I

SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II) and Working Group Meetings

Meetings held during the reporting period

JULY 2011	
12, 19, 25	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
18	SIS II Migration Workshop
26	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
26	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting)
11	SIS II Test Strategy Workshop
4, 18, 25	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)

AUGUST 2011	
2, 9, 22	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
23	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
23	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting)
1, 15, 22	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)

SEPTEMBER 2011	
2, 9, 16, 22, 30	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
23	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting)
23	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
29	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)
22	SIS II Workshop on Compliance Test (Extended) TDDs
24	SIS II Migration Workshop

OCTOBER 2011	
6, 13, 27	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
5, 12, 19, 26	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)

NOVEMBER 2011	
10, 18, 24	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
25	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting)
25	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
17	SIS II Migration meeting
12, 17, 24, 31	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)

DECEMBER 2011	
1, 8, 15, 28	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
23	SIS II CTE Workshop
29	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting)
29	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
7, 14, 21	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)

SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II) and Working Group Meetings

b) Meetings provisionally scheduled during the forthcoming reporting period

JANUARY 2012	
6, 12, 19, 27	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
20	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting)
20	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
5, 12, 19, 26	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)
14	SIS II M2 Test Preparation Meeting

FEBRUARY 2012	
10, 23	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
2, 9, 16, 23,	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)

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MARCH 2012	
7 , 14 , 21 , 28	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
21	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting))
21	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
6 , 13 , 20 , 27	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)

APRIL 2012	
5 , 19 , 26	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
24	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting))
24	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
4 , 11 , 18 , 25	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)

MAY 2012	
9 , 16 , 23 ,	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
23	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting))
23	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
8 , 15 , 22 , 29	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)

JUNE 2012	
7 , 14 , 21	SIS II Global Programme Management Board
21	SIS-VIS Committee (SIS II Technical Formation Meeting))
21	SIS II National Project Managers' Meeting
6 , 13 , 20	SIS II TAG meeting (Test Advisory Group)