Resolution on progress of Schengen Information System II and Visa Information System

2009/2721(RSP) - 22/10/2009 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 507 votes to 88 with 19 abstentions a resolution on progress of Schengen Information System II and Visa Information System.

The text adopted in plenary had been tabled as a joint resolution by the EPP, S&D, ALDE and ECR groups.

Parliament notes that in 2001 the Commission was given a mandate to develop the second-generation Schengen Information System (SIS), which should have come into force in March 2007. It recalls that numerous problems and delays have meant that the new system has still not come into operation, the current forecast being that SIS II will not be able to come into operation until the last quarter of 2011.

As regards the VIS: the VIS is also being delayed, given that the date of deployment at the end of 2009 will not be met and that the start of operations might be delayed beyond September 2010 owing to certain problems in setting up the central VIS by the Commission and with regard to preparations at national level in the Member States.

SIS II: a priority: Members stress the fact that the establishment of SIS II still remains a priority for Parliament and that it should be operational as soon as possible, introducing several improvements and new functionalities, as provided in the legal basis, in order to reinforce the security of European citizens and guarantee efficient border controls at external borders, while ensuring the completion and coherence of the Schengen acquis. Noting that the VIS is also being delayed, given that the date of deployment at the end of 2009 will not be met and that the start of operations might be delayed beyond September 2010, Parliament expresses deep concern at the delays in the start of operations of both the SIS II and the VIS systems, and asks to be informed by the Commission and the Council of the results of the technical milestone 1 test, due to take place on 22 December 2009, immediately after its completion and to be informed without delay as to the future steps to be taken.

Parliament calls for full transparency as regards the implementation process, and the financial aspects, and asks to be informed, as co-legislator, whether the so-called milestone 1 and 2 tests (the latter to take place in the summer of 2010) are still within the scope of the present SIS II development contract or whether they will have to be treated as additional requirements, and what extra costs are envisaged in that case. Parliament also wants to know the following:

- if any penalties have been imposed on the contractor for the delays and technical errors that led to the failure of the earlier tests and, if so, what they amounted to;
- what extra costs were involved in those delays and technical errors in terms of the need to carry out the new tests and the extended timetable for the deployment of SIS II;
- a reasoned explanation from Commission and Council of the grounds on which they continue to have confidence in the current contractor and in its ability to take the VIS and SIS II systems forward successfully and without further delays;
- whether any cancellation of the contract will automatically lead, in the case of the SIS II project, to the back-up or contingency solution being implemented, and to outline the possible effects on the VIS project.

The resolution calls for concerted and coordinated efforts from the Commission and Member States to avoid the scenario that happened in connection with the development of the SIS II being repeated in relation to the VIS.

Parliament's involvement: Member stress that the Council and the Commission must involve Parliament in any decision related to the development of SIS II and VIS, in particular if the results of the tests are not satisfactory, thus leading to a change of direction regarding both the SIS II and the VIS projects, which might include cancelling the present contract with the company responsible for them. Parliament's competent committee is instructed to monitor this issue closely and to prepare a follow-up resolution for plenary as soon as new developments warrant it, and at the latest after the completion of the milestone 1 test.

Lastly, Parliament emphasises that it must be kept constantly informed of the state of play as regards the deployment of SIS II and VIS.