

Schengen: migration from the Schengen Information System (SIS 1+) to the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II). Regulation

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In accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1104/2008 and Council Decision 2008/839/JHA, the Commission presents a progress report describing the work carried out in the second semester of 2011, i.e. July 2011 to December 2011, concerning the development of the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) and preparations for migration from SIS 1+ to SIS II.

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:

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

Testing: the report describes in detail the problems relating to maintaining the schedule for testing regarding: (i) compliance of the national systems with the SIS II specifications during the CTE phase; (ii) qualification tests (CSQT without Member States). The impact of the delays at both Member States and central levels 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.

All 8 participating Member States made good progress for testing in CSQT with Member States to the degree that there were no concerns regarding the possibility of starting the CSQT with Member States on time.

The report also describes preparations for the second Milestone Tests, preparations for the Comprehensive Test, and preparation for migration from SIS 1+ to SIS II. It notes that on the basis of tests on the converter that have already been carried out, preparation for migration between SIS 1+ and SIS II will continue.

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).

Member States supported this mitigation solution.

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.

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.

The Commission states that 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 carried out throughout 2012, namely the Provisional System Acceptance Tests (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.