The second generation Schengen information System SIS II

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Carlos COELHO (EPP-ED, P) on the second-generation Schengen Information System (SIS II). In its introductory remarks, it pointed out that the Schengen Information System (SIS) was originally created as a compensatory measure to allow for the free movement of persons but that over the years it had come to be used for police information purposes in a broad sense. However, no clear legal framework about the principles governing police cooperation had yet been laid down, nor had a clear border protection policy been established. MEPs also noted that the SIS was the largest database in Europe and that all proposed changes to it would have data protection implications. They added that the development of SIS II was now estimated to cost far more than originally planned but that financing for this was not decided on by codecision. The committee made a series of recommendations to the Council on SIS II: - a public debate should be encouraged about the nature of the SIS and the political objectives to be achieved; - a new SIS should be developed in a more transparent and democratic manner which should avoid, for example, forwarding legislative proposals to Parliament only after a political agreement had been reached in Council; - a detailed study should be undertaken into the feasibility of merging existing or future databases (SIS, Europol, Eurodac, the proposed Visa Information System (VIS), etc.) in order to optimise resources and avoid overlapping; - any extension of the SIS should be accompanied by the highest standards of data protection and particular attention should be paid to the human rights implications and dangers inherent in the inclusion of biometric data; - the Joint Supevisory Authority (JSA) should be closely involved in the development of SIS II and should be given more funding and staff for this purpose; - citizens should be better informed about the SIS, including their right to access and rectify their individual data, and they should be given a right of appeal at European level to the Ombudsman and/or the Data Protection Supervisor; - the legislative proposal for the development of the Visa Information System (VIS) should provide for codecision to ensure that Parliament is fully involved; - Parliament should be kept regularly informed about the VIS and the development of SIS II.