The second generation Schengen information System SIS II

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This is a first progress report concerning the development of SIS II. It aims at providing a description of work carried out by the Commission's services during 2002 and to outline the next steps: 1) The report discusses the technical strategic requirements for SIS II, on which the SIS II Committee voted a favourable opinion. The main requirements are: - the system must have an ability to be scaled or extended; - it must also have the ability to implement changes easily; - a more homogenous system, especially concerning national interfaces, will have a positive impact on testing, data quality and data integrity /security; - reliability, including concepts such as availability, security and performance; 2) A number of national constraints need to be addressed: - if there is a period of unavailability of data due to the migration from SIS to SIS II, this should be as short as possible; - financial investments must be carefully evaluated. The solution proposed should not imply unrealistic costs, but Member States should be ready to make the necessary investments on the national side. On the basis of the outcome of the feasibility study, the Commission will carry out a sound evaluation of the financial needs at EC level. The exact boundaries of responsibility between the national and EC budgets still need to be decided. Financial costs will also vary depending on the choice of architecture and on the type of national interface to be delivered; - certain data cannot be used by states implementing part only of the acquis. One of the major constraints of the project is the necessity of reconciling different national views respecting the technical architecture for SIS II. Most Member States favour a solution taking into account the latest technological developments and are willing to plan modifications at national level for allowing the building up of a flexible information system which is easy to change. Some Member States are more reluctant to accept such fundamental national modifications, notable given their financial constraints, and may prefer to keep their present systems (currently named N.SIS) with minor modifications at the expense of other strategic requirements. The selection of the technical architecture for SIS II will have to receive the favourable opinion of the SIS II Committee in early 2003. To allow for this, the national constraints have been taken into account all along the first steps of the study through informal consultations, committee meetings and seminars. Member States must remain committed to this project, which is crucial in view of enlargement and better control over external borders. The political commitment should now be translated into the readiness to undergo inevitable necessary national modifications. At the Council and European Parliament level, clear political and financial support is needed, so that further integration of new users and functions, especially in the light of 11/09/01, would not require implementation timeframes that are too long.