

WHAT IS EURODAC?

Eurodac is the centralised European database that stores and processes the digitalised fingerprints of asylum seekers and irregular migrants who have entered a European country. This helps determine the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application.

Eurodac is a large-scale IT system that helps with the management of European asylum applications since 2003. It is used by 32 countries: 28 EU Member States and 4 Associated Countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein).

Eurodac stands for EUROpean Asylum DACtyloscopy database.

HOW DOES EURODAC WORK?

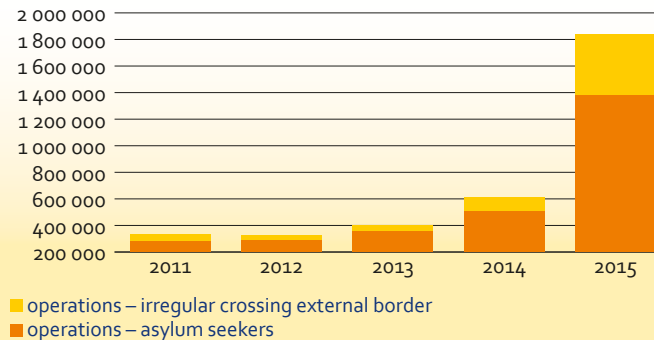
When a person applies for asylum in an EU Member States or Associated Country, their fingerprints are stored in Eurodac. The system helps compare new asylum applications against those already in the database and against data of people apprehended irregularly crossing an external border. This information is one of the criteria that helps determine the country responsible for taking care of the asylum applicant.

THE ADDED VALUE OF EURODAC

Eurodac provides the following benefits:

- support for processing applications of asylum seekers requesting protection in Europe;
- detection of multiple asylum applications by an individual. This reduces 'asylum shopping' (when an individual applies for asylum in more than one country);
- IT support to law enforcement authorities in preventing, detecting and investigating terrorist and other serious offences.

USAGE OF THE SYSTEM IN THE LAST 5 YEARS



Operations refer to action taken in the database (update/entry/search/deletion, etc.)

Source: Eurodac annual reports (eu-LISA, 2014 and 2015)

WHO CAN ACCESS EURODAC?

National asylum authorities use Eurodac in order to store new fingerprints and compare existing records on asylum seekers. Since July 2015, law enforcement authorities and Europol (the European Police Office) can access the system – under very strict conditions – in order to prevent, detect and investigate terrorist and other serious criminal offences.

WHAT INFORMATION IS STORED AND WHAT FOR?

Eurodac holds data on asylum applicants and irregular immigrants, including their gender, fingerprints, date and place of asylum application or of their apprehension. The data is anonymous; no names are registered and comparisons are carried out only based on fingerprints.

Eurodac processes, stores and/or compares the fingerprints of third-country nationals or stateless people who are at least 14 years old and:

- have applied for asylum in one of the countries using Eurodac;
- have been apprehended in connection with an irregular crossing of an EU external border; or
- have been found to be illegally present in a country using Eurodac.

When applying for asylum, the data is stored for 10 years and compared against the data already in the system. Future searches will compare this data with asylum requests and data on people who have been found to be illegally present.

For people illegally present in the EU, fingerprints will not be stored but only compared against asylum applications already in the system.

Only in specific cases can law enforcement authorities search fingerprints stored in the system related to asylum seekers and irregular crossings. Such searches can only be made when linked to prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist and other serious offences. In cases when the individual was granted international protection, this search possibility is limited to a period of three years.

HOW IS PERSONAL DATA PROTECTED?

Eurodac holds sensitive data on asylum seekers and irregular migrants. Therefore, data protection rules are an absolute priority. Countries sending data to Eurodac ensure that it is lawfully processed, transmitted, stored or deleted. Data rights are key to data protection: individuals are allowed to exercise their rights of access to, correction of and erasure of their data, within the legally established limits.

Both national data protection authorities and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) oversee the protection of personal data.

eu-LISA: CONTRIBUTING TO FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

eu-LISA is the European Agency that ensures 24/7 operational management of Eurodac and its communication infrastructure. eu-LISA is responsible for the constant maintenance as well as the evolution of the system, while strictly following relevant security and data protection regulations. The Agency provides training to national authorities on how to use Eurodac, produces statistics and reports, and monitors relevant strands of research.

As well as Eurodac, the Agency manages two other large IT systems:

- the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) – the largest IT system for public security and law enforcement cooperation in Europe, and
- the Visa Information System (VIS) – a system that allows Schengen countries to share visa-related information of third-country nationals who visit or travel in the Schengen Area.

With IT eu-LISA safeguards the EU's internal security and supports the implementation of asylum, migration and border management policies. These actions help ensure that European citizens and non-EU citizens have the freedom to live, work and travel safely throughout the Schengen Area.

In 2015 eu-LISA carried out, in cooperation with Member States, the Smart Borders Pilot project to assess new technologies on EU borders and provide decision-makers with information on the feasibility of using biometric identifiers at the Schengen Area's external borders. This has placed eu-LISA among the institutions tasked to contribute to building a stronger and smarter data management architecture for EU border checks and security. eu-LISA is focused on increasing the interoperability of the existing systems and contributing to the development of new IT systems in cooperation with Member States.

The headquarters of eu-LISA are in Tallinn (Estonia), the operational management is carried out in Strasbourg (France) and a backup site is located in Sankt Johann im Pongau (Austria). eu-LISA also has a liaison office in Brussels (Belgium).

EURODAC IN ACTION

Sara (18) and Malika (23) are sisters. Due to the political situation in their home country, they decide to flee to Europe. They are apprehended irregularly crossing into Croatia via its southern border. The authorities identify them and insert their fingerprints into Eurodac as irregular migrants. The two sisters apply for asylum directly in Croatia. At this point, the Croatian authorities insert their fingerprints into Eurodac as asylum applicants. As this happens they are checked against Eurodac data to see whether the sisters have already requested asylum in any other Member State and whether they were stopped while crossing an external border. This helps the Croatian authorities to determine which country is responsible for processing the asylum requests.

FAST FACTS

- **32 European countries** use Eurodac
- **Almost 1.4 million operations** (e.g. fingerprint submission, data modification, etc.) related to asylum seekers were performed in 2015
- **An increase of more than 180 %** of the total amount of operations took place between 2014 and 2015

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Eurodac

eu-LISA: safeguarding
the EU's internal security

