

# VIS – Reports on the technical functioning\*

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*eu-LISA • European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice*

## VIS

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The Visa Information System (VIS) is the EU's large-scale IT system dedicated to the exchange of data on short-stay visas for entering the Schengen area. The main objectives of VIS are to support the implementation of a common EU visa policy as well as the EU's migration and border management policy. VIS helps to prevent "visa shopping", assists in the fight against irregular migration, contributes to the prevention of threats to the internal security of the Member States and provides transparent and faster procedures to bona fide travellers.

VIS started operations on 11 October 2011 and followed a phased rollout in the Member States' consular posts worldwide. The rollout was completed on 20 November 2015 at consular posts and on 29 February 2016 at the Schengen border crossing points.

The EU Member States connected to VIS are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. Associated Countries connected to VIS are Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. The Schengen candidate-countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania) are not yet connected to the VIS system, but preparatory work is on-going. The connection is expected to occur as soon as these Member States join the Schengen area and the relevant legal requirements are in place.

## eu-LISA's role

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As of 1 December 2012, eu-LISA has been the sole authority in charge of the operational management of VIS. This includes monitoring of the system, application of management services, implementation of corrective and evolutionary maintenance, legal reporting obligations and the training of information technology operators.



Two years after VIS entered into operations and every two years thereafter, eu-LISA submits a report on the technical functioning of VIS pursuant to the VIS Regulation, including the security thereof, to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission as per Article 50(3) of VIS Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.

Council Decision 2008/633/JHA determining the conditions under which Member States' designated authorities and Europol may obtain access to VIS entered into force on 1 September 2013. Similar to the VIS Regulation, the VIS Decision requires as per Article 17(3) that two years after VIS entered into operation eu-LISA submit a report to the EU institutions on the technical functioning of VIS including information in particular on the need and use made of Article 4(2) by Member States.

## The Reports at a glance

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The reporting period covered goes from 1 September 2013 to 30 September 2015. Member States contributed to the reporting exercise in particular with quantitative information on the usage of the system. eu-LISA provided information on the technical functioning of the Central VIS as well as on its security

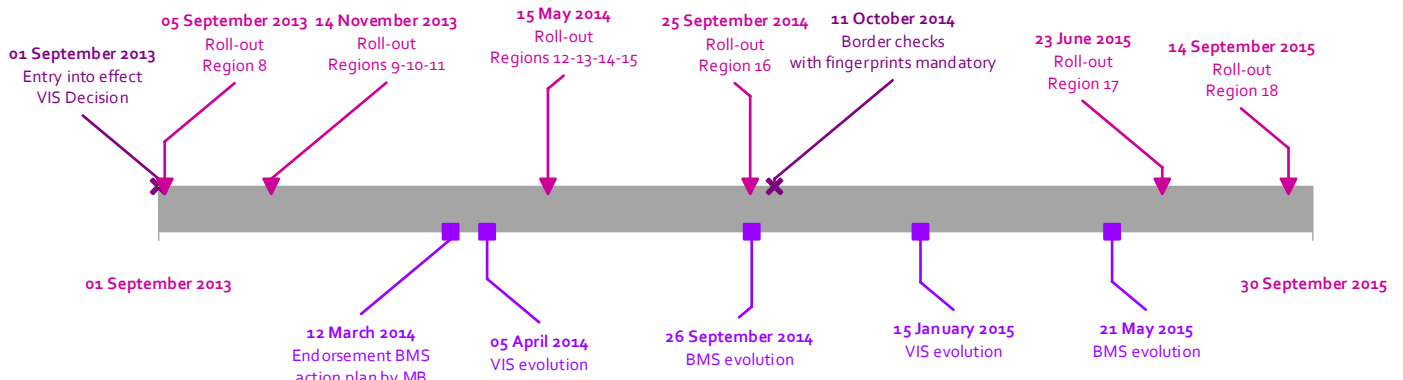
During the period covered in the reporting the Central VIS consistently performed well.

\* This document is provided purely for information purposes, it highlights key points of the accompanying "VIS report pursuant to Article 50(3) of reg (EC) No 767/2008" and "VIS report pursuant to Article 17(3) of Council Decision 2008/633/JHA".

The system met the expectations of Member States and has proven able to effectively support the increased business demands. A number of critical projects, of significant scale, were successfully delivered to further support the Member States in the implementation of the common visa policy and border management.

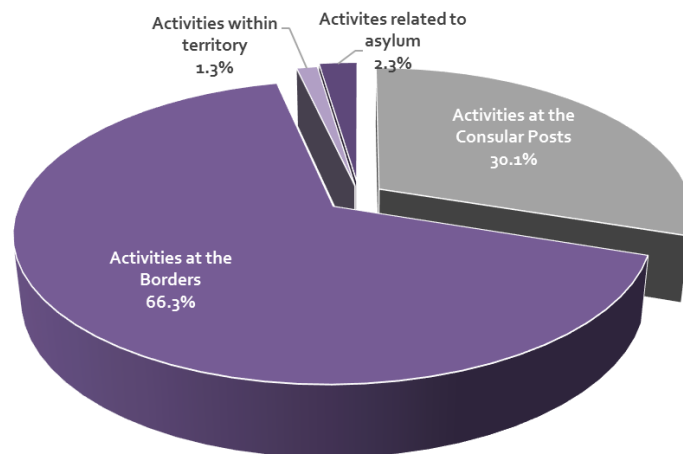
The main highlights of the reporting period are:

- increased transactional processing capacity of VIS, up to 300,000 operations per hour, to meet the increased business demands;
- increased implementing capacity of the Biometric Matching System (BMS) in order to support mandatory fingerprints checks at the external borders as of October 2014;
- coordinated preparatory works for the entry into operation of VIS Mail 2 consultation mechanism and subsequent discontinuation of VISION;
- the launch of a support project for Croatia's integration into VIS.



High level VIS activities during the reporting period

Based on the amount of operations reported by Member States per user group, **over 58 million VIS operations were executed at the borders** and over 26 million were executed at consular posts in the reporting period. Activities related to asylum - as per Articles 21 and 22 of the VIS Regulation – were over 2 million, and the activities performed by the competent authorities within the territory – as per Articles 19 and 20 of the VIS Regulation – were over one million.



Distribution of VIS type of operations during the reporting period

Between 1 September 2013 and 30 September 2015, eleven Member States granted access to VIS to designated authorities for the prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and other serious criminal offences as per the VIS Decision. In this period, over 9,400 searches were performed by designated law enforcement authorities pursuant to the Decision.

### About the Agency

eu-LISA is the European Agency that ensures 24/7 operational management the European Union's (EU) largest IT systems and their respective communication infrastructure in the area of freedom, security and justice: Eurodac, SIS II and VIS. With information technology, eu-LISA safeguards the EU's internal security and supports the implementation of asylum, migration and border management policies for the benefit of citizens.

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