



Protection level PUBLIC

VIS Report pursuant to Article 50(3) of  
Regulation (EC) No 767/2008

VIS Report pursuant to Article 17(3) of Council  
Decision 2008/633/JHA

July 2016

This report has been produced pursuant to Article 50(3) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 as well as to Article 17(3) of Council Decision 2008/633/JHA of 23 June 2008 with the purpose of providing information on the technical function of VIS, including the security thereof, as well as the need and use made by Member States of Article 4(2) of the of Council Decision 2008/633/JHA.

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# Table of Contents

<b>Executive summary .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Report pursuant to Article 50(3) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1. Legal base and scope of the report .....	6
2. VIS rollout .....	6
3. Operational management of VIS.....	7
3.1 Technical function of VIS .....	8
3.1.1 Biometric Matching System (BMS).....	9
3.2 VIS Mail .....	10
3.3 National systems .....	11
3.3.1 Schengen candidate countries .....	11
3.3.2 Integration of Croatia .....	11
3.4 Monitoring, reporting and training activities .....	12
4. Communication infrastructure .....	13
4.1 Technical functioning of the Communication infrastructure.....	14
5. Security and Data protection .....	14
5.1 Security measures of Central VIS .....	14
5.1.1 Member States security measures and audits .....	15
5.2 Data protection .....	15
6. Usage of VIS .....	16
6.1 Consular posts activity .....	17
6.2 Border crossing points activity .....	19
6.3 Activities for asylum purposes .....	20
6.4 Activities within the territory.....	21
<b>Report pursuant to Article 17(3) of Council Decision 2008/633/JHA .....</b>	<b>23</b>
1. Legal base and scope of the report .....	23
2. Technical functioning .....	23
3. Member States` reported usage.....	23
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Annexes .....</b>	<b>26</b>
I. Data reported by Member States on the usage of VIS pursuant to the VIS Regulation .....	26
II. Data reported by Member States on the usage of VIS pursuant to the VIS Decision .....	27
III. VIS roll-out schedule and map .....	28
IV. List of National Authorities per Member State pursuant to Article 28(2) VIS Regulation .....	30
V. Number of end-users per Member State pursuant to VIS Regulation .....	31
VI. Number of access points and end-users per Member State pursuant to VIS Decision .....	34
VII. Template for MS to submit the required information for VIS pursuant to the VIS Regulation...	35
VIII. Template for MS to submit the required information for VIS pursuant to the VIS Decision .....	36

## Executive summary

The main objective of Vis Information System (VIS) is to support the implementation of a common EU visa policy as well as EU's migration and border management policy, by preventing "visa shopping", assisting in the fight against irregular migration, contributing to the prevention of threats to the internal security of the Member States and bringing transparent and faster procedures for bona fide travellers. Since 1 December 2012, eu-LISA has been the sole authority in charge of the operational management of VIS including monitoring of the system, application of management services, implementation of corrective and evolutionary maintenance, legal reporting obligations as well as training of information technology operators.

The *Report pursuant to Article 50(3) of VIS Regulation (EC) No 767/2008* and the *Report pursuant to Article 17(3) of VIS Council Decision 2008/633/JHA* outline the technical functioning of the system and its security from 01 September 2013 to 30 September 2015. The sections on the usage of the system have been drafted based on data provided by the Member States.

Subsequent to the successful roll-out, during the reporting period, Member States started using VIS as planned in their consular posts located in regions 8 to 18. VIS' worldwide roll-out including the external border crossing points was completed by the end of February 2016.

In addition to ensuring the smooth and uninterrupted operation of VIS, the main highlights of the reporting period focus on:

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

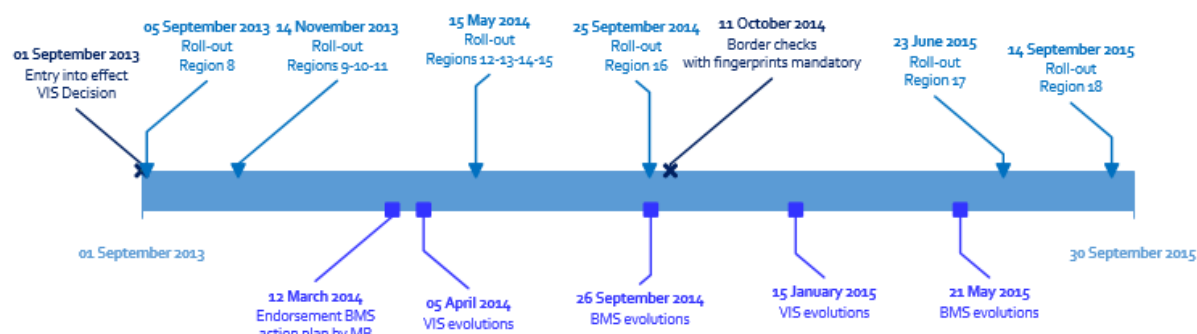


Figure 1: High level VIS' activities during the reporting period

In September 2015, a planned European Data Protection Supervisor's (EDPS) audit took place. No critical findings were reported regarding the security of the central VIS and no security incidents were reported on any unauthorized access to VIS data.

Considering the amount of operations reported by the Member States per user group, in the reporting period over 66% of the operations were executed at the borders and 30% were executed at consular posts. The top three users of VIS were respectively Poland, France and Lithuania.

With over 1 million visa applications processed, July 2015 was the busiest month since VIS' entry into operations in terms of applications processed. August 2015 was the busiest month throughout the whole reporting period in terms of verifications at the borders as VIS processed more than 2.7 million border verifications in one month. As from the summer of 2015 an increase of the asylum related activities and checks within the territory were observed.

Between 01 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 allowed by the VIS Decision. In this period, over 9,400 searches were performed.

# Report pursuant to Article 50(3) of Regulation (EC) No 767/2008

The Visa Information System (VIS) is the large-scale IT system of the EU dedicated to the exchange of data on short-stay visas for entering the Schengen area. As per Article 1(2) of the Council Decision 2004/512/EC establishing the Visa Information System<sup>1</sup>, the system consists of the Central VIS (CS-VIS)<sup>2</sup>, a National Interface (NI-VIS) in each of the Member State<sup>3</sup> connected to VIS and the communication infrastructure.

As per the VIS Regulation<sup>4</sup>, the VIS aims at improving the implementation of the common visa policy, consular cooperation and consultation between central visa authorities by supporting the exchange of data between Member States. The system has been implemented in order to facilitate the visa application procedure, to prevent 'visa shopping', to support the fight against fraud and to facilitate checks at external border crossing points and within the territory of the Member States.

In addition, the VIS assists in the identification of any person who may not, or may no longer, fulfil the conditions for entry to, stay or reside on the territory of the Member States, supporting with the processing of asylum applications<sup>5</sup> and contributing to the prevention of threats to the internal security of Member States.

The VIS started operations on 11 October 2011<sup>6</sup> and followed a phased roll-out in the Member States' consular posts worldwide<sup>7</sup>. The VIS initially started operations under the responsibility of the Commission and, as from 1 December 2012 eu-LISA<sup>8</sup> is the Management Authority with the responsibilities defined in the legal basis.

eu-LISA's administrative and management structure is set in Article 11(1) of the Agency's establishing regulation<sup>9</sup>, and comprises a Management Board (MB), an Executive Director and Advisory Groups (AGs)<sup>10</sup>. The MB and the AGs<sup>11</sup> are composed by representatives of Member States and Commission.

As per Article 19(1) of eu-LISA Regulation, the role of the VIS AG is to provide the MB with expertise related to VIS and, in particular, in the context of the preparation of the annual work program and the annual activity report. The VIS AG met regularly<sup>12</sup> during the reporting period, and has also been instrumental in developing and overseeing the implementation of a number of business-critical processes such as the establishment of the Change Management Process as well as discussing technical matters such as further evolution of the systems, data quality, VIS and BMS evolution projects, or implementation of VIS Mail2.

Member States' experts are also the main drivers in several working groups and fora supporting the work of the Agency and the AG, thus guiding on specific matters or elaborating proposals impacting the VIS, such as the Change Management Group, the National Contact Points for Training (NCP) and the Security Officers Network (SON).

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 213, 15.06.2004

<sup>2</sup> The Central VIS is supported by an integrated component performing fingerprint matching services the Biometric Matching System (BMS). The BMS is considered as part of the CS-VIS even if at some point it can be referred to individually.

<sup>3</sup> Under the term "Member States" the current document refers to the Member States of the EU and Associated Countries which are connected to VIS, if not further explained. Member States of the EU 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 EU Member States of Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Croatia are not yet connected to VIS.

<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EC) No 767/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 July 2008 concerning the Visa Information System (VIS) and the exchange of data between Member States on short-stay visas (hereinafter VIS Regulation), OJ L218, 13.8.2008

<sup>5</sup> The competent national asylum authorities have access to the VIS for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application in accordance with Regulation (EU) 604/2013 and for the examination of such an application.

<sup>6</sup> As per Article 1 of the Commission Implementing Decision of 21 September 2011 determining the date from which the Visa Information System (VIS) is to start operations in a first Region (2011/636/EU); OJ L249, 27.9.11

<sup>7</sup> The roll-out was completed on 20/11/2015 at consular posts and on 29/02/2016 at the Schengen Border Crossing Points, outside the reporting period.

<sup>8</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1077/2011 of the European parliament and the Council of 25 October 2011 establishing a European Agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice, OJ L 286, 01.11.2011

<sup>9</sup> Regulation (EU) no 1077/2011, OJ L 286, 01.11.2011

<sup>10</sup> As per Article 11(2), the Agency's structure shall also include a Data protection Officer, a Security Officer and an Accounting Officer.

<sup>11</sup> There is one Advisory Group for each of the systems managed by the Agency.

<sup>12</sup> During the reporting period, the VIS AG was convened 7 times: in November 2013; in February, May, September and December 2014; in February and June 2015.

The Commission retains responsibility for any legislative initiatives linked to the system as well as the implementation of the VIS legal framework, assisted by the SISVIS Committee – VIS formation<sup>33</sup> bringing together representatives of the Member States.

## 1. Legal base and scope of the report

In accordance with Article 50(3) of the VIS Regulation, two years after the VIS entered into operations and every two years thereafter, the Management Authority shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission a report on the technical functioning of the VIS, including the security thereof. Pursuant to Article 50(6), Member States shall provide the Management Authority with the information necessary to draft the above mentioned report.

The reporting period covered in this report goes from 01 September 2013 to 30 September 2015. Member States were requested to contribute to the reporting exercise with quantitative and qualitative information<sup>34</sup>, as per Article 50(6) of the VIS Regulation. eu-LISA contributed to the report with qualitative information on the technical functioning of Central VIS and the security of the system.

This report is the second one of this type and it has to be placed in the general framework of the monitoring of the system and transparency sought by the legislator. The previous report was submitted to the EU institutions in March 2014<sup>35</sup>.

## 2. VIS rollout

The VIS was progressively deployed, region by region, in the order defined by the Commission<sup>36</sup> on the basis of three criteria defined by Article 48(4) of the VIS Regulation: the risk of irregular immigration, the threats to the internal security of the Schengen States, and the feasibility for collecting biometrics from all locations in the respective region. A total of 23 regions were defined, being the rollout schedule decided on a progressive manner.

During the reporting period, regions 8 to 18 were successfully rolled out – South America, Central Asia, South East Asia, the Palestinian territory, Central America, North America, the Caribbean, Australian continent, the Western Balkans, the Eastern partnership countries, Ukraine and Russia - and Member States started using the VIS as planned in their consular posts located in those regions.

The schedule for VIS rollout in the last set of regions (regions 17 to 23) was initially agreed in May 2014. Two main regions were included in this set:

- Region 17: Eastern neighbouring countries from Asia, including Ukraine, responsible for around 15% of all VIS activity, scheduled to be rolled out end January 2015;
- Region 18: Russia, responsible for almost 35% of all VIS activity, scheduled for rollout in April 2015.

A prerequisite for eventually going live in each region was that all Member States notified Commission on their readiness by a certain deadline prior to the scheduled date of the rollout. By end of 2014, it was unclear if all Member States would notify their readiness for going live in region 18 (readiness to be notified by early January 2015).<sup>37</sup>

Technical readiness of the central system was confirmed as fully able to support the initially agreed roll-out, however a decision was taken by the Permanent Representatives Committee<sup>38</sup> on 05 February 2015 as regards

<sup>33</sup> As foreseen by Article 49 of the VIS Regulation.

<sup>34</sup> Member States were requested to fill in an ad-hoc template, see Annex VII. Last contribution was received on 26 April 2016.

<sup>35</sup> The first report, submitted in March 2014 is available at the following link [http://www.eulisa.europa.eu/Publications/p\\_reports/Pages/default.aspx?RID=6](http://www.eulisa.europa.eu/Publications/p_reports/Pages/default.aspx?RID=6)

<sup>36</sup> Commission Decision 2010/49/EC of 30 November 2009 determining the first regions for the start of operations of the VIS; Commission implementing Decision 2012/274/EU of 24 April 2012 determining the second set of regions for the start of operations of the VIS; Commission implementing Decision of 30 September 2013 determining the third and last set of regions for the start of operations of the VIS.

<sup>37</sup> The rollout dates in the two regions were linked to each other even though scheduled in two separated dates. The rollout on region 17 would not be endorsed without the certitude that the rollout in region 18 would follow in the timeframe agreed.

<sup>38</sup> Doc. 5939/15 VISA 32 COMIX 63

the postponement of the roll-out: Region 17 was rescheduled for June 2015, region 18 was rescheduled for September 2015 and the completion of the rollout was to be assured by end 2015.

The VIS worldwide rollout was completed<sup>19</sup> outside the reporting period. At the time of drafting this report, the VIS was successfully connecting all consular posts in non-EU countries and all external border crossing points of the Member States<sup>20</sup>.

As per Article 48(3) VIS Regulation Member States had the possibility to start using the VIS, with or without collecting visa applicants' fingerprints, in any location ahead of the rollout, provided that they notify the Commission on their technical and legal readiness. A few Member States used this opportunity and rolled out ahead in certain regions or in certain consular posts without collecting fingerprints. Belgium, Switzerland and Estonia rolled out worldwide ahead of the general planning without collecting fingerprints.

### 3. Operational management of VIS

In accordance with Article 1(2) of the Council Decision 2004/512/EC the VIS consists of the Central VIS system (CS-VIS), a National Interface (NI-VIS) in each Member State and the communication infrastructure. The National Interface provides the connection to the relevant central national authority of the respective Member State. The complete end-to-end solution includes the national systems providing the interface to the end-users.

Each Member State is responsible for implementing, operating and managing its own national system, while the operational management of CS-VIS and certain aspects of the communication infrastructure<sup>21</sup> are under eu-LISA's responsibility.

The Central VIS includes an AFIS<sup>22</sup> subsystem referred to as the Biometric Matching System (BMS), which is responsible for biometric operations and thus enters into play depending on the specific VIS operation requested. The Central VIS architecture is supported by two data centres in different locations:

- the technical support function (Central Unit – CU) located in Strasbourg (France) for the technical supervision and administration of the CS-VIS;
- the back-up site located in Sankt Johann im Pongau (Austria) which ensures all the functionalities of the principal CS-VIS in the event of failure or planned maintenance of the system (Back-up Central Unit - BCU).

This implies that the data contained in CU and BCU is kept synchronized at all times guarantying business continuity. The average time for a switchover<sup>23</sup> is approximately 30 minutes.

Various technical environments on a non-operational platform are also available to eu-LISA and Member States for system testing and training activities. These environments include among others<sup>24</sup>: a pre-production environment representative of the production environment (this is applicable to VIS and not to BMS) in terms of functionality, capacity and performance used for validation of any change before deployment in production; and a "playground" environment at the disposal of Member States to perform national side testing, training activities or qualification of national system evolutions.

Since the transfer of the VIS' operational management to the Agency on 1 December 2012, eu-LISA has been ensuring uninterrupted access to VIS 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, thus allowing the continuous exchange of data between competent national authorities, in accordance with the corresponding legal provisions.

The VIS operational management is achieved, in a large part, through application management services, supervision and implementation of appropriate preventive, corrective, adaptive and evolutionary maintenance.

<sup>19</sup> For a complete schedule of VIS rollout, please see Annex III.

<sup>20</sup> Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/281 of 26 February 2016 determining the date from which the Visa Information System (VIS) is to start operations at external border crossing points, OJ L52, 27.2.16

<sup>21</sup> As per Article 7 of the eu-LISA Regulation.

<sup>22</sup> Automated Fingerprint Identification System.

<sup>23</sup> To support the major releases deployed during the reporting period, planned switchovers to BCU were performed on 05 April 2014 for VIS evolutions, on 03 June 2014 to validate VIS evolutions deployment on BCU, on 15 October 2014 for the quarterly corrective/adaptive maintenance release, on 13 January 2015 for the VS release. Subsequently, switchbacks to CU were also performed.

<sup>24</sup> As part of the VIS evolutions project and following Member States' request in November 2013, an additional test environment to cover future operational needs for both Member States and the Agency is in preparation. The additional test environment is planned to be released in the course of 2016.

During the reporting period, external technical support has been provided by Bridge<sup>3</sup> Consortium<sup>25</sup> the contractor for the VIS Maintenance in Working Order and Evolutionary Maintenance (MWO). The MWO framework contract was signed in August 2012 between the Commission and the contractor and it was transferred to eu-LISA in August 2013.

Due to the fact that the current MWO contract will expire in August 2016, in August 2015 eu-LISA launched a restricted call for tender for the establishment of the new MWO framework contract for VIS. The procedure, which is still on going at the time of writing this report, is expected to be finalized in Q2 2016. This will allow a four months handover/takeover phase between the current contractor and the winner of the ongoing procurement procedure. The restricted call for tender launched in 2015 covers the operations, corrective, adaptive and evolutionary maintenance of the Central VIS, including the BMS system as well as all associated services. The initial duration of the new framework contract is four years, with the possibility of one extension for a maximum period of two more years<sup>26</sup>.

### 3.1 Technical function of VIS

At the beginning of the reporting period in September 2013, the VIS was technically able to process 60,000 operations per hour and was officially rolled out in 7 regions out of 23. A VIS evolutions project was launched, in order to increase the performance and the capacity of the system and its ability to support the remaining agreed VIS roll-out schedule and the subsequent increase in usage. This project foresaw different delivering phases.

Several tests were performed both internally and in cooperation with the Member States. Among them was the Provisional System Acceptance Test (PSAT) during which four volunteer Member States - Germany, Italy, Romania and Sweden - tested and validated the new product. This phase was successfully concluded in March 2014. In addition, several other technical steps - rollback tests, data migration rehearsal, completion of the production handover and entry in operation activities – were performed prior to the data extraction phase could start.

The migration represented a very complex exercise<sup>27</sup> and a lot of efforts were put into coordination between Member States, eu-LISA and the contractor. A migration manual was prepared for Member States with detailed steps and activities (including governance, communication, escalation points, milestones, etc.). Data migration plan and schedule were agreed. Eventually the data migration started the week before the migration with the initial load.

The migration was successfully carried out during the night 05-06 April 2014<sup>28</sup>. The connectivity tests with the Back-up Central Unit and the Central Unit went as per schedule. As a result, all Member States were successfully connected to the new version of the Visa Information System. Following the go-live<sup>29</sup> an intensive period of monitoring started to confirm the stability of the new VIS.

VIS evolutions project - Phase 1, deployed in April 2014, provided a completely new VIS system in terms of infrastructure, software versions and search engine. The processing power of the new platform was increased up to 120,000 operations per hour, doubling its capacity compared to the previous version.

The second phase of VIS evolutions project was deployed in mid-January 2015 with increased transactional processing power/ performance up to 300,000 operations per hour, as an intermediate step towards the target of 450,000 operations per hour to meet increased demand. In addition, the initial scope of VIS evolutions project has been further extended to also cover an upgrade of storage to 60 million visa applications, in light of capacity analysis and mid-term projections. Entry into operations of this third phase of VIS Evolutions is foreseen for Q2 2016, together with other technical improvements.

<sup>25</sup> The consortium is composed by Accenture, HP and Morpho.

<sup>26</sup> More information on the procedure can be found at the following link <http://www.eulisa.europa.eu/Procurement/Pages/OpenTenders.aspx>

<sup>27</sup> Having the availability of a rollback solution designed, setup and tested in only a couple of months was an impressive challenge in terms of resources (time, human, budget) for all stakeholders involved.

<sup>28</sup> Based on observations, the lowest impact on business activity mainly at border points appeared to be the night between Saturday and Sunday. An agreement on the migration date was reached after discussion with Member States.

<sup>29</sup> No significant business-related issues were reported during the whole process. The rollback capability was maintained until 9 April, at the time the secondary site (BCU) was fully synchronized and all databases backed up.



At the end of the reporting period considered here, the central system storage limit was 40 million records, with little more than 17 million visa applications stored<sup>30</sup>. The scope and timeframe of the specific contract covering VIS evolutions phase 2 will be extended until Q3 2016 to cover the VIS storage upgrade before a new contractor will come in.

### 3.1.1 Biometric Matching System (BMS)

Towards the end of 2013 it was estimated that the BMS capacity has to be increased to support the business activity of a fully rolled out VIS system. The estimation was made based on a potential increased demand resulting from visa applications at all consular posts worldwide<sup>31</sup> and the introduction of mandatory fingerprints checks at the external borders<sup>32</sup>. To address those risks, a task force<sup>33</sup> was created with the objective to evaluate the BMS capacity analysis, to recommend a number of mitigating actions in order not to jeopardize the final phase of the VIS worldwide rollout, and to present a long-term BMS capacity upscale strategy.

In March 2014, the Management Board endorsed the action plan proposed by the Agency foreseeing: a capacity upscale of 2.5 times for synchronous operations (150% capacity increase) and 3 times for asynchronous ones<sup>34</sup> (200% capacity increase) along with a technological change of the BMS system aiming at introducing scalability for future capacity needs and evolutions.

In September/October 2014 eu-LISA reassessed the BMS capacity based on updated statistics and latest information available with the objective to properly address the new additional requirements of some Member States<sup>35</sup> and take into account, to a certain extent, the way several Member States were utilizing the system while not always respecting the VIS best practices<sup>36</sup>. This additional assessment indicated a need for an additional increase capacity compared to what was agreed early in March 2014.

In detail, this additional capacity upscale identified was of 6.5 times for asynchronous operations (550% capacity increase) instead of the initially planned 3 times against the original system's throughput capacity, in order to mitigate the newly identified risks. Eventually the project scope for BMS Evolution was adjusted to this increased performance throughput, maintaining the same delivery date. The BMS evolution project<sup>37</sup> was planned to be delivered in March 2015<sup>38</sup>, to support the biggest regions planned to be rolled-out - at that time – in the first semester 2015.

Although the VIS rollout dates for the remaining regions were postponed<sup>39</sup>, eu-LISA continued with the planned BMS Evolution implementation roadmap. In agreement with Member States and taking advantage of the extended timeline, the Agency introduced a supplementary set of end-to-end VIS-BMS performance tests in addition to the usual set of tests. Those tests were added to better respond to Member States expectations and

<sup>30</sup> The amount of applications significantly increased with the completion of the VIS roll-out. Middle of December 2015, VIS processed its 20,000,000<sup>th</sup> visa application since its entry into operations.

<sup>31</sup> By December 2013, the rollout was completed in 11 regions out of 23; however regions accounting for the largest amount of visa applications were still to come. Based on Member States visa statistics available, regions 1 to 16 accounted for 30.5% of all visa applications registered in 2013. On the other hand region 17 (Eastern neighbouring countries) accounted for more than 15% of all visa applications and region 18 (Russia) accounted for almost 35% (the largest worldwide visa activity until now).

<sup>32</sup> Since 11 October 2014, verifications based on fingerprints of visa holders have been mandatory at the external borders in accordance with Article 18(2) of the VIS Regulation. On the other hand, the checks were applicable only to visa holders whose fingerprints were already stored in VIS (as at that point VIS was rolled out in 16 regions out of 23, for a complete overview see Annex III).

<sup>33</sup> The task force was composed by representative of Member States, the Commission, eu-LISA and the Consortium in charge of the MWO.

<sup>34</sup> Synchronous operations are mainly performed by border posts (for example for verification purposes), whereas asynchronous operations are typically performed at consular posts (insertions, searches).

<sup>35</sup> Some operational needs might exceed the initial planned BMS upgrade.

<sup>36</sup> As per the design and architecture the system handles a given maximum load (corresponding to a maximum number of operations) during peak hours as well as a given distribution of the load over the course of one day. Due to the fact that the overall system capacity is split among Member States in a fixed way, the maximum number of operations performed per Member State shall not exceed the system capacity. If a Member State exceeds the capacity allocated to it for a continued period of time, the system performance could be degraded. Best practices foreseen among others respecting allocated transaction capacity, not usage of batch processing, respect the transactional distribution per type of operations and search.

<sup>37</sup> Very complex project encompassing design phase, procure infrastructure, development, several testing phases to be executed (Factory Acceptance Tests, System Solution Tests as well as Provisional System Acceptance Test).

<sup>38</sup> Different work packages were foreseen. The one related to the upscale of the BMS synchronous capacity to ensure smooth compulsory border checks from October 2014 was planned to be delivered by September 2014, while the one related to the capacity upscale for the asynchronous and synchronous operations targeting to address needs for the remaining of the VIS roll out was planned to be delivered in March 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Beginning of 2015 an agreement on the dates for the last set of regions to be rolled out was reached: rollout in region 17 was eventually planned for June 2015 (initially was planned for January 2015) and region 18 was planned to be rolled out in September 2015 (initially was for April 2015).

to validate the BMS response times using VIS. eu-LISA performed VIS-BMS end-to-end soak, load and stress tests as part of the official BMS qualification campaign. BMS evolution was put in production in May 2015<sup>40</sup>.

With the corrective and adaptive maintenance release deployed end 2014, an important novelty was introduced in BMS consisting in removing the quality limitations for fingerprints at central level. As of October 2014, the BMS has allowed the insertion and usage (for checks at the borders) of all fingerprints provided by the Member States<sup>41</sup>.

In parallel to the BMS Evolutions project, eu-LISA prepared a study for a BMS storage capacity increase – to increase it from the initial 24 million records to 60 million records as far as the production system is concerned<sup>42</sup>- to be released as a next evolution phase of the new BMS system. The project, initiated in September 2015, is expected to be completed by Q2/2016 when the forecasted number of visa applications with fingerprints in BMS is expected to reach the current database storage threshold (24 million).

### 3.2 VIS Mail

Since the entry into operations of VIS, VIS Mail phase 1 Consultation Mechanism<sup>43</sup> was in operation in parallel with the Schengen Consultation Network (VISION)<sup>44</sup>. During the reporting period covered by this report, preparations for the entry into operation of VIS Mail Phase 2 and discontinuation of VISION were planned and organised by the Agency in close cooperation with the Member States.

As per the Commission Decision 2009/377/EC of 5 May 2009<sup>45</sup> the replacement of the Schengen Consultation Network (VISION) by VIS Mail Phase 2 shall start when all Schengen visa issuing posts would be connected to VIS (VIS rollout completed)<sup>46</sup>. In accordance with Article 46 of the VIS Regulation, in July 2015 the SISVIS Committee – VIS Formation endorsed the date of 20 January 2016 as the date of entering into operation of VIS Mail 2 consultation mechanism.

With the aim of having a successful and smooth transition from VISION to VIS Mail 2, in March 2015 eu-LISA established the Transition Board composed by all stakeholders involved in the migration. The board met regularly, at least once a month, mainly via video conference for managing all actions, risks and prerequisites for the transition. In addition, to better support Member States in the transitional phase, the Agency updated the VIS Mail Operational Guide, provided the Integration Test Design Description (TDD), the Global Campaign TDD and drafted the Transition Guidelines document providing an overview of the milestones, practical information about the agreed approach, the conditions to be fulfilled in order to complete the transition and the global schedule.

VIS Mail integration tests, aiming at proving the compliance of Member States national VIS Mail 2 systems with the agreed specifications, were executed and completed by beginning of 2015. A global test campaign (functional and non-functional) started in September 2015, in line with the VIS Mail Global campaign TDD and was concluded in mid-December, outside the reporting period considered here.

Following the handover from s-Testa Security Operation Centre, in October 2015 the Agency became fully responsible for the operational management of the VIS Mail 2 business and network infrastructure. The transition<sup>47</sup> from VISION to VIS Mail 2 was completed on 20 January 2016 when VIS Mail 2 successfully entered

<sup>40</sup> Following the deployment of the new BMS misalignments between the previous BMS and the new one were discovered causing accuracy issues. Several actions were taken, initiated in the reporting period but completed outside the period considered here, to tackle the fingerprints quality management and accuracy including additional accuracy measurements, accuracy test campaigns as well as technical workshop/training with Member States.

<sup>41</sup> In practice this novelty - technically called zero failure to enrol - changed the behaviour of BMS to a big extent as fingerprints not passing the quality check were no longer rejected. Prior to the deployment some accuracy concerns arose about the quality of future fingerprints to be stored in the database. To mitigate this, the Agency worked together with Member States to introduce a new feature which would provide warning messages in case of quality check not passed.

<sup>42</sup> An upscale of the pre-production system was also planned for both the throughput and database; the evolution will account for 40% overall percentage of the production environment.

<sup>43</sup> Member States may use the VIS Mail phase 1 mechanism for transmission of: messages related to consular cooperation, requests for supporting documents, messages on inaccurate data, Member State nationality acquired by an applicant.

<sup>44</sup> VISION shall be used in parallel for prior consultation between central visa authorities in accordance with Article 22 of the Visa Code.

<sup>45</sup> Commission decision adopting implementing measures for the consultation mechanism and the other procedures referred to in Article 16 of VIS Regulation (EC) No 767/2008, OJ L177, 12.5.2009.

<sup>46</sup> This was achieved on 20 November 2015 with the rollout in the last region.

<sup>47</sup> A transitional period was deemed necessary as from 20 November (VIS rollout completed) so as to ensure that, for those visa applications lodged before 20 November and therefore not present in the VIS, notifications of visa issuance be still sent relying on VISION.

into operations<sup>48</sup>. As from that date VIS Mail 2 started managing all new consultation requests and notifications<sup>49</sup>. Following the two months observation period, the VIS Mail was officially declared the one and only one system managing the messages defined in the legal basis.

### 3.3 National systems

Each Member State has its own national system that includes the interface used by the end-users allowing the connection to CS-VIS. Implementation, operation and maintenance of the national systems are sole responsibility of Member States. In the framework of collecting data for this report, Member States were invited to provide information on their NI-VIS in terms of technical functioning, updates and issues encountered if any during the reporting period. Limited information was provided by Member States in this respect.

No major problems were reported. Member States informed about continuous efforts for optimizing the system, regular updates, corrective maintenances for minor bugs and training activities. In general, Member States praised the performance and functioning of CS-VIS considering it as satisfactory. The system has been running smoothly with an effective searching system and the performance and the behaviour have been as expected.

In accordance with Article 28(2) of the VIS Regulation, each Member State shall designate a national authority that shall provide for access by the competent authorities referred to in Article 6(1) and (2) to the VIS Regulation and connect that national authority to the national interface. The list of National Authorities pursuant to Article 28(2) as reported by the Member States is available in Annex IV.

Furthermore, each Member State shall designate the competent authorities<sup>50</sup>, the duly authorised staff of which shall have access to enter, amend, delete or consult data in VIS as per Article 6 of the VIS Regulation. The number of end-users per authority as reported by Member States is available in Annex V.

As mentioned earlier in the report, during the reporting period VIS was rolled out in eleven regions around the world, subsequently increasing in a meaningful manner the total number of end-users pursuant to the VIS Regulation. By September 2015, the approximate total number of end-users using VIS pursuant to the VIS Regulation was more than 350,000<sup>51</sup>, the majority of them coming from consular offices or border posts.

#### 3.3.1 Schengen candidate countries

During the reporting period covered in this document, no major developments have been recorded for Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania, which were not yet connected to VIS production. The three countries successfully completed VIS compliance tests already in the previous reporting period. These countries have access to the VIS pre-production environment for training and further preparation purposes. Provided that preparations are appropriate, connection to the VIS production is expected to occur as soon as the above Member States join the Schengen area and the relevant legal instruments are in place.

#### 3.3.2 Integration of Croatia

End of 2014, close cooperation with Croatia<sup>52</sup> started aiming at connecting Croatia to VIS. From eu-LISA side, at the beginning of 2015, a project for the integration of this new user was launched to cover integration into

<sup>48</sup> Following the entry into operation of VIS Mail 2, VISION was in a semi operational mode for 2 months, in order to cover the pending consultation replies. At the end of this period, VISION will be discontinued.

<sup>49</sup> For consultations and transmission of information between Member States, based on Articles 8, 22 and 31 of the Visa Code as well as for VLTV (Visa with Limited Territorial Validity) related information.

<sup>50</sup> The list of the authorities specifying for what purpose each authority may process data in VIS is regularly published by the Commission. A consolidated list was published on OJ C106, 9.4.2014.

<sup>51</sup> In September 2015 no data from Germany was available. In order to calculate the approximate total number of end-users for VIS pursuant to the VIS Regulation, the figures provided by Germany in August 2013 for the previous report were used (report published in March 2014). To be noted that during the reporting exercise, VIS was rolled out in several regions and most likely this determined an increase of the number of end-users for Germany.

<sup>52</sup> Croatia accessed the EU on 1 July 2013; in March 2015 Croatia declared its readiness to join the Schengen area.

VIS and SIS II<sup>53</sup>, as well as into the associated communication networks (s-Testa/Testa NG) and messaging systems (SIRENE, VIS Mail). The project's milestones at eu-LISA side foresaw the modification of CS-VIS, modification of VIS Mail, compliance and performance tests, as well as tailor made training program<sup>54</sup>.

From Croatian side, a public procurement process was launched by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which resulted in a contract awarded in February 2015. This contract consisted of the development of the national VIS and integration with the central VIS. In parallel with the deployment of the national system, Croatia started working on VIS Mail Phase 1 and Phase 2 consultation network.

Between July and October 2015 Croatia made a successful connection to C-VIS Playground<sup>55</sup> after which informal internal tests to verify the well-functioning of the Croatian national applications prior to the official qualification campaigns were conducted. The integration with the central system was initiated in mid-September 2015 and is aimed to be finalised by the end of 2016. At the time of writing this report, works on CS-VIS had started according to the project's timeline.

### 3.4 Monitoring, reporting and training activities

Central VIS monitoring is carried out at the operational centre in Strasbourg:

- A 24/7 monitoring regime by the eu-LISA Service Desk is active and enables event-triggered incident management. This monitoring system is continuously analysed and assessed for business impact;
- The business activity is represented by a status overview screen – VIS Business Dashboard - giving the actual status of the traffic for each Member State connected to VIS.

The eu-LISA Service Desk is the entry point for users' reports for incidents<sup>56</sup> as well as requests for information or technical advice and support. Any request or incident is registered in a central incident management tool for follow-up. Based on the initial analysis<sup>57</sup> the relevant assistance is provided or functional and/or hierarchical escalation is triggered.

The eu-LISA technical function is the specialist team that further analyses, follows up and acts on incidents. The eu-LISA technical function consists of Application Administrators, System Administrators and Network Administrators, together with Security Officers and other experts if necessary. During the reporting period, 877 user requests related to VIS including incidents and requests for information were registered.

The incident management process is under the supervision of the Incident Manager who manages the involvement of incident support staff (first- and second-line), monitors the effectiveness of incident management and makes recommendations for improvement.

eu-LISA has defined and implemented IT Service Management (ITSM) processes following extended best practices<sup>58</sup> to assure quality of service. This is a continuous exercise to ensure efficient and cost-effective management of VIS<sup>59</sup> by continuously monitoring and evolving operational processes.

An Operator Manual (OPM) is in use by all VIS Single Point of Contacts (SPoCs) at central level by the Agency as well as at national level. Different communication channels (functional mailboxes, video/audio conference and dedicated tools) between eu-LISA and the Member States are available and can be used depending on the scope and recipients of the messages.

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<sup>53</sup> Together with VIS, eu-LISA is responsible for the operational management of the Schengen Information System (SIS II) as well as Eurodac. At national level there are dependencies between VIS and SIS II, as a fully functioning national VIS requires a fully functional national SIS II to operate. For this reason, eu-LISA set up a project encompassing Croatia's integration to both systems.

<sup>54</sup> A detail training planning to support Croatia integration in both VIS and SIS II was set up as part of the integration project. Implementation mainly for the part related to SIS II was conducted in 2014, whereas the VIS newcomer training program dedicated to Croatia took place in March 2016 (outside the reporting period).

<sup>55</sup> Following negotiations and agreement with the representatives of Cyprus and the eu-LISA, Croatia made a successful connection to C-VIS Playground using Cyprus code.

<sup>56</sup> An incident is opened by the service desk following an exchange/interaction with Member States or following eu-LISA monitoring activities (abnormal observations).

<sup>57</sup> Impact, urgency and priority of the incident are defined at this first stage. All long the process, eu-LISA technical staff reviews the status and priority assessing the severity of the incident.

<sup>58</sup> eu-LISA follows Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITILv3) best practices.

<sup>59</sup> And SIS II and Eurodac as well.

During the reporting period the VIS OPM was updated and a new version became operational on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015. The main changes were related to the introduction of automated notifications, following improvements of the incident management procedure and the customization of the Incident Management tool<sup>60</sup> (message templates as part of the Operational Procedures), an updated escalation procedure, a revised process for reporting of VIS Mail incidents and clearly defined requirements for staff working in the SPoC at national level. The new version of the Operator Manual provides also an updated procedure for the communication of national system`s maintenance as well updated procedure for the update of the list of authorities.

Operational statistics at central level are gathered and analysed regularly (on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly). Business information extracted from these statistics is periodically discussed with Member States, during the Advisory Group meetings, in order to identify and follow up on areas requiring improvement. Such improvements can be related not only to the technical performance of the end-to-end system but also to the quality of the data inserted into the VIS by Member States as well as to incorrect practices concerning the usage of the system at national level.

Member States have access to these statistics, either via a dedicated web platform or through the VIS Advisory Group. Reporting functionality is also available to the Member States at a central level, allowing them to execute reports to obtain business information on a regular or ad-hoc basis.

As per its mandate, eu-LISA has provided training activities on VIS for national IT operators and technical VIS experts during the reporting period. In this respect, the classroom training on the technical use of VIS is organised once a year by the Agency. In addition to that, through regular analysis of training demands and needs of the Member States the Agency plans and implements ad-hoc initiatives<sup>61</sup>. Training is also an essential element in the Croatia integration project, to ensure that the accessing country is provided with up-to-date knowledge to develop and operate its national system.

## 4. Communication infrastructure

According to Article 1(2) of the Council Decision of 08 June 2004 establishing the VIS Information System (2004/512/EC) and parallel provision in Article 2 of Annex of Commission Decision of 17 June 2008, one of the three elements comprising VIS shall be a communication infrastructure between the central system (CS-VIS) and the national interfaces (NI-VIS) that provides an encrypted, virtual, private network dedicated to VIS data and to communication between Member States according to the Community legislation related to VIS and between Member States and the authority responsible for the operational management for the CS-VIS.

The above-mentioned communication infrastructure is provided via a European private secure network named Secure Trans European Services for Telematics between Administrations (s-TESTA<sup>62</sup>).

The scope of services covered by the s-TESTA network includes: (a) the provision of a Core Management Team, responsible for the overall vision, design and security of s-TESTA and the leadership, communication, and management of the service delivery team; (b) a dedicated centralised Support and Operations Centre (SOC) responsible for ensuring the operational management and the quality of the network by the provider on a 24/7 basis; (c) consultancy services; (d) connectivity; (e) network and (f) security. These services relate to the provision, set-up and operation of a dedicated centralised management, monitoring and support infrastructure. Additional services cover the provision of monitoring tools, reporting, and SOC staffing.

According to Article 7 of the eu-LISA Regulation, tasks regarding the communication infrastructure (including operational management and security) are divided between eu-LISA and the Commission. In order to ensure coherence between the exercising of their respective responsibilities, operational working arrangements were established between eu-LISA and the Commission and are reflected in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concluded in June 2014. As specified in Article 19 of the above referred MoU, the Agency is responsible for

<sup>60</sup> During the reporting period the central incident management tool in used was SM7, preparation for the upgrade of the tool to SM9 were on going. Outside the reporting period considered here, Member States performed several test campaigns (connectivity tests started in December 2015 and functional in January 2016) for the migration to SM9. SM9 went live beginning of March 2016.

<sup>61</sup> Ad-hoc initiatives have been dedicated to topics like BMS accuracy and search functions. Those were planned during the reporting period and will be implemented outside the reporting period.

<sup>62</sup> implemented under the IDABC programme (2005-2009) by the European Commission Directorate General for Informatics (DIGIT)

supervision, security and coordination of relations between the Member States and the network provider for the communication infrastructure for VIS

On the other hand, the Commission is responsible for all other tasks relating to the communication infrastructure, in particular tasks relating to the implementation of the budget, acquisition and renewal and contractual matters.

#### 4.1 Technical functioning of the Communication infrastructure

The VIS network provides a secure wide-area network for the exchange of data between central and national systems. The architecture of the network can be described as a star topology with resilience. The central unit (CU in Strasbourg) and backup central unit (BCU in Sankt Johann im Pongau) contain the systems to which each national network connects. The central unit and backup central unit are interconnected by a dedicated Point-to-Point connection.

The VIS network<sup>63</sup> is permanently monitored in order to ensure continuous service availability while strict performance service level requirements have been established. During the reporting period covered in this report (01 September 2013 to 30 September 2015), there were no incidents with critical impact on the functioning of the overall VIS community. On the other hand, there were in total six incidents affecting the connectivity of more than one site, caused by issues on the underlying network infrastructure and by software malfunctioning. Each one of these incidents was analysed to identify the root cause, and appropriate measures were implemented to prevent reoccurrence of the incident.

Currently, there is an on-going project to migrate the current s-TESTA network to the new TESTA NG (New Generation) network. The migration concerns the set-up and installation of the TESTA NG network by a different legal entity, the continuation of the s-TESTA services until the TESTA NG network is operational and the transfer of all existing s-TESTA services – and therefore also those related to VIS - from the old s-TESTA network to the new TESTA NG network. Thus the migration will be also implemented for the VIS network<sup>64</sup>. To support this complex exercise and to better coordinate the implementation efforts at central and national level, particular attention has been put towards communication with stakeholders. Dedicated webinars are regularly organised with Member States and an interest group was created, in a secure environment with controlled access, to share relevant documentation.

## 5. Security and Data protection

### 5.1 Security measures of Central VIS

At central level, VIS strictly complies with the requirements of the VIS Regulation and EC Decisions in terms of data protection and information security. Both a System Security Officer and a Local Security Officer ensure the operational effectiveness of the security controls and the continuous improvement of the security strategy. The protection of personal data related to individuals processed by the VIS at central system level is supervised by the eu-LISA Data Protection Officer and by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS).

As per Article 32 of the VIS Regulation and Article 12(1)(p) of the eu-LISA Establishing Regulation, the overall security plan and corresponding security measures applicable to CS-VIS have been defined within the VIS Security Plan, the VIS Security Policy and the VIS Business Continuity Plan. The three documents were reviewed during the reporting period and new versions are to be approved by the Management Board in the course of 2016. Member State experts will be involved in the revision process during the VIS Advisory Group consultation phase.

<sup>63</sup> The VIS Mail Relay service operated within the VIS network provides Simple Mail Transport Protocol (SMTP) relay functionality in a hub-and-spoke topology to national systems (NS-VIS) for the purposes of providing VIS Mail Consultation Mechanism as stipulated in Article 2 of Commission Decision 2009/377/EC Annex. The VIS Mail SPoC (Single-Point-of-Contact) Servers are two mailbox servers, one at the CU site and one at the BCU site, which host the VIS central SPoC mailbox. This allows NS SPoC mailboxes to send email messages to the central SPoC mailbox, and for the central mailbox to send messages to the NS SPoC addresses.

<sup>64</sup> As for the planning available at the time of writing this report, the migration of VIS is scheduled to be completed around end 2016.

As from the entry into operations of VIS two EDPS audits took place, the first one in June 2012 when the system was still under Commission's responsibility, and a second one in September 2015<sup>65</sup>. eu-LISA did ensure a proper follow-up of the 2012 EDPS findings and addressed several of them during the reporting period, e.g. security incident procedure, fire loads in the datacentre, security hardening of the systems. Overall, no critical findings were reported regarding the security of the central VIS and no security incident had to be reported on any unauthorized access to VIS data. It should be reminded that the central VIS system is an isolated, controlled and secured environment.

The VIS security and continuity risk management strategy covers all layers of the security spectrum: physical security, personnel security, network security, operating systems security, application security, business continuity and data security, in accordance with the relevant security principles and standards of the European Commission and good practices from ISO27001 standard.

The central VIS is protected by strong physical controls: several layers of electric fences, 24/7 CCTV and intrusion detection monitoring, security guards, access control via fingerprints and personal badge, environmental detectors, etc. Moreover, in case of contingency, operations can be switched to the standby site in Austria where a contingency team is permanently present. All persons having logical or physical access to the production systems (central or backup sites) have a valid security clearance at EU Secret level.

In terms of information security, operational and administrative access to the Central and Backup systems is managed following the segregation of duties and the least required privileges principles. Any communication towards Member States is encrypted on a non-routable closed group network and is further filtered by several layers of firewalls.

Security requirements are embedded in all evolution projects, changes and maintenance activities. The local security officer is part of the change advisory board and takes part in any evolution project as from the design phase.

With the aim of increasing the level of cooperation in the area of security operations, an informal network of security contact points, the Security Officers Network (SON), was established by eu-LISA's Management Board in 2014. The network, bringing together security experts from eu-LISA and the Member States, facilitates the convergence of the security requirements from an end-to-end perspective for all systems managed by the Agency, and thus for VIS as well. This specialized working group is convened every six months.

### 5.1.1 Member States security measures and audits

Member States were invited to provide their own assessment of the security measures and audit regarding their national implementation of the NI-VIS. Based on the information received, it appears that no security incident or relevant security issue were reported by Member States. Several Member States confirmed to have established a 24 per 7 monitoring system and have business continuity plans in place.

In terms of audits, seven Member States reported having had an audit during the reporting period, whereas three Member States reported not having had any. The recommendations made as part of the reported audits were translated into improvements of the national implementations.

## 5.2 Data protection

The protection of personal data related to individuals processed by the VIS at central system level is monitored by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) in close cooperation with eu-LISA's Data Protection Officer (DPO). Quality of data stored in the CS-VIS and data subjects' rights, as per the legal provision, are ensured by the Member States.

As mentioned above, an inspection to the Central VIS system was performed by the EDPS in September 2015. In this context the DPO acted as a liaison between the Agency and the EDPS during the entire exercise (from the preparation phase, on site visit, post-visit documentation requests, and comments to the draft report). The

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<sup>65</sup> The final report and conclusions were under preparation at the time of writing this report.

inspection held in 2015 aimed at assessing the implementation status of the recommendations issued following the previous audit (in 2012) and the current security of CS-VIS in terms of processing of personal data.

Eu-LISA's DPO represents the Agency at the meetings of the Supervision Coordination Group of VIS reporting about the current state of the CS-VIS and any future evolutions. This group, composed by the National Data Protection Authorities and the EDPS monitors the data protection legal compliance at both Member States' and Central system levels.

## 6. Usage of VIS

By the end of September 2015, at the end of the reporting period, VIS was storing over 17 million registered visa applications<sup>66</sup> resulting in almost 15.5 million Schengen visas issued<sup>67</sup>. To be noted, in September 2015 regions 19 to 23 were still to be rolled out<sup>68</sup>.

From VIS' entry into operation till 30 September 2015 over 254 million operations were executed by the system, with an average of over 175,000 operations per day. 68% of all those operations, over 172 million, were executed during the reporting period. As a result of the VIS roll-out in several regions and the introduction of mandatory fingerprints checks at the external borders, by the end of the reporting period in the summer 2015, VIS processed on average 10 million operations per month<sup>69</sup>. This represented the double compared to the monthly average from the beginning of the reporting period in September 2013.

In September 2015, daily operations were up to 40,000 operations per hour during the peak hour<sup>70</sup>. In the last 3 months of the reporting period, the system processed on average on a daily basis over 29,000 visa applications and over 28,000 visas were issued.

Considering the amount of operations reported by the Member States<sup>71</sup> per user group, in the reporting period over 66% of the operations were executed at the borders<sup>72</sup> and 30% being executed at consular posts. Activities related to asylum - as per Articles 21 and 22 of the VIS Regulation - accounted for almost 2.5% of all operations, and the activities performed by the competent authorities within the territory – as per Articles 19 and 20 of the VIS Regulation - accounted for almost 1.5% of all operations reported.

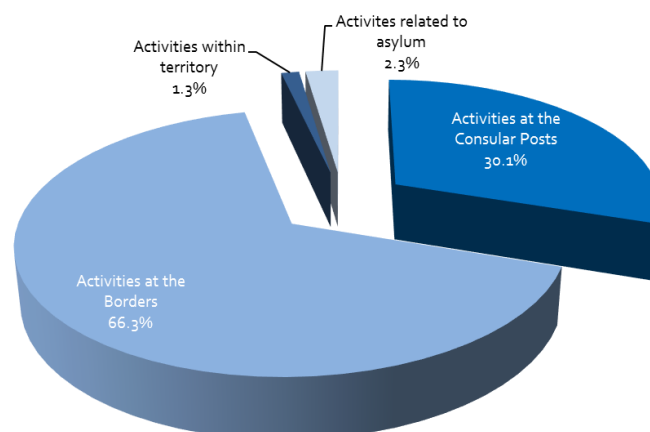


Figure 2: Distribution of VIS type of operations during the reporting period

<sup>66</sup> Middle of December 2015, VIS processed its 20,000,000<sup>th</sup> visa application.

<sup>67</sup> The data comprises also 4 million visa applications and 3.6 million visas issued between October 2011 and 31 August 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Region 18 representing Russia, accounting for the biggest amount of Schengen visas, was rolled out on 14 September 2015.

<sup>69</sup> At the beginning of the reporting period in September 2013, an average of 5.2 million operations per month was executed.

<sup>70</sup> In the beginning of February 2016, the daily operations were up to 51,000 operations per hour during the peak hour.

<sup>71</sup> See table in Annex I "Data reported by Member States on the usage of VIS pursuant to the VIS Regulation".

<sup>72</sup> Activities at the borders: visa verifications border + identifications border; activities at the Consular posts: registered applications + issued visa + refused visa; activities related to asylum: searches asylum + identifications asylum; activities within the territory: visa verifications within territory + identifications within territory.



As per the data provided by the Member States, during the reporting period, the top three users of VIS were respectively Poland (accounting a little more than 18% of the total operations reported mainly due to activities at the borders), France (with over 14%, mainly due to activities at consular posts) and Lithuania (with over 13% of the total operations reported due to borders activities).

The usage of the system substantially differs from Member State to Member State. While the extent of the consular network and historical ties determine – among others - the workload of the consular posts, both the number of third country nationals crossing the external borders as well as the length of the external borders have an important impact on the usage of the system for border control purposes. The latter is clearly visible in the data provided by Poland, Lithuania as well as Finland.

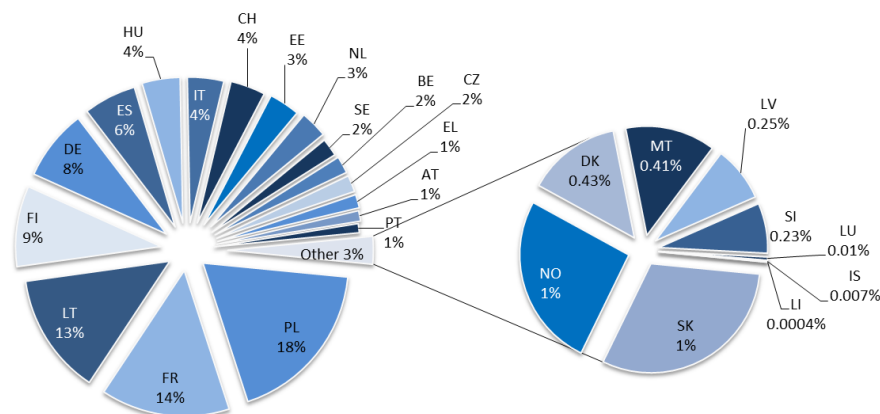


Figure 3: Distribution of total amount of VIS operations per Member State

As detailed above, great efforts were made for improving the overall VIS performance especially in the first months of the reporting period. With the deployment at the beginning of April 2014 of the new search engine together with a first increase of the transactional capacity per hour, visible improvements were detected. The technical performance of the system and its robustness improved considerably, faster response times were observed.

Based on the mentioned projects, and in particular for the VIS and BMS evolutions, the capacity and performance have proved to be effectively supporting the increased business demands throughout the period considered in this report. The overall performance of the system is very satisfactory.

### 6.1 Consular posts activity

As per the data provided by the Member States, in the reporting period over 13 million registered applications were processed resulting in more than 11.7 million visas issued. The number of visa applications processed in the month of September 2015 – when VIS was rolled out in 18 regions out of 23 - represents an increase of 160% compared to the amount registered at the beginning of the reporting period, in September 2013 when VIS was rolled out in 8 regions; whereas the amount of visa issued increased by 200%.

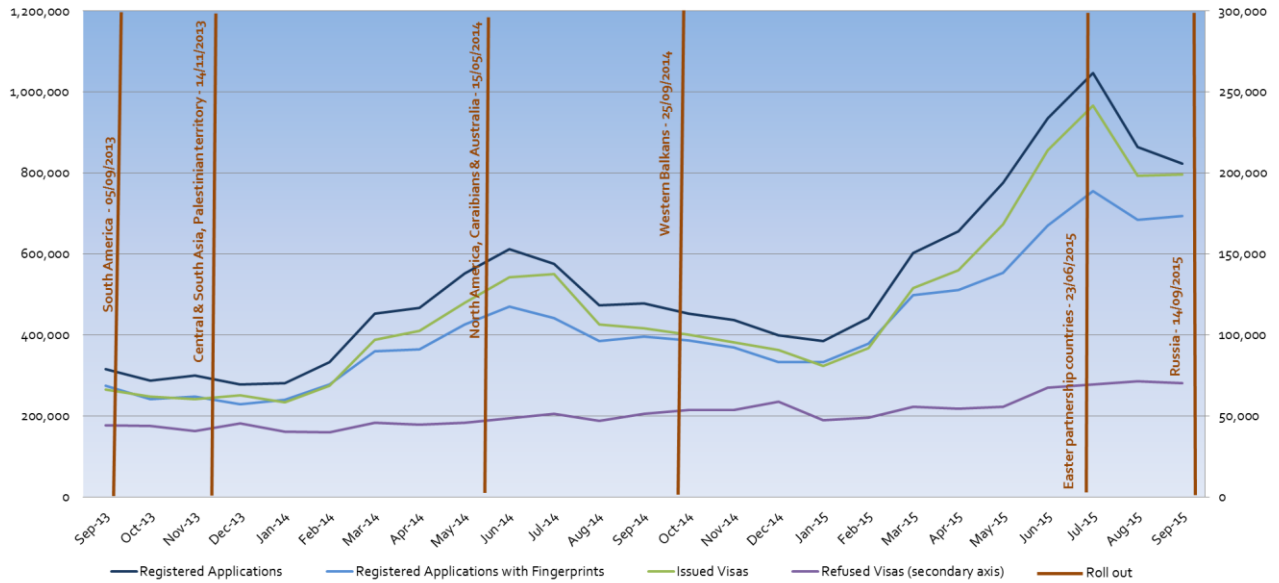


Figure 4: Evolution of registered applications, issued and refused visas during the reporting period

With 1,057,277 visa applications registered, July 2015 was the busiest month for the whole reporting period (and also since entry into operations) in terms of applications. For the first time since its entry into operations, VIS processed more than 1 million applications in one month.

During the reporting period, four Member States each processed over 1 million visa applications, namely France accounting for 28% of the total visa applications, Germany with over 13%, Spain with over 12% and Italy with almost 10% of the total registered applications.

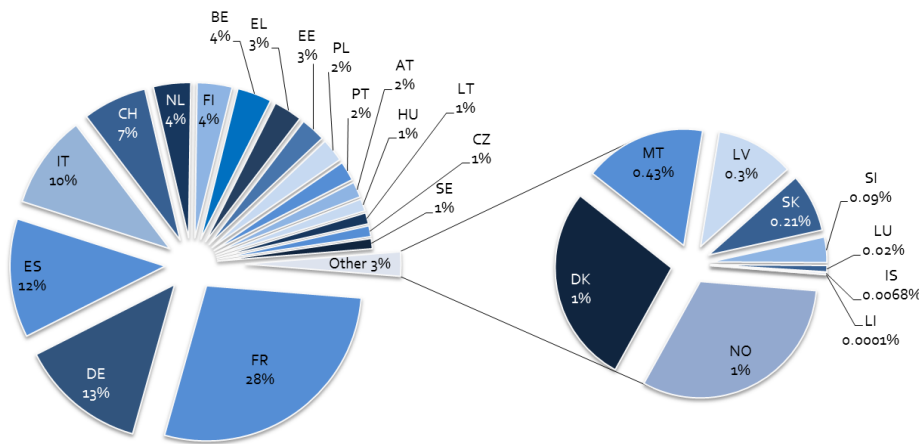


Figure 5: Distribution of registered applications per Member State

As per the data provided by Member States, the total amount of registered applications without fingerprints during the reporting period represents 20% of the total applications processed, which is a decrease compared to what was observed in the first reporting exercise<sup>73</sup>. A visa application can be submitted and stored in VIS without fingerprints for different reasons:

- the applicant is exempt from the fingerprinting requirement for legal reasons (Article 13(7) Visa Code);

<sup>73</sup> During the first reporting period (October 2011 – August 2013), over 25% of applications were without fingerprints. This might be explained by the fact that as mentioned above, some Member States started operations - for specific regions or consular posts or world wide – ahead of the official rollout, without capturing fingerprints.

- it was physically impossible for the applicant to provide fingerprints (Article 13(7) of the Visa Code);
- the application was lodged in a region where the use of the VIS and the collection of the fingerprints were not yet mandatory, i.e. a Member State has anticipated on the VIS go-live using the VIS early than the official deployment in certain regions and decided on not to collect fingerprints.

64% of the registered applications without fingerprints did not contain fingerprints due to the fact that the applicant was exempt from this requirement for legal reasons. On the other hand, 36% of the registered applications without fingerprints did not contain the fingerprints due the fact that it was factually impossible for the applicant to provide fingerprints.

Member States are not always in compliance with the rules on how to indicate the reasons for not collecting fingerprints, which is done by means of two different fields in the system<sup>74</sup> and which affects the quality and accuracy of the data stored in VIS, and subsequently the reporting as well. The respective Member States have been identified and eu-LISA is continuously following up where appropriate until it is evident that the organizational and technical measures needed to improve this practice have been implemented correctly at national level.

## 6.2 Border crossing points activity

During the reporting period as per the data reported by Member States, over 58 million checks at the external borders – both first and second line border checks - were performed.

During the reporting period, the standard first-line checks should have been performed using the visa sticker number and since 11 October 2014 in combination with the fingerprints of the visa holder, as per the provisions of Article 18(2) of VIS Regulation. However, due to the fact that in October 2014 VIS was still not fully rolled out, the recommendation provided by Commission clarified that fingerprints checks were applicable only to visa holders whose fingerprints were already stored in VIS<sup>75</sup>.

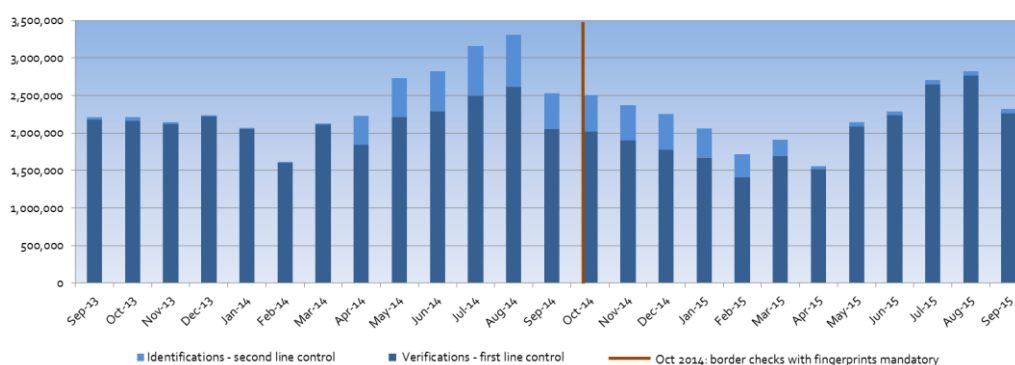


Figure 6: Activities at the border crossing points

Over 51 million first line checks and over 6 million second line checks were performed during the 25 months covered by the current report. In September 2015 Member States reported having had 4% additional first line checks compared to the ones performed in September 2013. Second line checks registered an increase of almost 90% in September 2015 compared to September 2013.

With 2,762,278 first line checks, August 2015 was the busiest month throughout the whole reporting period in terms of verifications at the borders. For the first time since its entry into operations, VIS processed more than 2.7 million border verifications in one month (August 2015).

<sup>74</sup> From a technical point of view it is possible to allow a combination of those fields which is however not possible to have at business level (basically creating an invalid scenario). This combination has a negative impact on Member State reporting, as the violation of this rule leads to imprecise values in some reports. This complex matter has been discussed several times and significant progress has been achieved.

<sup>75</sup> The three-year transitional period from the VIS entry into operations till October 2014, when checks with fingerprints were not mandatory was decided on by the legislator under the assumption that the worldwide VIS roll-out would be completed within two years, i.e. one year before the verification of fingerprints becomes mandatory.

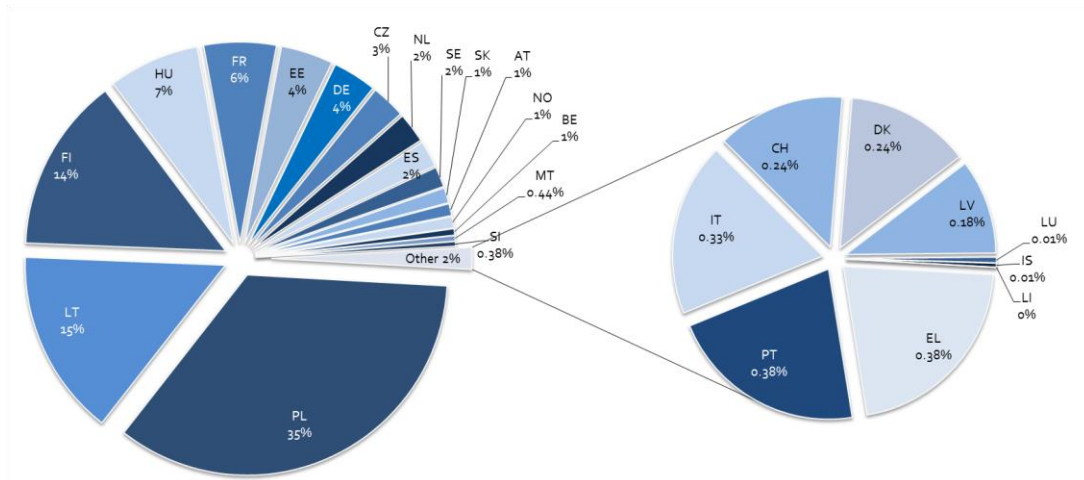


Figure 7: Distribution of first line checks per Member State

It is worth noting that during the reporting period one of the Member States implemented a practice not fully in line with the provisions of Article 18 of the VIS Regulation concerning the second line checks<sup>76</sup>. According to Article 18 of the VIS Regulation, the second line checks should be performed in those cases where verification fails or where there are doubts as to the identity of the visa holder (first line checks). The second line checks should not be systematic for visa holders crossing the external borders, hence, the amount of second line checks should not exceed the number of first line checks.

Following investigations and discussions between the relevant Member State and eu-LISA, actions were taken at national level to correct the practice as from April 2015. The incorrect practice had an impact on the figures reported.

### 6.3 Activities for asylum purposes

The substantial increase of usage of the VIS for asylum purposes is visible in particular as from the 2015 summer. The number of searches related to asylum in the last reported month, September 2015, shows an increase of 355% compared to the total searches executed in the first reported month (September 2013); the increase was of 365% for the identifications performed for asylum purposed.

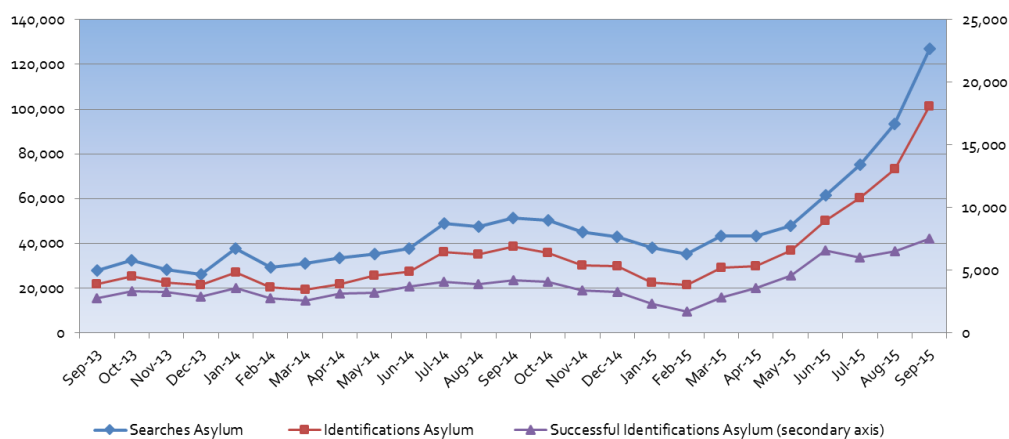


Figure 8: Use of VIS for asylum activities

<sup>76</sup> The VIS Regulation makes a clear distinction between the verification at borders in accordance with Article 18, which is a standard practice for all visa holders entering the Schengen area, and the identification procedure in accordance with Article 20, which provides for the possibility of additional investigations in exceptional cases.

Searches related to asylum, in accordance to Article 21 of the VIS Regulation, were mostly performed by Sweden (over 38% of the total searches reported), by Germany (almost 37%) and the Netherlands with 12.5% of the searches. During the reporting period several Member States started using VIS regularly for searches related to asylum, namely Austria as from November 2014, France as from August 2014, Lithuania as from May 2014, Norway as from March 2015 and Belgium as from July 2015.

Similar to the searches, the big majority of identifications for asylum purposes were performed by few Member States: Germany executed almost 45% of the total identifications reported, Sweden almost 34% followed by the Netherlands and Switzerland each with over 7%. During the reporting period three Member States started using regularly this operation, Denmark as from May 2014, Norway as from March 2015 and Belgium as from June 2015.

Over 50% of the reported hits/successful identifications performed during the reporting period were achieved by Switzerland, followed by Germany and Sweden who each reported 23% of the total hits. Following the increase of identifications performed for asylum purposes, a considerable growth is also visible in the number of hits/ successful identifications. The hits in September 2015 increased by 172% compared to the number of hits in September 2013.

In the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, Luxembourg and Austria it was not possible to calculate the occurrence of hits/successful identifications for asylum due to the lack of technical implementation.

### 6.4 Activities within the territory

Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden did not perform any verification within the territory as per Article 19 of the VIS Regulation during the reporting period; whereas Denmark, Estonia, France, Liechtenstein, Malta and the Netherlands performing very limited amount of verifications.

76% of the total verifications performed within the territory in the whole reporting period were done by Switzerland. Comparing the monthly data from September 2015 with September 2013, the amount of verifications increase in 46%.

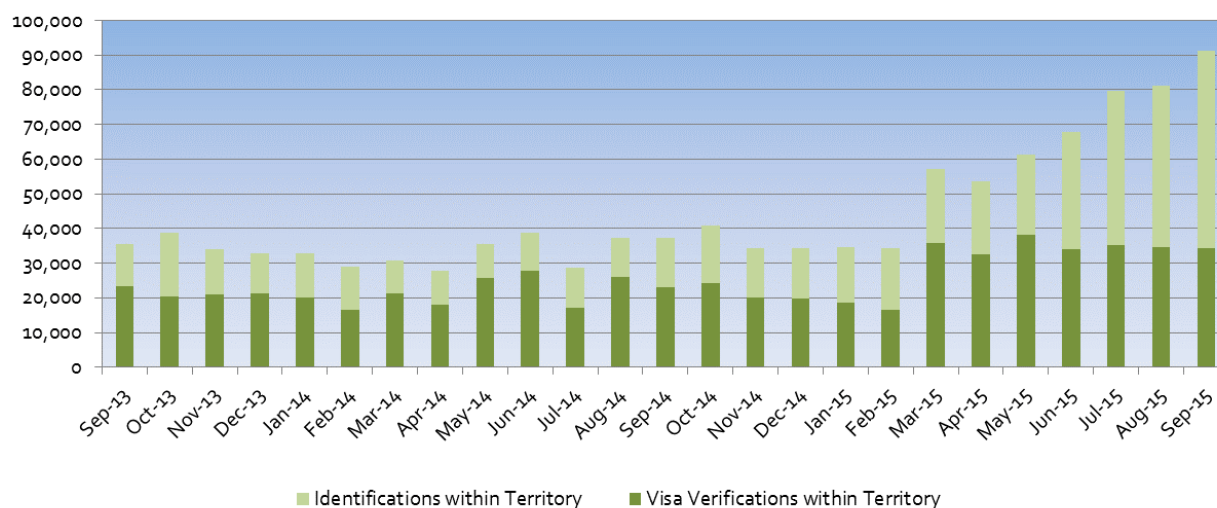


Figure 9: Activities within the territory

Identifications within the territory using second line checks as per Articles 19(3) and 20 of the VIS Regulation were performed by the majority of the Member States (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and Switzerland).

Iceland, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain did not perform any identification. Half of the total identifications executed during the reporting period were performed by two countries, Slovakia with 35% of the total identifications and Greece with 27%.

Comparing the monthly data from September 2015 to September 2013, the amount of identifications increased by over 370%. Together with the average increase in the usage of this functionality by Member States already using it in the previous reporting exercise, 10% of the total identifications were executed by three new users in only a couple of months as from spring/summer 2015. Norway started performing identifications in March 2015 accounting for almost 2.5% of the total identifications for the whole period; Austria started in May 2015 and accounted for over 5% of the total identifications in the reporting period, Belgium started using the functionality in June 2015 accounting for almost 2% of the total identifications for the whole period.

# Report pursuant to Article 17(3) of Council Decision 2008/633/JHA

The Council Decision 2008/633/JHA<sup>77</sup> (here after referred to as “VIS Decision”), determining the conditions under which Member States` designated authorities and Europol may obtain access to VIS, produced effect as from 1 September 2013<sup>78</sup>.

## 1. Legal base and scope of the report

Pursuant to Article 17(3) of the VIS Decision, two years after the VIS entered into operation, eu-LISA in its role of Management Authority for VIS shall submit a report to the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission on the technical functioning of the VIS pursuant to the above mentioned Decision. The report shall include information in particular on the need and use made of Article 4(2).

This report, the first one pursuant to the VIS Decision, covers the period from 01 September 2013 to 30 September 2015. Member States were requested to contribute to the reporting exercise with quantitative and qualitative information<sup>79</sup>, as per Article 17(5) of the VIS Decision.

As per the VIS Decision, Europol should have access to VIS data within the framework of its tasks. However, Europol was not connected to the VIS in the period covered by this report<sup>80</sup>.

## 2. Technical functioning

The system has been supporting in a satisfactory way Member States that granted access to designated authorities pursuant to the VIS Decision for the prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and other serious criminal offences. No issues have been reported by Member States in this respect.

At central level there is no distinction between the technical functioning of the system pursuant to the VIS Regulation and pursuant to the VIS Decision. As a result, for information related to the technical functioning of VIS, see the sections above in this document.

## 3. Member States` reported usage

As per Article 3(3) of the VIS Decision, each Member State shall designate the central access point(s) through which the access pursuant to the Decision is done. France, Italy, Portugal and Sweden did not report to eu-LISA their designated access points<sup>81</sup> and also did not report any end-users. The amount of access point(s) and end-

<sup>77</sup> OJ L218, 13.8.2008

<sup>78</sup> As determined by Council Decision of 22 July 2013 fixing the date of effect of Decision 2008/633/JHA, OJ L198, 27.7.2013.

Council Decision 2013/392/EU was annulled by the Court of Justice of the EU in its judgement of 16 April 2015. The CJEU ruled that the Council should have consulted the European Parliament before adopting the Council Decision 2013/392/EU fixing the date of effect of Decision 2008/633/JHA. However, the Court decided to maintain the legal effects of this Decision until the entry into force of new act intended to replace it. Following the judgement, Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2015/1956 of 26 October 2015 was adopted, this time in consultation with the European Parliament.

<sup>79</sup> Member States were requested to fill in an ad-hoc template, see Annex VII.

<sup>80</sup> In the framework of establishing Europol approach towards interconnectivity with external databases, preliminary contact for implementing the connection to VIS may be established during the next reporting period.

<sup>81</sup> Pursuant to Article 3(4) of the VIS Decision, the Declarations concerning Member States' designated authorities and central access point(s) for access to VIS data for consultation in accordance with Article 3(2) and 3(3) of VIS Decision shall be published on the Official Journal of the EU. The list was published on JO C236, 14.08.2013

users, when reported, considerably varies between the Member States. In the framework of this exercise, the total number of access points reported by all Member States is 135. The estimated number of VIS end-users pursuant to the Decision is over 1,200. Breakdowns per Member States are available in Annex VI.

Several Member States reported having used the VIS during the reporting period for the prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and other serious criminal offences as allowed by the VIS Decision.

Norway, Portugal and Sweden have reported that technical solutions allowing the usage of VIS pursuant to the VIS Decision were not in place during the reporting period. On the other hand twelve Member States - Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta and Slovakia - did not report any activity on the usage of VIS pursuant to the VIS Decision for the purpose of this report.

By the end of September 2015, eleven Member States reported having performed a total of 9,474 searches by law enforcement authorities in accordance with the VIS Decision: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland. Finland, the Netherlands and Slovenia reported very limited usage of VIS for law enforcement purposes, with less than 15 searches each. Over 38% of the whole searches were executed by Germany, followed by Hungary with almost 26%, Poland with almost 14% and Spain with 11% of the total.

### 3.1 Usage of Article 4(2) of the VIS Decision

In accordance with Article 4(2) of the VIS Decision, in an exceptional case of urgency, the central access point(s) may receive written, electronic or oral requests. In such cases, the central access point(s) shall process the request immediately and only verify *ex-post* whether all the conditions of Article 5 are fulfilled, including whether an exceptional case of urgency existed. The *ex-post* verification shall take place without undue delay after the processing of the request.

As per the data reported, during the reporting period 52 urgent searches pursuant to Article 4(2) were performed, all of them by Germany. In none of those searches, the *ex-post* verification declared that there was no urgency.



## Conclusion

During the reporting period, VIS was successfully rolled out in several regions, which accounted in total for more than 50% of the VIS activity. Consequently, this resulted in a substantial increase of the usage of the system by Member States' consular posts: in September 2015 VIS processed 160% visa applications more than in September 2013. By the summer of 2015, VIS processed daily on average 29,000 visa applications and 28,000 visas were issued. A significant increase of the usage of VIS was also visible during the reporting period, especially as from summer 2015, both for asylum purposes as well as by the competent authorities responsible for performing checks within the territory of Member States (in particular for second line checks).

As from 11 October 2014 mandatory border checks against the VIS for third country nationals under Schengen visa obligation, must be carried out using the visa sticker number in combination with the fingerprints checks of the visa holders in case the later were already stored in VIS. Important evolutions have been implemented at central level, in particular in the Biometric Matching System (BMS), to assist and support Member States in complying with the mandatory legal provisions.

As from 1 September 2013, a number of Member States' law enforcement authorities started executing searches in VIS for the prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and other serious criminal offences pursuant to the VIS Decision.

All along the 25 months covered by the reports, the Central VIS has been consistently performing well. The system has met the expectations of Member States and it has proven to effectively support the increased business demand. A number of critical projects of significant scale were successfully delivered during the reporting period to further support the Member States in the implementation of the common visa policy and border management.

In particular, a new search engine was deployed for VIS and its transactional processing capacity substantially increased from 60,000 up to 300,000 operations per hour; further increases - up to 450,000 operations per hour and up to 60 million visa applications storage - are in progress. Capacity upscale was also implemented in phases for the BMS and works are continuously on-going to further support the increasing business activity. Preparatory works for the migration to VIS Mail 2 consultation mechanism were carried out during the reporting period, and VIS Mail 2 successfully entered into operation on 20 January 2016.

eu-LISA is continuously enhancing the performance of the system by upgrading the current VIS and BMS storage and processing capacity and increasing the system's processing times to better support the business and particularly border related activities of the Member States.

## Annexes

### I. Data reported by Member States<sup>82</sup> on the usage of VIS pursuant to the VIS Regulation

Period	Registered Applications	Registered Applications with Fingerprints	Registered Applications without Fingerprints	Registered Applications without Fingerprints – legal	Registered Applications without Fingerprints – factual	Issued Visas	Refused Visas	Refused Visas per Applicant	Refused Visas – fingerprints could not be provided factually	Visa Verifications Border	Visa Verifications within Territory	Identifications Border	Identifications within Territory	Searches Asylum	Identifications Asylum	Successful Identifications Asylum
Sep-2013	317,082	274,714	40,763	36,458	4,292	265,363	44,273	108	2,748	2,176,795	23,472	31,020	12,079	27,863	21,761	2,758
Oct-2013	287,477	242,061	49,761	39,073	10,690	249,128	44,198	204	3,111	2,164,258	20,449	46,031	18,213	32,445	25,384	3,293
Nov-2013	300,951	248,858	50,734	22,527	28,208	242,976	40,842	182	2,963	2,119,814	20,930	24,541	12,957	28,062	22,321	3,270
Dec-2013	278,867	229,094	48,406	23,067	25,339	251,424	45,789	1,144	3,519	2,221,537	21,345	14,009	11,539	26,137	21,267	2,879
<b>2013 Total</b>	<b>1,184,377</b>	<b>994,727</b>	<b>189,664</b>	<b>121,125</b>	<b>68,539</b>	<b>1,008,891</b>	<b>175,102</b>	<b>1,638</b>	<b>12,341</b>	<b>8,682,404</b>	<b>86,196</b>	<b>115,601</b>	<b>54,788</b>	<b>114,507</b>	<b>90,733</b>	<b>12,200</b>
Jan-2014	281,207	240,840	38,655	21,668	16,987	233,621	40,353	169	3,369	2,053,001	20,156	15,661	12,571	37,596	26,949	3,595
Feb-2014	333,207	278,574	52,983	31,604	21,379	275,920	40,102	174	3,658	1,602,528	16,583	13,595	12,329	29,202	20,410	2,775
Mar-2014	453,229	360,100	91,633	62,966	28,667	388,259	46,003	215	4,305	2,109,142	21,226	16,008	9,557	30,892	19,319	2,553
Apr-2014	468,109	364,502	105,867	80,135	25,732	411,449	44,904	165	4,605	1,843,200	18,092	385,703	9,746	33,286	21,753	3,147
May-2014	551,846	425,830	123,377	99,583	23,803	479,925	46,054	132	4,973	2,214,524	25,776	517,340	9,614	35,069	25,411	3,189
Jun-2014	612,940	470,685	138,438	111,607	26,840	542,578	48,834	95	5,932	2,289,034	27,882	534,292	10,949	37,718	27,362	3,668
Jul-2014	576,039	442,133	129,967	105,984	23,986	551,264	51,490	126	6,562	2,496,182	17,090	661,112	11,669	48,969	36,102	4,051
Aug-2014	473,935	386,135	86,116	68,078	18,042	426,587	47,198	85	5,795	2,610,920	25,999	698,082	11,254	47,294	35,091	3,905
Sep-2014	478,697	396,526	80,504	61,667	18,838	417,411	51,630	4,078	5,349	2,049,385	23,096	483,110	14,176	51,440	38,689	4,171
Oct-2014	454,089	387,768	65,187	44,773	20,418	401,857	53,973	165	4,609	2,017,296	24,334	489,189	16,645	50,170	35,638	4,056
Nov-2014	437,359	369,809	66,270	49,055	17,220	381,728	54,029	243	4,354	1,897,040	20,227	471,999	14,022	44,920	30,210	3,395
Dec-2014	399,617	333,562	64,745	47,682	17,076	363,682	58,836	1,687	5,447	1,773,389	19,724	476,768	14,735	42,927	29,789	3,225
<b>2014 Total</b>	<b>5,520,274</b>	<b>4,456,464</b>	<b>1,043,742</b>	<b>784,802</b>	<b>258,988</b>	<b>4,874,281</b>	<b>583,406</b>	<b>7,334</b>	<b>58,958</b>	<b>24,955,641</b>	<b>260,185</b>	<b>4,762,859</b>	<b>147,267</b>	<b>489,483</b>	<b>346,723</b>	<b>41,730</b>
Jan-2015	386,700	334,239	51,173	40,176	10,998	323,864	47,466	137	3,777	1,662,768	18,643	398,885	15,875	37,994	22,247	2,340
Feb-2015	443,230	379,953	61,827	14,747	367,939	49,321	195	4,010	1,407,769	16,674	307,918	17,716	35,323	21,449	1,697	
Mar-2015	602,964	499,406	101,746	75,202	26,519	516,175	56,030	199	4,627	1,688,373	35,883	221,038	21,311	43,121	28,979	2,834
Apr-2015	656,585	512,614	142,187	93,713	48,437	560,765	54,808	256	4,596	1,512,230	32,587	45,192	20,963	43,203	29,873	3,560
May-2015	777,459	555,155	220,669	110,914	109,733	673,834	55,882	172	5,557	2,088,809	38,167	51,866	23,049	47,888	36,751	4,543
Jun-2015	937,181	672,367	261,735	130,682	130,636	857,663	67,865	268	8,067	2,235,637	34,114	51,220	33,750	61,326	50,234	6,539
Jul-2015	1,057,277	764,400	291,390	127,043	163,341	975,457	69,724	231	8,501	2,648,044	35,273	57,296	44,287	74,970	60,138	5,974
Aug-2015	872,705	692,177	178,105	93,279	84,213	801,916	71,541	324	7,687	2,762,728	34,632	59,692	46,653	93,276	73,225	6,498
Sep-2015	832,431	701,581	129,436	78,734	50,407	804,390	70,674	3,650	7,096	2,263,593	34,229	59,027	56,947	126,868	101,097	7,509
<b>2015 Total</b>	<b>6,566,532</b>	<b>5,111,892</b>	<b>1,438,268</b>	<b>796,806</b>	<b>639,022</b>	<b>5,882,003</b>	<b>543,311</b>	<b>5,432</b>	<b>53,918</b>	<b>18,269,951</b>	<b>280,202</b>	<b>1,252,134</b>	<b>280,543</b>	<b>563,969</b>	<b>423,993</b>	<b>41,494</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,271,183</b>	<b>10,563,083</b>	<b>2,671,674</b>	<b>1,702,733</b>	<b>966,539</b>	<b>11,765,175</b>	<b>1,301,819</b>	<b>14,404</b>	<b>125,217</b>	<b>51,907,996</b>	<b>626,583</b>	<b>6,130,594</b>	<b>482,598</b>	<b>1,167,959</b>	<b>861,449</b>	<b>95,424</b>

<sup>82</sup> The Netherlands: from September 2013 till April 2014 data was not available for "Registered Applications without Fingerprints – factual".

## II. Data reported by Member States on the usage of VIS pursuant to the VIS Decision

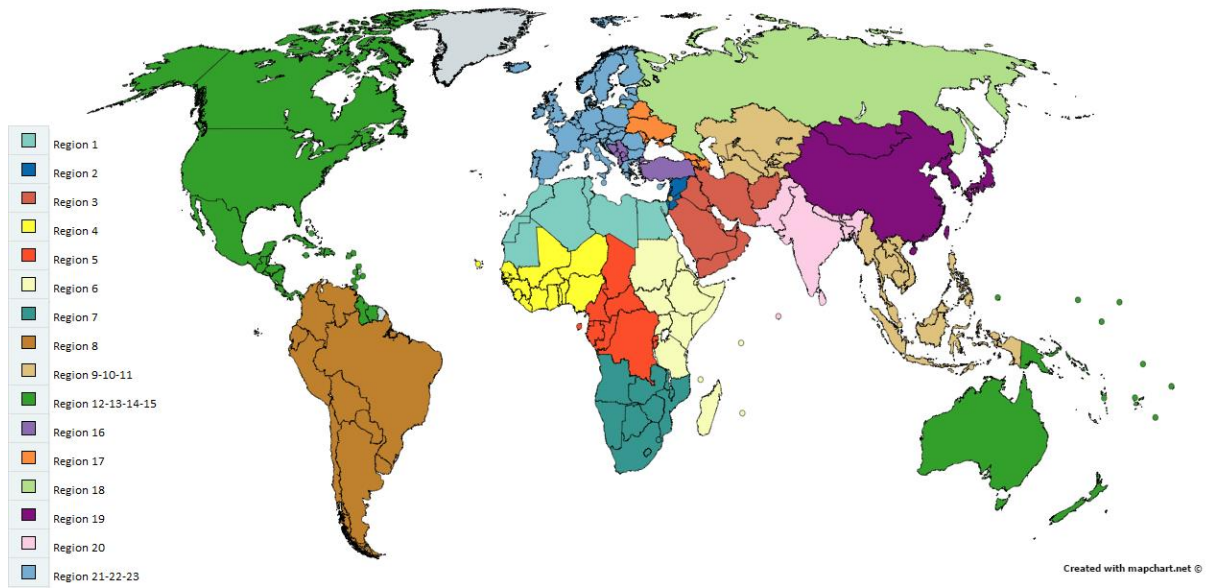
Period	Use of Article 4(2)		Number of all searches
	Number of urgent cases	Number of 4(2) where ex-post no urgency	
Sep-2013	0	0	522
Oct-2013	12	0	702
Nov-2013	2	0	243
Dec-2013	0	0	291
<b>2013 Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,758</b>
Jan-2014	0	0	287
Feb-2014	11	0	222
Mar-2014	1	0	213
Apr-2014	13	0	407
May-2014	0	0	243
Jun-2014	1	0	115
Jul-2014	1	0	331
Aug-2014	1	0	197
Sep-2014	2	0	268
Oct-2014	0	0	399
Nov-2014	1	0	501
Dec-2014	0	0	228
<b>2014 Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,411</b>
Jan-2015	1	0	560
Feb-2015	1	0	309
Mar-2015	0	0	730
Apr-2015	0	0	341
May-2015	0	0	295
Jun-2015	0	0	260
Jul-2015	0	0	670
Aug-2015	4	0	638
Sep-2015	1	0	502
<b>2015 Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,305</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,474</b>

### III. VIS roll-out schedule and map

#### a. Completed schedule of VIS rollout (in dark blue the regions rolled out during the reporting period)

Nr	Regions	Start operations
1	North Africa: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia	11/10/2011
2	The Near East: Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria	10/05/2012
3	The Gulf region: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen	02/10/2012
4	West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo	14/03/2013
5	Central Africa: Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Cameroon, Central African Republic and Chad	14/03/2013
6	East Africa: Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania, Uganda, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan	06/06/2013
7	Southern Africa; Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe	06/06/2013
8	South America: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela	05/09/2013
9-10-11	9/Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan. 10/South East Asia: Brunei, Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam 11/Palestinian territory: The occupied Palestinian territory	14/11/2013
12-13-14-15	12/Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama. 13/Canada, Mexico and the United States. 14/Antigua and Barbuda, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Cuba, Dominica, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. 15/Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.	15/05/2014
16	Western Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey.	25/09/2014
17	Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine.	23/06/2015
18	Russia	14/09/2015
19	China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan.	12/10/2015
20	Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka.	02/11/2015
21-22-23	21/Andorra, Holy See, Monaco, San Marino. 22/Ireland and the UK. 23/Schengen Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland).	20/11/2015
	External border crossing points region.	29/02/2016

b. VIS roll-out map



#### IV. List of National Authorities per Member State pursuant to Article 28(2) VIS Regulation

<b>Austria</b>	Bundesministerium für Inneres
<b>Belgium</b>	FPS of Interior - DVZOE Brussels
<b>The Czech Republic</b>	Directorate of alien police service
<b>Denmark</b>	Ministry of Immigration, Integration alien police service and Housing
<b>Estonia</b>	Ministry of the Interior (Siseministeerium)
<b>Finland</b>	Visa National Authority, Helsinki, Ministry for Foreign Affairs
<b>France</b>	Ministry of Interior
<b>Germany</b>	Federal Office of Administration (Bundesverwaltungsamt)
<b>Greece</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>Hungary</b>	Office of Immigration and Nationality
<b>Iceland</b>	The Directorate of Immigration
<b>Italy</b>	DGIT - Ufficio VI - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
<b>Latvia</b>	OCMA Migration division
<b>Liechtenstein</b>	Ausländer- und Passamt
<b>Lithuania</b>	Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs - Bureau des Passeports/Visas/Légalisations
<b>Malta</b>	Central Visa Unit MFA
<b>The Netherlands</b>	Minister of Foreign Affairs (Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken)
<b>Norway</b>	Directorate of Immigration (Utlendingsdirektoratet)
<b>Poland</b>	Central Technical Authority - Commander in Chief of the Police
<b>Portugal</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consular department
<b>Slovakia</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
<b>Slovenia</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consular department
<b>Spain</b>	Directorate-General of Consular and Immigration Affairs — Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Dirección General de Asuntos Consulares y Migratorios — Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación)
<b>Sweden</b>	Swedish Migration Agency in Norrkoeping
<b>Switzerland</b>	FDJP, SEM, Central National Authority

## V. Number of end-users per Member State pursuant to VIS Regulation

<b>Austria</b>	VISA CP - Ministry of European and International Affairs: 857 end-users VISA Border - Ministry of Interior: 245 end-users VISA CNA - Ministry of Interior: 10 end-users VISA Territory Check - Ministry of Interior: 28,483 end-users Asylum Authority - Ministry of Interior: 327 end-users National Supervisor: 6 end-users
<b>Belgium</b>	Asylum Authority: 181 end-users Border Post: 797 end-users Consular Post: 806 end-users Territory Check Authority: 181 end-users Visa National Authority: 413 end-users
<b>The Czech Republic</b>	Directorate of alien police service: 163 end-users Police of the Czech Republic - Section for residency issues: 694 end-users Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 540 end-users Department for asylum and migration policy: 150 end-users
<b>Denmark</b>	Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing: 15 end-users Danish Immigration Service: 230 end-users Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 500 end-users National Police <sup>83</sup> : 350 end-users
<b>Estonia</b>	Ministry of foreign Affairs (Välisministeerium): 94 end-users Police and Border Guard Board (Politsei- ja Piirivalveamet): 140 end-users Northern Prefecture (Põhja Prefektuur): 166 end-users Eastern Prefecture (Ida Prefektuur): 96 end-users Southern Prefecture (Lõuna Prefektuur): 102 end-users Western Prefecture (Lääne Prefektuur): 62 end-users Ministry of the Interior (Siseministeerium): 2 end-users
<b>Finland</b>	Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Ulkoasiainministeriö/ Utrikesministeriet): 542 end-users Finnish Border Guard (Rajavartiolaitos/Gränsbevakningsväsendet): 1,885 end-users Customs (Tulli/Tull): 1,078 end-users Police (Poliisi/Polisen): 1,337 end-users Finnish Immigration Service (Maahanmuuttovirasto/ Migrationsverket): 188 end-users
<b>France</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs : 181 consular posts, 900 end-users Ministry of Interior: 46 border control posts, 400 territory units Ministry of Finance: 83 border control posts
<b>Germany</b>	No data was provided <sup>84</sup>
<b>Greece</b>	Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 561 end-users Aliens' Directorate of the Hellenic Police and Ministry of Citizens' Protection and Public Order: 3,513 end-users Hellenic Data Protection Authority: 3 end-users
<b>Hungary</b>	Office of Immigration and Nationality: 219 end-users Police: 3,411 end-users
<b>Iceland</b>	Directorate of Immigration: 33 end-users Icelandic Embassy 8 end-users District Commissioner: 75 end-users
<b>Italy</b>	Consular Post: 280 end-users

<sup>83</sup> In principle all security cleared operative personnel within the Danish police will have access to perform a verification or identification via the police system where the VIS access is integrated, which would constitute a potential 12.000 users. In reality the usage will likely be centralised around the external borders and the division within the police working with different aspects concerning foreign nationals, thus an "operational" number of users, should be set at 350 users.

<sup>84</sup>For an estimation, please refer to the figures provided by Germany in the report published in March 2014 available at the following link [http://www.eulisa.europa.eu/Publications/p\\_reports/Pages/default.aspx?RID=6](http://www.eulisa.europa.eu/Publications/p_reports/Pages/default.aspx?RID=6)

	<p>Border Post: 2,000 end-users          Visa National Authority: 15 end-users          Territory Check Authority: 700 end-users          Asylum Authority: 19 end-users          National Supervisor: 10 end-users</p>
<b>Latvia</b>	<p>Ministry for Foreign Affairs: 23 end-users          State Border Guard: 803 end-users</p>
<b>Liechtenstein</b>	<p>Ausländer- und Passamt: 15 end-users          Landespolizei: 20 end-users          Datenschutzstelle: 1 end-users</p>
<b>Lithuania</b>	<p>Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Lietuvos Respublikos užsienio reikalų ministerija): 148 end-users          State Border Protection Service (Valstybės sienos apsaugos tarnyba prie Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerijos): 1,950 end-users          Department of Migration (Migracijos departamentas prie Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerijos): 22 end-users</p>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	<p>Central Authority: 11 end-users          Embassies: 84 end-users          Frontiers: 32 end-users          Asylum: 14 end-users</p>
<b>Malta</b>	<p>Consular Posts: 106 end-users          Immigration Police/Security: 132 end-users</p>
<b>The Netherlands</b>	<p>Minister for Foreign Affairs (Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken): 200 end-users          Royal Military Constabulary (Koninklijke Marechaussee): 4,235 end-users          Police: 150 end-users          Immigration and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst): 200 end-users          Minister for Immigration and Asylum (Minister voor Immigratie en Asiel): 200 end-users</p>
<b>Norway</b>	<p>Directorate of Immigration (Utlendingsdirektoratet): 259 end-users          National Police Directorate (Politidirektoratet): 206 end-users</p>
<b>Poland</b>	<p>Internal Security Agency (CPA) : 10 end-users          Government Protection Bureau (CPA): 2 end-users          Customs Service : 230 end-users          Police: 89,815 end-users          Border Guard: 10,486 end-users          Foreign Intelligence Agency (CPA): 7 end-users          Central Anticorruption Bureau (CPA): 4 end-users          Fiscal supervision authorities CPA): 2 end-users          Military Counterintelligence Service (CPA): 3 end-users          Military Intelligence Service (CPA): 3 end-users          Military Police (CPA): 7 end-users          Court /Public prosecutor's office/Police (CPA): 20 end-users          Provincial Governor: 320 end-users          Consulates and Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 443 end-users          Office for Foreigners: 80 end-users          Refugee Board: 3 end-users</p>
<b>Portugal</b>	<p>Visa National Authority: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consular department: 33 end-users          Consular Post: Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 250 end-users          Border Post: Ministry of Interior, State border and aliens sections: 383 end-users</p>
<b>Slovakia</b>	<p>Consular post: 325 end-users          Border post: 98 end-users          Territory check authority: 176 end-users          Visa national authority: 21 end-users</p>
<b>Slovenia</b>	<p>Visa National Authority- Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Consular department: 4 end-users          Consular Post - Ministry of Foreign Affairs: 22 end-users          Border Post - Ministry of Interior, Police, State border and aliens sections: 2,578 end-users</p>



	Territory Check Authority: Ministry of Interior, General police directorate: 5,726 end-users
<b>Spain</b>	Consular Posts - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación): 690 end-users Border Control Posts & Territory Check Authority - General Aliens and Borders Department - Ministry of Interior (Comisaría General de Extranjería y Fronteras - Ministerio del Interior): 4.573 end-users Visa National Authority - Directorate-General of Consular and Immigration Affairs - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Dirección General de Asuntos Consulares y Migratorios - Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación): 9 end-users
<b>Sweden</b>	Migration Agency: 6,050 end-users Police: 8,189 end-users Embassies of Sweden: 578 end-users
<b>Switzerland</b>	Embassies: 1,088 end-users Border guards services: 2,523 end-users Federal office for migration: 4,060 end-users Migration offices of the cantons: 3,172 end-users

## VI. Number of access points and end-users per Member State pursuant to VIS Decision

Member State	Access point(s)	End user(s)
Austria	1	16
Belgium	39	
The Czech Republic	1	20
Denmark	1	19
Estonia	7	569
Finland	4	81
France		
Germany	14	
Greece	13	15
Hungary	1	37
Iceland	1	1
Italy		
Latvia	4	50
Liechtenstein	1	1
Lithuania	8	44
Luxembourg	11	41
Malta	1	14
The Netherlands	1	11
Norway	2	206
Poland	11	74
Portugal		
Slovakia	3	
Slovenia	9	53
Spain	1	10
Sweden		
Switzerland	1	24

## VII. Template for Member States to submit the required information for VIS pursuant to the VIS Regulation

Report 3: Report on the technical functioning of the VIS and the security thereof pursuant to Article 50(3) of the Regulation (EC) No 767/2008																
Member State	<Member State>															
Report generated at	<timestamp> [VIS into operation + 21 months, Frequency + 24 months]															
Year:	<Year(date)>															
Time period from	<date> to <date> [MS into operation + 12 months + 9 months (separately), every 12 months thereafter]															
Management of the System																
General Description of MS																
Central National Authority	<Name> [Article 28(2)]															
End-Users[1]	<Authority Name + Total Number of End-users in each>...															
Monitoring and Reporting	<Description of Procedures>															
Description of audits, if any	<Description of audits by the National Supervisor and findings>															
Technical Functioning of the System																
CS-VIS and BMS	<Description of experiences and findings>															
NI-VIS	<Description of technical functionality, updates, encountered issues, if any>															
VIS Mail	<Description of functionalities, encountered issues, if any>															
Security of the System																
MS Security Measures	<Description of audits, if any, any incidents or problems encountered>															
Workload and Performance[2]																
CS-VIS and BMS, NI-VIS																
<Description of the Performance> + the following Statistics, if available																
2 x 12 months data separately [Note exception with 1 <sup>st</sup> report 12 + 9]	Registered Applications	Registered Applications with Fingerprints	Registered Applications without Fingerprints	Registered Applications without Fingerprints – legal	Registered Applications without Fingerprints – factual	Issued Visas	Refused Visas	Refused Visas per Applicant[3]	Refused Visas – fingerprints could not be provided factually	Visa Verifications Border	Visa Verifications within Territory	Identifications Border	Identifications within Territory	Searches Asylum	Identifications Asylum	Successful Identifications Asylum
January	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
February	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
March	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
April	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
May	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
June	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
July	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
August	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
September	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
October	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
November	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
December	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
Total	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>
Reference for collection of data	C.C.R. 3.2.3	C.C.R. 3.2.3	C.C.R. 3.2.3	C.C.R. 3.2.3	C.C.R. 3.2.3	C.C.R. 3.2.2	C.C.R. 3.2.1	C.C.R. 3.2.14	C.C.R. 3.2.18	Retrieve VerificationB order + Authenticate ByFingerprint VerificationB order	Retrieve VerificationT erritory + Authenticate ByFingerprint VerificationT erritory	Search Identification Border + Retrieve Identification Border + SearchByFingerprint Identification Border	Search IdentificationT erritory + Retrieve IdentificationT erritory + SearchByFingerprint IdentificationT erritory	Search AsylumResponsibility/AsylumExamination + Retrieve AsylumResponsibility/AsylumExamination + SearchByFingerprint AsylumResponsibility/AsylumExamination	SearchByFingerprint AsylumResponsibility/AsylumExamination	<Positive Results of the Previous>

**VIII. Template for Member States to submit the required information for VIS pursuant to the VIS Decision**

Report No 4: Report on the technical functioning of the VIS pursuant to Article 17(3) of the Council Decision 2008/633/JHA					
Member State/Europol	<Member State/Europol>				
Report generated at	<timestamp> [MS into operation + 21 months, Frequency + 24 months]				
Year:	<Year(date)>				
Time period from	<date> to <date> [VIS into operation + 12 months + 9 months (separately), every 12 months thereafter]				
Management of the System [pursuant to VIS Decision]					
General Description of MS					
Central National Authority	<Name> [Article 28(2) VIS Regulation]				
End-Users[1]	<Total Number of End-users>...				
Number of Access Points	<Total Number of Access Points>				
Monitoring and Reporting	<Description of Procedures>				
Description of audits, if any	<Description of audits by the National Supervisor and findings>				
Activities Performed on behalf of another MS	<Description and number of activities referred to in Article 6 of the VIS Decision>				
Technical Functioning of the System					
CS-VIS	<Description of experiences and findings> [Only pursuant to VIS Decision]				
NI-VIS	<Description of technical functionality, updates, encountered issues, if any> [as above]				
Use of Article 4(2)	<Description of situations and results of ex-post verifications>				
Workload and Performance					
CS-VIS and BMS, NI-VIS	<Description of the Performance> + the following Statistics [2] [From designated authorities viewpoint]				
2 x 12 months data separately [Note exception with 1st report 12 + 9 months]	Use of Article 4(2)			Other Remarks	
	Number of Urgent Cases	Number of 4(2) where ex-post no urgency	Number of All Searches		
	January	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	February	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	March	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	April	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	May	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	June	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	July	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	August	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	September	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	October	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	November	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
	December	<Total>	<Total>		<Total>
<b>Total</b>	<Total>	<Total>	<Total>		



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