eu-LISA: MANAGING THE IT BACKBONE OF THE SCHENGEN AREA

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

The core mission of eu-LISA is to continuously assist Member States to create a safer Europe through the use of state-of-the-art technological solutions. The Agency supports national authorities in the constant exchange of information across Europe: in doing so, eu-LISA contributes to the internal security and safer borders of the Member States and the European Union. The main objectives of eu-LISA are to:

— provide high quality and efficient services and solutions for large-scale IT systems in the area of justice and home affairs – and grow as a centre of excellence in the field;
— earn stakeholders' trust by continuously aligning technology capabilities with the evolving needs of the Member States.

OVERVIEW OF THE IT SYSTEMS

eu-LISA manages the following three IT systems:

European Asylum Dactyloscopy (Fingerprint) database (Eurodac)

Eurodac helps Member States to manage asylum applications. It is a European database that collects and processes the digitalised fingerprints of asylum seekers and irregular migrants who have entered a European country. This helps determine the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application.

Schengen Information System II (SIS II)

The second generation Schengen Information System is a large-scale IT system that supports the exchange of information on people and objects between national police, border control, customs, visa and judicial authorities. Since people and goods can move throughout the Schengen Area without being checked at internal borders, SIS II is a tool used by security officials to help keep people safe.

Visa Information System (VIS)

VIS supports the implementation of the EU's common visa policy and facilitates border checks. The system enables dedicated national authorities and Europol (the European Police Office) to enter and consult data, including biometrics (personal data), for short-stay visa requests to access the Schengen Area.

SCHENGEN AREA

Within the Schengen Area, internal border controls have been removed to enable free movement of people and goods. This provides the EU and its citizens with many important benefits. The Schengen Area is comprised of 26 countries: 22 EU Member States and 4 Associated Countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein). All 26 Schengen Area countries benefit from the work eu-LISA performs to help make life safe and secure for their citizens.

WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS

eu-LISA strives to foster and extend cooperation with all relevant parties. These include EU Member States and Associated Countries, EU Institutions (in particular the Council of the EU, the European Commission and the European Parliament), EU Agencies (in particular the Agencies operating in the area of freedom, security and justice), international organisations, academia, research organisations, non-governmental organisations and the media.

eu-LISA'S GOVERNING BODIES

The administrative and management structure of eu-LISA is comprised of a Management Board, Advisory Groups and an Executive Director.

The Management Board consists of representatives of EU Member States and the European Commission. Associated Countries (Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein) and agencies (Europol and Eurojust) are also represented. The role of the Board is to ensure that eu-LISA delivers the tasks and results set in the Agency's mandate in the most cost-effective way, taking into account the strategic goals and objectives of the Agency.

The role of the Advisory Groups is to provide the Management Board with relevant expert advice as well as support on various technical issues relating to the evolution and further development of the existing systems. Three Advisory Groups have been created for Eurodac, SIS II and VIS.

Krum Garkov is the Executive Director of eu-LISA since 1 November 2012.

PROTECTING YOUR DATA

eu-LISA respects the principles of data protection and information security. Authorities working with personal data are trained to ensure it is lawfully processed, transmitted, stored or deleted.
Data rights are key to data protection: all people have the right to be informed about data stored on themselves and request that inaccurate data be corrected or that unlawfully recorded data be deleted, within the legally established limits.

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

TOWARDS STRONGER AND SMARTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR BORDERS AND SECURITY

In 2015 eu-LISA carried out, in close cooperation with Member States, the Smart Borders Pilot project to assess new technologies on EU borders and provide decision-makers with information on the feasibility of using biometric identifiers at the Schengen Area's external borders. The high standards of daily performance and expertise provided have placed eu-LISA among the institutions tasked to further contribute to building a stronger and smarter IT architecture for EU border checks and security. eu-LISA is focused on improving the data quality of all the systems, increasing the interoperability of the already existing systems and contributing to the development of new IT systems in cooperation with Member States.

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eu-LISA

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