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from :	Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania and Slovakia delegations
to :	Mixed Committee at the level of high officials
	Mixed Committee at the level of Ministers
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Subject :	Joint declaration on the SIS II legal framework discussions

The Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania and Slovakia would like to take this opportunity to express their high appreciation for continuous efforts of the Austrian Presidency, the Commission and the European Parliament in prioritising the SIS II development and the progress achieved.

The development and successful implementation of the SIS II is one of the key elements for the SIS II project and consequently for the enlargement of the Schengen Area. The SIS II is the essential tool for ensuring the security of our citizens and migration control. It is also a precondition for lifting the controls on internal borders, which represents another attribute of the full EU membership.

It shall be emphasized, though, that for reaching the ambitious political goal of operation of the SIS II and lifting the border control in 2007 (The Hague Programme, paragraph 1.7.1.) a lot of additional effort is needed from all involved Parties.

We also recall the discussions on the legal framework for the SIS II at meetings of the Schengen Acquis Working Party and the conclusions of the High Level Group on SIS II held on 5 April 2006.

The use of biometrics as proposed is indeed a new and very important functionality of the SIS II and it is a big progress in comparison to the current system. By using biometrics identifiers as primary search key for identification purposes when searching SIS II from 2009 it would considerably promote the EU security. Therefore we fully support the Presidency approach and invite all involved Parties to be flexible and constructive in order to reach compromise on this case. However, the questions on biometrics should **not delay** the adoption of the SIS II legal framework.

We express our full support to the Presidency's approach in bringing the negotiations on the legal framework for SIS II to a successful conclusion. We again underline the crucial importance of finding a good compromise, which is only possible if all Parties show necessary flexibility in reaching the common interest.

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