

Informal Council of Ministers for Home Affairs

Prague, 15 January 2009

SIS II

Background

The second generation of Schengen Information System (SIS II) is a very comprehensive project under development. This system was intended to enable the integration of a greater number of Member States, allow for the integration of new functions, benefit from the latest development in the field of information technology and, following its completion, replace SIS1+. The Commission is responsible for the development of the central system and the communication infrastructure while the Member States are responsible for the development of the national systems. Further testing of SIS II as well as the migration from SIS 1+ to SIS II is governed by the legal instruments adopted by the Council in November 2008 on the migration from SIS 1+ to SIS II.

Pending SIS II development, 9 new Member States were integrated into the SIS1+ via the SISone4ALL in 2007, enabling them to fully participate in the Schengen cooperation. This project was implemented by the Member States based on their solidarity only as an interim solution. The same approach was also used in the case of Switzerland in 2008.

The Czech Republic will chair the Council at a substantially advanced stage of the development of SIS II project and as already highlighted at the last Council meeting, intends to ensure that the greatest effort is put into a successful completion of the project.

Following the development of the central and national parts of the SIS II, the Operational System Test (OST) phase, aimed at testing the central system under operational conditions with a limited number of Member States, ended in December 2008.

The last information on the OST provided by the Commission during the Article 36 Committee meeting on 18 December 2008 indicated that the number of bugs in the central SIS II was reduced between November and December 2008 and substantial progress has been achieved.

However, during this phase, a number of problems have persisted and need to be resolved in the area of data consistency (mechanism that ensures the equivalence of data between the national systems and the central system), performance and robustness of the system.

According to the Commission, an in-depth analysis of the current SIS II solution, which has been conducted by the Commission in parallel with the OST, indicates that the outstanding issues can be solved without a major re-design of the SIS II application.

The fact that some of the blocking bugs are still present and that more time is needed for their resolution shows that the date for migration from SIS1+ to SIS II set for September 2009 is not realistic anymore. This situation requires a thorough discussion at Ministerial level on the best way to reach the common goals regarding SIS II, which includes the availability of the new SIS II functionalities and the creation of conditions for the integration of waiting Member States in the Schengen cooperation.

It seems obvious that, in order to fulfil the above stated goals, the project will require new stimuli and both careful and thorough consideration of all alternative scenarios. The necessary studies and analysis are already under way. Therefore it is important to be able to assess them with regard to the common political objectives and to have the means to compare alternative scenarios on the basis of coherent criteria.

The Czech Presidency is convinced that the dialogue at the informal ministerial meeting will offer an impulse in order to channel further steps towards the goal of this common project.

Points for discussion

Way forward

Based on the current status of the project, proceeding towards the root cause analysis together with solutions for findings and repair of SIS II – in its current technical configuration - seems to represent the desirable way forward.

'Business as usual' is not an option. We need to set up the right framework to reach the shared objective of bringing SIS II into operation. Due to the recent delays, the current schedule and therefore the planned launch date of SIS II has become unachievable. In this situation, it is appropriate to implement **immediately** a working method that ensures a global approach of the project, **including thorough analysis, effective test methodology and management and monitoring concepts**. This will make it possible to finalize the project and prevent further unexpected complications in the future.

- **Global project management approach and monitoring**

Member States should be actively involved in the management of the project in order to ensure the necessary consistency between the Central and National

systems development and solving current problems. A global programme management structure should be established encompassing central and national developments.

This structure would closely monitor the remaining stages of the SIS II project, from now to the end-to-end testing phase and the migration up to its entry into operation. This will contribute to increase transparency of the project.

- **Implementing a necessary analysis and a "repair" action plan**

In order to identify with accuracy the very origin of remaining problems affecting the system, it is desirable to finalize the **thorough and in-depth analysis** of the SIS II (*root cause analysis*) building on the work already done by external contractors, Commission and MS experts.

Analysis and testing will be carried out by the experts of the Commission, contractors and the Member States. Member States will provide their cooperation through carrying out **dedicated testing, taking into account financial and human resources in the Member States**.

On this basis, a specific "repair" action plan aimed primarily to find causes of the problems should be implemented, which is a necessary precondition for both successful finalization of the project and a realistic schedule will be derived together with the estimations of the further expenditures.

The implementation of the "repair" action plan is estimated to last up to 4 months. The declared objective is to identify all the main problems and find solutions to repair them. This will lead to realistic Global schedule and cost estimation for both the central and national systems.

- **Global testing approach**

A new test plan based on a global approach of testing and a more efficient use of financial and human resources should be prepared. This test plan should guarantee an increased involvement of Member States in the tests definition and management. That plan should be fully implemented after "repair" period if main problems are solved. During "repair" period testing will be aimed mostly to help find the vulnerability of the central system. Member States experts should be together with the Commission and their contractors directly and full-time on the spot (Strasbourg). This would greatly facilitate cooperation between the Member

States and Commission test experts, contractors, as well as the future SIS II operators.

- **Creation of an Alternative Scenario**

In order to enable the JHA Council to agree on orientation of the further direction of the SIS II project, a study of a scenario based on SIS1+ evolution should be elaborated. This study, already commissioned by the SIS-TECH Working Party, will be ready by April 2009.

Common criteria allowing the comparison of the scenarios should be identified. These criteria should take into account common political objectives, the schedule, investment protection and integration of the waiting Member States, which need a clear guideline for their planning.

- **Decision on further direction of the Project**

Direction provided by the January 2009 informal JHA Council should be confirmed by the February 2009 JHA Council.

The decision on further direction of this project will be endorsed by the Council immediately after collecting of all the data necessary for a qualified evaluation of the current situation, at the latest on the June 2009 JHA Council. A schedule will be included.