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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on Frontiers/Mixed Committee
	(EU-Iceland/Liechtenstein/Norway/Switerland)
Subject:	Beyond the technical implementation of the future IT systems for border management - Re-engineering of business processes

Today, border management is undergoing a fundamental transformation. On the one hand, it is information-driven and intelligence-led and its efficiency depends on the availability and timely exchange of comprehensive information. On the other hand, border management is no longer the concern of border agencies alone. Instead, it involves a number of other stakeholders such as carriers, airport operators, etc.

To address this transformation, the EU has launched an initiative to develop and deploy a new information architecture for internal security and border management. In this regard, the Entry Exit System (EES) (and the targeted amendments of the 'Schengen Border Code' as regards the use of the EES that accompany the EES Regulation) and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) will join other national, EU and international IT systems already available at external borders. This document focuses on the EES and ETIAS as they are among the first new IT systems of the new information architecture for internal security and border management which are due to enter into operation in the first and the second half of 2022 respectively. However, any discussion on the re-engineering of business processes also needs to continue beyond the EES and ETIAS. The reason is that, in the longer term, changes stemming from other recently adopted, or still to be adopted legislation, will continue to affect the work of border guards.

The new information architecture for internal security and border management also reflects a paradigm shift in the area of border management away from physical and manual operations to increasingly digital and automated operations, and away from a silo-based approach with regard to IT systems to interoperable systems to ensure a more efficient access to the right information by the right authorities at the right time. The ultimate objective of the new IT architecture is, for instance, to effectively support the processes that the border guards have to execute at the external borders. A technical solution (workflow engine) is implemented in order to optimise the applicable first line border control associated business processes, to reduce the response times and to minimise the number of necessary interactions between the end-users and the central system.

The implementation of the EES and its interoperability with the VIS - adapting to the way the border checks will be performed when the EES is used at external borders and adding to the requirements for checking ETIAS at external borders - are therefore not just a technical initiative. In order that both systems deliver the anticipated policy objectives and operational benefits, their technical implementation will be coupled with efforts to redesign the relevant operational processes followed by the Member States. The aim is to ensure a smooth and efficient integration of the new capabilities provided by the systems within the daily work of border guards. This, in turn, will ensure the implementation of an integrated border management strategy at operational level.

Progress on the implementation of EES and ETIAS, at central and national level, is being continuously monitored by the European Commission and eu-LISA. This is done through the relevant governance bodies and pursuant to respective responsibilities. Implementation and organisation are delivered in close cooperation with the Member States, and discussed on a regular basis so as to raise awareness of and ensure transparency as regards any impediments/challenges encountered, manage identified risks and mitigation measures and ensure that all stakeholders make progress at the same pace.

Overall, these projects are extremely challenging. The reasons include the novelty of the approaches, the multitude of stakeholders involved, the different responsibilities of the stakeholders and the cross-sectoral impact. One of the most important elements is that as a result of the EES and ETIAS, and with the implementation of interoperability, new operational business processes will need to be in place. These will cover the activities of the National Authorities and the Union Agencies involved in all associated business areas. Such areas include visa, border and immigration authorities, law enforcement authorities, industry (Carriers operating in all areas) and the ETIAS National Units.

The re-design and fine-tuning of the operational business processes by Member States need to be performed in parallel with the technical implementation of the systems. The aim is to enable Member States to confirm that all services associated with the EES are properly implemented with the relevant ICD (Interface Control Document) Solutions (equipment) for each type of border. This is to ensure that the new systems will not provoke constraints in persons flows at the borders. Amongst other things, the business processes will have to take into account the implementation of a workflow engine which will reduce the number of interactions between the first line end-users and the central systems and automatically launch operations currently initiated by those end-users.

The report provided by the Working Group on ICT (Information and Communication Technology) solutions for Member States with external land and sea borders (subgroup of eu-LISA's EES-ETIAS Advisory Group), includes recommendations per type and size of borders, different scenarios for equipment, mobile devices and respective automated systems. In this regard, it is extremely important to acknowledge that the implementation of the EES does not end with the implementation of the IT system. The reason is that business processes supported by the EES and the relevant equipment associated with those processes are essential to the effective operation of the system. For example, Frontex has used the above recommendations in the context of its pilot projects. eu-LISA is also assessing how it can further help Member States by providing additional services in this matter. Finally, it is also important to highlight the initiative of the IXIM WP in creating a catalogue of devices compatible with the relevant requirements, in the context of the Presidency's roadmap for standardisation[1].

The main EES processes (use cases) can be used as an example to illustrate the complexity of the Member State's tasks in redesigning / re-engineering the above business processes. The processes relevant to border authorities in the context of the EES include: border checks, biometric management at the border, offline mode (with National Uniform Interface - NUI available) and fall-back procedures - including manual stamping and notification of the European Commission should the NUI be unavailable. Moreover, the business processes should take into consideration the specific nature of each type of border (land, air, sea), the categories of travellers concerned, whether the case concerns a first or a subsequent entry or exit and the various facilitation means used (e.g. ABC gates). Furthermore, there is a need to redesign the processes used by the immigration authorities (verification within the territory), visa authorities (examination and processing of visa applications), and law enforcement access (via Central Access Points - CAP). The processes related to data amendment and business continuity aspects should also be redesigned.

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[1] Council document 11824/2/20

Given the importance of this comprehensive task, the Management Board of eu-LISA adopted two decisions (one for the EES and one for ETIAS) stating that all business processes need to be re-engineered in time to allow the testing of these with the new ICT solutions and the adequate training of end-users.

In the following months, the EES testing in Member States will start. This will be carried out in several phases, as follows:

– *Formal Member States Testing* (Compliance Tests): involving validation of the national implementation against the specifications (ICD);

– *Provisional System Acceptance*: involving validation of the central implementation performance and resilience (Member States' involvement);

– *Member State End-to-End Business Testing*: validation of the end-users' business processes and the respective national implementation and associated training, in relation to the new re-engineered operational business processes supported by current / new ICT solutions;

– *Transition*: validation of Entry into Operation (EiO) operational and service management preparations.

The above testing phases are important both in the context of Member State preparations and the validation of the national implementation and training (in relation to the new operational business processes and in combination with the new ICT solutions supporting these processes). This overall approach will be tested during End-to-End Business Testing. It should help ensure that, from business and operational perspectives, those processes are properly redesigned, tested and the necessary flows are properly implemented by the Member States before they go on stream.

A revised scenario on the timeline of the testing is still under discussion at the Programme Management Board and EES-ETIAS Advisory Group level.

Another important aspect worth mentioning - and which highlights the importance of the timely redesign of related business processes - is that a number of pre-requisites should be met to allow Member States to progress to the End-to-End testing phase. These prerequisites are: the formal Compliance Testing should be successfully completed (all business areas); all involved national systems, supporting all business areas, need to be ready; the ETIAS National Units should be deployed; the associated operational business processes should be re-engineered; the End-User ICT solutions, supporting the associated processes, should be in place.

eu-LISA started an exercise to identify the associated business use cases that needed to be tested by the Member States before going on stream in 2019.The aim of the exercise is to enhance the understanding of the Member States in this matter and to contribute to and further support their efforts in re-engineering the related operational / business processes. The exercise covers the following areas: the operational and business processes; all involved areas relating to visa, border, law enforcement and immigration; all types of borders including air, land and sea in the context of the VIS and the EES systems. Work is also being done to cover the business cases associated with ETIAS. As the exercise is still ongoing but has to be completed very soon, the input of the end-users in drafting / fine-tuning the use cases is extremely important with a view to ensuring that all key elements are addressed. The Agency's aim is to draft a document to be distributed via the EES-ETIAS Advisory Group and/or the Council so that it can be used by the Member States' business experts.

As regards verification cases for border authorities, it is important to ensure that the processes implemented at the external borders comply with the regulations in place. While executing these processes, the ICT solutions implemented to support the business needs will also need to be validated. In order to cover the various flows of information involved in this process, various scenarios will have to be followed.
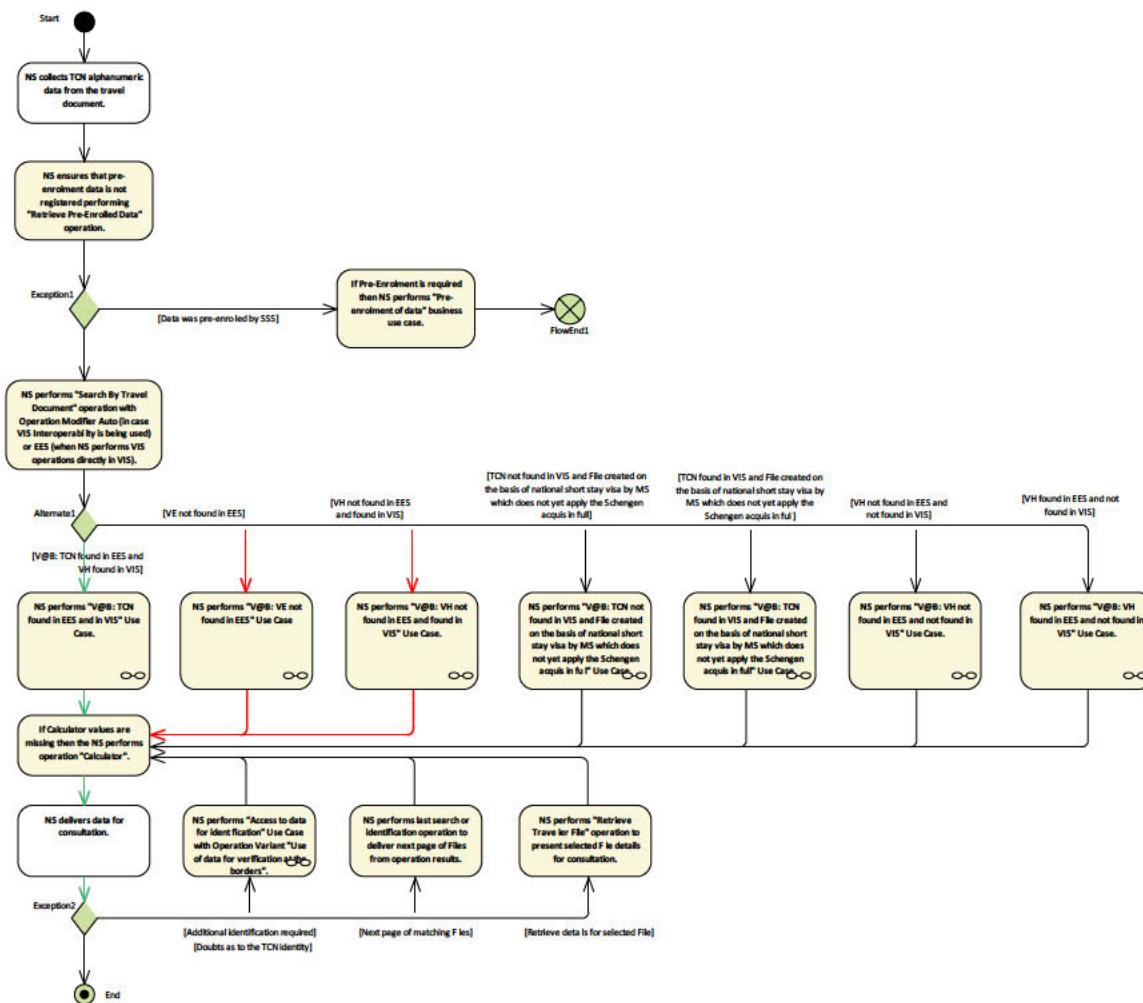
The new architecture for EU information systems for borders, migration and security will completely change the way in which border control and other related activities will be carried out. In view of this and the novelty of such developments, it is essential that there is a close collaboration between all stakeholders on all matters related to the implementation of these projects. As mentioned above, in-depth discussions on the use cases are being held at eu-LISA Advisory Group level, involving the relevant experts. In addition, work on the EES and ETIAS Handbooks has started at the expert level, coordinated by the Commission (the EES first meeting took place on 28 January 2021).

So as to support Member States' efforts and share best practices, the Presidency considers this a good opportunity to hold an exchange of views among the Member States' experts. There is a need to focus on national experience in terms of ongoing preparations as well as any specific steps taken and analysis carried out with a view to the re-engineering of business processes.

Therefore, in view of the Frontiers Working Party meeting scheduled on 3 March 2021, the Member States are invited to provide their input on the following questions:

1. What is the approach taken at national level concerning the redesign of the current business processes or the creation of new ones, where applicable?

2. What are the major challenges encountered? If any, how are they being overcome?

3. How could Member States be better supported by the European Commission, eu-LISA, other Agencies or other Member States through the sharing of ideas and approaches with regard to the process of redesign?

4. Would Member States consider it appropriate that eu-LISA prepare a Paper identifying the associated use cases for the EES and ETIAS, to support the work of Member States?