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**LIMITE**

**VISA 29  
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**NOTE**

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From:	Presidency
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee/Mixed Committee
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Subject:	VIS - time frame concerning the roll-out in the last regions - Approval of the final compromise

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A schedule for the roll-out of the Visa Information System (VIS) in regions 17-23 was agreed in May 2014 in SCIFA/Mixed Committee (see 9748/14). As regards region 17 (Eastern Partnership countries and in particular Ukraine) and 18 (Russia), it was agreed that VIS would be rolled out in region 17 on 29 January 2015, provided that it was verified by December 2014 by eu-LISA that the capacity of the VIS Biometric Matching System (BMS) would be sufficient for region 18.

All Member States have declared their readiness regarding region 17. According to the schedule, declarations of readiness were due by 2 January 2015 regarding region 18, with a view to implementing the roll-out in region 17 on 29 January 2015 and in region 18 on 21 April 2015.

In December 2014, eu-LISA concluded that the VIS Biometric Matching System (VIS/BMS) would be able to support the VIS roll-out for region 17 and beyond, provided that Member States would continue to follow the agreed procedures. However, several delegations at FoVIS, SCIFA and JHA Counsellors voiced concerns regarding the technical capacity of the system and also raised some political aspects about the roll-out dates as regards the last regions (17 to 23). It was at the end of 2014 unclear if all Member States would notify their readiness by 2 January 2015 for region 18 as scheduled in May - a condition for going live in region 17 on 29 January 2015.

On 19 December 2014 at Coreper, the Commission informed delegations that, in the present circumstances, it did not consider appropriate to proceed with the adoption by the Commission of its implementing decision to go live in region 17 on 29 January 2015.

On 15 January 2015, the Commission informed Coreper/Comix that not all Member States had yet notified their readiness for using the VIS in region 18 (Russia), and that the Commission was therefore not in a position to adopt the decision determining the date from which the use of the VIS would become mandatory in regions 17 and 18 respectively. The Commission also recalled the political dimension of the roll-out process, while underlining the importance of completing the roll-out of the VIS by the end of 2015.

JHA Counsellors met on 28 January 2015 to examine the matter. There was consensus that the roll-out must be completed by the end of 2015 and that the time schedule now to be agreed should be the very final one. Regarding regions 17 and 18, the Commission confirmed that it would proceed with the adoption of only one decision setting the dates for the VIS go-live in both of these regions. Eu-LISA stressed that it was not technically feasible to schedule any roll-out to take place in March 2015. Several delegations expressed regrets that the time schedule agreed in May 2014 was not respected. However, the vast majority of delegations and the Commission supported the revised time schedule informally suggested by the Presidency at the meeting, although some delegations called for further safeguards, including advancing the deadlines for notifications of readiness. SE suggested a shorter time frame and maintained a reservation on the suggestion tabled by the Presidency. EL entered a scrutiny reservation, referring to the recent elections in Greece.

The Presidency has on this basis prepared the attached revised time frame for regions 17-23. In the light of comments made, the deadlines for declaring technical readiness have been advanced for regions 19-23 as compared with the suggestions made at the JHA Counsellors meeting, in order to avoid any risk for further delays.

*The Presidency invites Coreper to confirm agreement on the final time schedule, as set out in the Annex.*

Visa Information System (VIS) - Time schedule for the roll-out in regions 17-23

- The VIS will be launched on **23 June 2015**, for **region 17** (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine). The notification by Member States<sup>1</sup> is no longer necessary as all Member States have already notified their technical readiness.
- The VIS will be launched on **14 September 2015**, for **region 18** (Russia). Pursuant to Article 48(3) of the VIS Regulation, the Member States who have not done so yet should transmit their notification of readiness at the latest by 1 March 2015.
- The VIS will be launched on **12 October 2015**, for **region 19** (China, Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan). Pursuant to Article 48(3) of the VIS Regulation, the Member States should transmit their notification of readiness at the latest by 16 March 2015.
- The VIS will be launched on **2 November 2015**, for **region 20** (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri-Lanka). Pursuant to Article 48(3) of the VIS Regulation, the Member States should transmit their notification of readiness at the latest by 2 April 2015.
- The VIS will be launched on **20 November 2015**, for regions 21 (Andorra, Holy See, Monaco, San Marino), 22 (Ireland and the UK) and 23 (Schengen Member States). Pursuant to Article 48(3) of the VIS Regulation, the Member States should transmit their notification of readiness at the latest by 2 April 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> "Member States" means the Schengen Member States, namely the 22 EU Member States together with the 4 associated countries.