

Interoperability between EU information systems: Council Presidency and European Parliament reach provisional agreement

The EU is introducing new rules on interoperability between EU information systems in the area of justice and home affairs. Easier information sharing will improve security, allow for more efficient checks at external borders and contribute to prevent and combat illegal migration.

Today, the Romanian Presidency of the Council and representatives of the European Parliament reached a preliminary agreement on the two proposed regulations establishing a framework for interoperability between EU information systems in the area of justice and home affairs. The preliminary agreement will now be presented to EU ambassadors for confirmation on behalf of the Council.

To make sure we detect those who pose a security threat or who are lying about their identity, competent authorities carrying out checks need to have a full picture of the person in front of them. The interoperability components will allow authorities to quickly access all relevant information available in existing databases and to check biometric data against these databases to detect cases of multiple identity.

Carmen Daniela Dan, Romanian minister of internal affairs

Interoperability between information systems will allow the systems to complement each other, help facilitate the correct identification of persons and contribute to fighting identity fraud. The regulations establish the following interoperability components:

- A **European search portal**, which would allow competent authorities to search multiple EU information systems simultaneously, using both biographical and biometric data.
- A **shared biometric matching service**, which would enable the searching and comparing of biometric data (fingerprints and facial images) from several systems.
- A **common identity repository**, which would contain biographical and biometric data of third-country nationals available in several EU information systems.
- A **multiple identity detector**, which checks whether the biographical identity data contained in the search exists in other systems covered, to enable the detection of multiple identities linked to the same set of biometric data.

The systems covered by the two regulations provide support for national authorities in the areas of security, border and migration management, visa processing and asylum. They include the entry/exit system (EES), the visa information system (VIS), the European travel information and authorisation system (ETIAS), Eurodac, the Schengen information system (SIS) and the European criminal records information system for third country nationals (ECRIS-TCN), as well as other relevant databases on travel documents.

The new regulations do not modify the rights of access as set out in the legal basis relevant for each European information system. The European search portal will flag where data or links exist in relation to a query, but the system will only show each authority the data to which they already have a right of access under previous legislation setting up the different databases.

Background

Interoperability of EU information systems in the area of justice and home affairs has been a priority at the highest political level over the past few years. In its conclusions of 18 December 2015, the European Council stated that recent terrorist attacks demonstrated the urgency of enhancing information sharing, notably as regards ensuring the interoperability of the relevant databases with regard to security checks. A high level expert group on information systems and interoperability was established and prepared a report which stressed the need for a more effective and efficient data management for borders and security in the EU.

In June 2017, the European Council invited the Commission to prepare as soon as possible legislative proposals on this issue, on the basis of the recommendations made by the high level expert group. The Commission presented two legislative proposals on 12 December 2017.

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

press.office@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press