COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION

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LIMITE

VISA 158
COMIX 806

NOTE

from :	Spanish delegation
to :	Visa Working Party
Subject :	Database of visas

1. **Policy questionnaire**

In point 26 of its conclusions of 20 September 2001, the Council requested the submission of proposals for establishing "a network for information exchanges concerning the visas issued". Coreper has instructed the Commission to present a feasibility study on such a database of visas.

In order to provide guidance for the study, it would be very useful, if not essential, for delegations of the Visa Working Party to submit comments on needs and objectives. The list of issues and questions is not exhaustive, nor does it serve any purpose other than to facilitate comments, observations and suggestions. Delegations are also asked to provide the General Secretariat with the information referred to in the two final notes.

2. <u>Objectives</u>

– Contribute to the improvement of local consular cooperation.

– Distinguish better between the identity of the holder and the carrier of the visa at the external border checkpoint or at immigration or police checkpoints.

– Facilitate application of the Dublin Convention on asylum.

– By archiving the visa file, assist (directly/indirectly) in the identification and documentation of undocumented illegals and therefore in the readmission of illegal residents.

– Contribute to combating terrorism and organised crime.

– Respond to the nature of the visa (instrument of prevention and channelling of legal movements of persons).

3. <u>Content</u>

(Indicate any missing or irrelevant points in this respect.)

– Visas issued, indicating types.

– Visas formally refused.

– Visas requested.

– Visas annulled, revoked, extended, indicating types.

– Visa-stickers misappropriated or lost.

– Other content? (Visas to be examined in more detail or certain visa categories to be refused at the request of the UN, NATO, WEU, CFSP, etc.?)

– Data to be included from each visa: identification of the applicant and, where appropriate, of the visa-sticker and type.

– Use the headings of the application form to state their order of importance in terms of need to be included in the database of visas.

4. Input into the database

–   Consular posts?
–   Central visa authorities (e.g. visas at borders)?

5. Access for consultation

–   Consular posts?
–   Central visa authorities?
–   Checkpoints at external borders?
–   Police departments?
–   Immigration departments?
–   Asylum offices?

6. Period during which data should be retained in the database before being archived (validity of the data)

In view of the impact on the annual volume of visas to be incorporated and the volume of data per visa, is it advisable to:

–   differentiate between visas granted and those refused,
–   differentiate between nationalities according to the risk involved,
–   differentiate for countries whose authorities pose technical difficulties for documentation?

7. Other databases which should be directly accessible to consular posts

–   Genuine travel documents
–   False documents
–   Access to the SIS (list of inadmissible persons)

8. Communication system

8.1. Should the feasibility study be extended to the communication system:

- between consular posts and the database?
- between consular posts of the same city, country or region?
  (consultation on visas with an immigration risk, exchange of statistics, detection of false documents, LTVs issued, etc.)
- should the network allow the transmission and receipt of images based on individual requests?
- should the communication system between consular posts and the database be the competence and responsibility of each State?

8.2. Practical implications of the database (input, consultation of data and replies to consultations) with regard to the organisation of work in the consulates

9. SIS/Database of visas

- Should the database be incorporated into the SIS? Should it be a special system within the SIS? What degree of autonomy should it have owing to its specific nature? What would be the SIRENE role as a management support?

- Should the database of visas be designed separately? If so, what are the implications in terms of time, expenditure and additional human resources, project management and project financing?

10. **Data protection**

    – Are special rules required? Does the Community Directive give adequate coverage? Should there be a similar system as for the SIS?

    – Access for persons concerned.

11. **VISION consultation network**

    – Should it be structured differently in preparation for a database of visas?

    – Could the data currently supplied be incorporated into a database of visas?

12. **Comments on technical aspects**

    – Design of the database's physical structure

    – Security requirements (protection, audit/logging, encryption, etc.)

    – Communication network requirements

    – Technical requirements of the database

    – Etc.

NOTES

1. Delegations are asked to provide the visa statistics for 2000 and 2001, including LTVs.

2. Delegations are also asked to provide information on the criteria and procedures currently used by each Member State for archiving data on visas and to state whether or not such procedures cover all the Member State's consular posts.

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