

AFIS for SIS II to be deployed this month

The Schengen Information System (SIS II) is a highly efficient large-scale information system that supports law enforcement cooperation and external border control throughout the Member States of the European Union (and Schengen Associated Countries).

The SIS II enables competent authorities, for example police officers and border guards, to enter and consult alerts on specific categories of wanted or missing persons and objects.

SIS II acts as an information sharing system between all the countries that use it and holds information in the form of "alerts". Each *Person alert* can contain biographical information such as, name, date of birth, gender and nationality. In addition to this, SIS II can also store fingerprints and photographs of the person an alert is related to.

Although the legal basis of SIS II permits the storage of fingerprints, they have only been used so far to confirm the identity of a person who has been identified following a check on his/her name and/or date of birth. Though this feature has been useful, the real added value of fingerprints is to be able to identify a person from his/her fingerprints alone.

In order for this to occur, an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is necessary and is now ready to go live.

How is an AFIS used?

Many people, sought after by the police, can be evasive about their identity and tend to use multiple aliases. Some subjects of SIS II alerts for "refusal of entry" have even sought to legally change their identity to avoid detection. AFIS provides the technology to identify a person on the basis of fingerprints held in SIS II.

What is the purpose?

The SIS II central system database already contains many thousands of fingerprint records, but there was no fingerprint search capability at the central level. The SIS II AFIS allows all Member States to leverage on a centralized policing-oriented database. As such, it will strengthen the fight against crime within Europe.

Who is part of the AFIS Project?

The Project Management Forum (PMF) is responsible for managing technical implementation at both national and central system levels. Its members are:

- The eu-LISA AFIS team,

- National Project Managers of all the SIS II Member States,
- Representatives of the European Commission,
- SIS II contractor – responsible for the design and delivery of the AFIS to eu-LISA.

The first PMF meeting took place in June 2016, followed by 15 further regular meetings, that gathered the end-users from the Member States and Associated Countries. Training sessions for the Member States has already been delivered in Strasbourg and via web-based seminars.

When will it be implemented?

The Phase 1 Go-live will take place on 5 March 2018. It will introduce the biometric search capability into SIS II. Ten Member States (AT, CH, DE, LI, LU, LV, NL, PL, PT & SI) have confirmed that they will be ready to use the biometric queries from day 1. Within 2018, it is expected that other Member States will also use this functionality offered by the Central System.

Further work will take place to develop the AFIS' capabilities in Phase 2 which will be implemented in 2019.

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Statement of Vice-President Šefčovič on natural gas situation following contacts with Russian-Ukrainian counterparts

Following the contact by the Ukrainian authorities at the end of the week regarding the situation of the Ukrainian gas system and the gas imports from Russia, Vice-President Šefčovič has reached out to both the Ukrainian and Russian authorities. Over the past days, Vice-President Šefčovič spoke to Ukraine's Prime Minister Groysman, to Naftogaz CEO Kobolev and to Russia's Energy Minister Novak. The conversations focused on Ukraine's concern regarding pressure levels in gas supply from Russia, on gas for the transit to the European Union as well as on the recent decision of the Stockholm Arbitration Tribunal.

All existing commitments to supply and transit gas to the EU are being honoured.

Regarding the situation in Ukraine Vice-President Šefčovič has been informed by Naftogaz that today the situation is under control and managed well, following the adoption, by the Ukrainian authorities, of special measures and Naftogaz contracting additional volumes of gas from Poland, hence ensuring stable gas supply for domestic purposes.

The European Commission has involved the [European Network for Transmission System Operators for Gas \(ENTSOG\)](#) in monitoring and helping resolve the situation.

For his part, the Russian Minister of Energy Mr Novak, gave reassurances that the transit of gas to the EU Member States is not endangered and remains reliable. Regarding the Stockholm Arbitration decision Vice-President Šefčovič has been informed that Gazprom remains set to terminate its contracts with Naftogaz. This procedure may, however, take some time and will not have immediate consequences on the gas flows.

In this context, Vice-President Šefčovič encouraged both sides to engage in seeking a satisfactory solution to this issue: "The European Commission stands ready to engage and mediate in a trilateral process, which in the past proved to be effective in bridging differences between the parties. Due to the complexity and sensitivity of the issue, we will further explore the possibility of such process bilaterally. Both Ukraine and Russia have

confirmed their readiness to stay in close contact with the European Commission. I will follow the situation closely in order to ensure that the transit of Russian gas through Ukraine to the EU – as it remains our priority – is safeguarded at all times.”

LINK:

Statement of Vice-President Šefčovič on Russian-Ukrainian natural gas situation in March 2018

Brussels, 2 March 2018

http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-18-1505_en.htm

Statement by Eurogroup President Mario Centeno on Greece

Press contacts

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I have been informed that the Eurogroup Working Group on 2 March verified that all prior actions of the third review of the Greek ESM programme have been completed.

The full implementation of the prior actions confirms the commitment of the Greek government to the programme and a continued reform effort.

The ESM Board of Directors is expected to approve the disbursement of the fourth tranche of the ESM programme after national parliamentary procedures have been completed.

This will pave the way to the release of the first subtranche of €5.7bn in the second half of March.

We have now entered the final lap of the ESM Greek programme. The fourth and final review is ongoing. So is the technical work of possible new debt relief measures.

Greece has started its return to market financing and the Greek government is working on a long-term growth strategy, which will be critical to define the post-programme framework.

I'm confident this will help Greece to return to an equal footing with its European partners and leave crisis days behind.

[Download as pdf](#)

Indicative programme – Environment Council of 5 March 2018

Press contacts

[Katharina Pausch-Homblé](#)

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Place:

Europa building, Brussels

Chair:

Neno Dimov, Minister of Environment and Water of the Republic of Bulgaria

All times are approximate and subject to change

from 08.00

Arrivals (Europa building VIP entrance)

+/- 08.50

Doorstep by Minister Dimov

+/- 10.00

Beginning of Environment Council meeting (Roundtable)

Adoption of the agenda

Approval of non-legislative A items

+/- 10.10

Circular Economy Action Plan

Plastics Strategy

The interface between chemicals, products and waste

+/- 12.10

Any other business:

- 21st European Forum on Eco-innovation for air quality
- Global Pact for the Environment
- Eliminate deforestation from supply chains
- Invasive alien species

- Commercial trade in raw ivory
- REACH review
- CO2 standards for cars and vans ([live streaming](#))
- Shipping and the International Maritime Organization
- Climate change: UNFCCC COP24

+/- 13.25

Working lunch discussion on eco-innovation in the context of the circular economy

+/- 15.00

Greening the European Semester

+/- 16.30

Press conference (Justus Lipsius press room [live streaming](#))

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