



Security Union: Interoperability of EU Information Systems

#SecurityUnion



Effective information sharing is a key element of the fight against terrorism and organised crime. It gives police officers and border guards the right tools to access and exchange the necessary information on people to better protect the EU external borders and enhance the internal security of the EU.

To improve information exchange and maximise the efficiency of information systems at EU level, the Commission has set out a new approach to managing data, where all centralised EU information systems for security, border and migration management are interoperable in full respect of data protection and fundamental rights.

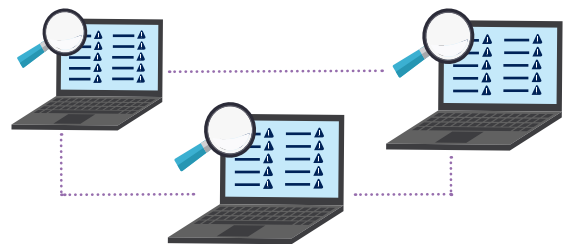


“Border security means that information and intelligence exchange must be prioritised (...) We need to know who is crossing our borders.”

(President Juncker’s State of the Union address, 14 September 2016)

WHAT IS INTEROPERABILITY?

Interoperability of EU information systems for security, border and migration management is the ability of different and separately developed **IT systems** to exchange data and to enable the sharing of **information**, in full respect of fundamental rights, data protection and with strict purpose limitations.



WHY IS INTEROPERABILITY IMPORTANT?

Today’s security threats are becoming more complex and transnational making effective information exchange of paramount importance. Unfortunately, the current architecture of EU information systems is still very **complex** and **fragmented**.

Recent terrorist attacks have further highlighted the urgent need for information systems to be interoperable so that criminals and terrorist suspects cannot exploit information loopholes, for instance by using different aliases recorded in several, unconnected databases. Border guards, migration and asylum officials, and police officers need **the right information at the right time** to protect our borders and ensure security in the EU.

HOW WILL INTEROPERABILITY OF EU INFORMATION SYSTEMS BE ACHIEVED?

The new approach towards interoperability set out by the Commission in May 2017 has three main features:

- **European search portal** – to allow systems to be searched simultaneously producing combined results, in full compliance with data protection safeguards;
- **Shared biometric matching service** – to enable searches across different information systems holding biometric data, possibly with hit/no-hit flags indicating a connection with related biometric data found in another system;
- **Common identity repository** – based on alphanumeric identity data (e.g. dates of birth, passport numbers), this detects whether a person is registered under multiple identities in different databases.

The Commission will propose the necessary legislative measures to implement this approach and achieve full interoperability by 2020.



The EU Agency responsible for the management of information systems, **eu-LISA**, is set to play a crucial role in the technical implementation of this new approach.

WHAT EU INFORMATION SYSTEMS EXIST?

The three main existing systems



- **Schengen Information System (SIS)** - external checks at Schengen borders, law enforcement and judicial cooperation



- **Visa Information System (VIS)** - exchange of information on EU visa holders between Schengen States



- **Eurodac** - EU asylum fingerprint database

New systems*

- **Entry/Exit System (EES)** – system recording the crossing of the external EU borders of non-EU nationals
- **European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)** - pre-travel security and irregular migration screening of visa-exempt non-EU nationals

* New systems are expected to become operational by 2020. To learn more on EU information systems [available here](#).