

# Home Affairs Council

## SIS II to be operational on 9 April

By Nathalie Vandystadt | Thursday 07 March 2013

After a seven-year delay, the member states' home affairs ministers finally agreed, at their Council on 7 March, on the launch date of the second-generation Schengen Information System (SIS II), which collects data on persons entering the area without border controls and on lost and stolen objects. It will become operational on 9 April. SIS II was initially slated for launch in 2007.

The system will be accessible to migration and law enforcement authorities of the 26 countries belonging to the Schengen area. It will modernise the existing SIS database, which enables these countries to organise any controls that may be needed, particularly by adding photos and digital fingerprints. SIS II will also offer the possibility to produce new types of alerts and to link different alerts (one concerning a person and the other a vehicle, for instance).

Although SIS II is costing far more than planned, it will be one of the most advanced security systems in an area within common borders.

It will be comprised of three elements: a central system, EU states' national systems and a communication infrastructure (network) between these two systems.

Commissioner Cecilia Malmström (internal security) also briefed the Council on her plans for boosting security at Schengen borders. This concerns registration of the entries and exits of non-European nationals and facilitated entry for certain categories of regular travellers, such as business travellers, students and researchers. The Greens in the European Parliament have already challenged these plans.

### Background

SIS II will supplement other European databases, including the Visa Information System (VIS) database, which requires fingerprints and biographical information on all candidates. According to a study by experts commissioned by the EP's Committee on Civil Liberties (LIBE), all these databases, existing or in the planning stages - VIS, SIS (I and II), European PNR, EU TFTS, Eurosur, etc – represent, in addition to the question of costs, huge challenges in terms of protection of personal data as well as non-discrimination against foreigners on the basis of nationality or ethnic group. This will be even more the case with the plans for registering entries and exits of non-European nationals in Schengen and facilitating entry for certain travellers. "A question of particular concern in this respect is non-discrimination and how increasing data collection and exchange can generate statistical discrimination effects due to profiling and data mining logic," say the authors of the study (academics, researchers and a member of the NGO Statewatch).