

WHAT IS SIS II?

The second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) is a large-scale IT system that supports internal security and the exchange of information on people and objects between national police, border control, customs, visa and judicial authorities. As people and goods can move in the Schengen Area without being checked at internal borders, SIS II is used by security officials to help keep people safe and counter cross-border crime.

SIS II assists national authorities in sharing information with their European counterparts: performing border checks, fighting cross-border crime and countering terrorism. SIS II supports authorities to ensure Europe's internal security, while respecting data protection requirements. In 2015, SIS II contained over 63 million alerts and more than 156 000 'hits' on alerts were registered. A 'hit' refers to the number of wanted persons and objects found thanks to the system.

The Schengen Area has no internal border controls. This enables free movement of people and goods in Europe and provides the EU and its citizens with many benefits. The Schengen Area comprises 26 countries: 22 EU Member States and 4 Associated Countries (i.e. Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein). As of 2015, 29 countries use SIS II: the 26 countries in the Schengen Area as well as Bulgaria, Romania and the UK.

HOW DOES SIS II WORK?

A national authority in a European country issues an alert describing a sought-after person or object. The alert is sent to the central system that immediately directs it to all national systems. This provides the following information for on-the-ground officers:

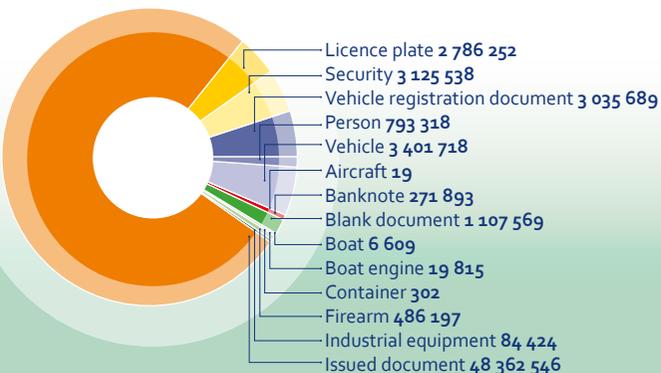
1. the situation they are facing (e.g. the sought after person is dangerous or a missing person has been located);
2. the action to take (e.g. arrest, protect or apply specific checks on the person);
3. which authorities to contact for further support.

THE ADDED VALUE OF SIS II

The second generation Schengen Information System:

- enhances the security of people in Europe by improving information exchange between national authorities such as the police, border guards and customs;
- provides information via statistics and technical reports on the use of the system;
- strengthens individual rights through rules on who can access data, the retention of alerts, data quality and information security.

ALERT TYPES



Source: SIS II – Public statistics for 2015 (eu-LISA, 2016)

WHO CAN ACCESS SIS II?

- Law enforcement authorities
- Border control authorities
- Customs authorities
- Judicial, visa and vehicle registration authorities
- EU Agencies Europol and Eurojust (access is limited to data directly related to their mandate)

WHAT INFORMATION IS STORED IN SIS II?

SIS II provides authorities with information on people:

- who may have been involved in a serious crime;
- who may not have the right to enter or stay in the Schengen Area;
- whose identity has been misused;
- who are required to assist in judicial procedures;
- who are missing (both adults and minors).

SIS II also contains data on objects that have been stolen or lost, such as:

- vehicles
- firearms
- aircrafts
- boats
- industrial equipment
- identity documents
- credit cards
- banknotes

HOW IS PERSONAL DATA PROTECTED?

SIS II does not hold sensitive information (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs or trade-union membership, nor data on health or private life). Even so, the processing of data held in SIS II must comply with the relevant data protection requirements.

Data is safeguarded at every step. The authorities in every country using SIS II check the information they enter into the system. Both eu-LISA and the European Commission have taken measures to guarantee the physical protection of data in SIS II.

The SIS II Supervision Coordination Group, consisting of one representative of each Member State's data protection authority and the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), ensures that the data contained in SIS II is handled according to data protection rules. The EDPS supervises the processing of personal data in the central system. The national data protection authorities supervise the processing of data by national authorities, ensuring personal data rights.

All people have the right to be informed about data stored in SIS II on themselves and request that inaccuracies be corrected or that unlawfully held data be deleted. This process is managed by the national data protection authorities.

eu-LISA: CONTRIBUTING TO FREE MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE

eu-LISA is the European Agency that ensures 24/7 operational management of SIS II and its communication infrastructure. eu-LISA is responsible for the constant maintenance as well as the evolution of the system, while strictly following relevant security and data protection regulations. The Agency provides training to national authorities on how to use SIS II, produces statistics and reports, and monitors relevant strands of research.

In addition to SIS II, the largest information system for public security and law enforcement cooperation in Europe, eu-LISA manages two other systems:

- Eurodac – a system that collects and processes the digitalised fingerprints of asylum seekers in Europe, and
- Visa Information System (VIS) – a system that allows Schengen Area countries to share visa-related information of third-country nationals who visit or travel in the area.

In 2015 eu-LISA carried out, in cooperation with Member States, the Smart Borders Pilot project to assess new technologies on EU borders and provide decision-makers with information on the feasibility of using biometric identifiers at the Schengen Area's external borders. This has placed eu-LISA among the institutions tasked to contribute to building a stronger and smarter data management architecture for EU border checks and security. eu-LISA is focused on increasing the interoperability of the existing systems and contributing to the development of new IT systems in cooperation with Member States.

The headquarters of eu-LISA are in Tallinn (Estonia), the operational management is carried out in Strasbourg (France) and a backup site is located in Sankt Johann im Pongau (Austria). eu-LISA also has a liaison office in Brussels (Belgium).

With IT eu-LISA safeguards the EU's internal security and supports the implementation of asylum, migration and border management policies. These actions help ensure that European citizens and non-EU citizens have the freedom to live, work and travel safely throughout the Schengen Area.

SIS II IN ACTION

Anne's car is stolen from outside her office in Brussels, Belgium. In Poland the police stopped the car for speeding. When checking the car's details the officers carried out a routine check in SIS II. Thanks to the alert issued by the Belgian police, their Polish colleagues knew that the car is stolen and confiscate it in order to return it to Anne.

FAST FACTS

- **29 European countries** use SIS II
- Over **63 million alerts** were stored in SIS II at the end of 2015
- The total number of **alerts increased over 13%** between 2014 and 2015
- **In 2015 an average of 2 400 alerts** were created, updated or deleted per hour
- **Over 156 000 'hits' were registered** on alerts in 2015

Find out more

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eu-LISA: contributing
to the safety of citizens

