



## Security Union: The renewed Schengen Information Systems enters into operation

Brussels, 7 March 2023

Today, the upgraded [Schengen Information System \(SIS\)](#) enters into operation. SIS is the largest information sharing system for security and border management in Europe. It provides information on wanted or missing persons, third-country nationals with no legal right to stay in the Union and lost or stolen objects (for example cars, firearms, boats and identity documents).

The renewed SIS is the foundation of the most advanced border management system in the world that we are building. Together with the [Entry/Exit System \(EES\)](#) and the [European Travel Information and Authorisation System \(ETIAS\)](#), SIS will be part of the interoperability architecture.

The renewed SIS is being enhanced to include new categories of alerts, biometrics such as palm prints, fingermarks, and DNA records for missing persons, and additional tools to combat crime and terrorism. The upgrade is important as it will also allow for preventive alerts to protect vulnerable persons and deter irregular migration. These upgrades aim to provide national authorities with more complete and reliable information to enhance security and border management in Europe.

The upgraded features include:

- **Enhanced information sharing and cooperation:** New categories of alerts and more data will be shared through SIS, ensuring that more complete and more reliable information is available to the national authorities. Clearer rules and improved structures have been introduced for the exchange of information through the national contact points (SIRENE Offices).
- **New possibilities to locate and identify persons sought and strengthen external border controls:** In addition to photographs and fingerprints, SIS will contain new types of biometrics (such as palm prints, fingermarks and palmmarks, as well as DNA records – but only in relation to missing persons) and other information to locate and identify people registered in the system.
- **Additional tools to combat criminality and terrorism:** New inquiry check alerts will allow national authorities to collect targeted information on suspects of serious crime or terrorism. For example, identification documents, information about the car that they are using will be stored in SIS. There will be alerts on “unknown wanted persons”, containing only the prints of unknown perpetrators that are discovered at the scenes of terrorist offences or serious crimes.
- **Additional tools to protect missing and vulnerable persons:** National authorities will be able to issue preventive alerts in the system to protect certain categories of vulnerable persons (children at risk of abduction or potential victims of terrorism, trafficking in human beings, gender-based violence, or armed conflict/hostilities), in addition to existing alerts on missing persons.
- **Additional tools to prevent and deter irregular migration:** Return decisions will be part of the information shared in the system to improve the effective enforcement of these decisions. Member States will be required to create an alert in SIS each time they issue a return decision on a third-country national with no legal right to stay in the EU, allowing them to actively follow up whether the returnee effectively leaves the EU territory. It will pave the way for mutual recognition of return decisions between Member States, as proposed by President von der Leyen in her letter with targeted actions ahead of the February European Council.
- **Enhanced use of SIS by EU Agencies:** Europol and national immigration authorities now have access to all alert categories in SIS. The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) operational teams have been granted access to SIS (implementation is still ongoing).

SIS has strict requirements on data quality and data protection. The system only contains data on people and objects wanted in EU countries and Schengen associated countries. National authorities supervise the application of the data protection rules in their respective countries, while the

European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) monitors how the data protection rules are being applied in the central system managed by eu-LISA.

## Next Steps

As of today, the renewed SIS is operational in 30 countries throughout Europe (26 EU Member States and the Schengen associated countries). The connection of Cyprus to SIS in summer 2023 will further extend security cooperation throughout the entire Union.

## Background

SIS was created in 1995 following the abolition of internal border controls in the EU. The [2016 evaluation of SIS](#) confirmed the outstanding success of the system. But it also identified opportunities to further enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of SIS, to better tackle increasingly complex security challenges.

The Commission [tabled three proposals](#) to strengthen cooperation between the Member States making use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) on 21 December 2016. On 12 June 2018, the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council [reached political agreement](#) on all three proposals. The three agreed Regulations (available [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)) were adopted on 28 November 2018.

The legal and technical preparations for the implementation of the new SIS started in 2019 and continued until 2021. During 2022, the national and central systems were thoroughly checked in close cooperation between [eu-LISA](#) (the EU agency in charge of the operation of the central competent of SIS) and the Member States (in charge of the national components of SIS). The legal conditions for the start of operation were completed in January 2023 and on 31 January 2023, the [decision](#) of the start of operation was published by the Commission.

## For More Information

[Factsheet](#)

[DG HOME website](#) – Schengen Information System

[eu-LISA](#) – European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

[Press Release](#) – Security Union: Commission proposes to reinforce the Schengen Information System to better fight terrorism and cross-border crime

[Press Release](#) – Security Union: Commission welcomes agreement on a reinforced Schengen Information System

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Quotes:

The start of operation of the renewed SIS marks a clear step forward in the management of our external borders and our common Schengen Area. It is a key milestone in making Europe a safer place for its citizens.  
Ylva Johansson, Commissioner for Home Affairs - 07/03/2023

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