

# eu-LISA: agreement between the Council Presidency and the European Parliament

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On 24 May 2018, the Bulgarian Presidency of the Council and the European Parliament reached an informal agreement on a draft regulation on the European agency for the operational management of large-scale IT systems in the area of freedom, security and justice (eu-LISA).

The EU has been working to improve migration management as well as its capacity to detect those who may pose a security risk to the EU through the update and creation of several information sharing databases. Strengthening the mandate of EU LISA, the agency managing these systems, will help them improve their operation and make the best use of the tools available

*Valentin Radev, Bulgarian minister of interior*

This regulation will further develop the agency's capacity to contribute to border management, law-enforcement cooperation and migration management in the EU. The agency will also have a vital role in implementing new IT architecture in the area of Justice and Home Affairs (JHA).

The draft regulation will strengthen the mandate of eu-LISA and will entrust the agency with:

- developing and operating new systems, such as the recently adopted entry-exit system and the European travel information and authorisation system (ETIAS)
- contributing to the development of technical solutions to achieve interoperability, subject to a legislative instrument on interoperability currently under discussion
- providing support to member states at their request, for example ad-hoc support to deal with migratory challenges, and assistance for creating common solutions for the implementation of their obligations stemming from EU legislation on decentralized systems in the area of JHA
- a greater role in research, pilot projects and testing activities

## Next steps

The informal agreement will now be presented to EU ambassadors for confirmation on behalf of the Council. Following this, the regulation will be submitted to the European Parliament for a vote at first reading, and subsequently to the Council for adoption.

## Background

eu-LISA was established in 2011 and currently manages systems including the visa information system (VIS) and the Schengen information system (SIS) and EURODAC.

Following an evaluation of the agency, as well as recent developments in the fields of migration and security, the European Commission presented on 29 June 2017 a proposal for a new legal mandate for eu-LISA so that it can better meet current and future challenges in the area of freedom security and justice.

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## [International organised crime group involved in fraud, forgery and money laundering dismantled in Spain and Romania](#)

23 May 2018

□The Spanish Central Investigating Court of the *Audiencia Nacional* and the Romanian Directorate for Investigation of Organised Crime, Central Office and Terrorism (DIICOT), as well as the Romanian Police, initiated separate investigations into an organised crime group (OCG), composed mainly of Romanian nationals. The OCG, which targeted a multitude of victims worldwide, including public and private entities, as well as individuals, is suspected of having committed the crimes of fraud, forgery of documents, money laundering and involvement in an OCG. Following simultaneous house searches in both Member States, thirty-three suspects were detained in Spain (fourteen were arrested in Spain on the action day) and five people were arrested in Romania on the basis of Spanish European Arrest Warrants (EAWs).

□Once more, Eurojust's contribution was indispensable to the successful outcome of the operation, providing all the necessary judicial cooperation tools as well as its operational support in a timely and effective manner. On

the initiative of the Spanish Desk at Eurojust, a case was opened in February 2018, and, in April 2018, a coordination meeting was held at Eurojust with the national authorities involved to coordinate the investigations in the Member States – as the OCG members were constantly commuting among several countries – exchange case-related information and agree on a way forward. Subsequently, Eurojust, via the concerned National Desks, facilitated the national authorities' investigations through the execution of EAWs and Letters of Request. Two action days took place, in Spain on 23 April, and in Romania on 26 April. Europol deployed mobile offices in both Member States.

The OCG has been active since 2016. Its members opened numerous bank accounts in various Member States using forged identity documents. Through those accounts, and via websites such as Amazon and Airbnb, the perpetrators defrauded an amount estimated at more than EUR 8 million by deceiving them into buying counterfeit products or services, such as fake holiday packages.

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## **International VAT fraud OCG dismantled**

4 May 2018

The national authorities of Belgium, Spain and Germany initiated investigations into an organised crime group (OCG) involved in a large-scale VAT fraud case that targeted numerous individuals and companies in Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Portugal and Romania.

This case, a so-called VAT carousel fraud case, began several years ago with an investigation in Spain. The OCG, mainly composed of German, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese nationals, created a network of computer and electronics companies throughout Europe to divert the illicit profit yielded in Spain. The criminals managed to avoid VAT payments in Spain and yet receive VAT reimbursements through the companies set up in other Member States by simulating their business operations.

After the Spanish Desk opened a case at Eurojust, a coordination meeting was held last month between the national authorities involved to exchange case-related information and plan the common actions, ensuring that the necessary judicial cooperation instruments would be timely and effectively implemented on the action day.

A coordination centre took place at Eurojust on 18 April to coordinate the simultaneous operations in the eight Member States concerned, which led to the arrest of the main suspects, more than 100 searches, the freezing of several bank accounts, as well as the seizure of assets, including cash and luxury cars. One company under investigation was estimated to have defrauded more than EUR 17 million over a two-year period.

On the action day, Eurojust swiftly reacted to evolving judicial cooperation needs by facilitating the execution of European Arrest Warrants, European Investigation Orders and freezing orders on the spot. Europol participated in the coordination centre via a mobile office deployed in Spain, contributing to the successful outcome of the operations.

***Results:***

**Arrests:** 1 in Belgium, 3 in Germany, 52 in Spain and 1 in Portugal

**Searches:** 6 in Belgium, 2 in Bulgaria, 14 in Germany, 62 in Spain, 4 in Italy, 3 in Hungary, 15 in Portugal and 1 in Romania

**Interviews/interrogations:** 2 interviews in Bulgaria, 10 interrogations in Germany