

# Security Union: new rules on reinforced Schengen Information System enter into force

The SIS is Europe's most widely used information sharing system for security and border management. Consulted over 5 billion times by national authorities in 2017, the upgraded database will help border guards to better monitor who is crossing the EU's borders; support police and law enforcement in capturing dangerous criminals and terrorists; and offer greater protection for missing children and vulnerable adults, in line with the new data protection rules.

Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris **Avramopoulos** said: *"We are closing a critical security gap today in the EU. Member States will have an obligation to introduce terrorism alerts into the reinforced Schengen Information System. Anyone posing a threat should not go unnoticed anymore: the interoperability of SIS with our other information systems on security, borders and migration in the near future will make sure that all the dots are properly connected on our radar screens."*

Commissioner for the Security Union Julian **King** said: *"The SIS is a key tool for security in the EU, allowing national authorities to catch criminals and terrorists all over Europe. The new obligation to create SIS alerts will help make Europe safer – especially when it comes to tackling terrorism – as part of our wider efforts to strengthen information sharing and make our information systems work together more effectively."*

As of today, new rules on alerts related to terrorism apply:

- **Greater vigilance for terrorist offences:** As of today, national authorities are obliged to create a SIS alert for all cases related to terrorist offences. By the end of 2019, Member States will also have to inform Europol of hits alerts linked to terrorism, which will help to connect the dots at the European level.
- **Stronger data protection rules:** The new rules have been brought into line with the new General Data Protection Regulation and the Police Directive on data protection.

A number of other new functionalities in the SIS will be implemented in phases, with a requirement for the system to be fully operational in Member States 3 years following entry into force of the legislation:

- **New alerts on criminals and return decisions:** The new rules will allow SIS alerts to be issued for unknown persons who are wanted in connection with a crime. In addition, a new alert category for "return decisions" has been introduced to improve the enforcement of return decisions issued to irregularly staying third-country nationals;
- **Stronger provisions on missing children and people in need:** National authorities will be able to issue preventive alerts on persons who are

in need of protection, in addition to existing alerts on missing persons;

- **Enforcement of entry bans:** It will be now compulsory to insert into SIS any entry bans issued to third-country nationals preventing them from entering the Schengen area;

## **Background**

In his [2016 State of the Union Address](#), President Juncker highlighted the importance of overcoming the current shortcomings in data management and of improving the interoperability of existing information systems. A strengthened Schengen Information System (SIS) is one of the foundations of this work.

As a result of a comprehensive evaluation of the SIS carried out in 2016, some areas were identified where operational and technical improvements could be made. The legislative proposals presented by the Commission in [December 2016](#) implemented the recommendations set out in this evaluation report as well as the commitment made by President Juncker in his 2016 State of the Union Address. Co-legislators adopted the Commission proposals in [November 2018](#).

The Schengen Information System (SIS) is a large-scale, centralised information system that supports checks at the external Schengen borders and improves law enforcement and judicial cooperation in 30 countries throughout Europe. It currently contains around 79 million records, and was consulted 5 billion times in 2017. The SIS notably provides information on individuals who do not have the right to enter or stay in the Schengen area, persons sought in relation to criminal activities and missing persons, as well as details of certain lost or stolen objects (for example cars, firearms, boats and identity documents) and data that is needed to locate a person and confirm their identity.

## **For More Information**

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

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