



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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LIMITE

**VISA 5
COMIX 17**

NOTE

from :	Presidency
to :	Visa Working Party
Subject :	New utilities on the VISION Network

1. At present the VISION Network is used:

- for a State examining an application to consult a State or States that wish to be consulted for security reasons (Annex 5 B);
- for a representing State that receives an application to consult a represented State that wishes to be consulted (Annex 5 C).

Both cases concern visa applications for which the Member States (both those processing applications and the States consulted) receive in their capitals very full information comprising at least the eleven sections mentioned in section 2.3 of the Common Consular Instructions.

In exceptional cases cooperation extends to providing a copy of the applicant's application form and his photograph. To this authentic database on those visas must be added the information which has to be provided by the consular offices to their own central authorities (Annex 5 A).

Annex 5 of the CCI brings together all the exceptional cases in which decisions on visa applications are not transferred to the consular offices. Although consultation cases are numerically few, the information provided is qualitatively highly significant in security and prevention terms. The very fact that a journey has been made, the reason given for it, the references given in Member States, and so on, if properly processed and exploited, can in themselves help prevent, and in other cases provide guidance in combating terrorism and organised crime.

2. At its meeting in September 2001 the Council asked for proposals on establishing an information exchange network on visas issued.

In this context COREPER has asked the Commission to submit a feasibility study on a database of visas. It is to be expected that it will take some time for this information exchange tool to become available. In addition, this proposal assigned to the Commission is not necessarily the only way to contribute to security; it is open to States that share interests and values to add to the possibilities.

3. Given the time it will take to provide the database of visas, and especially taking into account the contribution that visas can and should make to security and to combating illegal immigration, consideration should be given to whether additional measures can and should be undertaken regarding the VISION Network, which, after all, handles information on particularly sensitive groups.

The Network would achieve this increased utility if the following measures, among other possible ones, were approved:

- (a) move towards an Annex 5 B list that is common to the greatest possible degree and an Annex 5 C list as little diffuse as possible:
 - 1. all applications submitted in the countries mentioned in both Annexes would be referred for consultation, whether submitted by nationals, residents or non-residents;
 - 2. all applications submitted in any other State by certain nationals or by certain categories of persons would be referred for consultation;
- (b) it could be decided in which cases the consultation was requested purely for information and thus with no need for a reply;
- (c) the VISION Network should be equipped to communicate decisions to grant visas, with indications of the type of visa issued (common or LTV), and formal rejections of applications for which consultation has been necessary.

Internally, the States would set up consultation with security, intelligence and immigration services which could provide useful information or for which it would be useful for security if they could consult the information on the VISION Network.

If changes to the present configuration of the VISION Network prove necessary in the light of the debate, the VISION Network technicians will be asked to make those changes.