

Carriers Working Group of 02 February 2023

Summary

Subject: Monthly Carriers Working Group meeting

Sea and Land Carriers at 10:00– 12:00 CET

Participants: Carriers for the sea and land industry, carrier associations, European Commission (DG HOME), Member State (MS) experts, Frontex and eu-LISA

<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>a. Agenda</p> <p>b. Carriers meeting calendar</p>	<p>The agenda of the 20th Carriers Working Group was presented to the participants.</p> <p>The WG took note of the Carriers meeting calendar with highlights of the dates of upcoming meetings until May 2023. The next Carriers Working Group meeting will take place on 1 March; and there will be one meeting per month until May, respectively on 3 April and 15 May 2023. <i>Ad hoc</i> meetings can be organised upon request. eu-LISA kindly requested the topics to be shared in advance for the preparation of the meeting.</p> <p>Carriers were informed about the eu-LISA Management Board deliberation related to planned EES EiO:</p> <p>After considering the state of play of the EES implementation at all levels (i.e. central, national and industry) and the status of the related web services, on 12 January 2023 eu-LISA's Management Board concluded that the EES Entry into Operations scheduled for May 2023 is no longer feasible. As already stated in the Management Board's decision on the matter, all involved stakeholders are requested to continue their respective preparations, in particular, at border crossing points which require being fully equipped for the use of EES. Revised planning is being prepared that targets an entry into operations of EES within 2023 and information will soon be available on the resolution of the ongoing technical issues.</p>
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	<p>Carriers were also informed that the Onboarding and Support Service to carriers provided by eu-LISA contractor is currently on hold.</p> <p>For urgent matters, carriers can send their questions to “EULISA-CARRIERS@eulisa.europa.eu”. Support on those urgent topics will be provided on a best-effort basis.</p>
<p>2. Legal updates (European Commission)</p> <p>a. Validation of the visible digital seal on Schengen visa stickers</p>	<p>The European Commission informed the Carriers WG of the implementation of the new visible digital seal (VDS) in Schengen visas and other visas issued in the uniform format. The problem lay in the uniform format for visa stickers that had not undergone substantial changes since 1995 and many counterfeits of the visa stickers in circulation had been identified. Following a revision of the uniform format in 2017 and the inclusion of new additional security features, the visa sticker remained under considerable counterfeit pressure. Since the migration crisis, large numbers of high-quality counterfeits have been detected by national border authorities. The Commission outlined the different milestones of the evolution to the new 2D barcode as standardised by the <i>ICAO Technical Report Visible Digital Seals for non-electronic documents</i>, which became mandatory for all visas issued in the uniform format as of 1 November 2022.</p> <p>The Commission further explained that the visible digital seal (VDS) comprises a cryptographically signed data structure that contains document features, which are encoded as a 2D bar code and printed on the document that secures the personalised data, giving confidence in the validity and authenticity of the visa, when validated properly. Correct validation of the VDS could play a key role in speeding up controls at transport hubs while also reducing penalties due to carrier liability.</p> <p>It was also highlighted that the Commission has developed a mobile application, VDS Reader, for the reading and validation of the VDS. It is publicly available for Android devices. Although the VDS Reader was developed for testing purposes, it can already be used for the reading and validation of VDS printed on visa stickers issued in the uniform format. The application includes the latest certificates uploaded by Member States’ authorities.</p> <p>The Commission will develop a new application (also compatible with iOS devices) with additional functionalities to facilitate the validation of the VDS. The Commission will also issue guidance to Member States authorities and carriers on the reading and validation of the VDS.</p>

<p>3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>eu-LISA informed the Carrier WG that a new version of the Carrier Technical Guidelines for the System-to-System connection will be shared with the registered carriers shortly. This new version includes a few improvements concerning the process of the connectivity, including two additional forms being added, the F04a and the F04b, to be used to get all the connectivity configurations..</p> <p>The “Not Applicable (NA)” response sent by the Carrier Interface (CI) is also clarified for selected use cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the third-country nationals that were indicated as out-of-scope in the query; • the CI was able to mark the third-country nationals as out-of-scope based on the input received from the carrier. <p>The document also provides technical corrections in the JSON and XLM schemas for the request and reply format; examples being also added, depicting the type of the reply sent for an invalid query.</p> <p>The samples will be updated for the new schemas based on the feedback received from the carriers and system providers, a generic "CUSRES message" for a failed MQ request was added.</p>
<p>4. Operational updates (Frontex)</p>	<p>Frontex informed the Carriers WG about the state-of-play of two documents: the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).</p> <p>The third version of FAQ with around 40 additional questions was published in December 2022 and is available on eu-LISA’s website Frontex Report Dark Blue Template (europa.eu), with the new questions marked in green. Frontex will continue to work on the document by collecting and adding questions posed during Carrier WG meetings and sent in by the carriers.</p> <p>Regarding the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the first draft version of the document, elaborated in cooperation with eu-LISA, was shared with the carriers in December 2022. The deadline to receive feedback from the carriers will be extended to 24 February 2023.</p>
<p>5. Q&A</p>	<p>During the Q&A session, the Commission, eu-LISA and Frontex answered several questions posed by the carriers.</p> <p>The Commission outlined the transitional and grace periods to the application of the ETIAS Regulation - the three-year exemption from the</p>

obligation for the Travel Authorisation following the entry-into-operation of ETIAS, only applies to the coach industry.

Regarding EES, the Commission recalled the obligations of carriers to verify that all passengers subject to the visa requirement are indeed in possession of a valid visa. However, following the EES EiO, a Single or a Double Entry Visa is to be checked through the Carrier Interface, in order to ensure that the visa still has minimum one unused entry when the third country national enters the Schengen area. This is due to the fact that stamping will stop and consumption of the entries of these visas will no longer be visible.

Carriers Working Group of 02 February 2023

Summary

Subject: Monthly Carriers Working Group meeting

Air Carriers at 13:00– 16:00 CET

Participants: Carriers for the air industry, carrier associations, European Commission (DG HOME), Member State (MS) experts, Frontex and eu-LISA

<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>a. Agenda</p> <p>b. Carriers meeting calendar</p>	<p>The agenda of the 20th Carriers Working Group was presented to the participants.</p> <p>The WG took note of the Carriers meeting calendar with highlights of the dates of upcoming meetings until May 2023. The next Carriers Working Group meeting will take place on 1 March; and there will be one meeting per month until May, respectively on 3 April and 15 May 2023. <i>Ad hoc</i> meetings can be organised upon request. eu-LISA kindly requested the topics to be shared in advance for the preparation of the meeting.</p> <p>Carriers were informed about the eu-LISA Management Board deliberation related to planned EES EiO:</p> <p>After considering the state of play of the EES implementation at all levels (i.e. central, national and industry) and the status of the related web services, on 12 January 2023 eu-LISA’s Management Board concluded that the EES Entry into Operations scheduled for May 2023 is no longer feasible. As already stated in the Management Board’s decision on the matter, all involved stakeholders are requested to continue their respective preparations, in particular, at border crossing points which require being fully equipped for the use of EES. Revised planning is being prepared that targets an entry into operations of EES within 2023 and information will soon be available on the resolution of the ongoing technical issues.</p>
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<p>4.. Business Aviation (eu-LISA, European Commission)</p>	<p>The Agency and the Commission explained the main questions raised by representatives of the business aviation community on the subject of on the obligation to query the CI and other topics. It was asked what happens if an operator arrives to the EU without registering to ETIAS due to lack of knowledge of the system and it was explained that the MS might penalise the carrier and the carrier will need to transport the passenger back to the point of departure.</p> <p>Regarding the question related to the de-registration of carrier from the carrier interface after a one-year period of lack of operation, it was clarified, that a notification is sent to the carriers one month prior to the actual de-registration, allowing time for the carrier to react before the actual deregistration.</p> <p>Therefore, the Commission recommends all carriers expecting to carry passengers into the EU to launch the registration process with eu-LISA in advance to avoid any operational/legal issues after the entry-into-operation of EES and ETIAS.</p> <p>eu-LISA explained to the questions concerning the operators that conduct both commercial and non-commercial operations that it does not expect to have a specific treatment for carriers from the Business Aviation sector. The processes and the system are the same for all carriers with EES and ETIAS obligations.</p> <p>The Agency answered several questions about the definitions of a carrier as well as crew and the different obligations faced by the carriers depending on the scope. Carriers appreciated the inclusion of references to the concept of making profit in the FAQ document. However, due to open questions, the concept will be further discussed and the reference may be enhanced or amended.</p>
<p>5.. Q&A</p>	<p>During the Q&A session, the Commission, eu-LISA and Frontex answered several questions posed by the carriers. When addressing the questions from the WG the Commission kindly invited the carriers to check the presentation on Variable Geometry on the eu-LISA website. <u>eu-LISA - Working Group for Carriers (europa.eu)</u> The document provides clarifications on several questions about the Schengen area, including the discrepancies between the scope of EES and ETIAS.</p>