

Carriers Working Group of 21 March 2024

Summary

Subject: Monthly Carriers Working Group meeting

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

Participants: Carriers representing sea and land industry, their declared service providers, carrier associations, European Commission (DG HOME), Member State (MS) experts, Frontex and eu-LISA (altogether 70 participants).

<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>a. Agenda</p> <p>b. Carriers meeting calendar</p>	<p>eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 30th Carriers Working Group (CWG) and the calendar of the upcoming meetings to the participants.</p> <p>The CWG took note of the Carriers meeting calendar with the dates of upcoming meetings until June 2024. The next CWG meeting is scheduled for 25th April. Ad hoc meetings can be organised upon request. eu-LISA however kindly requested that the discussion topics are shared in advance to ensure the inclusion of the most pertinent experts.</p>
<p>2. Legal updates (European Commission)</p>	<p>The CWG received a reminder from the European Commission regarding the implementation of the precautionary measures that will apply with the EiO of the Entry/Exit System (EES). It was emphasised that these measures are intended to facilitate smoother border crossings and reduce queues. Specifically, MS have the option to temporarily not record all biometric data at specific border crossing points (BCPs), a decision aimed at accommodating the unique needs and particularities of each BCP. This flexibility is at the discretion of the MS, underscoring the importance of ongoing communication between the Carriers and the Member States to ensure awareness of when and how these measures are applied. Additionally, the Commission informed that the exact start date for the EES EiO, expected in Q4 of 2024, will be officially communicated in Q3.</p> <p>The European Commission also announced that a high-level meeting with the Industry Associations is planned to take place at the end of April.</p>

<p>3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>eu-LISA updated the CWG on the status of Carrier implementations and system-to-system integration processes as of March 2024, providing a comprehensive overview of the progress and developments in various areas. In the current landscape, there are 557 carriers prepared for system-to-system integration and 503 carriers ready for integration with the mobile app and web portal. Among these, 127 carriers have not yet completed all required forms, while 345 carriers are ready for testing, though their systems are not yet compliant. Additionally, 63 carriers are on the brink of certification for system compliance, with 8 carriers already certified or exempted. On the system readiness front, 45 systems are not yet ready to start the system-to-system connectivity, indicating a need for further preparation in terms of technical readiness and compliance. Meanwhile, 23 systems are in the midst of connectivity testing, and 6 systems are ready for CT, having achieved the required connectivity standards. Only 2 systems have reached full compliance.</p> <p>In terms of technical guidance, a new version of the Carrier Technical Guidelines for System to System will be published under the Revision Status 25_00_00 in the first quarter of 2024. This update aims to address critical areas, such as Variable Geometry scenarios, transit handling in PAXLST and updates related to EES and ETIAS applications, among others. Concurrently, the Carrier Technical Guidelines for Web Portal and Mobile Application will be released under Revision Status 5_01_00, offering updated guidance on user management, authentication, and interface navigation to enhance usability and compliance. The Carrier Interface Overview remains a pivotal element, reinforcing the essential aspects of Carrier interface operations, including query/reply mechanisms for passenger and itinerary data, and classification guidelines per EES and ETIAS regulations.</p> <p>Furthermore, the deep dive into the Carrier Web Portal emphasised the portal's role in managing users, verifying TCN status, and ensuring that Carriers are equipped with the necessary tools and information for effective system use. Detailed explanations have been provided on the user management first access and Carrier SPOC view. eu-LISA Carrier administrator will allocate 10 anonymous user IDs to each Carrier SPOC requesting the Web Portal/Mobile app connection. However, additional users can be allocated upon request in accordance with carrier's needs. Scheduled to be available for training on PGD from the first week of April, 2024, and ready on PRD for technical connections during Q3 2024, the portal is set to fully become operational for business use by Q4 2024, coinciding with the EES Entry into Operations.</p>
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	<p>Reflecting on the lessons learnt during the pilot phase, key takeaways include the critical role of active interactions between REST/JSON experts to reduce connection establishment times, the importance of adhering to provided templates to avoid common errors, and the utility of specific attributes, such as the CorrelationID for tracking test executions more efficiently.</p>
<p>4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates and sea scenarios (Frontex)</p>	<p>The CWG received a presentation from Frontex detailing the operational framework and support mechanisms provided by the ETIAS Assistance Centre Unit (ACU) to Carriers. This comprehensive guide outlines the roles, digital tools and standard operating procedures designed to assist carriers in fulfilling their future tasks related to EES and ETIAS. The ACU, a dedicated unit within the ETIAS Central Unit at Frontex, is primarily responsible for supporting carriers, as well as travellers when filling in the ETIAS application form. This unit will be operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, starting from the entry into operations of the EES in Q4 2024. Support will be provided only in English, comprising first-level assistance through FAQs available online and second-level support for registered carriers, which can be requested via a web form. The Carrier Onboarding and Support Tool (COBST), provided by eu-LISA, is an automated self-service web portal equipped with ticketing functionalities, serving as the main communication channel between Carriers and ACU/eu-LISA. This tool, accessible through the EES and ETIAS public website, will be available exclusively to registered Carriers and is to be used by duly authorised Carrier staff. In the event of COBST being unavailable, a backup emergency phone line is established for operational and technical inquiries.</p> <p>Frontex also introduced the SOP for Carriers' Assistance, mandated by the ETIAS Regulation. These procedures detail the common issues Carriers may encounter when adhering to EES and ETIAS Regulations - mainly registration for the carriers who are already registered migrating to the COBST, new carrier registrations, user management of COBST, technical requests, operational requests, technical impossibility notification, security incidents -, offering clear guidelines for resolution through agreed processes between ACU and eu-LISA. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Carrier's points of contact, duly authorised staff and legal representatives. The ACU commits to responding to operational requests, facilitating the management of technical inquiries and handling notifications on the technical impossibility of sending verification queries via the Carrier Interface. The latter may be due to failures at the central system, which fall under eu-LISA's responsibility, or failures on the Carrier's side. A forthcoming presentation will detail the technical impossibility topic. In response, eu-LISA will address and resolve technical requests, manage registrations for new Carriers, user management of COBST, deregistration, and security incidents, resolve the failure at central system level.</p> <p>The CWG was briefed on procedures in case of technical impossibility at <u>central system level</u>, highlighting that Carriers are exempt from submitting</p>

	<p>queries during this period. It was emphasized that all stakeholders, including MS, are kept informed about technical impossibility at central system level. Carriers will receive this information via the COBST. It was clarified that despite Carrier exemption to perform the query before boarding, necessary checks will be conducted by the border authorities at Schengen BCPs to ensure entry conditions are upheld.</p> <p>For operational queries, Carriers were invited to contact Frontex at etias.acu1@frontex.europa.eu.</p>
<p>6. Q&A</p>	<p>During the Q&A session, eu-LISA, the Commission and Frontex addressed several topics and answered Carriers' questions on the precautionary measures, the EES EiO official date and the communication campaign, Carrier Interface replies and the processes in case of technical impossibility to send verification queries via the Carrier Interface.</p>

Carriers Working Group of 21 March 2024

Summary

Subject: Monthly Carriers Working Group meeting

Air Carriers at 13:30– 16:00 CET

Participants: Carriers representing air industry, their declared service providers, carrier associations, European Commission (DG HOME), Member State (MS) experts, Frontex and eu-LISA (altogether 118 participants).

<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>a. Agenda</p> <p>b. Carriers meeting calendar</p>	<p>eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 30th Carriers Working Group (CWG) and the calendar of the upcoming meetings to the participants.</p> <p>The CWG took note of the Carriers meeting calendar with the dates of upcoming meetings until June 2024. The next CWG meeting is scheduled for 25th April. Ad hoc meetings can be organised upon request. eu-LISA however kindly requested that the discussion topics are shared in advance to ensure the inclusion of the most pertinent experts.</p>
<p>2. Legal updates (European Commission)</p>	<p>The CWG received a reminder from the European Commission regarding the implementation of precautionary measures that will apply with the EiO of the Entry/Exit System (EES). It was emphasised that these measures are intended to facilitate smoother border crossings and reduce queues. Specifically, MS have the option to temporarily not record all biometric data, at specific border crossing points (BCPs), a decision aimed at accommodating the unique needs and particularities of each BCP. This flexibility is at the discretion of the MS, underscoring the importance of ongoing communication between the Member States and the Carriers to ensure awareness of when and how these measures are applied. Additionally, the Commission informed that the exact start date for the EES EiO, expected in Q4 of 2024, will be officially communicated in Q3.</p>

<p>3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>eu-LISA updated the CWG on the status of Carrier implementations and system-to-system integration processes as of March 2024, providing a comprehensive overview of the progress and developments in various areas. In the current landscape, there are 557 carriers prepared for system-to-system integration and 503 carriers ready for integration with the mobile app and web portal. Among these, 127 carriers have not yet completed all required forms while 345 carriers are ready for testing, even though their systems are not yet compliant. Additionally, 63 carriers are on the brink of certification for system compliance with 8 carriers already certified or exempted. As to the system readiness, 45 systems are not yet ready to start the system-to-system connectivity, indicating a need for further preparation in terms of technical readiness and compliance. Meanwhile, 23 systems are in the midst of connectivity testing and 6 systems are ready for CT, having achieved the required connectivity standards. Only 2 systems have reached full compliance.</p> <p>In terms of technical guidance, a new version of the Carrier Technical Guidelines for System to System will be published under the Revision Status 25_00_00 in the first quarter of 2024. This update aims to address critical areas such as Variable Geometry scenarios, transit handling in PAXLST, and updates related to EES and ETIAS applications, among others. Concurrently, the Carrier Technical Guidelines for Web Portal and Mobile Application will be released under Revision Status 5_01_00, offering updated guidance on user management, authentication and interface navigation to enhance usability and compliance. The Carrier Interface Overview remains a pivotal element, reinforcing the essential aspects of carrier interface operations, including query/reply mechanisms for passenger and itinerary data, and classification guidelines per EES and ETIAS regulations.</p> <p>Furthermore, the deep dive into the Carrier Web Portal emphasized the portal's role in managing users, verifying TCN status, and ensuring that carriers are equipped with the necessary tools and information for effective system use. Detailed explanations have been provided on the user management first access and Carrier SPOC view. eu-LISA Carrier administrator will allocate 10 anonymous user IDs to each Carrier SPOC requesting the Web Portal/Mobile app connection. However, additional users can be allocated upon request in accordance with carrier's needs. Scheduled to be available for training on PGD from the first week of April, 2024 and ready on PRD for technical connections during Q3 2024, the portal is set to be fully operational for business use by Q4 2024, coinciding with the EES Entry into Operations.</p>
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	<p>Reflecting on the lessons learned during the pilot phase, key takeaways include the critical role of active interactions between experts to reduce connection establishment times, important PAXLST notes about the MQ/EDIFACT message structure to be reinforced to avoid the 400 errors, the importance of adhering to provided templates to avoid common errors and the utility of specific attributes, such as the CorrelationID for tracking test executions more efficiently, annex to TDD and a “template” DTP will be provided to clarify the mapping of attributes to respective message structure and format.</p>
<p>4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates (Frontex)</p>	<p>The CWG received a presentation from Frontex detailing the operational framework and support mechanisms provided by the ETIAS Assistance Centre Unit (ACU) to Carriers. This comprehensive guide outlines the roles, digital tools and standard operating procedures designed to assist carriers in fulfilling their future tasks related to EES and ETIAS. The ACU, a dedicated unit within the ETIAS Central Unit at Frontex, is primarily responsible for supporting Carriers, as well as travellers when filling in the ETIAS application form. This unit will be operational 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, starting from the entry into operations of the EES in Q4 2024. Support will be provided only in English, comprising first-level assistance through FAQs and second-level support for registered Carriers, which can be requested via a web form. The Carrier Onboarding and Support Tool (COBST), provided by eu-LISA, is an automated self-service web portal equipped with ticketing functionalities, serving as the main communication channel between Carriers and ACU/eu-LISA. This tool, accessible through the EES and ETIAS public website, will be available exclusively to registered Carriers and is to be used by duly authorised Carrier staff. In the event of COBST being unavailable, a backup emergency phone line is established for operational and technical inquiries. Frontex also introduced the SOP for Carriers' Assistance, mandated by the ETIAS Regulation. These procedures detail the common issues Carriers may encounter when adhering to EES and ETIAS Regulations, offering clear guidelines for resolution through agreed processes between ACU and eu-LISA. It outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Carrier's points of contact, duly authorised staff and legal representatives. The ACU commits to responding to operational requests, facilitating the management of technical inquiries and handling notifications on the technical impossibility of sending verification queries via the Carrier Interface. These may be due to failures at the central system, which fall under eu-LISA's responsibility, or failures on the Carrier's side. In response, eu-LISA will address and resolve technical requests, manage registrations for new Carriers, user management of COBST, de-registrations and security incidents.</p> <p>In response to queries posed by Carriers, Frontex detailed streamlined support system for Carriers, incorporating updated FAQs and SOPs, a</p>

	<p>ticketing tool for queries accessible through a web portal and an emergency contact line available 24/7 to be used <u>only when COBST is unavailable</u>. This multi-tiered approach ensures consistent assistance. However, limitations exist, such as the fact that the operators do not have access to ETIAS database. The support framework guides carriers to relevant documentation, facilitates the escalation of technical issues to agencies like eu-LISA and advises on procedural steps within legal parameters, ensuring efficient and compliant support.</p> <p>For operational queries, Carriers were invited to contact Frontex at etias.acu1@frontex.europa.eu.</p>
<p>5. Q&A</p>	<p>During the Q&A session, eu-LISA, the Commission and Frontex addressed several topics and answered Carriers' questions mainly on the precautionary measures, carrier interface replies with particular focus on the reply for ETIAS LTV (indication to be available only in the OK response, as it can be supported by the legal base), procedures to handle the travellers who were refused boarding.</p>