

The European Parlement
Mr C. Coelho
Wiertzstraat
B-1047 Brussels
Belgium

Subject

Biometric identifiers in visas, residence permits
and passports of EU Member States

Dear Mr Coelho,

On 19 April 2004 Mr Ole B. Sørensen asked, as the rapporteur of the European Parlement on the proposals to introduce biometric identifiers, the Dutch Senate a number of questions regarding the proposals to introduce biometric identifiers in the visas, residence permits and passports of the EU Member States. The Senate asked me in mid-June 2004 to answer those questions of a factual nature.

It was not possible to answer your questions sooner, as it took some time to collect figures on visas, residence permits and travel documents. Some of the information you requested is now available, although we are still waiting for the data on counterfeit passports. I hope to have these data in the near future. As soon as I do I shall inform you.

THE MINISTER FOR GOVERNMENT REFORM AND KINGDOM RELATIONS,

Thomas de Graaf

Date

oktober 25, 2004

Our reference

BPR2004/67333

Department

DGKB/BPR

Information

mw mr M. Gonzalez
T 00 31 70 361 3121
F

Your reference

Page

1 of 3

Enclosures

1

Address for visitors

Lange Vijverberg 11
The Hague
The Netherlands

Postall address

Postbus 10451
2501 HL Den Haag
The Netherlands

Internet

www.bprbzk.nl

Datum
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Ons kenmerk
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Blad
2 van 3

Annex 1

Question:

Do you have an indication on how many counterfeited visa documents are intercepted at your border crossings? What is the percentage of these? Do you have an indication on how many of the visas issued by your country are counterfeited? What is the percentage of these? Do you have any figures as regards passports and residence permits?

Answer:

An indication of the number of counterfeit visa documents found can be given based on Schengen visas inspected at Schiphol by the Royal Netherlands Military Constabulary during the 2002-2003 period. A total of 124 counterfeit visa documents were found at Schiphol during that period. These involved misuse of authentic—i.e. stolen—visa documents, substituting data on authentic visas or rendering them illegible, and completely forged visa documents. Of the 124 counterfeits found, nine were visas issued by the Netherlands, i.e. 7% of the total counterfeit visa documents found at Schiphol during the 2002-2003 period. What percentage the 124 counterfeits found represents of the total number of visas inspected in the Netherlands is not known, as the number of visa-holders crossing the border is not currently recorded.

The indication given above also includes a few residence permits. There are no separate records kept of numbers of residence permits inspected and counterfeits found.

Question:

What does your government estimate that the adoption of these proposals (in particular as regards the uniform format for visas and residence permits and the EU passport) would cost (including the storage medium, the enrolment equipment and verification systems for all national border entry points together with additional staff costs)?

Answer:

The Visa Information System (VIS) is based on a centralized architecture and comprises a central visa information system, a national interface in each Member State and a communications infrastructure between the central visa information system and the national interfaces.

These are being developed by the European Commission, which has budgeted a total of € 30 million in development costs for the phase lasting until 2006.



Datum
oktober 25, 2004

Ons kenmerk
BPR2004/67333

Onderdeel
DGKB/BPR

Blad
3 van 3

The Commission estimates running costs for the 2007-2009 period and onwards at a total of € 8 million per annum.

The national infrastructures are to be developed and/or adapted by the Member States. The specific cost to the Netherlands cannot be estimated until specifications for the central facilities have been received from the European Commission.

When estimating the cost of adding biometric identifiers to Dutch passports we break this down as follows:

- The one-off investment the Dutch government needs to make in adapting the current passport production process and purchasing the enrolment and verification equipment required for handling passport applications and issuing passports.
- The additional cost of applying the biometric identifiers (the storage medium) and servicing the equipment.
- The additional costs to the municipalities, which are responsible for issuing passports in the Netherlands.

As part of the feasibility study into the introduction of biometric identifiers in Dutch travel documents, calculations were made for a few scenarios, varying both the biometric identifiers to be used and the roll-out of the required infrastructure (enrolment equipment) at issuing bodies.

The table below shows the estimated costs of changing the 2001 travel document model and the issuing system to include a finger scan and a digital passport photograph.

	x million €		per document
Investments			
Investment in changes to central production facility	2,60	€	0,18
Modification RAAS-software (photo and finger) and roll-out/training	4,60	€	0,31
Finger scan enrolment equipment (4,800 units for 800 locations)	31,79	€	2,15
Project organization	8,00	€	0,54
Total investments	46,99	€	3,18
Document-related expenses (five-year contract)			
Chip (32 kB crypto chip with embedding, antenna)	90,28	€	6,10
Chip personalization	17,61	€	1,19
Maintenance of biometric equipment (15% of purchase cost)	4,77	€	0,32
Total additional cost (five-year contract)	112,66	€	7,61
Total expected additional cost per document	€		10,79

The additional costs to municipalities (the issuing bodies) are not included in the above table. A trial was launched in six Dutch municipalities on 30 August 2004, one of the aims being to ascertain the consequences, including financial consequences, to the issuing bodies. This trial will take six months.

