



## Conclusions

### *2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the informal ad hoc Working Group for Carriers*

On 20 September 2019, the European Commission, together with the European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (eu-LISA), hosted the second informal ad hoc meeting of the Working Group (WG) for carriers. Twenty-five (25) participants attended the meeting (*see the Annex*), representing air, sea and land passenger transport industries. Further to carrier associations, four (4) Member States (Belgium, the Czech Republic, France and Italy) as well as the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA/Frontex) were present at the meeting.

Carrier representatives were provided with preliminary views of the Commission services of the key elements of draft Implementing Regulations on Carriers, and which are expected to be adopted by mid-2020. The presentation covered the following main topics:

- Obligation of carriers to verify the status of third-country nationals prior to boarding but not earlier than 48 hours before the scheduled time of departure.
- Connection and access means to the carrier interface: dedicated network connection or internet, with three communication channels: a system-to-system interface (through an Application Programming Interface / API), a web interface and a mobile application.
- Registration/authentication scheme: Carriers requesting registration online via a Carriers Assistance Centre (CAC), managed by EBCGA/Frontex in its capacity as the ETIAS Central Unit. Member States would provide eu-LISA with carriers' contacts (e.g. official carrier entity, commercial name, official industry tag, carrier industry, single point of contact (SPOC) and its backup). The registration would be validated by any of the national administrations in which the carrier operates. Carriers (if they operate in more than one Member State) could decide in which Member State to register. A technical solution would be provided to support the registration process. Carriers, once registered, would get a Carrier Submission ID for further reference. During the discussion, it was highlighted that the three (3) connection channels would be protected via an authentication scheme and technical details would be further clarified in the technical guidelines.
- Carriers' duly authorised staff: Carriers are responsible for ensuring that only duly authorised staff have access to the web interface of EES and ETIAS, and would need to put in place the necessary physical access control mechanisms as well as internal authentication procedures.
- Participants discussed the content of the queries' entry fields:
  - Data contained in machine-readable zone, including surname, first name or names, date of birth, sex, nationality, type and number of travel document (almost always a passport with a three (3) letter code identifying the issuing country) and date of expiry of the travel document.
  - Member State of entry (not the city/airport) and details (number, scheduled departure date and time).
  - Scheduled day of arrival at the borders of the Member State of entry.

Sea carrier representatives indicated that shipping companies do not use equivalent to the air industry flight identification codes, but rather a unique identification mechanism including the ship's name, registration number and departure date. The European Commission would consider possible solutions for sea carriers based on concrete examples from the sea carriers.

- Concerning queries, participants took note of the fact that, according to ETIAS Regulation Art. 2(2) and EES Regulation Art. 2(3), not all third country nationals fall within the scope of the queries. It was also stressed that carriers' current obligations under the Convention Implementing the Schengen Agreement (CISA) remained and that carriers would continue to verify the existence of valid documentation for entry into the Schengen area. As a facilitation, carriers could inform about the existence of additional documentation already when sending the query, which proved that the carrier had already checked that the TCN was out of the scope of the legal provisions.
- Query in batch (several passengers to be checked in a single query: possibility for sending one batch query and receiving individual responses per third-country national in one batch. IATA's representative pointed out that while queries are made passenger-by-passenger for the entire flight (iAPI principle), exceptional cases or passengers not falling into the same scope should be handled by the systems. eu-LISA explained that the system would recognise each passenger category and reply, per passenger, accordingly.
- Special attention was given to the transitional and grace periods and measures as established in the ETIAS Regulation. Discussion focused on the possible replies (OK / Not OK / Not Applicable) that carriers would receive once the systems were operational. It was still to be assessed whether there was a need for providing separate replies to carriers (one for EES and another one for ETIAS) or if a single reply would be sufficient.
- Concerning data extraction, participants were informed that the Read Only (RO) Database would be updated daily as well as when needed (e.g. issued, revoked or annulled travel authorisations as well as revoked or annulled single or double entry visas). Carriers are to store the information sent and the answer(s) received in accordance with applicable laws.

EBCGA/Frontex provided information on the Carriers Assistance Centre (CAC), to be established under their auspices (ETIAS Central Unit). It would be a single point of entry to provide support to registered carriers on operational (carrier responsibilities, operational guidance and general information) and technical (provision of the carrier interface, authentication problems, business continuity incidents, or issues with 3<sup>rd</sup> party providers) requests. It was clarified that CAC would offer an uninterrupted service (24/7), primarily in English and that it could be contacted via web form and e-mail. CAC would not however offer a telephone hotline due to the high operational workload as well as the heavy back-end resource needs. The planned CAC process was also briefly presented.

eu-LISA presented and complemented the European Commission's presentation with a number of technical elements with a special focus on *i) High Level Architecture; ii) Connection possibilities; iii) Message format and iv) Testing and certification process.*

Concerning the message format, discussion focused on presented industry standards (UN/EDIFACT PAXLST/CUSRES, XML, JSON) and whether they were sufficient or if further message formats supported by other reservation control systems, such as the New Skies (system used by TUI and offered by Navitaire.com - now part of AMADEUS - covering circa 50 airlines globally) should also be considered. Further discussion was required for eu-LISA to be in a position to end up with the proper format or formats to be used to accommodate all industries. The Agency mentioned that it was aware of on-going pilot projects in the Passenger Name Record (PNR) directive implementation domain, investigating other means of transport (like sea and land) for passenger data exchange and also stressed that the transfer protocol (the way the message format would be transmitted) still needed to be decided. Carrier representatives called for ad-hoc follow-up technical discussions with eu-LISA on the message formats.

eu-LISA highlighted the importance of the testing and certification processes for the system-to-system connection option, which would validate compliance with the message format (query and response), transfer protocol and eu-LISA's authentication scheme. Carriers would be able to carry out tests via a simulator in a test environment equivalent to the operational one. The entire process is planned to consist of three (3) phases, including development, pre-certification and certification. Once certification was passed successfully, the Carriers Assistance Centre (CAC) would coordinate the roll-out into operation of the individual carrier.

The meeting was concluded with the identification of the following next steps:

- The 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Working Group for Carriers is scheduled for 19 December 2019 in Brussels;
- By the end of 2019 (most probably in October-November), eu-LISA will organise ad hoc technical sessions for carriers. These sessions could be organised for each industry separately (sea, air and land), if considered necessary;
- Among other topics to be addressed, the message format, the communication protocols as well as the authentication scheme should be further discussed and agreed upon.
- Carrier representatives were invited to come back with any relevant topics/problems/concerns they intend to discuss in this forum by sending an email to [management-board@eulisa.europa.eu](mailto:management-board@eulisa.europa.eu) and [HOME-SMART-BORDERS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:HOME-SMART-BORDERS@ec.europa.eu);
- Carriers were invited to provide their feedback on the following topics in particular:
  - Indicate if they are unable to provide all fields necessary for identifying a carrier – as presented on the last slide in the section of eu-LISA's presentation entitled "connection – registration";
  - Provision of an equivalent of "flight number" by sea and land carries to identify a specific connection of a carrier; and
  - Provision of feedback if the proposed period of one (1) hour of impossibility to connect the side of the carrier, after which they should contact the Carrier Assistance Centre (CAC) established under EBCGA/Frontex's ETIAS Central Unit, is not acceptable.
- The consolidated list of carriers (air/sea/land) should be made available, by the European Commission or EBCGA/Frontex, with the collaboration from Member States (through outreach towards their respective national administrations) at the latest by the end of 2020, to enable eu-LISA to embed it in the system implementation (authentication scheme included).
- Conclusions of the meeting and other relevant documents would be made available on eu-LISA's website.

*Annex*

*Participants to the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the informal ad hoc Working Group for Carriers*

IATA - International Air Transport Association (3 participants)
AIRE - Airlines International Representation in Europe
A4E (3 participants)
CLIA
ECSA
Flixbus
FNTV
TUI
Belgium
Czech Republic
France
Italy
Representatives of Frontex
Representatives of the European Commission
Representatives of eu-LISA