Carriers Working Group of 1 March 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. About 85 participants were observed.

1. Introduction **a. Agenda** **b. Carriers meeting calendar**	The agenda of the 21st Carriers Working Group was presented to the participants. 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 meetings will take place on 3rd of April and 15th of May 2023. *Ad hoc* meetings can be organised upon request. For urgent matters, given the current temporary pause of the onboarding and support service, carriers can send their questions to the functional mailbox EULISA-CARRIERS@eulisa.europa.eu. Support on those urgent topics will be provided on a best-effort basis.
2. Legal updates (European Commission)	Carriers were informed of the discussions taking place in the EES Expert Group regarding scenarios where penalties should not be imposed by the MS, as well as on the topic of visas for crew obtained upon arrival The Commission presented clarifications to the Carriers WG as to which third-country nationals (TCNs) fall under the scope of ETIAS. Carriers were informed about Annexes I and II of the Regulation (EU) 2018/1806 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement, respectively.

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	Nationals of third countries listed in Annex II of the above Regulation are the ones falling under the scope of ETIAS. Some Carriers requested that eu-LISA and COM establish a clear list of countries and overseas territories requiring ETIAS, and of nationalities of third countries which need to apply for ETIAS travel authorisation. The Commission reminded that these lists are established by the legislator and are evolving. The Commission shared the link to the ETIAS website listing those countries (https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias/what-etias_en). eu-LISA kindly asked Carriers to send in writing certain questions raised during the WG regarding countries and territories with specific handling, so that clarifications can be provided and Frontex can include them in the FAQs. The Carriers were also reminded that the Carrier interface should be used only in the scope of ETIAS as well as single-entry and double-entry visas.
3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)	First, eu-LISA provided Carriers with an update on the progress made since the last WG on the Central Systems, the Carrier and the TCN Interface. The Carriers were informed that the system-to-system factory acceptance testing phase is currently finalised and the ongoing factory acceptance testing for Carrier Web Portal, Carrier Mobile application and TCN Public Website is planned to be finalised by the end of March 2023. A new contract for the carrier onboarding and support service was signed recently and the service is estimated to be available again as of 20 March 2023.Carriers were reminded about the eu-LISA Management Board's (MB) decision from January 2023 related to the planned EES EiO and the fact that all involved stakeholders are requested to continue their respective preparations, in particular, at border crossing points to ensure full readiness for the use of EES. Revised planning is being prepared that targets EES EiO within 2023 as suggested by MB. As soon as more info becomes available on next steps and testing phases, eu-LISA will share it with Carriers via email and in this WG.. Secondly, a detailed technical overview of the compliance of Carrier's Systems (Pre-CT and CT) was presented by eu-LISA. The legal context framing the concept of compliance to connect to the Carrier Interface via system-to-system connection and the authentication scheme was explained. It was stressed that these validation tests will assess the quality of data exchanged and the compliance with the authentication scheme, but not the respective system the carriers have set up.

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	The Carriers were reminded of the two important documents for Compliance Testing: 1) the Carrier Tech Guideline (CTG) that contains information on security certificates, communication protocols, message formats, error handling, schemas and templates, and 2) the Test Design Documentation (TDD) containing 12 test cases required to be executed in order for eu-LISA to assess the compliance. The potential technical responses the Carriers can expect when querying the Read Only Data Base (RODB) were explained along with the three steps of the Compliance Phase. Lastly, the four phases of the Detailed Testing Plan, namely Planning, Monitoring, Logging and Validating, were shared along with the respective key roles and responsibilities related to those phases. eu-LISA encouraged Carriers to inform the Agency as soon as they are ready for testing. The Agency has established a pool of Test Managers equipped with a tool that analyses continuously all the test results and automatically checks the compliancy of the Carrier's system.
4. Operational updates (Frontex)	Frontex informed the Carriers WG about the state-of-play of two documents: the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). Regarding the state of play of FAQ, Frontex is finalising a new version of the compilation of FAQ that is expected to be ready by the next WG meeting in April. Concerning plans to have a dedicated workstream allowing Carriers to provide their specific routes, Frontex will soon provide a template for providing information and support on the requirements the Carriers need to fulfil to be in line with the Regulation. Regarding the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the survey was closed on 24 February 2023 with the participation of 40 Carriers; the compilation of results is undergoing and the outcome will be implemented into the SOP shortly. As part of this process, meetings with eu-LISA are taking place to discuss and implement the feedback from Carriers and MS experts. The main conclusions from the survey were provided differentiating the positive aspects to the ones to be improved or implemented. Lastly, four examples of the questions received by Carriers for the SOP were explained and answered. For any questions on FAQ or SOP document, please contact: ETIAS.ACU1@frontex.europa.eu

5. Q&A	During the Q&A session, the Commission, eu-LISA and Frontex answered several questions posed by the carriers.
	As regards the question concerning legal requirements for entity registration (when having separate legal entities in various destination locations), it was explained that the company can register as a group or a main company, provided that those who need to query the carrier interface fall under the definition of duly authorised staff. In case entities would like to use the system with different identity they need to register separately.
	To the question on how to consider a passenger who has dual nationality (the first in scope of ETIAS and the second out of scope), the Commission replied that it depends on the passport the passenger presents. If a person has an EU nationality, the EU passport must be used; in other cases, passenger can choose which travel document to use.

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Carriers Working Group of 1 March 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. About 135 participants were observed.

1. Introduction **a. Agenda** **b. Carriers meeting calendar**	The agenda of the 21ˢᵗ Carriers Working Group was presented to the participants. 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 meetings will take place on 3ʳᵈ of April and 15ᵗʰ of May 2023. *Ad hoc* meetings can be organised upon request. For urgent matters, given the current temporary pause of the onboarding and support service, carriers can send their questions to functional mailbox EULISA-CARRIERS@eulisa.europa.eu. Support on those urgent topics will be provided on a best-effort basis.
2. Legal updates (European Commission) **a. Validation of the visible digital seal on Schengen visa stickers**	Carriers were informed of the discussions taking place in the EES Expert Group regarding scenarios where penalties should not be imposed by the MS, as well as on the topic of visas for crew obtained upon arrival The Commission informed the Carriers WG of the implementation of the visible digital seal (VDS) in Schengen visas and other visas issued in the uniform format. The problem lies 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

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	been detected by national border authorities. The Commission outlined the different milestones of the evolution to the new 2D barcode as standardised by the *ICAO Technical Report Visible Digital Seals for non-electronic documents*. All the Schengen visas and other visas issued in the uniform format as of 1 November 2022 shall include the VDS. The Commission further explained that the 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. 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; the app will be updated for iOS as well. 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. 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.
3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)	First, eu-LISA provided Carriers with an update on the progress made since the last WG on the Central Systems, the Carrier and the TCN Interface. The Carriers were informed that the system-to-system factory acceptance testing phase is currently finalised and the ongoing factory acceptance testing for Carrier Web Portal, Carrier Mobile application and TCN Public Website is planned to be finalised by the end of March 2023. A new contract for the carrier onboarding and support service was signed recently and the service is estimated to be available again as of 20 March 2023. Carriers were reminded about the eu-LISA Management Board's (MB) decision from January 2023 related to the planned EES EiO and the fact that all involved stakeholders are requested to continue their respective preparations, in particular, at border crossing points to ensure full readiness for the use of EES. Revised planning is being prepared that targets EES EiO within 2023 as suggested by MB. As soon as more info becomes available

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	on next steps and testing phases, eu-LISA will share it with Carriers via email and in this WG.

Secondly, a detailed technical overview of the compliance of Carrier's Systems (Pre-CT and CT) was presented by eu-LISA. The legal context framing the concept of compliance to connect to the Carrier Interface via system-to-system connection and the authentication scheme was explained. It was stressed that these validation tests will assess the quality of data exchanged and the compliance with the authentication scheme, but not the respective system the carriers have set up.

The Carriers were reminded of the two important documents for Compliance Testing: 1) the Carrier Tech Guideline (CTG) that contains information on security certificates, communication protocols, message formats, error handling, schemas and templates, and 2) the Test Design Documentation (TDD) containing 12 test cases required to be executed in order for eu-LISA to assess compliance.

The potential technical responses the Carriers can expect when querying the Read Only Data Base (RODB) were explained along with the three complete steps of the Compliance Phase.

Lastly, the four phases of the Detailed Testing Plan, namely Planning, Monitoring, Logging and Validating, were shared along with the respective key roles and responsibilities related to those phases.

eu-LISA encouraged Carriers to inform the Agency as soon as they are ready for testing. The Agency has established a pool of Test Managers equipped with a tool that analyses continuously all the test results and automatically checks the compliancy of the Carrier's system. |
| **4. Operational updates (Frontex)** | Frontex informed the Carriers WG about the state-of-play of two documents: the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Regarding the state of play of FAQ, Frontex is finalising a new version of the compilation of FAQ that is expected to be ready by the next WG meeting in April.

Regarding the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the survey was closed on 24 February 2023 with the participation of 40 Carriers; the compilation of results is undergoing and the outcome will be implemented into the SOP shortly. As part of this process, meetings with eu-LISA are taking place to discuss and implement the feedback from Carriers and MS |

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	experts. The main conclusions from the survey were provided differentiating the positive aspects to the ones to be improved or implemented. Lastly, four examples of the questions received by Carriers for the SOP were explained and answered. For any questions on FAQ or SOP document, please contact: ETIAS.ACU1@frontex.europa.eu
5. Business Aviation (eu-LISA, European Commission)	Questions from the Business Aviation were answered by eu-LISA and the Commission. The Commission also conveyed the message that the best solution for all Carriers that carry passengers into the Schengen Area is to launch the registration process with eu-LISA in advance to avoid any operational/legal issues after the EiO of EES and ETIAS. As regards the operation of the Carrier Interface, the Commission clarified that one query can contain up to 99 passengers; this could include a combination of passengers that can indistinctly fall under the scope of ETIAS with others that fall under the scope of the single or double entry visas. The Interface will reply to both of them. Carriers were also reminded that Carrier Interface will only include in the first release single and double entry visas; the remaining will need to be checked manually as it is the case now. In addition, the Commission informed Carriers that the legal base has already been adopted to expand the scope by adding multiple entry Schengen visas, long stay visas, transit visas and residence permits; however these will be the scope of a future implementation. Finally, regarding the process of de-registration due to inactivity, it was mentioned that the Carrier can request to extend the registration upon receiving the relevant notice, by providing sufficient justification. The process will be included in the SOP as there is a need to cater for this situation to keep Carriers registered, especially in the Business Aviation.
6. Q&A	During the Q&A session, the Commission, eu-LISA and Frontex answered several questions posed by Carriers. As regards the question concerning the departure from military airports where the passengers do not go through passport control, possibly rendering some of those passengers "overstayers", the Commission will discuss this issue with Member States upon receiving more info from the carriers on the specific airports.

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