Carriers Working Group of 25 January 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 89 participants).

1. Introduction **a. Agenda** **b. Carriers meeting calendar**	eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 28th Carriers Working Group (CWG) and the calendar of the upcoming meetings to the participants. The WG took note of the Carriers meeting calendar with the dates of upcoming meetings until June 2024. The next CWG meeting is scheduled for the 27th February and the meeting initially planned for May 30th has been rescheduled to May 29th Ad hoc meetings can be organised upon request, however, eu-LISA kindly requested to share the discussion topics in advance. The CWG warmly welcomed Mathilde Walczak, as the new co-chair representing the Commission.
2. Legal updates (European Commission)	The European Commission informed about the Council's recent adoption of the decision on the full application of the Schengen acquis in Bulgaria and Romania . This decision will result in the lifting of sea and air borders as of the 31st of March 2024. Additionally, the Commission Legal Services are currently assessing the overall impact of this Decision and the impact on EES and ETIAS. A final assessment and decision regarding this impact on the community will be communicated in this forum. In addition, the CWG was informed that COM is adopting a flexible approach to the implementation of the EES EiO, which will enable MS, at certain border crossing points and as exceptional measures, to derogate from the standard obligation of collecting biometric data. This decision, aimed at accommodating the unique circumstances of each border crossing point,

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	will require a gradual increase from 10% to 100% of biometrics recording, during the first six months of the EES entry into operation. The specifics of these precautionary measures, still under development by COM, are to be activated only for a short duration . The COM invited the community to keep close contact with the MS to be informed about the activation of these measures.
3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)	eu-LISA informed the CWG that the Test environment has been operational since the 16th of January , carriers requesting System to System can start their testing . The CWG took note of the technical updates in the System to System (S2S) implementation, particularly emphasising the Compliancy Strategy, Compliance Tests Scope and the Test Campaign Organisation, Carrier test activities and process and tools, incidents and communication channels. Regarding the status of Carrier systems as of January 2024, there is a varied level of readiness for the CT phase. First eu-LISA establishes the connectivity with the carrier representative of the system, and requests the carrier and/or the service provider to finalise the CT scenarios. When this is done, eu-LISA will proceed with the configuration of all the remaining carriers to launch their testing (with the execution of the CT tests as optional).
	Specifically, two systems are connected to the PGD environment and 71 Carriers are ready to start testing. Additionally, 17 systems are prepared to connect with PGD, involving 237 Carriers. However, 45 systems, associated with 142 Carriers, are not yet ready to begin the CT phase. The connectivity process, as outlined, requires Carriers or System Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) to provide all system connection details under F04 and CI connectivity sheets for each system environment. These forms are to be completed only once per system/environment. Following this, eu-LISA and system connectivity experts exchange specific configurations to connect the environments, using a representative Carrier for initial tests and the CT campaign. The successful connection of systems is confirmed by eu-LISA and the Carrier or system SPOCs. In the compliance process, once the Carrier or system SPOC confirms to the eu-LISA onboarding team that CT tests can start, eu-LISA verifies the system's compliance and readiness for production activation. The Carriers or system SPOCs are required to pass all test cases detailed in the CT Test Document Description (TDD) during the scheduled slot to achieve compliance. The execution of these compliance tests is a critical step in confirming the readiness of the system for practical use. Carriers are scheduled to begin the compliance phase on a pre-arranged date, subject to environment readiness and connection approval. They must successfully pass all mandated test cases within a 24-hour certification slot. Notably, for certification purposes, the sequence of

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	test case execution as per the Test Document Description (TDD) is not a requirement. If a Carrier fails any test case, they must restart the entire suite of tests in a new 24-hour window. Submissions outside the predefined Compliance Testing (CT) cases are deemed as failures but do not affect the certification. The process culminates with the successful completion of seven tests for EES certification, after which compliance is confirmed through examination of certification logs by eu-LISA. The entire approach from planning, through monitoring and logging, to final validation is designed to ensure a thorough and efficient path to achieving S2S implementation compliance. The use of specialised tools and communication protocols to facilitate the S2S implementation testing and compliance was underlined. A dedicated SPOC is established for executing tests and managing communications, utilising specified forms for reporting issues and requesting assistance. The eu-LISA Test Manager plays a pivotal role in overseeing the testing process and validating the results. A structured support system with multiple levels is in place to assist Carriers with any technical issues, documentation, and defect resolution throughout the testing phase.
	Starting the growth phase, eu-LISA will connect all the new systems using a FIFO approach and recommend all the carriers and Systems SPOC to schedule in advance their CT slot. Carriers can be exempt from testing, if they wish, by providing an official declaration form, as agreed with COM in the past
4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates and sea scenarios (Frontex)	Frontex informed the community about the stipulations of ANNEX VI, Article 3.2.10 of the Schengen Borders Code. This Regulation mandates that checks on passengers who embarked in a TC, and remain onboard the ferry during stopovers in a MS territory, are to be conducted at the port of arrival/destination, and vice-versa. This procedure is notably relevant when the ferry's destination is a third country, ensuring a streamlined process in line with border control regulations.
	The CWG was also informed about the ongoing revisions to the FAQ, particularly concerning the latest developments with Bulgaria and Romania , which once finalized they will be taken into consideration in the FAQ. The Carrier community also received updates on recent ad hoc meetings with land Carriers, highlighting the need for updating shared materials in alignment with the latest official developments. In parallel, the final stages of completing the sea scenario document are underway, incorporating the LTV topic; this document will soon be redistributed to all registered Carriers with some important yet minimal changes.
	The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) revision is ongoing
	Work on SOPs continues, with the collaboration of eu_LISA
	For operational queries, Carriers were directed to contact Frontex at etias.acu1@frontex.europa.eu.

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6. Q&A	During the Q&A session, eu-LISA, the Commission, and Frontex addressed several topics and answered Carriers' questions. A key question raised was whether sea crew members need an ETIAS travel authorisation or a visa. It was clarified that sea crew members might be exempt from such an obligation. However, there is variability in how European countries using EES or requiring ETIAS interpret "sea crew", "going ashore", and "performing their duty". For detailed exceptions determined by these countries, as per Article 6 of Regulation (EU) 2018/1806, information has been communicated to Commission and is available online, specifically in an Excel file under "Exemptions Article 6(1)" starting from row 348. These exemptions apply similarly to both visas (for visa-required countries) and ETIAS (for visa-exempt countries).
	Another question addressed was whether operators of cargo ships are subject to the same obligations and have to query the Carrier Interface. The answer was affirmative; operators of cargo ships transporting travellers with short-stay visas or an ETIAS travel authorisation into territories of European countries using EES or requiring ETIAS must query the Carrier Interface.
	Additionally sea carriers wished to know if there could be any measures that would alleviate heavy impact at ports with carriers and border checks. The Commission will investigate if carriers checks and/or border checks can take place at a specific time on the vessel.
	Finally, a discussion took also place on the ferry carriers' scenarios .

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Carriers Working Group of 25 January 2024

Summary

Subject: Monthly Carriers Working Group meeting

Air Carriers at 13:00– 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 151 participants).

1. Introduction **a. Agenda** **b. Carriers meeting calendar**	eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 28th Carriers Working Group (CWG) and the calendar of the upcoming meetings to the participants. The WG took note of the Carriers meeting calendar with the dates of upcoming meetings until June 2024. The next CWG meeting is scheduled for the 27th February and the meeting initially planned for May 30th has been rescheduled to May 29th Ad hoc meetings can be organised upon request, however, eu-LISA kindly requested to share the discussion topics in advance. The CWG warmly welcomed Mathilde Walczak, as the new co-chair representing the Commission.
2. Legal updates (European Commission)	The European Commission informed about the Council's recent adoption of the decision on the full application of the Schengen acquis in Bulgaria and Romania. This decision will result in the lifting of sea and air borders as of the 31st of March 2024. Additionally, the Commission Legal Services are currently assessing the overall impact of this Decision and the impact on EES and ETIAS. A final assessment and decision regarding this impact on the community will be communicated in this forum. In addition, the CWG was informed that COM is adopting a flexible approach to the implementation of the EES EiO, which will enable MS, at certain border crossing points and as exceptional measures, to derogate from the

	standard obligation of collecting biometric data. This decision, aimed at accommodating the unique circumstances of each border crossing point, will require a gradual increase from 10% to 100% of biometrics recording, during the first six months of the EES entry into operation. The specifics of these precautionary measures, still under development by COM, are to be activated only for a short duration . The COM invited the community to keep close contact with the MS to be informed about the activation of these measures.
3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)	eu-LISA informed the CWG that the Test environment has been operational since the 16th of January , carriers requesting System to System can start their testing The CWG took note of the technical updates in the System to System (S2S) implementation, particularly emphasizing the Compliancy Strategy, Compliance Tests Scope and the Test Campaign Organization, Carrier test activities and process and tools, incidents and communication channels. Regarding the status of Carrier systems as of January 2024, there is a varied level of readiness for the CT phase. First eu-LISA establishes the connectivity with the carrier representative of the system, and requests the carrier and/or the service provider to finalise the CT scenarios. When this is done, eu-LISA will proceed with the configuration of all the remaining carriers to launch their testing (with the execution of the CT tests as optional). Specifically, two systems are connected to the PGD environment, and 71 Carriers are ready to start testing. Additionally, 17 systems are prepared to connect with PGD, involving 237 Carriers. However, 45 systems, associated with 142 Carriers, are not yet ready to begin the CT phase. The connectivity process, as outlined, requires Carriers or System Single Points of Contact (SPOCs) to provide all system connection details under F04 and CI connectivity sheets for each system environment. These forms are to be completed only once per system/environment. Following this, eu-LISA and system connectivity experts exchange specific configurations to connect the environments, using a representative Carrier for initial tests and the CT campaign. The successful connection of systems is confirmed by eu-LISA and the Carrier or system SPOCs. In the compliance process, once the Carrier or system SPOC confirms to the eu-LISA onboarding team that CT tests can start, eu-LISA verifies the system's compliance and readiness for production activation. The Carriers or system SPOCs are required to pass all test cases detailed in the CT Test Document Description (TDD) during the scheduled slot to achieve compliance. The execution of these compliance tests is a critical step in confirming the

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	readiness of the system for practical use. Carriers are scheduled to begin the compliance phase on a pre-arranged date, subject to environment readiness and connection approval. They must successfully pass all mandated test cases within a 24-hour certification slot. Notably, for certification purposes, the sequence of test case execution as per the Test Document Description (TDD) is not a requirement. If a Carrier fails any test case, they must restart the entire suite of tests in a new 24-hour window. Submissions outside the predefined Compliance Testing (CT) cases are deemed as failures but do not affect the certification. The process culminates with the successful completion of seven tests for EES certification, after which compliance is confirmed through examination of certification logs by eu-LISA. The entire approach from planning, through monitoring and logging, to final validation is designed to ensure a thorough and efficient path to achieving S2S implementation compliance. The use of specialised tools and communication protocols to facilitate the S2S implementation testing and compliance was underlined. A dedicated SPOC is established for executing tests and managing communications, utilising specified forms for reporting issues and requesting assistance. The eu-LISA Test Manager plays a pivotal role in overseeing the testing process and validating the results. A structured support system with multiple levels is in place to assist Carriers with any technical issues, documentation, and defect resolution throughout the testing phase.
	Starting the growth phase, eu-LISA will connect all the new systems using a FIFO approach and recommend all the carriers and Systems SPOC to schedule in advance their CT slot. Carriers can be exempt from testing, if they wish, by providing an official declaration form, as agreed with COM in the past
4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates (Frontex)	The CWG was informed about the ongoing revisions to the FAQ, particularly concerning the latest developments with Bulgaria and Romania, and SOP. Frontex is awaiting the final official remarks for these updates before distributing them to the community. For operational queries, Carriers were directed to contact Frontex at etias.acu1@frontex.europa.eu.
5. Q&A	During the Q&A session, eu-LISA, the Commission, and Frontex addressed several topics and answered Carriers' questions. Carriers requested clarifications on whether a transition period will apply for Romania and Bulgaria, as in the case of Croatia . Additional key points included clarification of the process for Carriers to access PGD, necessity to submit a connectivity form and scheduling of test slots. eu-LISA's role in confirming system connectivity and compliance was noted, with Carriers then required to complete CT 12 test cases. The session also addressed the use of

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	industry tags and IATA codes, emphasising coordination with the onboarding team for new industry tags. Importantly, it was clarified that the current version 19 of the Carrier technical specifications is not final, with a new version anticipated in Q1 2024. This update awaits legal developments and the final integration of Romania and Bulgaria , which will influence updated scenarios for Carriers. The meeting also covered testing procedures, assuring that ongoing testing would not be impacted by the upcoming revised guidelines. Updates on the Web/Mobile interface for Carriers were discussed, including the delayed release of the mobile application and the targeted end-of-February availability of the web portal for staff training and functionality assessment. For cargo companies, executing the 99-passenger test was advised for certification and addressing non-functional issues. Air carriers informed that the previously requested functionality of sending up to 99 pax in one message no longer applies and cannot by supported by the systems. Only one PAX info will be sent per query. Test cases may need to be redesigned, and performance or other impact of this new information will be investigated by the technical teams.

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