

Carriers Working Group of 3 December 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 78 participants).

1. Introduction a. Agenda b. Carriers meeting calendar	<p>eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 38th Carriers Working Group (CWG) and the calendar of the upcoming meetings to the participants.</p> <p>The CWG reviewed the schedule for upcoming meetings, noting the dates through March 2025, with the next session scheduled for January 10th2025.</p>
2. Legal updates (European Commission)	<p>The European Commission provided the CWG with an update on the development of the progressive approach for the EES EiO. This approach, announced during previous CWG meetings, is still under preparation and nearing completion. The Commission assured Carriers that official communication will follow once the process reaches higher political levels and committed to keeping the CWG informed about the progress.</p> <p>In response to a query about the timeline, the Commission stated that there is currently no adopted timeline for the EES EiO. However, the full go-live is not expected before spring 2025, with spring being defined as the second quarter of the year, typically starting in April.</p> <p>Regarding whether the progressive approach will require a new legal text to amend the EES Regulation, the Commission clarified that there will be no amendments to the Regulation. Instead, a targeted review of the legal framework is being conducted to introduce specific derogations. These derogations will not modify the Regulation itself but will ensure the</p>

	<p>progressive approach operates within the existing framework. The Commission will communicate details once the final political process is concluded.</p> <p>On the distinction between "progressive approach" and "full go-live," the Commission explained that the progressive approach allows MS temporary flexibility in using the system. This phase will be limited in time and clearly defined. Once the progressive approach concludes, the full go-live of the EES, meaning that the system will be operated fully.</p> <p>The Commission finally addressed concerns raised by Carriers regarding the potential impact of the EES Entry into Operation during Q2, which includes the Easter period and precedes the peak travel season. The Commission acknowledged the importance of this period for the travel industry and assured Carriers that they are fully aware of its significance. They emphasised that such feedback has been taken into account and assured that the system would not be launched during this busy time, reflecting their commitment to minimising disruption to Carriers' operations.</p>
<p>3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>eu-LISA updated the CWG on Carrier Implementation Figures as of December 2024. Currently, there are 698 Carriers registered for System-to-System connectivity and 508 for the Mobile App and Web Portal. Following clarifications with Service Providers, 6 air-declared systems were deregistered last month as they were determined not to be connected with the Carrier Interface. To address outstanding issues, eu-LISA has launched a campaign for bilateral calls with Service Providers or systems that have not yet submitted the necessary connectivity forms. These calls aim to clarify the status of these systems and establish the way forward. Carriers and Service Providers are encouraged to accept these invitations to provide greater visibility into their readiness.</p> <p>For systems that are not yet developed, eu-LISA advises Carriers to consider deregistering the system and use alternative communication methods, such as the Carrier Web Portal or Mobile Application, until the system is fully operational. Additionally, Carriers must send confirmation to the Carrier Onboarding Team verifying that their staff have completed the necessary training for the Carrier Web Portal before access to the live environment can be granted.</p>
<p>4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates and sea scenarios (Frontex)</p>	<p>Frontex provided the CWG with an update on the Carrier Interface, addressing key points discussed during recent Q&A sessions with the sea industry and land representatives from third countries. The Carrier Interface is a tool for verifying travel credentials and ensuring compliance with EES and ETIAS requirements. It enables Carriers to check the validity of single or double-entry visas and confirm whether ETIAS-required travellers hold valid travel authorisations. While visa checks can currently be done manually, the consumption of available entries authorised by single and</p>

double entry visas will eventually need to be performed electronically through the interface as manual passport stamping is phased out. Frontex emphasised that the Carrier Interface verifies visa validity, not the passport itself. An expired passport with a valid visa will generate an "OK" reply, while a valid passport with an expired visa will return "NOK EES." It was clarified that the data queried through the interface is not shared with border authorities and serves only as a tool for Carriers' internal verification, unlike systems such as API.

The query process must focus on the border crossing point where the future entry record in EES will be created, considering the date, time, and Member State of entry. For itineraries which include two entries, those entries must be accounted for and be depicted in the Carrier Interface query by marking the respective field mentioning "Double entry required". Carriers should not query multiple-entry visas at all but verify them manually, as it happens nowadays. Frontex reiterated that, for the purpose of this presentation, "entry" refers to the official entry stamp in the passport, which will correspond to future EES records.

For sea crew members, Frontex explained that they may be exempt from holding a visa or an ETIAS if they fall under the exemptions which are determined by each Member State under Regulation (EU) 2018/1806, consistent with current visa and ETIAS frameworks.

Lastly, Frontex addressed concerns about submission of incorrect data in the Carrier Interface. While incorrect details, such as typos, do not result in direct Carrier liability, they can lead to "NOK" responses due to mismatches with EU databases. Carriers were encouraged to ensure data accuracy to avoid such issues and ensure compliance. Carriers' liability applies when carriers transport travellers to the external borders of the Schengen area without them holding the proper documentation to cross the borders, and not automatically when submitting incorrect data in the Carrier Interface.

Additionally, it was noted that the Carriers' Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document is currently under revision and awaiting European Commission's approval before being shared with Carriers. For operational queries, Carriers were invited to contact Frontex directly at etias.acu1@frontex.europa.eu.

The CWG was also reminded to refer to the [FAQ](#), and encouraged to regularly consult it for updates and guidance.

Carriers Working Group of 3 December 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 142 participants).

<p>1. Introduction</p> <p>a. Agenda</p> <p>b. Carriers meeting calendar</p>	<p>eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 38th Carriers Working Group (CWG) and the calendar of the upcoming meetings to the participants.</p> <p>The CWG reviewed the schedule for upcoming meetings, noting the dates through March 2025, with the next session scheduled for January 10th2025.</p>
<p>2. Legal updates (European Commission)</p>	<p>The European Commission provided the CWG with an update on the development of the progressive approach for the EES EiO. This approach, announced during previous CWG meetings, is still under preparation and nearing completion. The Commission assured Carriers that official communication will follow once the process reaches higher political levels and committed to keeping the CWG informed about progress.</p> <p>In response to a query about the timeline, the Commission stated that there is currently no adopted timeline for the EES EiO. However, the full go-live is not expected before spring 2025, with spring being defined as the second quarter of the year, typically starting in April.</p> <p>Regarding whether the progressive approach will require a new legal text to amend the EES Regulation, the Commission clarified that there will be no amendments to the Regulation. Instead, a targeted review of the legal framework is being conducted to introduce specific derogations. The</p>

	<p>Commission will communicate details once the final political process is concluded.</p> <p>On the distinction between "progressive approach" and "full go-live" the Commission explained that the progressive approach allows MS temporary flexibility in using the system. This phase will be limited in time and clearly defined. Once the progressive approach concludes, the full go-live of the EES, meaning that the system will be operated fully. The CWG was reminded that ETIAS EiO will follow the full EiO of EES, as its implementation depends on EES being fully operational. While it will be introduced as soon as feasible, a transitional period between the two systems is expected.</p>
<p>3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>eu-LISA updated the CWG on Carrier Implementation Figures as of December 2024. Currently, there are 698 Carriers registered for System-to-System connectivity and 508 for the Mobile App and Web Portal. Following clarifications with Service Providers, 6 air-declared systems were deregistered last month as they were determined not to be connected with the Carrier Interface.</p> <p>To address outstanding issues, eu-LISA has launched a campaign for bilateral calls with Service Providers or systems that have not yet submitted the necessary connectivity forms. These calls aim to clarify the status of these systems and establish the way forward. Carriers and Service Providers are encouraged to accept these invitations to provide greater visibility into their readiness.</p> <p>For systems that are not yet developed, eu-LISA advises Carriers to consider deregistering the system and use alternative communication methods, such as the Carrier Web Portal or Mobile Application, until the system is fully operational. Additionally, Carriers must send confirmation to the Carrier Onboarding Team verifying that their staff have completed the necessary training for the Carrier Web Portal before access to the live environment can be granted.</p> <p>Regarding the MQ System-to-System connectivity, it was confirmed that intensive work has been ongoing to ensure Carriers are connected to both backup and production environments.</p> <p>Addressing issues with the web portal, eu-LISA explained that repeated failed login attempts can result in user accounts being automatically locked. Carriers encountering this issue were advised to contact eu-LISA for assistance in unlocking accounts, and specific details about the connection and user IDs would be needed to conduct a technical investigation and resolve the problem.</p>

<p>4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates (Frontex)</p>	<p>Frontex provided the CWG with an update on the Carrier Interface, addressing key points discussed during recent Q&A sessions with the sea industry and land representatives from third countries. The Carrier Interface is a tool for verifying travel credentials and ensuring compliance with EES and ETIAS requirements. It enables carriers to check the validity of single or double-entry visas and confirm whether ETIAS-required travellers hold valid travel authorisations. While visa checks can currently be done manually, the consumption of available entries authorised by single and double entry visas will eventually need to be performed electronically through the interface as manual passport stamping is phased out.</p> <p>Frontex emphasised that the Carrier Interface verifies visa validity, not the passport itself. An expired passport with a valid visa will generate an "OK" reply, while a valid passport with an expired visa will return "NOK EES." It was clarified that the data queried through the interface is not shared with border authorities and serves only as a tool for Carriers' internal verification, unlike systems such as API.</p> <p>Lastly, Frontex addressed concerns about submission of incorrect data in the Carrier Interface. While incorrect details, such as typos, do not result in direct Carrier liability, they can lead to "NOK" responses due to mismatches with EU databases. Carriers were encouraged to ensure data accuracy to avoid such issues and ensure compliance. Carriers' liability applies when carriers transport travellers to the external borders of the Schengen area without them holding the proper documentation to cross the borders, and not automatically when submitting incorrect data in the Carrier Interface. Additionally, it was noted that the Carriers' Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) document is currently under revision and awaiting European Commission approval before being shared with Carriers. For operational queries, Carriers were invited to contact Frontex directly at etias.acu1@frontex.europa.eu.</p> <p>The CWG was also reminded to refer to the FAQ, and encouraged to regularly consult it for updates and guidance.</p>
<p>5. Q&A</p>	<p>During the Q&A session, eu-LISA, the Commission and Frontex addressed several topics and responded to further questions posed by Carriers on the crew members without CMC or the interpretation and the implications of the progressive approach.</p>