



Ad-Hoc Query on the detection of misuse of EU/EFTA identity documents

Requested by NO EMN NCP on 19 of June 2015

Summary produced on 16.09.2015 based on the responses from Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom plus Croatia and Norway (21)

Disclaimer: The responses were provided primarily for the purpose of information exchange among EMN NCPs in the framework of the EMN. The contributing EMN NCPs have provided, to the best of their knowledge, information that is up-to-date, objective and reliable. Note, however, that the information provided does not necessarily represent the official policy of an EMN NCPs' Member State.

Background

In accordance with EU Regulation 562/2006 dated 15. March 2006 art. 7 section 2, EU/EFTA nationals are only subject to minimum controls when crossing an internal EU/Schengen border. However, passports and other identity documents issued by EU Member States or Schengen Associated Countries are the most attractive and commonly misused documents to enter the EU/Schengen area. (In Norway they constitute about 2/3 of all registered misuse of identity documents.) Frontex has reported a clear rising trend in the use of impostor passports. Identity cards issued by member states may be used as travel documents within the EU/Schengen area, and Frontex reports that identity cards form the second biggest group of documents abused for illegal border crossing and intra-EU/Schengen movements.

On this background, the *Norwegian National ID Centre* (see <http://www.nidsenter.no/en/Forside/>) posed the following questions:

- 1. Has your country taken measures to prevent abuse of your passport and ID cards?**
- 2. Has your country strengthened the controls of EU/Schengen documents at your borders or on your territory, beyond the minimum control requirements, or introduced or planned other measures to detect such abuse?**
- 3. Has your country established reporting routines about detected forged or imposter use of EU/EFTA identity documents, that would include the detection by authorities *other than* the Schengen border control? E.g. do you have a national agency where detected misuse of identity documents can be reported by any public or private organization that performs ID-controls? If so, please provide the contact information to this agency.**

Summary of responses

Among the 21 replies to this query 20 provided more or less detailed information. The most comprehensive ones were those from Belgium and the Czech Republic.

One of the two responding countries that does not participate in the Schengen Borders Code (UK) responded that steps to improve the integrity of its passports are considered roughly every five years, and that the control procedures of ID-documents from Schengen member countries are broadly consistent with the Schengen controls, with no changes envisaged. In the UK, there are no mandatory routines/systems for reporting detected actual misuse of identity documents to the authorities monitoring identity fraud. The other responding country outside the Schengen Borders Code did not provide any information on its practices.

It would seem that in most of the countries (at least 13) there is an agency responsible for registering and providing information on examples of identity documents that have been subject to misuse, e.g. to serve as warning to the border control and other officers who check ID documents, and to use in their training. Only a few of the countries (5) signalled that there is a systematic reporting of actual detected misuses with a registration of the detected misused documents. It is unclear, however, to what extent this information is shared with all agencies that need to check/verify the identity of foreign citizens. NO reported that one agency requests statistics on control/verification activities and detected misuse, from the agencies controlling the ID of foreign citizens. However, the experience is that some of the agencies responsible checking/verifying ID documents have incomplete registrations, especially of the number of controls.

While only 7 of the responses signalled that there recently has been a strengthening of the control with EU/Schengen documents, in some cases through improved training of border control officers, other responses stated that proposals for such strengthening are being considered. All responses signalled that the controls are being carried out in line with the Schengen requirements. In the response from one country (ES) it is stressed that controls of

EU/Schengen documents are especially intense at border control posts considered to be high risk ones. Several responses signalled that controls are based on risk profiling and procedures for identifying persons who may abuse travel and other identification documents, and one country (LT) described that this is used as a basis for random controls.

From one country (BE) it was reported that it is a goal to reinforce the role of the Central National Register to prevent and fight against identity fraud.. In another country (NO) the population registration officers undertake an ID-control when registering new residents immigrating from abroad, with a central follow-up examination of suspicious documents/cases.

All the responses indicate that steps have been taken to ensure that national passports and identity documents (where issued) have been equipped with biometric information and other safety features. Several responses also referred to steps to ensure that such documents are delivered to the right person when newly issued, e.g. that they are not sent in ordinary mail. From one country (SE) it was reported that there is a proposal that, as a measure to counteract “lookalike fraud”, citizens should only have the right to three regular passports during a five-year period. Any person who applies for an additional passport should only have the right to obtain a provisional passport for a particular journey.

Improved training of officers in identity verification were also mentioned by several responses, but for some countries this has been limited to officers working at foreign missions.
