

Beat: Politics

Smart border checks at gateways to the EU

Questions to Commission and Council

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USPA NEWS - Are the EU's proposed Entry/Exit System and Registered Traveller Programme for non-EU nationals "appropriate and adequate" to deal with the growing numbers of people crossing its external borders? MEPs will put the question to the Commission and Council on Tuesday.

In the ensuing debate, they are also likely to ask about data retention periods, whether law enforcement agencies should be given access to the data, and the costs of these systems. Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos, announced on 3 December last year that the "Smart Borders" proposals tabled in 2013 would be withdrawn and replaced by new ones at the end of 2015 or the start of 2016. A Smart Borders pilot scheme is testing biometric check technology at the main airports in Portugal, Germany, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Sweden from March to September 2015.

The Smart Borders package includes proposals for an Entry/Exit System (EES) and a Registered Traveller Programme (RTP), to improve the management of Schengen area external borders, combat irregular immigration and gather data on over-stayers, whilst at the same time making it easier for pre-vetted non-EU nationals who are frequent travellers to cross borders.

The planned EES would be used to record the time and place of entry and exit of non-EU nationals crossing EU external borders, calculate the duration of their stay and generate an alert when authorised stay periods are exceeded. The RTP would allow some groups of frequent travellers (e.g. business travellers, family members etc.), from third countries to enter the EU, subject to appropriate pre-screening and simplified border checks, including the use of automated gates.

Article online:

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