

**Future Group on Travel Intelligence and Border Management  
Outcome of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workshop – 21 & 22 October 2019**

**Introduction**

On 21 & 22 October 2019 the second workshop of the Future Group on Travel Intelligence and Border Management, jointly organised by Frontex and Europol, was held at the Headquarters of Europol in The Hague, The Netherlands. This report presents the outcome of that workshop, along with the related highlights of the discussions.

This second Workshop is part of a series, aimed at identifying operational opportunities stemming from recent policy developments related to security, border management and interoperability at EU level.

**Main focus of the meeting**

This second workshop was aimed at elaborating some of the topics that were identified at the previous one as of interest for further exploration. These topics were 1) the development of a person-centric approach when using the new or enhanced EU information systems for border management; 2) the possible creation of a back office function in support of firstline border checks; and 3) analysing the relationship between the border checks and the various tools, sources and networks that may be of relevance for those.

**Development of a person-centric approach for border checks**

With the increasing amount of information that is collected and made available for border management, the need for an integrated presentation of available information from the traveler becomes more and more pertinent. The firstline border check gives the border guard very little time per traveler to take a decision. Collecting data for an informed decision from various sources is complex, cumbersome and prone to overlooking relevant details.

Among the relevant sources are national databases, SIS, VIS, Interpol databases and API. Europol was also mentioned as a possible source, with reference to its most-wanted list. It is also possible that for specific individuals PNR data is made available on the initiative of the PIU. In the future, also the EES and ETIAS can be added to the list of sources. For the latter, it is worth highlighting the integrated nature in which they are foreseen to be delivered, also incorporating data from the VIS. Possibly this can serve as a basis for further integration.

A detailed comparison of sources was presented and discussed, including the types of data they contain. This demonstrated the possibilities for merging data sets with similar content – e.g. names, DOB, ID-number – to create a single overview of the relevant information composed of the various sources.

A highly valuable ingredient to the integrated view could be the presentation of the particularities of the travel along the various steps of the border management continuum (travel authorisation – pre-arrival information – Schengen-entry check). This would include any hits against screening rules, flags and any other assessments that were made in relation to admission. Especially where inconsistencies appear between data collected along the continuum the integrated view could demonstrate its value to the border guard.

The technical realisation was discussed as well. It was generally agreed that the practical implementation would be a responsibility for the national authorities. Yet, bearing in mind the common interests and, indeed, the significant weight of the shared sources at EU level, a harmonisation or standardisation of the way data is processed, could be valuable for all.

In this context, also the deployment of border guards from one Schengen country to other or the future deployment of EBCG Standing Corps Members who will perform border control tasks would ideally require the development of a common user interface. As mentioned above, the way VIS, EES and ETIAS are intended to be combined may already offer a basis. The use of UMF (Universal Message Format) may also contribute to such a solution. Finally, also the resource constraints of some partners may invite to consider a jointly developed solution for the interested ones.

As a next step, a use case will be drafted on the basis of the collected information and views, for discussion at one of the forthcoming Workshops.

### **The possible creation of a back office function in support of firstline border checks**

In addition to the need for an integrated view, the firstline border checks would also benefit from a practical assistance in the digestion of the ever-increasing amount of data. Certainly where deconfliction is required for the interpretation of discrepancies between data sources, timely assistance is needed. The creation of a back office support function could enable the advance prefiltering and "digestion" of information and highlighting the information of interest for the border guard conducting the firstline check.

Several detailed use cases were presented to better understand the different scenarios and how the back office function could support the process of border checks. In some countries, such differentiation of roles already exists and is provided by local or national coordination centres supporting firstline checks.

In terms of resourcing, it was clarified that the additional border management information will have an impact on resource requirements that cannot be simply resolved by automation. The human factor remains of huge relevance and the key issue is that a frontline border officer must focus on the essential direct interaction with the traveler. The redesigning and automation of some of the current processes and the back office support for the more complex cases will be instrumental in this regard.

In addition, it was identified that the support function that a back office could offer, might also be used to support secondline intervention, for instance in the collection of input for the interviews from relevant sources and possibly even related investigations.

As a next step, equally as for the development of a person-centric approach, a use case will be drafted on the basis of the collected information and views, for discussion at one of the forthcoming Workshops.

### **Relationship between the border checks and the various tools, sources and networks**

There was insufficient time to address this topic in full detail. Instead, the main aspects for the discussion were presented, along which a discussion paper will be prepared by Europol and Frontex to prepare and frame the discussion at one of the next Workshops.

### **Operational pilot(s)**

A short update was presented on the identification of suitable cross-border investigations, that might benefit from a pro-active support from Europol and Frontex for enrichment by available travel intelligence and border management sources. The aim is to initiate such a support service to selected investigations that welcome such support, towards the end of 2019. Several participants expressed their willingness to consider supporting this initiative from the side of their respective competent authorities.

### **Other topics of relevance**

- The discussion on data quality came back several times. The value of using PNR data was perceived as having disadvantages due to the limited quality versus the benefit of its early availability, allowing for preparatory action. New concepts for high-quality identity management are being tested and deserve more thorough attention.
- It was stressed that entry into Schengen was not the end of the border management process and, consequently, a broader orientation is required.
- Where the topics addressed are taken forward into concrete follow up, the data protection aspects and the protection of fundamental rights deserve due attention in the further process.
- It is worth investing in awareness and training to foster the use of sources, instruments and solutions that already exist to the benefit of criminal investigations, security and border protection.
- Whilst the emphasis of the discussions was on the national dimension, the suggestion was made to also look at the concept of creating an 'international back office' that could possibly be shared by Member States in the future.

### **Attendance**

The Workshop was attended by representatives from several Member States, EU Agencies and the European Commission, from varying professional backgrounds and competent authorities, which allowed to approach the topics discussed from multiple relevant angles. The setting was informal among experts, without official, national or organisational positions, which stimulated the open and out-of-the-box orientation of the discussions.

### **Next meetings**

- Workshop 3: 9 & 10 December 2019; Frontex Headquarters, Warsaw
- Workshop 4: 3 & 4 February 2020; Europol Headquarters, The Hague

### **Further information**

The current report on the outcome of the second Workshop of the Future Group will be shared with the stakeholders associated to Frontex and Europol. Further information can be obtained by contacting:

- [personal data] at Frontex via [personal data] or  
[personal data] at Europol via [personal data]
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