

Application for the electronic submission of travel data (“EU Digital Travel application”); use of digital travel credentials

2024/0670(COD) - 08/10/2024 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish an application for the electronic submission of travel data (EU Digital Travel application) with a view to increasing security and facilitating travel in the context of external border management.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: in 2023, a total of 593 million crossings were recorded. From these crossings, 65% were at air borders, 31% at land borders and the remaining 4% via sea borders. The fact that over half a billion passengers enter or leave the EU every year puts a strain on its external borders.

Having in place systematic border checks and highly secure travel documents facilitates legitimate entry and stay for both EU citizens and third-country nationals, while guaranteeing that security is maintained through proper controls on identity, by checking both documents and databases to determine potential security risks.

Given the pressure on the verification processes at external borders, combined with varying rates of digitalisation by Member States, new challenges are emerging. They include **security risks and inefficient border management** as well as obstacles to smooth travel across borders.

Therefore, the existing legal framework should be updated to ensure that both travellers and border authorities can benefit from more efficient and effective border checks using so-called digital travel credentials, that is, a digital representation of the person’s identity that is derived from the information stored in the storage medium (chip) of the travel document (i.e. passport or EU identity card) and that can be validated, leading ultimately to shorter waiting and processing times at border-crossing points and improving the authorities’ ability to pre-screen travellers, plan and manage resources and focus on higher risk travellers.

CONTENT: the proposed EU Digital Travel Application, developed by the Commission with support from eu-LISA, will be implemented across the EU. It will be accessible to all EU and non-EU citizens who hold biometric passports or EU identity cards and are traveling to or from the Schengen Area.

The proposal for a regulation aims to:

- **create digital travel credentials**, using their passports or, in the case of EU citizens, their identity cards;
- **submit travel plans and documents** to the border authorities **in advance**, reducing waiting times at border crossings since most checks will be completed beforehand;
- ensure their **data is protected**.

The EU digital travel application will become available as of 2030. This will provide the possibility to store the digital travel credentials in the **European Digital identity wallet**. By introducing the possibility for travellers to have and submit a digital version of their travel document through an application for an advance check ahead of travel, they could pass through border control in a smoother fashion.

Moreover, creating the possibility for border authorities to receive digital versions of travel documents in advance would allow them to carry out the checks in advance and thereby focus their resources on **detecting cross-border crime and irregular migration** more efficiently.

The proposal also supports the implementation of the Entry/Exit System by enabling third-country nationals to pre-enrol their data remotely, as opposed to registering data once they arrive at the physical border crossing point. This will result in less waiting times at the physical border crossing points and allow additional time for border authorities to carry out the necessary checks.

Budgetary implications

This proposal would have an impact on the budget and staff needs of eu-LISA and mainly one-time costs for border authorities of Member States.

For eu-LISA, it is estimated that an additional budget of approximately EUR 49.5 million (EUR 6 million under the current 7-year EU budget, the ‘multiannual financial framework’) and 20 full-time equivalent staff members are needed to develop the ‘EU Digital Travel’ application and for eu-LISA to carry out its tasks in accordance with the eu-LISA Regulation and this proposal.

For Member States, while it is not possible to accurately determine the costs associated with implementing this proposal, it is estimated that the one-off investment for each country amount to approximately EUR 2 million.