

European passport: standards for security features and biometrics elements

2004/0039(CNS) - 02/12/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted the resolution drafted by Carlos COELHO (EPP-ED, PT) and made some amendments to the Commission's proposal. The resolution was adopted by 471 votes in favour to 118 against and 6 abstentions:

- a new clause states that the biometric data in passports should be used only for verifying the authenticity of the document as well as the identity of the holder by means of directly available comparable features

when the passport is required to be produced by law;

- Parliament specified that no central database of European Union passports and travel documents containing all EU passport holders' biometric and other data should be set up;

- the storage medium may be used only by the competent authorities of the Member States for reading, storing,

modifying and erasing data, and by authorised bodies entitled by law to read the data for reading the data;

- each Member State must maintain a register of the competent authorities and authorised bodies. It must communicate that register and, if necessary, regular updates to the Commission, which must maintain an up-to-date online compilation of the national registers.

With regard to the additional technical specifications referred to in the draft regulation, Parliament stated that the Commission must forward its draft decision on the additional technical specifications to the European Parliament which may, within a period of three months, adopt a resolution opposing that draft decision.

The application of the Regulation is contingent on the certification by national data protection authorities that they have adequate investigative powers and resources to enforce Directive 95/46/EC in relation to data collected under it.

Finally, Parliament wanted the deadline for implementing the regulation to be extended to 18 months (instead of one year) after the approval of the technical requirements for the passports at the latest.