

Quality and use of children's fingerprints

Regarding the calls for studies concerning the quality and usage of fingerprints, especially those of children, the Commission services have explored the ongoing international schemes to acquire sufficient and reliable data on this issue.

During the course of this exploration, the Commission has identified, besides the Biodev II project, another applicable programme, which appears to meet the criteria for the data to justify conclusions to be drawn and decisions to be made. These criteria refer to both the nature of the programme as well as to the amount of data it is basing its findings on.

The preliminary statistical information received from the UK Border Agency indicate the following regarding the quality of children's fingerprints within the age group of 6-14 years in comparison of age groups 15-30, 31-50, 51-70 and 71+ respectively. The total volume of data is approximately 1,5 million persons of which the age group 6-14 comprises approximately 60.000.

FINGERPRINT QUALITY SUMMARY - AGE 6-14										
Quality Measurement	R. Thumb	R. Index	R. Middle	R. Ring	R. Little	L. Thumb	L. Index	L. Middle	L. Ring	L. Little
Good Quality (1-3 scores)	97,24%	93,99%	94,69%	90,35%	72,87%	96,50%	91,67%	92,48%	87,89%	70,33 %
Poor Quality (4-5 scores)	2,75%	6,02%	5,31%	9,65%	27,13%	3,51%	8,34%	7,52%	12,11%	29,67 %
FINGERPRINT QUALITY SUMMARY - AGE 15-30										
Good Quality (1-3 scores)	99,61%	98,62%	98,50%	97,02%	78,65%	99,45%	98,00%	97,80%	95,25%	75,86 %
Poor Quality (4-5 scores)	0,39%	1,38%	1,50%	2,98%	21,35%	0,55%	1,99%	2,19%	4,75%	24,14 %
FINGERPRINT QUALITY SUMMARY - AGE 31-50										
Good Quality (1-3 scores)	99,43%	98,01%	97,89%	96,53%	75,42%	99,19%	97,22%	96,97%	94,48%	72,72 %
Poor Quality (4-5 scores)	0,58%	1,99%	2,11%	3,47%	24,57%	0,81%	2,78%	3,04%	5,52%	27,29 %
FINGERPRINT QUALITY SUMMARY - AGE 51-70										
Good Quality (1-3 scores)	96,43%	91,53%	91,51%	88,41%	57,18%	95,16%	88,63%	88,60%	83,55%	52,79 %
Poor Quality (4-5 scores)	3,57%	8,47%	8,49%	11,59%	42,82%	4,84%	11,38%	11,39%	16,44%	47,21 %
FINGERPRINT QUALITY SUMMARY - AGE 71+										
Good Quality (1-3 scores)	84,69%	75,34%	73,91%	67,76%	38,35%	80,00%	68,52%	68,47%	62,25%	35,20 %
Poor Quality (4-5 scores)	15,32%	24,67%	26,10%	32,24%	61,65%	20,00%	31,49%	31,53%	37,74%	64,79 %

The data suggests, as previously presented by the Commission, that fingerprinting children from the age of 6 years, appears to be technically feasible with sufficient quality. International standards have been applied to the quality measurements and as indicated in the tables, the portion of good quality fingerprints in this age group is only slightly smaller than in other age groups and even larger than in the age group of 71 and above.

The Commission is looking forward to elaborate these results in due time. The overall data is gathered based on:

International Group Biometrics Programme Fingerprint Quality Summary

- Operational at 159 Posts
- Operational at 105 Visa Application Centres (VACs)
- Operational in 135 countries
- Recorded biometrics from over 1.5M visa applicants