COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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COMIX 419

NOTE

from :	Chairman of the Committee created by Article 6 of Regulation 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas
to :	Visa Working Party
Subject :	Minimum security standards for identity cards

1. Introduction

The June 2003 Thessaloniki European Council conclusions confirmed that "a coherent approach is needed in the EU on biometric identifiers or biometric data which would result in harmonised solutions for documents for third country nationals, EU citizens' passports and information systems (VIS and SIS II)".

On 4/5 November 2004, the European Council adopted a multi-annual programme in the area of freedom, security and justice, the Hague Programme. In this Programme, the European Council invites "the Council, the Commission and Member States to continue their efforts to integrate biometric identifiers in travel documents, visa, residence permits, EU citizens' passports and information systems without delay and to prepare for the development of minimum standards for national identity cards, taking into account ICAO standards".

This invitation to prepare minimum standards for national ID cards was clearly based on the ambition of the Constitution, which would offer a legal basis for adopting measures on this issue. In this framework, the development of minimum standards for national identity cards has been examined for the first time at the occasion of an expert meeting on 18 April 2005, without prejudging the issue of the possible legal basis for a measure harmonising these minimum security features for national identity cards and without affecting the right for each Member State to decide whether or not to issue national identity cards.

Following the declaration of the JAI Council on 13 July in respond to the London terrorist attacks the SCIFA meeting of 15 July concluded that the technical committee created by Article 6 of Regulation 1683/95 laying down a uniform visa and which is also responsible for setting out the technical specifications for the passport, should start working on the security aspects of the ID card. In parallel work should be started on the interoperability of electronic signatures and an expert group should be called by the Commission on rendering issuing procedures more secure.

Conclusions based on the results of the expert meeting of 7 November 2005 and the meetings of the Article 6 Committee on 6 October and 9 November 2005 have been prepared confirming that as a general approach the minimum standards for ID-Cards should follow those set out in Regulation 2252/2004 on security standards for the passport, including biometric identifiers. These conclusions included also elements on rendering ID-card issuing procedures more secure.

In the margin of the Council meeting on 1/2 December, the Representatives of the Governments of the Members States decided to accept "the above mentioned interim conclusions of the experts working in the Committee created by Article 6 of Council Regulation (EC) 1683/95".

Furthermore, they ask these first conclusions to be followed by "more detailed technical standards in due course". To this end a supplementary meeting of the Article 6 Committee took place on 10 February 2006.

2. Conclusions

The Article 6 committee has reached an agreement on the minimum standards set out in the annex, which are now forwarded to the Council for further consideration.

On the issue of interoperability of electronic signatures contacts have been taken with DG ENTR and DG INFSO as this issue fall under their competence. Further developments are expected in the course of 2006.

ANNEX

MINIMUM SECURITY STANDARDS OF IDENTITY CARDS VALID FOR TRAVEL ISSUED BY MEMBER STATES

Introduction

This document lays down the minimum level of security that the Member States' Identity Cards valid for travel are required to meet. The provisions are concerned primarily with the biographical data (front side of the card). Appropriate provisions should be made also on the back of the card in order to protect the card against attempts at tampering with the data e.g. by splitting and/or delamination.
The ID-card may consist of various basic materials. This document specifies the minimum level of security for the specific material that is used.

1. Material

The ID-card can be established as a card with paper core which is laminated on both sides or a card made entirely of a synthetic substrate.

If the ID-card is made of a synthetic substrate with paper core the paper shall meet the following minimum requirements:

— no optical brighteners,

— duotone watermarks,

— security reagents or equivalent protection to guard against attempts at tampering by chemical erasure and/or delamination,

— coloured fibres (partly visible and partly fluorescent under UV light, or invisible and fluorescent in at least two colours),

— UV-fluorescent planchettes are recommended,

— the use of security thread is recommended.

If the ID-card is made entirely of a synthetic substrate, it is not usually possible to incorporate the authentication marks used in passport or travel document paper. In this case, the lack of marks in the materials shall be compensated for by measures in respect of security printing, use of an anti copying device and an issuing technique according to sections 3, 4 and 5 over and above the following minimum standards.

2. Biographical data

The ID-card shall be machine-readable in compliance with Part 3 Volume 1 of ICAO Document 9303[1] ("Size 1 and Size 2 Machine Readable Official Travel Documents") and the way they are issued shall comply with the specifications for machine-readable cards set out therein.

The portrait of the holder shall not be affixed but integrated into the material of the front side of the card by the issuing techniques referred to in Section 5.

[1] Third edition (not yet published)

3. Printing techniques

The following printing techniques shall be used:

A. Background printing:

— two-tone guilloches or equivalent structures,

— rainbow colouring, where possible fluorescent,

— UV-fluorescent overprinting,

— effective anti-counterfeiting and anti-falsification motifs (especially on the biographical data page) with optional use of microprinting,

— reagent inks must be used on paper substrate,

— if the paper of the ID-card is well protected against attempts at tampering, the use of reagent inks is optional

The lay-out of the front of the card shall be distinguishable from the back of the card.

B. Form printing

With integrated microprinting (unless already included in background printing).

C. Numbering

The ID-card shall have a unique document number:

— printed with a special style of figures or typeface and in UV-fluorescent ink or integrated using the same techniques as for the biographical data.

It is recommended that in the ID-cards the unique document number is visible on both sides of the card.

Additional optically variable security devices shall be used on ID-cards made entirely of a synthetic substrate, e.g. ink with optically variable properties or other optically variable devices, completing the requirement of protection at least through the use of a DOVID (diffractive optically variable image device) or equivalent measures.

4. Protection against copying

An optically variable (OVD) or equivalent device, which provides for at least the same level of identification and security as currently used in the uniform format for visas, shall be used on the biographical data page and shall take the form of diffractive structures which vary when viewed from different angles (DOVID)[1] or of features with at least the same level of security, incorporated between the card layers, into the hot-sealed or an equivalent laminate or applied as an OVD overlay.

[1] A DOVID is an element of security with a variable and optically diffractive image with a high resolution. An optically variable image can be made of either animated elements of an image (multichannel image), or a permutation of colours, or a switch from a positive image to a negative image, or a 3D effect. Optically diffractive means the spatial distribution of light along the path of propagation for each wavelength individually, e.g. separating white light into its different coloured components

The OVD devices should be integrated into the document as an element of a layered structure, effectively protecting against forgery and falsification. In documents made of paper, they should be integrated over as wide a surface as possible as an element of the hot-sealed or an equivalent laminate or applied as a security overlay, as described in section 5. In documents made of a synthetic substrate, they should be integrated within the card layers over as wide a surface as possible or applied as a security overlay.

If a synthetic card is personalised by laser engraving, and an optically variable laser written device is incorporated therein, the diffractive OVD shall be applied at least in the form of a positioned metallised or transparent DOVID, to achieve enhanced protection against reproduction.

If the card is made of a synthetic substrate with paper core, the diffractive OVD shall be applied at least in the form of a positioned metallised or transparent DOVID within the layers, to achieve enhanced protection against reproduction.

It is recommended that the biographical data area for cards be given additional protection by means of raised or embossed tactile features.

5. Issuing technique

To ensure that ID-cards data are properly secured against attempts at counterfeiting and falsification, biographical data including the holder’s portrait, the holder's signature and main issue data, including the machine-readable zone, shall be integrated into the basic material of the document. Conventional methods of attaching the photograph shall no longer be used.

The following issuing techniques may be used:

— laser printing,

— thermotransfer,

— ink-jet printing,

— photographic,

— laser-engraving that effectively penetrates into the card layers bearing the security characteristics.

To ensure that biographical and issue data are adequately protected against attempts at tampering, hot-seal or equivalent lamination, for example in form of a laminated pouch or an overlay with an anti-copying device is compulsory where laser printing, thermo-transfer, ink-jet printing or photographic techniques are used. For paper based cards personalised with ink-jet printing lamination is required for sufficient durability.

For all card types it is important that also the back of the card is sufficiently protected in order that the biographical data cannot be altered from behind.

Travel documents shall be issued in machine-readable form. The layout of the ID-card shall follow the specifications given in part 3 Volume 1 of ICAO Document 9303[1] ("Size 1 and Size 2 Machine Readable Official Travel Documents"), and the issuing procedures shall meet the specifications it sets for machine-readable documents.

[1] Third edition (not yet published)

6. Further security features

Member States have the possibility, with regard to the points above to introduce further security features provided that these are in conformity with decisions already taken on these matters.

7. Biometric features

If ID-cards used for travel purposes contain biometric identifiers, these data shall be stored and be readable in compliance with ICAO specifications on biometrics (Document 9303[1] part 3 Volume 2) and European Union regulations and technical specifications for biometrics in passports, established in Council Regulation (EC) 2252/2004. Other options of biometric features can be added for national use.

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[1] Third edition (not yet published)