



France

1. Have you implemented innovations in border management at air, sea or land borders within your country or are you planning to do this in the near future? If so, could you please specify these innovations?

Since October 2009, France has been implementing in Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle and Orly Parisian airports an Automated Border Control system, **PARAFE**, which stands for "Automated Fast Track Crossing at External Borders" in French. It is a government-run programme, which was approved by Decree 2007-1182 dated 3 August 2007 and modified by Decree 2010-1274 dated 25 October 2010. This system allows Community nationals and their family members, who have previously enrolled in the system, to cross the border in about 20 seconds simply by presenting, at automated control booths, the Machine Readable Zone (MRZ) of their valid passport as a first step and, secondly, their fingerprint. In the medium term, it is planned to lift the registration prerequisite.

Our system meets the challenges of a modern and efficient administration in its service to the public. It is an extremely practical alternative to the manual controls used at present. Our programme is cost saving in terms of staff and it enables the border police staff to focus more on the most risky passengers. It is also time saving for the passengers who can use a dedicated line.

2. Do you currently have e-gates at air, sea or land borders within your country or are you planning to introduce these in the near future? If so, what type of biometrics do you make use of and are there any eligibility restrictions?

Today, there are 24 automated control booths (20 in Roissy and 4 in Orly), as well as 3 enrolment lounges (2 in Roissy and 1 in Orly). The opening of 3 other automated control booths and of another enrolment lounge in Roissy is scheduled in the first half of 2012. In 2012, the airport of Marseille-Provence will be equipped with 4 automated control booths and 1 enrolment lounge.

Fingerprints (eight fingers, without thumbs) are taken at registration. They are then used exclusively for authentication purposes, to allow passengers to pass through the automated control booth.

Holders of the new generation French biometric passports will soon be able to use the system without a prior enrolment. Holders of other Member States biometric passports will have to continue to enrol in the system because PARAFE cannot yet check the validity of certificates of biometric passports issued by other Member States.

The persons who can register are adult citizens of the European Union, European Economic Area (EEA) or the Swiss Confederation, as well as their spouses who are third-country nationals. To register, passengers must be no more than 2 meters tall and weigh less than 150 kilos. Persons with reduced mobility do not use PARAFE because they already have priority lanes at manual control booths (they also are accompanied to the point of embarkation by staff members).

Registration is free, valid for 5 years maximum (within the limit of the passport validity) and valid at all airports which are equipped, or to be equipped with the PARAFE facility.

3. Do you currently have a programme for registered travellers within your country? If so, please describe the programme including the specifications for enrolment and the type of biometrics used?

Yes, see answer to question 2.

4. Please identify the biggest challenges your country is currently facing in relation to innovation border management?

- Fighting irregular immigration and dealing more effectively with migratory pressure, notably resulting from the consequences of the "Arab Spring" (indeed, since 1st January 2011, more than 60,000 clandestine migrants have disembarked on the Italian coastline and more than 16,000 Tunisians in an irregular situation have been apprehended on the French territory by all the government services).
- Finding a balance between the needs in terms of security, fight against terrorism and border control on the one hand and purpose of facilitating the traffic flow (avoiding delays) on the other hand.
- Developing a project on the creation of an interministerial platform for the exploitation of reservation data called PNR (**passenger name record**) and data collected at check-in called API (**advance passenger information**). As a first step, it will apply to air passengers on flights from or to non-European Union States and, in the longer term, to passengers at sea. France considers that both of these types of data are intrinsically linked and complement one another. The joint exploitation of these two types of data before the arrival of passengers indisputably adds value in the field of border controls, fight against irregular immigration and serious forms of crime and terrorism. These two types of data will make it possible to focus controls on persons considered at risk and consequently to facilitate border crossings of persons who will not cause any particular difficulties.

For France, the exploitation of API and PNR data represents one of the aspects of the development in the methods of border controls. This approach is fully in line with the Stockholm Programme which confirms the need of an integrated border management in order to better coordinate the different types of border controls with the dual objective of facilitating access and improving security.

5. Could practical co-operation on an EU-level or the adoption of EU policies in relation to the smart borders communication in your opinion contribute to addressing these challenges? If so, please specify how?

Yes, on condition that the issue of smart borders is part of the broader issue of Schengen area management and security. Therefore, the notion

of “smart borders” must be regarded as a global concept not limited to a strictly migratory perspective as it seems to be presented in the communication of the Commission. Indeed, it is important that the investment to be made for implementing the “smart borders” covers both migratory and **security** aspects.

6. Please specify your expectations of the smart border communication of the European Commission, what do you envisage to be the most important outcomes for your country?

The smart borders are key issues for the EU. France supports the Commission suggestion to develop **simultaneously** the EES and the RTP in order to **enhance the security of border management while facilitating the movement of third-country nationals** and also to provide for cost savings. In any case, it is inconceivable that the RTP should be developed before the EES.

France is in favour of **centralised** EES and RTP which should a priori ensure important cost savings in terms of investment for programmes of this scale and guarantee interoperability between the different national systems. **In this context, France wishes the financial impact to be better assessed.**

France also emphasizes the importance to use **biometrics** from the beginning of the implementation of the systems.

It appears absolutely necessary to explore **synergies** between the two future systems (EES, RTP) and the existing ones (VIS, SIS), notably by cross-checking the biometric data of each programme (biometric data are already entered in the VIS, and they will be entered in the SIS in the medium term in the framework of the implementation of the SIS II), all of it of course subject to the establishment of strict safeguards with regard to data protection. In this respect, the Commission should describe a rapid and logical solution to the consultation and/or input of the different databases (for example, it should be provided that a single presentation of the passport and fingerprints makes it possible, at the same time, to consult the SIS and, where necessary, the VIS, allow registered travellers to use the RTP and supply the EES for every third-country national).

7. Please specify your view on the introduction of a Registered Traveller Programme for the EU, what do you consider the most important benefits for your country and the EU?

France supports the objective to introduce a RTP for the EU. The development of a RTP should **facilitate traffic flows** by allowing specific categories of frequent travellers from third-countries who have been subject to prior checking to enter EU territory thanks to a simplified procedure via automated gates. Consequently, this would enable to redeploy some of the existing staff in charge of border controls to passengers identified as being potentially at risk, which would prove **cost saving**, as it is the case for France with PARAFE.

France considers that:

- RTP beneficiaries should first include holders of a multiple-entry visa who do not constitute a migratory risk or a risk in terms of security of the Member States (a gradual extension of the list of beneficiaries could be envisaged).
- Enrolment in the RTP should not be a right but a possibility left to the discretion of Member States as registration should retain a voluntary character for the traveller and be excluded for minors.
- Interoperability between the systems already implemented by seven Member States should be organised a minima by a legal harmonisation and a common technical standard.
- Alert and withdrawal of the RTP benefit mechanisms, for example in case of fraud, entry ban or a person wanted by the authorities, should be established.

8. Please specify your view on the introduction of an Entry/ Exit System for the EU, what do you consider the most important benefits for your country and the EU?

France supports the introduction of an EES for the EU, including biometrics from the beginning of the implementation of the system, and not after a transitional period. Biometrics definitely brings added value as it is the most important factor to re-identify a person on the territory. Indeed, on the territory, only biometrics will make it possible to check the identity of persons without documentation and exempted from visa obligation (it will be possible to identify visa holders by consulting the VIS) who would have been recorded in the system while crossing the borders. From using an EES with biometrics should result the possibility to **know overstayers in real time** as well as an **improvement of return operations and relationships with third-countries** the nationals of which would have been identified with reliable information.

In this framework, the issue of the access of law enforcement authorities to the EES is fundamental and it is important to ensure a broader access than access provided for in the VIS regulation. Indeed, it will be necessary to allow access to recorded data in the EES to all competent authorities in charge of identity controls in the national territory (police forces and gendarmerie in France), which are not explicitly mentioned by the Commission in its communication.

France has also concerns about the planned abolition of the obligation to stamp travel documents. Such an abolition will not make it possible any more for a person whose identity is controlled in territory to be able to prove herself or himself her or his regular situation. Consequently, this will imply for all competent authorities to have access anywhere and at anytime to the information recorded in the EES, which will require, taking into account the number of staff concerned in every Member State, important investment to plan ahead.