



News Online
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New Analysis and Briefing

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1. EU: Statewatch Analysis

EU-USA Justice and Home Affairs cooperation: an honest and equal relationship? (pdf):

Tony Bunyan, Statewatch Director, comments:

"The USA role in justice and home affairs is like that of the 29th EU state. Year after year since 2001 there have been regular meetings of Ministers and Senior Officials in Brussels and Washington - it also attended the six-monthly G6 meetings of EU Interior Ministers (and its preparatory meetings)

The USA is a major, unseen, influence on EU justice and home affairs policies and practices and uses the meetings to lobby for direct access to EU and Member State databases.

These meetings take place on the oft-repeated assumption that the USA and the EU "share common values of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental values". However, there are many people, in Europe and the USA, who do indeed believe we share these "common values", but not the policies and practices of our governments."

2. EU: Statewatch Briefing

Preparing the ground for "smart borders": EU action on "overstayers" (pdf) by Zakeera Suffee:

"Quiet preparations for the EU's ambitious "smart borders" proposals are ongoing. This will require the fingerprinting of all non-EU residents entering the Schengen area, and is made up proposals for an Entry/Exit System intended to detect visa "overstayers"; a Registered Traveller Programme for the vetting of selected individuals before they arrive at EU borders; and proposals for relevant legal amendments to the Schengen Borders Code..."

The multiple efforts to ensure ever-greater capture, storage and sharing of information suggest that people on the move are increasingly seen as a threat that needs to be regulated and managed through high-tech surveillance combined with "on-the-ground" information-gathering and police

operations. All of these initiatives pose significant challenges to fundamental rights, in different ways. The fact that they are, for the most part, discussed and prepared in secret only adds to the concerns that they raise."

3. EU: Smart borders: European Commission and Member States at odds over digitising passport stamps

The EU wants to replace ink-on-paper passport stamps with a digital alternative as part of its plans for an Entry/Exit System supposed to detect visa "overstayers". Member States are not convinced by the idea.

A proposed new database known as the Entry/Exit System (EES) would require the fingerprinting of all non-residents entering the Schengen area, with the aim of making it easier to calculate and detect who has "overstayed" their visa entitlement. A Registered Traveller Programme (RTP), for the vetting of certain travellers before they reach EU borders, would also be introduced, along with amendments to the Schengen Borders Code.

However, the Commission's plan has raised concerns amongst the Member States. Documents obtained by *Statewatch* show that a majority of Member States consider passport stamps to be the most effective way of detecting overstayers

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