



**COUNCIL OF
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LIMITE

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NOTE

from: Working Party on Frontiers / False Documents - Mixed Committee
(EU - Iceland/Liechtenstein/Norway/Switzerland)

to: Strategic Committee on Immigration, Asylum and Frontiers (SCIFA)

Subject: **Questionnaire on the coordinated deployment of document advisers
- Analysis and recommendations**

Under the Hungarian Presidency, the Frontiers/False Documents Working Party discussed on the state of play regarding the deployment of document advisers in third countries for illegal immigration purposes by Member States with a view to supporting joint efforts by Member States against the use of false and forged documents.

For the purpose of combating the use of forged and false documents for illegal migration purposes, Member States deployed document advisers to take part in document checks at ports and airports and in embassies and consulates as well as to provide training to consulate/embassy staff, local police or other relevant authorities. However, the number, the tasks, the level of training of document advisers deployed differs among Member States. Even more, there are Member States which do not still deploy neither on permanently or sporadically document experts.

By undertaking work in this area, the Hungarian Presidency was aiming at exploring whether there was scope for further action at EU level in support of Member States activities in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity or even by enabling Member States to carry out such tasks even if separately they could not do so.

In this respect, the Executive Committee Decision SCH/COM-ex (98) 59 rev of 15 December 1998 already included a plan for the coordinated deployment of document advisers for air and maritime traffic and at consular representations and the list of locations considered suitable for document adviser assignments and the designation of key locations and regions. Nevertheless no deployment of joint document adviser teams has taken place under Decision SCH/COM-ex (98) 59 rev since the termination of the Odysseus Programme in 2001.

Council Regulation (EC) No. 377/2004¹ on the creation of an immigration liaison officers network, provides for immigration liaison officers to be posted abroad to the national consular authorities of Member States in third countries or to the relevant authorities of other Member States. Among their tasks, ILOs collect information for use either at the operational level, or at a strategic level or both on methods used for counterfeiting or falsifying identity documents and travel documents.

On 4 March 2011 the Hungarian Presidency submitted a questionnaire on the coordinated deployment of document advisers (5681/11 REV 1 FAUXDOC 7 COMIX 4). The questionnaire was aimed at gathering information *inter alia* on the:

- Third countries where Member States provide a document advisory service;
- General and special tasks carried out by document advisers;
- Link of document advisers and the existing ILOs networks;
- Improvements in security checks by the assignment of a document adviser;
- EU or/and national financial support, and
- Added value of Frontex in this field.

¹ OJ L 064 , 02/03/2004 p. 1.

A compilation of the replies sent by Member States is set out in doc. 8502/11 FAUXDOC 12 COMIX 197 ADD 1 and ADD 2.

At the meeting on 7 June 2011, the Presidency submitted to the Working Party doc. 10744/11 FAUXDOC 20 COMIX 366 setting out a draft analysis of the replies and a series of draft recommendations. A large majority of delegations could agree on doc.10744/11 however few delegations indicated that they would submit written comments. The Presidency has received comments by CH, DE, FR and the UK on the basis of which it has revised the draft analysis and recommendations. The recommendations aim at strengthening solidarity between Member States and encouraging further cooperation among them and call upon Frontex to support Member States common activities, mainly training, and to facilitate information sharing.

The Presidency invites SCIFA to:

- *approve the analysis and recommendations set out in Annex I;*
- *take note of the locations where document advisers are currently deployed set out in Annex II,*
and
- *forward this document to FRONTEX.*

Analysis and recommendations**Question 1**

In which third state(s) does your country provide a document advisory service on a provisional or permanent basis? Does the document adviser work at an embassy or other authority?

Many Member States do not have a document advisory service (11) or they use officers who have a basic level of document expertise for that purpose (1). The other Member States have already deployed one or more liaisons officers, mainly on their own (6), although three Member States, namely Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, have appointed joint officers.

Several countries have not deployed permanent staff dedicated to document expertise but they do regularly send experts on short-term missions (generally between 2 and 6 weeks).

The choice of the location for deploying document advisers mostly depends on the existing relations between Member States and third countries as well as the geographical situation of the Member States. However, Russia and China are often cited as strategic places where document advisers have been posted.

It should be pointed out that the UK Risk and Liaison Overseas Network (RALON) is present in 51 locations all over the world. The German document advisers' network is implemented in 18 German Embassies. Spain also indicated that it has deployed 76 Interior Ministry attachés with basic level expertise as document advisers.

The document advisers work mainly for embassies and consulates, with the exception of the Estonian, Lithuanian and Latvian joint airlines liaison officer who has his desk at Tbilisi International Airport and the French document experts who also work at the airports. Some of the Finnish experts also work directly at airports. German document experts also provide advice and support to airlines at the airports as well as Austrian document advisers who apart from their work in the consulates, they give advice and support to the airlines directly on the spot at the respective airports.

Question 2

What is the document adviser's classification (e.g. ILO, attaché, etc.)?

According to the responses given, there is no common classification for document advisers, who may be attachés, ILOs, “document specialists”, etc. The appellation depends on the length of the mission (permanent or not) and on the prerogatives of the expert (whether the examination of documents is his/her main task or not).

Question 3

If you have a document adviser assigned jointly with another Member State(s), please indicate the cooperating parties.

Some joint actions take place between Member States. Four can be mentioned:

- There are jointly assigned experts (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) in Georgia, Russia and Belarus
- Germany cooperates with the Netherlands and Portugal in Community projects in Algeria, Russia and Turkey
- The Portuguese expert in Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau is also acting on behalf of the Netherlands and Germany

Recommendation: The Presidency considers that there is scope for further cooperation between Member States and that, given the current economic situation, Member States should be encouraged to explore possibilities for deploying joint experts or experts acting on behalf of several Member States, taking into account best practices in this field and common interests.

Question 4

Please describe the general and special tasks the document adviser might have (e.g. document checks at airports, ports, training of carrier staff, etc.).

Document advisers generally perform four types of task:

- They take part in document checks, “on the spot” at ports and airports, and in embassies and consulates, inter alia, when examining authenticity of documents enclosed with visa applications. Profiling is used while checking passengers/applicants.

- They provide training to consulate/embassy staff, local police or other relevant authorities and to airlines staff and private security companies. Strengthening ties with local agents is really a core dimension of their task.
- They exchange information with their national authorities, especially on new trends in document falsification, new routes taken by irregular migrants, etc. Most of them also interact with local authorities in order to enhance their knowledge.
- They build up networks by establishing strong relations based on mutual trust with local officials, and also by enhancing cooperation with other document advisers.

According to the replies, they are sometimes entrusted with other tasks, e.g. attending experts' meetings.

Question 5

In your country, what qualification is required of document advisers assigned to third countries?

The level of qualification required to be sent as a document adviser to a third country varies widely between Member States. Nevertheless, the typical document adviser is a senior officer who has a university degree and a solid background in immigration and false document matters: several years of experience in the field, certification (level II or III) in recognizing forged documents, extensive knowledge of the national and international rules on migration and asylum, etc. He is also comfortable with working in a foreign language and has sufficient skills in English. Finally, Member States often require an adequate security clearance (such as "EU confidential") and good health.

Recommendation: The Presidency suggests that document experts deployed by two or more Member States by common agreement receive Frontex training prior to their deployment and acquire at least an "advanced" level qualification without prejudice to development and updating of Member States own national training schemes.

Question 6

Does the document adviser participate in the local Schengen cooperation?

All the experts from Member States of the Schengen Area (excluding Swiss experts at the moment as they only start to be deployed in the third and fourth quarter of 2011) take part in the local Schengen cooperation.

Question 7

Does your Member State have experience of regular meetings of document advisers in third countries? If so, what added value do such meetings have for your Member State?

Most of the Member States which have deployed document advisers in third countries have already held meetings, regular or not, with host authorities or other document advisers. They all emphasize the importance of these meetings for information-sharing on illegal migration trends and routes and of jointly addressing a particular problem with the host authority. Those gatherings could also be used as a basis for further joint actions.

Several examples of successful joint events have been highlighted by Member States in their replies; one example is the Dead Sea Conference organized by Germany with a view to enhancing cooperation on forged documents.

Recommendation: According to replies by delegations, the Presidency underlines the importance of regular meetings with the relevant authorities of the host countries and other document advisers. Therefore, the Presidency encourages Member States to organise such meetings in order to enhance practical and operational cooperation with the relevant third countries.

Question 8

Should the activities of document advisers in third countries be incorporated into the activities of the existing ILO networks? If so, how?

Immigration Liaison Officers (ILOs) posted by Member States in third countries are in some cases document experts and in most cases they have a good knowledge of document-related aspects. All ILOs on the basis of Article 2.2 of Regulation 377/2004 should, among other things, "collect information for use either at the operational level, or at a strategic level, or both" in particular in relation to "methods used for counterfeiting or falsifying identity documents and travel documents."

Nearly all Member States concerned advocate the inclusion of document advisers' activities in the existing ILO networks, arguing that it would facilitate contacts and exchanges between experts, and that it would allow document advisers to take advantage of the existing links between delegations.

Recommendation: In the framework of the implementation of Regulation 377/2004 as amended recently by the European Parliament and the Council, the Member States are invited to consider the following actions:

- *Assessment of regional priorities for training and cooperation in detection of false and forged documents.*
- *Organisation of joint training activities where resources and expertise allow*
- *Sending to other members of the ILO network e-mail alerts on false and forged documents*

Question 9

To what extent was the security of checks improved by the assignment of an adviser? In 2010, how many and what type of detections were recorded (broken down by place of detection)?

The United Kingdom has pointed out the key role played by its document advisers (ILO and ILM) in the significant drop in inadequately documented passengers reaching the UK in 2010 (4,000) compared to 2000 (27, 000). Germany has also indicated that in 2010 advice provided by document advisers resulted in 3 472 boarding refusals at airports and 10 801 visa refusals at overseas missions.

Except for Austria, Germany, Finland, Norway and the United Kingdom, no other Member States collect detailed data on detection of forged documents, counterfeit stamps or boarding refusals on account of false documents. However, all Member States underline the importance of having staff dedicated to the detection of such documents, as it contributes to increasing security.

Recommendation: The Presidency encourages Member States to collect data on false and forged documents detected, on refusals of entry because of false or forged documents, and then process it and share relevant information with other Member States and Frontex. Information should be collated in a consistent way in order to avoid duplication and allow meaningful conclusions to be drawn. This would allow the EU, via Frontex, to gain further knowledge and to have a comprehensive overview of new trends and modus operandi while raising situational awareness in the EU and associated countries.

Question 10

Can your document advisers be contacted – either in writing or via telephone – by official bodies of other Member States?

Considering the answers given, it appears that it is generally possible for official bodies of other Member States to contact document advisers. Several Member States have just given the contact information of their document advisers. As far as Austria, France, Germany and Portugal are concerned, contact is possible only through official channels.

Question 11

Do you agree that a contact list should be drawn up and displayed on monitored pages (iFADO, ICONet)?

Nearly all the Member States who have replied can agree on the drawing up of a contact list. However, some concerns have been raised by several Member States about the compatibility of this list with national legislation on data protection and the need to observe the official procedure for contacting a document adviser.

Recommendation: The Presidency will consider the drawing up of a contact list of document advisers and will ask the Commission about the possibility of publishing it in ICONet with the indication that Member States commit themselves to observing the applicable national procedures of the requested Member State.

Questions 12 and 13

Is the assignment of the document adviser covered by own contribution or does it also involve EU financial support?

If the assignment is partly financed from EU resources, please specify the funds used and the time of receiving such support.

The assignment of document advisers is, half of the time, financed both by the Member State and by the EU through the European Border fund, which is part of the “Management of Migration flows” programme. The level of participation of the EUBF is not always specified by Member States in their answers. For example, Germany receives 50% of the costs generated by the deployment of its experts, and even 80% in the case of Community projects (carried out with the Netherlands and Portugal).

Recommendation: The Presidency suggests the systematic use of the External Borders Fund for deploying document advisers on behalf of two or more Member States.

Question 14

If you have no document adviser assigned to a delegation, how do you provide for the document training of consulate staff?

When Member States do not have a document adviser assigned to a delegation, they use several methods to train local staff in the detection of forged documents:

- consular officers receive specialised training during their training period or before being posted abroad
- regular training sessions provided by document specialists are organized both in the capitals and on the spot, on request or on a regular basis (generally, every year)

Although Romania has document advisers, it is worth mentioning its initiative to set up a new Headquarters for its Training Centre for Consular staff, which includes 3 desk offices where consular staff can practice working as officials and conducting interviews with passport/visa applicants.

Recommendation: The Presidency invites delegations to continue supporting Frontex training courses for consular staff in different third countries.

Question 15

Do you think it necessary, on the basis of risk analysis, to designate key locations? If so, please indicate the third countries of your choice.

A majority of Member States have already deployed document advisers according to a national risk analysis and clearly supports the idea of designating key locations on the basis of a risk analysis carried out by Frontex. Several countries have already been identified by Member States: China, Ukraine (Kiev but also other main cities), Turkey, Russia, Moldova, Egypt, Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates.

Recommendation: Frontex risk analysis, together with Member States own risk analyses and information, should be the basis for designating key locations and for determining locations where there is a common European interest and therefore document experts would be deployed on behalf of two or more Member States with EU financial support.

Question 16

Do you plan to assign document advisers to third countries in the near future? If yes, please specify the location and the timeframe envisaged.

Several Member States plan to deploy document advisers in third countries in the near future, for different periods:

- Austria plans to deploy on a permanent basis a document adviser in the United Arab Emirates and Russia.
- The Czech Republic replied that document advisers would be posted to Hanoi (Vietnam), Kiev and L'viv (Ukraine) for a period of seven months. For a period of five months the Czech Republic will assign a document adviser to the following cities: Moscow, Donetsk, Cairo, Beijing, Ulan Bator, Abuja and Astana.
- The German Federal Police plans to provide further staff at document adviser locations in India, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates.
- Estonia will deploy one document expert to Ukraine for a non -specified period of time.

Other Member States have replied that they also intend to deploy document advisers in the future but not in the short term.

Recommendation: When a Member State plans to deploy document advisers to one or several locations, it may inform the other Member States in order to look for possible synergies, which could reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Question 17

What do you think is the added value of Frontex in this context?

From the answers given by Member States, it clearly appears that Frontex plays already a significant role as far as its training activities are concerned. Indeed, the Agency has set up international teams of document specialists who train consular staff directly on the spot.

In addition, replies include other suggestions to give further added-value to Frontex in this context. These are described below:

- For many Member States, Frontex should coordinate activities carried out by Member States' document advisers in order to avoid duplication (joint missions at problematic airports, training activities, support for the ILOs with training material and tools).
- Several Member States consider that Frontex could provide useful risk-analysis to raise the situational awareness of Member States and other information with a view to identifying key locations where, from a European point of view, a pool of document advisers could be deployed for the benefit of all Member States.
- According to some replies, in light of the current economic situation, Frontex could finance the deployment of document advisers who will work for all Member States in key locations.
- Some Member States also mention that Frontex could define a common strategy for document checks and profiling.

Recommendation: The Presidency invites Frontex to support and ensure the coordination of common document advisers activities. In addition, Frontex should be invited to identify key locations based on its own risk analysis where a pool of document advisers could be deployed for the benefit of all Member States.

LIST OF LOCATIONS WHERE MEMBER STATES HAS CURRENTLY DEPLOYED
DOCUMENT ADVISERS

Germany:

Jordan,
Ghana,
Algeria,
Turkey,
Thailand,
India,
Sri Lanka,
Syria,
United Arab Emirates,
China (People's Republic),
China (Hong Kong),
Pakistan,
South Africa,
Egypt,
Ukraine,
Nigeria,
Russia,
Kosovo,
Iran;

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania:

Belarus,
Georgia,
Russian Federation;

Spain:

Germany, Andorra, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Argentina, Belgium, the Netherlands, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Colombia, Cuba, China, Ecuador, United States, Egypt, El Salvador, France, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Togo, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Guinea Conakry, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovak Republic, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Italia, San Marino, Malta, Israel, Libya, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Mali, Morocco, Mexico, Nigeria, Benin, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Portugal, United Kingdom, Ireland, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Haiti, Jamaica, Panamá, Rumania, Moldavia, Romania, Russia, Senegal, Sierra Leona, Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Syria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Thailand, Turkey and Venezuela;

France¹:

Algeria: ALGER
Greece: ATHENS
Mali: BAMAKO
Thailand: BANGKOK
Belgium: BRUSSELS
Romania: BUCAREST
China: CANTON
China: HONG KONG
China: BEIJING,
China: SHANGHAI
Turkey: ISTANBUL
Egypt: CAIRO
United Kingdom: LONDON
Spain: MADRID
Byelorussia: MINSK
Russia: MOSCOW
Germany: POSTDAM
Morocco: RABAT
Italy: ROME
Greece: THESSALONIKI
Libya: TRIPOLI

Austria:

Egypt: CAIRO,
Syria: DAMASCUS,
India: NEW DELHI,
Thailand: BANGKOK;

Portugal:

Angola, Russia, Brazil, Ukraine, Senegal: Cape Verde, and Guinea Bissau;

Romania:

Moldova: KISHINEV
Moldova: BALTI
Moldova: CAHUL

Slovakia:

Ukraine: UZHOROD

Finland:

Russia: MOSCOW, ST PETERSBURG, PETROZAVODSK and MURMANSK.
People's Republic of China: BEIJING,
Syria: DAMASCUS,
Turkey: ISTANBUL,
India: MUMBAI,
India: NEW DELHI,

¹ List of locations where there are French Immigration Liaison Officers

Nigeria: ABUJA;

Norway:

Thailand: BANGKOK;

United Kingdom¹:

AFRICA (see also Europe/Mediterranean region below)

Nigeria: ABUJA,

Ghana: ACCRA,

Ethiopia: ADDIS ABABA,

Gambia: BANJUL,

Zimbabwe: HARARE,

Nigeria: LAGOS,

Kenya: NAIROBI,

South Africa: PRETORIA;

¹ The extent to which Risk and Liaison Overseas Network (RALON) staff act as document advisers as part of their duties varies from post to post. Document advice plays a significant role at the posts underlined below. These posts provide monthly reporting on forgery detections.

AMERICAS

Colombia: BOGOTA,
Brazil: BRASILIA,
Jamaica: KINGSTON,
United States: NEW YORK,
Brazil: RIO DE JANEIRO;

ASIA – PACIFIC

Thailand: BANGKOK,
People's Republic of China: BEIJING,
People's Republic of China: GUANGZHOU,
People's Republic of China: HONG KONG,
Malaysia: KUALA LUMPUR,
Philippines: MANILA,
People's Republic of China: SHANGHAI;

EUROPE/MEDITERRANEAN

Jordan: AMMAN,
Netherlands: AMSTERDAM,
Greece: ATHENS,
Spain: BARCELONA,
Serbia : BELGRADE,
Egypt: CAIRO,
Denmark: COPENHAGEN,
Germany: FRANKFURT,
Turkey: ISTANBUL,
Ukraine: KIEV,
Portugal: LISBON,
Spain: MADRID,
Italy: MILAN,
Russian: MOSCOW,
France: PARIS,
Italy: ROME,
Sweden: STOCKHOLM,
Tunisia: TUNIS,
Poland: WARSAW;

GULF/PAKISTAN

United Arab Emirates: ABU DHABI,
Kingdom of Bahrain: BAHRAIN,
Qatar: DOHA,
United Arab Emirates: DUBAI,
Oman: MUSCAT,
Iran: TEHRAN,
Pakistan: ISLAMABAD;

SOUTH ASIA

India: CHENNAI,
Sri Lanka: COLOMBO,
Bangladesh: DHAKA,
India: MUMBAI,
India: NEW DELHI;

Europe (outside of EU)



Asia



Africa



America



Australia

