

**Ska Keller**

Spokesperson on migration of the Greens in the European Parliament

### **LIBE Flash September 2013**

## **Debate on "Smart Borders" in the Committee on Civil Liberties of the European Parliament**

Last week the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs in the European Parliament for the first time discussed the European Commission's proposal for the establishment of a fingerprint database for foreigners ("Smart Borders"). The proposal stipulates that in the future all ten fingerprints of foreigners who enter and exit the EU should be stored in a huge database.

In her speech, Ska Keller left no doubt that "Smart Borders" are absolutely unjustified: *"They are pointless and useless, contrary to fundamental rights and discriminatory, they will cost us billions of Euros and they will prolong the queue at the European borders significantly."*

Many social democrats and liberals (but not all of them), the Eurosceptic conservatives as well as some of conservatives of the European People's Party (EPP) also are against "Smart Borders". Main arguments are the extremely high costs of more than one billion Euros and the likely explosion of the costs; at the same time it is unclear what the aim of controlling the fingerprints actually is. Moreover, the European Data Protection Supervisor and the data protection officers of the member states consider "Smart Borders" to be an unlawful interference with European fundamental rights.

By contrast, the parliament's rapporteur and negotiator for the fingerprint database, the German member of the European Parliament Renate Sommer (EPP), pushes for an even more excessive version of "Smart Borders". She does not only want to use the database for border controls but also for combating crime. For that purpose, she wants to give the police access to the fingerprints so that it can compare the unidentifiable fingerprint from a crime scene with the biometric data of non-EU citizens. Thereby, Sommer makes herself the parliament's advocate of the member states which call for access of the police for criminal investigations as well.

What's next?

In October the rapporteurs of the parliament are expected to publish their amendments on "Smart Borders". Then it will become clear, what the positions of the European parties actually are.

### **More information on "Smart Borders"**

- Briefing by Ska Keller on "smart borders"
- The European Commission's proposal on "Smart Borders": <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2013:0095:FIN:EN:PDF>
- Statement of the European Data-protection Supervisor: [https://secure.edps.europa.eu/EDPSWEB/webdav/site/mySite/shared/Documents/Consultation/Opinions/2013/13-07-18\\_Smart\\_borders\\_EN.pdf](https://secure.edps.europa.eu/EDPSWEB/webdav/site/mySite/shared/Documents/Consultation/Opinions/2013/13-07-18_Smart_borders_EN.pdf)

- Position paper of the parliament's rapporteur for the fingerprint database, Renate Sommer (EPP):  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/libe/dt/941/941239/941239en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/libe/dt/941/941239/941239en.pdf)
- Position paper of the rapporteur for the registered travellers programme, Ioan Enciu (social democrats):  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/libe/dt/940/940761/940761en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/libe/dt/940/940761/940761en.pdf)

The LIBE Flash is the monthly newsletter by **Ska Keller**, spokesperson on migration of the Greens in the European Parliament, on news related to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) of the European Parliament. It focuses on policy developments in the area of EU border

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