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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Working Party on Frontiers/False Documents/Mixed Committee (EU-Iceland/Liechtenstein/Norway/Switzerland)
No. prev. doc.:	15502/16
No. Cion doc.:	COM(2016) 790 final
Subject:	Commission Questionnaire on Issues related to Registration of Identity

Delegations will find attached a questionnaire suggested by the services of the Commission on issues related to **Registration of Identity** in the context of the follow-up to the Commission's Communication on an Action Plan to strengthen the European response to travel document fraud (COM(2016) 790 final).

The questionnaire will be presented by the Commission in the meeting of the Working Party on Frontiers/ False Documents on 2 February 2017.

Delegations are kindly requested to agree to the questionnaire at the meeting of the Working Party on Frontiers/ False Documents on 2 February 2017, and, on that basis, to reply **by 15 April 2017** to the following e-mail addresses:

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Questionnaire on issues related to **Registration of Identity**
in the context of the follow-up to the Commission's Communication
on an Action Plan to strengthen the European response to travel document fraud
COM(2016) 790 final

Introduction

Registration of identity is one of the four key areas of Identity management. It is critical that establishing identity is carried out to the highest standards possible so to prevent identity, residence and travel documents being issued to those not entitled to hold them, including criminals and terrorists. Evidence of the applicant's identity, i.e. to ascertain whether a given identity is indeed a real one and the applicant is in fact the claimed individual, is a key element in the process of registration of identity.

On the basis of this identity-evidence process, breeder documents¹ are issued. While requiring a watertight process, competence on rules applying to breeder documents and production and issuance processes lies with Member States since they are closely related to nationality.

The **Action Plan to strengthen the EU response to travel document fraud** underlines that *"authentic documents established on the basis of a false identity are very difficult to detect at border crossings or within a Member State's territory. Individuals' identity should be established, and 'breeder documents' issued, on the basis of population registers containing relevant up-to-date historical, social and geographical data. Countries with a biometric population register or travel document database can check a person's identity each time s/he applies for a new travel document, so a person cannot apply for an authentic document using a false breeder document."* In addition it highlights that *"Breeder documents should have a minimum security level to prevent falsification."*

¹ Breeder documents are birth, marriage and death certificates used to support applications for identity, residence and travel documents.

Obtaining authentic documents on the basis of false 'breeder' documents (birth, marriage and death certificates) remains one of the biggest threats, as it is very difficult to detect." In this context it also emphasizes the role of Europol which "has funded the development of a handbook on the detection of false breeder documents, containing samples and short descriptions of European ID documents and breeder documents, but it is not used as much as it should be."

Member States are invited to answer the following questions on secure identity management and issuance of travel documents with a view to improve the exchange of best practices in this area.

Questions

1. Population registries²

- Please describe your population register, indicating how it is maintained e.g. the level of centralisation, what kind of information it contains (civil status data and/or other) and whether it allows for online/cross checks from other authorised entities, etc.)?
- Is a personal identification number (PIN) assigned to each identity?
- Are biometric identifiers taken for the process of registering the identity in your population register?
 - **If yes** what are the biometrics enrolled (photo, fingerprints, others)? Who has access and in which circumstances?
 - **If no**, what is the unique identifier used to link the claimed identity with the initial registered ID, in case an identity check³ (as opposed to a document check) is needed?

² According to OECD, “population registers are accounts of residents within a country. They are typically maintained via the legal requirement that both nationals and foreigners residing in the country must register with the local authorities. Aggregation of these local accounts results in a record of population and population movement at the national level”. UN defines it as a mechanism for the continuous recording of selected information pertaining to each member of the resident population of a country or area, making it possible to determine up-to-date information about the size and characteristics of the population at selected points in time. (United Nations, 2001, §500)

³ Identity check is the process by which a claimed identity is verified against biometric data (e.g. fingerprints or facial recognition). Document check is the process checking documents authenticity and integrity.

2. **Initial/ foundational Identity (first time registration)**

- How do you register the initial or foundational identity? Which information, documents or parameters are requested?
- Do you request the presence of one or both parents/legal guardians?
- Do you conduct interviews to establish identity? In which circumstances?
- In case of late-in-life registration of identity, e.g. in adulthood, do you apply special procedures? Which ones?

3. **Identity verification (subsequent registration)**

- What kind of checks do you perform to validate the claimed identity and the documentary evidence submitted: biometric checks (photo or fingerprint), birth/marriage/death records, others?
- Is there a difference between identity verification of a national and of a non-national? If yes please describe the different approach and why.
- In case of first-time-application for a travel document do you have special procedures in place? Which ones?

4. **Breeder documents**

- Upon registration/ verification of the identity, breeder documents, such as birth certificates, are issued as a means of proof of a certain civil status/ condition.
 - Do you issue breeder documents or are authorised entities in your country able to access the information in a population register online?
 - In case breeder documents are issued, which is their security level? Can you provide details of the security features?
 - Would you envisage to raise the security level of your breeder documents, e.g., by adding new security features? If yes which ones would you envisage?

- Do you ensure wide distribution of the Europol handbook on breeder documents to the document-issuing authorities in your country? What has been the feedback?
- Do you provide training in detecting forged documents/breeder documents to document-issuing authorities in your country? How often?
- Do you provide training for the correct enrolment/caption of biometric identifiers? How often?

5. Other identity-related procedures

- Is name changing permitted?
 - If yes, under which conditions?
 - Can you share statistics on the percentage of (1) requests compared to you population, (2) number of granted requests and (3) main reasons for requesting name changing?
 - How do you link name changing to law enforcement procedures, such as updating the info on relevant databases?

6. Control mechanisms

- Do you audit your identity infrastructure namely at the registration of identity and issuing level? How often? Which entity conducts the audit?
- Please describe any other procedural or machine-based mechanisms in place aiming to prevent human error and/or fraudulent attempts to obtain authentic documents, including limiting the number of blank stolen items.
- Have you already implemented / experience with the authentication of breeder documents through the Internal Market Information System (IMI) as provided for in Regulation (EU) 2016/1191⁴?

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2016/1191 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 July 2016 on promoting the free movement of citizens by simplifying the requirements for presenting certain public documents in the European Union and amending Regulation (EU) No 1024/2012 (OJ L 200, 26.7.2016, p. 1–136).