

European passport and travel documents: standards for security features and biometrics

2007/0216(COD) - 18/10/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to amend Council Regulation (EC) No 2252/2004 on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States in order to define exceptions for children of under 6 years of age and certain persons who are physically unable to provide to give fingerprints for travel documents.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: The Council adopted Regulation (EC) 2252/2004 on security standards and biometrics for passports and other travel documents issued by Member States in 2004 (see [CNS/2004/0039](#)) but this did not provide for any exceptions from the obligation to provide fingerprints.

At the time of the Commission proposal and the discussions on it in the European Parliament and the Council, no experiences with the use of biometric data for large scale applications in travel documents were available. During pilot projects of some Member States it appeared that the fingerprints of children under the age of 6 seemed not to be of a sufficient quality for one-to-one verification of identity and were subject to significant change, making it difficult to check them during the entire period of validity of the passport.

For these reasons, a proposal has been made to amend Regulation 2252/2004/EC in order to dispense with the obligation to give fingerprints for children of under 6 years of age and persons who are physically unable to do so.

The proposal also introduces the principle of 'one passport-one person' as an additional security measure, recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO). This would ensure that the passport and the biometric features are only linked to the person holding the passport and could help combat child trafficking by requiring children to have their own passport with their own biometric identifiers.

Most Member States are already following this principle as it is recommended by the ICAO. Therefore, no additional costs will be incurred for these Member States.

This proposal will have no financial impact on the Community's budget.