

Strengthening the security of ID cards in the EU

- Common minimum security standards for ID documents across the EU
- Applies only to member states already issuing ID cards

New rules on common security features for EU identity documents to reduce identity fraud were approved by European Parliament.

With at least 86 different versions of identity cards and 181 types of residence documents in circulation in the EU, the aim of the new rules is to deter the use of fraudulent documents that can also be used by criminals to enter the EU.

The updated rules, already agreed by Parliament and Council negotiators in February, will set new security standards for EU ID cards:

- **Common minimum security features across the EU** for ID cards set out by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO); the country code of the member state issuing them will be indicated on the ID card inside an EU flag.
- Making a **facial image and two fingerprints** stored on a chip in the card mandatory for citizens' ID cards; children under the age of 6 years are always exempt from the requirement to give fingerprints and member states have the possibility of providing the exemption to children up to the age of 12.

ID cards that do not meet these requirements would stop being valid when they expire (i.e. would be renewed with the new format) or at the latest 10 years after the application of the new rules. ID cards that do not have a machine-readable zone, such as Greek ID cards, would expire within five years.

Only member states already issuing ID cards to their nationals would be affected by the new rules. The measures would not make it compulsory to own an ID card or oblige member states to introduce ID cards.

Quote

Rapporteur [Gérard Deprez](#) (ALDE, BE) said : “The new rules will facilitate the free movement of people in the EU, reduce bureaucracy and reinforce EU's internal security. It is important to note that they won't allow for the creation of a database of biometric information. I'm also very happy

about the addition of an EU flag on ID cards and the words “EU citizen” on residence documents.”

Next steps

The new rules were adopted by 335 to 269, 21 abstentions. The text still needs to be formally approved by the Council before entering into force.

The new rules will become applicable two years after their publication. They will have to be reviewed by the Commission every six years with a particular focus on fundamental rights, the mobility of EU citizens and the effectiveness of biometric verification in ensuring the security of travel documents.

Background information

Of twenty-six EU member states that issue identity cards to their nationals, identity card ownership is compulsory in 15 member states. The total number of people detected with fraudulent documents, including ID cards, either entering or exiting the EU, or in transit, increased by around 16% from 2013 to 2015.

Further information

[Adopted text \(4.4.2019\)](#)

[Video recording of the debate \(3.4.2019\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Rapporteur Gérard Deprez \(ALDE, BE\)](#)

[EPRS Briefing: Security of ID cards and of residence documents issued to EU citizens and their families](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

Contacts

Iina LIETZÉN

Press Officer

 (+32) 2 28 40731 (BXL)

 (+33) 3 881 73472 (STR)

 (+32) 470 88 39 10

 [@EP_Justice](https://twitter.com/EP_Justice)

 iina.lietzen@europarl.europa.eu
