



Ad-Hoc Query on Assessment of Travel Documents as Foreign Passports

Requested by SE EMN NCP on 28th April 2009

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Responses from BE, BG, CZ, DE, EE, GR, FR, LV, LT, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, SI, SK, FI, SE, SP, UK – (20 in Total)






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1. Background Information

In Sweden it is the Migration Board that evaluates what kind of travel documents that should be accepted as foreign passports in Sweden. There are rules regarding acknowledged travel documents, but a question arises when new (not assessed) documents are presented for approval. In Sweden there is currently no suitable routine for this assessment of documents for approval or rejection as a valid foreign passport. In order to be able to establish an adequate routine we are asking you for your experience and work method.







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2. Responses¹

		Wider Dissemination? ²	- Which agency is responsible for assessment of foreign documents in your country? - What is the routine/process when new kinds of foreign travel documents are submitted for acceptance as a valid foreign passport?
	Belgium	No	This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.
	Bulgaria	Yes	In Bulgaria the Consular Office within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the Border Police within the Ministry of Interior collect the specimens of the valid travel documents and publish officially the list of the approved travel documents. In case a foreigner wants to enter Bulgarian territory with a document not included in that list the officials from the Border Police are entitled to assess the document and to make a decision. In the majority of cases their decision is negative.
	Czech Republic	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Alien Police are responsible for assessment of foreign documents, particularly the Unit for documents. 2) The Alien Police proceed according to the Alien Act, section 108, that gives requisites of a travel document as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its form and language complies with international practice and its territorial validity includes the Czech Republic; information on the nationality, and identity of a foreign national, a photograph of its holder, and information on the expiry date may be ascertained from it.
	Germany	Yes	<p>The Federal Ministry of the Interior of the authority determined by the latter decides in agreement with the Federal Foreign Office on the recognition of passports and replacement passport documents. Recognition is in each case related to a specific model (such as “service passport of the Republic of X”), which is passed to the Federal Ministry of the Interior by the foreign State in line with customary international practice. The decisions of the Federal Ministry of the Interior are published on a regular basis in the Federal Bulletin as a so-called “General Order on the Recognition of Foreign Passports” (“<i>Allgemeinverfügung über die Anerkennung ausländischer Pässe</i>”); where necessary, they are additionally published between the regular appearance dates.</p> <p>Entry may not be permitted if a passport or replacement passport document which is not recognised is presented at a border.</p>
	Estonia	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Board of Border Guard 2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs recognises a travel document issued by a foreign state on the basis of a diplomatic note, official letter or on the basis of other forms of information received from a competent foreign authority. <p>When the Ministry of Foreign Affairs receives a specimen of a foreign travel document, then the ministry evaluates the document and sends it to the Board of Border Guard to evaluate also. The Board of Border Guard has to take a stand in that issue in 14 days. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs makes the final decision within 14 days after receiving the opinion from the Board of Border Guard.</p>





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	Greece	Yes	The procedure of the assessment of travel documents and their acceptance as valid by our country is as follows: Travel documents are sent by the Embassies (Greek Embassies abroad or foreign Embassies in Greece) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and thereafter to the Criminal Investigation Division of the Hellenic Police Headquarters. This Division assesses the travel documents according to safety specifications of our national and EU legislation and compiles an Assessment Report. Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the final assessment. Taking into account the Assessment Report and other political parameters the Ministry decides whether the travel documents should be accepted as valid or not.
	Spain	Yes	The decision as to whether or not a travel document issued by a third country shall be recognized by Spain corresponds to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation and the Ministry of the Interior. When the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation receives the example of a travel document issued by a third country, it analyses this document to consider its compliance with all of the elements set forth in Appendix 11 of the CCI (Common Consular Instructions). The travel document must certify the identity and nationality of the holder and must guarantee the return to the same country which issued it. At the discretion of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, if no impediment exists from a technical and/or political perspective for recognising the travel document, then it is remitted to the Ministry of the Interior for its decision. If the Ministry of the Interior agrees with the criteria of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Co-operation, the document may be accepted. Next, the decision is remitted to the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU (for the modification of the "List of admissible travel documents") and to border posts, other competent authorities of the Ministry of the Interior, and Spanish Consular Offices abroad.
	France	Yes	Specimens of new travel documents issued abroad come to the Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Solidarity Development -sub-directorate of Visas ("sous-direction des visas": SDV)-, or through our diplomatic and consular posts or by the Embassies in the countries concerned of France. SDV studies these documents, then enter: - The services of Police ("Police aux Frontières") which makes a technical document - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs. If there is no problem and that everyone is in agreement, the SDV calls for the integration of the new emergency travel in the Visas World Net ("Réseau mondial des visas" –RMV-), informs our diplomatic and consular posts and the General Secretariat of the Council in Brussels, who enrolled in the relevant Annex of the Common Consular Instructions.
	Latvia	Yes	-The responsible agency is the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of Latvia.
	Lithuania	Yes	- According to the order signed on November 2007 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Interior a special working group was established for the assessment of foreign travel documents accepted as valid for the arrival into Lithuania. The group is composed of representatives from the Consular department (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Border Guards, Migration department and other relevant institutions. - The travel document must be included into the list of valid travel documents permitting to arrival to Lithuania. In case a foreigner presents a travel document that is not included into the list, one-off decision is taken by the State Border Guards. They inform the Consular department on their decision. Whether this document should be included into the list of valid travel documents is decided by the working group on the request by the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Foreign Affairs
	Hungary	Yes	The responsible body is the Government (meaning the Prime Minister and the Ministers). The following procedure shall be followed:






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			<p>An expert working group (EWG) shall be set up which would fulfil an advisory task towards the Government. This EWG shall draft a proposal to the Government on the list of travel documents issued by third countries where the holders of such documents can cross the Hungarian borders or obtain a visa.</p> <p>The chair of the EWG is a head of department assigned by the Minister of Justice and Law Enforcement. The members of the EWG are assigned by the leader/head of the following institutions: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Border Guards, Office of Immigration and Nationality, Minister without portfolio supervising the Civilian National Security Services, Office of Information, Special Service for National Security. The EWG meets every 3 months but also if necessary. The Chair shall convene the meetings (or any member if justified).</p> <p>The EWG meets a decision with majority vote, if the votes are equal the chair shall decide. Every member has one vote. At least 5 members have to be present to have a quorum.</p>
	Netherlands	Yes	<p>Decisions about the recognition of foreign travel documents are not made unilaterally by the Netherlands, but together with Belgium and Luxemburg.</p> <p>When a new foreign travel document is submitted for recognition (mostly through the diplomatic mission in the country concerned) a specimen of the document is sent to the national document-experts.</p> <p>In the Netherlands, the ministry of Foreign Affairs sends the document to a special unit of the Royal Military Constabulary which is specialized in Identity- and documentfraud. These specialists make an analysis and give advise about the technical aspects of the document.</p> <p>On the basis of the analysis of the technical experts and (when relevant) taking into consideration the political situation in the country concerned, the ministry of Foreign Affairs together with the ministry of Justice takes a position with regard to the recognition of the document.</p> <p>In a meeting between the Benelux-countries the different national positions with regard to the document are discussed and when all three countries can agree, a decision whether or not to recognise the document is made.</p>
	Austria	No	<p>This EMN NCP has provided a response to the requesting EMN NCP. However, they have requested that it is not disseminated further.</p>
	Poland	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are 2 agencies responsible for assessment of new foreign travel documents in Poland: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (political assessment) and Ministry of Interior and Administration (technical issues). - The routine is following: Embassy of third country notifies a new travel document and submits it to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. When it gets political acceptance it is sent to Ministry of Interior and Administration. If a new travel document gets technical acceptance, the Ministry of Interior and Administration places it in register of recognised foreign travel documents and informs about it the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
	Portugal	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When a non-EU country intends to introduce a new kind of travel document, in PT that matter is submitted to Foreign Affairs Ministry. - After that the Foreign Affairs Ministry submits this proposal to Immigration Border Service that issues an opinion on the document, namely about its origin and security of the document, the iconicity of the emitting entity and also on the emission procedures of the document, if it known, regarding the migratory and safety risks. <p>After this submission, the Foreign Affairs Ministry decides about this new travel document.</p>

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	Slovenia	Yes	<p>- The competent body is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior (General Police Directorate).</p> <p>- In the case of a new foreign travel document, Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents the specimens to the Ministry of the Interior (General Police Directorate), which then conducts all other necessary procedures and informs the border police. In case of any uncertainties about the new travel document, Ministry of the Interior informs the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which then obtains additional information from the country that issued the document. Otherwise, if there are no objections from either of the ministries, the document is considered acknowledged.</p>
	Slovak Republic	Yes	<p>In the Slovak Republic the responsible agency for the recognition of the validity of the travel documents of the third countries for the purpose of entry into the Slovak Republic is the Bureau of the Border and Aliens Police of the Ministry of Interior.</p> <p>In the process of the recognition of the foreign travel documents for the purpose of entry into the Slovak Republic the following facts are taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assessment of the passport from the technical point of view – security features of the travel document - agreements and accords of the Slovak Republic within the EU <p>multilateral and bilateral agreements which Slovak Republic concluded with the third countries</p>
	Finland	Yes	<p>a) The responsible agency is Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland</p> <p>b) When a new passport is presented for approval, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs asks a statement/opinion from different authorities and specialists according the quality and the level of the security features. If all the authorities approve the travel document and there is no doubt of the practice of granting, normally Finland accepts the document but every application is treated as an independent case and the acceptance routine is always a case-specific.</p>
	Sweden	Yes	<p>- The responsible agency is the Migration Board.</p> <p>- It is mostly done on an ad-hoc basis and a working routine is missing.</p>
	United Kingdom	Yes	<p>- Entry Clearance Officers (ECO) and Immigration Officers (IO) who work for the UK Border Agency will be placed at various ports of entry across the UK. They are responsible for assessing foreign documents.</p> <p>- IOs/ECOs examine the TDs when the individual presents the TD at the Control/with the visa application form. The National Document Fraud Unit (NDFU) will make the initial assessment on the security features in the travel documents and whether it's ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) compliant. Border Visa Policy (BVP) hold the policy for passport acceptance.</p>
