

Detecting Document Fraud in Migration

Part 2

Technical seminar

Athens, 21-22 January 2020

Report – overview of presentations

Tuesday, 21 January 2020

- **Welcome, presentation of EMN and the technical seminar**

Athina Balopoulou, EMN Greece coordinator, Directorate for Migration Policy, General Secretariat for Migration Policy, Reception and Asylum, Ministry of Migration and Asylum

Presentation of the European Migration Network and the organizers of this technical seminar, EMN Greece and EMN Luxembourg. Presentation of the outline and the novelties introduced: English to/from Greek, streamline of the event into Greek addressed to registered government officials in remote services in Greece, introduction of a “EU policy corner” to present an EMN output treating a specific EU migration policy area and a series of printed EMN outputs translated into Greek disseminated to participants.

- **Welcome**

Michail Kosmidis, acting Director, Directorate for Migration Policy, General Secretariat for Migration Policy, Reception and Asylum, Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greece

The aim of the two-day seminar is to focus on the extensive problem of document fraud in the context of migration and the ways of combating it. The Member States together with Frontex and the European Commission, stress the importance of combating this phenomenon and, with a view to reinforcing security during the identification process, apart from establishing the residence permit of uniform format and the taking of biometrics, recognize the need to improve interoperability of identification systems and data bases as well as the continuous development of new technologies of document authenticity checks and recording of data.

- **State of Play of Document fraud in the EU**

Adolpho Sommaribas, Senior Legal Expert, EMN Luxembourg

Presentation of the current situation as regards document fraud within the Schengen area, based on key findings drawn from the relevant EMN Inform. Statistical data of 2017 show an increasing trend in an already extensive phenomenon, as 12 different identity, travel and residence documents have been traced.

Although it is considered to be a criminal offense, the lack of a uniform legal framework among Member States shows that there is an urgent need for continuous analysis, recording and classification of cases, as well as for the creation of a strong organisational framework for the cooperation of services responsible for the determination of document authenticity, such as the Police, the Border Guard, Criminal Intelligence, which shall be common for all Member States. Among the most serious problems faced is the extremely high number of false documents as opposed to the number of experts who detect them, the lack of proper training, considering the fact that such training should be long-term and specialized, the consequences specifically as regards the asylum process, the differences among Member States in criminal and administrative

sanctions imposed when false documents are detected. The challenges arising pertain to the continuous improvement of quality of falsification techniques, the difficulties involved in document authenticity evaluation processes applied by third countries, and the limited availability and/or inadequate update of databases. In this framework a series of good practices and solutions are suggested, which indicatively include the use of national and international databases, the administering of a DNA test, the cooperation between countries of destination and countries of origin, the continuous exchange of information between competent services, the information campaigns, the specialized training and the systematic submission of documents for examination by experts.

The detection of false Breeder Documents: challenges & Solutions (Part I)

- **Breeder documents in citizenship procedures**

Louiza Kyriakaki and *Stavros Piotopoulos*, Citizenship Department, Ministry of Interior, Greece

Breeder documents can be defined as identification documents which are used as supporting documentation for the legal issuance of authentic documents with the exception of security

documents (identity, passport) which are not defined as such. Translation is a critical aspect in the acquisition of nationality as, following the issuance of the relevant decision, the third-country national acquires the rights of a Greek citizen.

The extent to which the document authenticity check could be effective is directly connected to the problems and difficulties that may emerge in such processes and which are linked to the insufficiency of relevant tools used to check designation elements, the determination that the document was issued based on legal processes, the integrity of the



content.

One of the most important difficulties involved is the accessibility of files in case the data is hard to trace or has been destroyed. Moreover, difficulties such as the lack of cooperation because the person concerned conceals data, or the high number of cases and bureaucracy directly point at a strong need for the creation of a document certification system in cases of document inconsistency or suspected forgery. If the acquisition of nationality leads to the issuance of identification documents with false or inaccurate evidence the consequences are felt at the level of public interest, public order and security.

- **Forgeries of passports and visas using inkjet overprint**
- **Yemeni passports issued by the Houthi rebels**
- **Counterfeit Iraqi ID cards and nationality certificates**

Ulf Lichner, Document expert, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF), Germany

A detailed reference to various forms of counterfeiting of passports and visas as well as identities through specific case studies with visual comparison of legal and forged security documents. A presentation of cases of forgery with inkjet overprint which may cause differences to the ink drops and corrupted colour on the photograph. The special reference to 'Houthi' passports concerns passports issued by 'Houthi' guerrillas, who had occupied certain provinces, which are not considered legally issued passports and present minimum differences compared to the model S2012. The case of Iraqi identities concerns differences detected with regard to the legal identities which have letterpress numbers and fonts. The corrupted parts of the identities in the serial designations can be traced due to the fact that they react differently to the intra-violet lamps.

The detection of false Breeder Documents: challenges & Solutions (Part II)

- **Fraudulently Obtained Genuine Documents**

Helena Estevez, deputy Director, Central Directorate for Immigration and Documentation, Immigration and Borders Service (SEF), Portugal

Based on statistical data fraudulently acquired legal documents are mainly the result of bribery of civil servants and taking advantage of historical bonds among countries. It is essentially a physical fraud, in the sense that it is the corruption of a legally issued document. Specifically as regards breeder documents, it whether they have been fraudulently acquired is very hard to be determined, especially by border guards, due to inadequate training or data bases which are inadequately informed and therefore do not allow full confirmation of information. The identity fraud is based on the false statement which will be printed on a legal document. It is necessary to eliminate all weak points in the identity chain (birth-registration-production-issuance-control) and to secure that there is sufficient document control throughout all stages of this chain so as to reach a safe conclusion.



- **Identity and breeder documents**

Angèle Trommelen, Senior Document expert, Ministry of Justice and Security, Netherlands

The Dutch document determination unit consists of competent experts in the field of detailed examination of breeder documents and provides the results of their investigations to the operators. The breeder documents are assessed with regard to their authenticity and issuing authority by application of processes of technical investigation, tactics, large scale analysis and investigation missions. The collected reference material includes document specimen, authorization stamps, even information on the timeframe within which the civil servant was in function in the particular service where the document was issued and information on the country legislation with regard to the issuance of breeder documents. A combination of elements is examined because of the fact that a person could acquire a security document such as a passport, through other supporting documentation that may be false.



- **Latest developments and new technologies in Estonia for detecting fraudulent documents**

Egert Belitšev, Head of Integrated Border Management Bureau, Police and Border Guard Boar, Estonia

The Border Management Office of Estonia is the single point where all matters concerning border crossing and security are regulated. In 2018 there was a dramatic increase in the number of travelers who crossed the borders of this country and at the same time, a particularly intense phenomenon was manifested, that is the emergence of false documents coming from EU countries. Although the human factor is trusted, yet, the increased bulk of documents and false documents led to the development of new technologies to accelerate security checks and add flexibility to the processes. The initially old-fashioned equipment for entry-exit control has now been replaced by a flexible, small-size multi-function device in the form of a tablet which has a Machine Readable zone (MRZ), a fast connection with data bases, applications for taking biometrics and a scanner for



cards and documents. Software programs for document control have been developed which, nevertheless, have an auxiliary role to the process of determining the document authenticity, yet provide significant information to border guards so that they take the final decision on whether a traveler shall be allowed to enter or exit the country.

- **Europol /EMSC Support in Document Fraud investigations**

Maria Maria, Europol –European Migrant Smuggling Centre-EMSC

In EUROPOL unit for irregular migration and document fraud, a unit created due to the massive migration fluxes in 2015, two large groups responsible for a specific geographical zone gather information on a national level through smaller units located in Member States and countries they cooperate with. Their main aim is the detection of traffickers and second level verifications in the Reception and identification Centres. The detection of false documents fall into the main priorities for the period 2018-2021. The collection of information is undertaken within a safe network where the information item is codified by the country of cooperation which then makes it available depending on the use it is intended for.



- **Frontex support in document fraud detection**

Juergen Duftschmied, Advanced/Specialist Level Document Expert, Centre of Excellence for Combatting Document Fraud, Operational Response Division, Frontex - European Border and Coast Guard Agency



The Centre of Excellence for combating document fraud is one of the Frontex units; it operates horizontally supporting all other units and directorates of this organisation of the EU. It has an electronic library, experts and a group of high expertise for the examination of documents. It studies the modus operandi of illegal networks, provides field training and sends early warning notifications concerning newly identified document forgery methods such as laser engraved polycarbonate cards.

- **Discussion, Q&As**
- **Closing of day 1**

Wednesday, 22 January 2020

- **EU Policy corner - Presentation of the 2019 EMN study** *Comparative overview of national protection statuses in the EU and Norway*

Dr Theodoros Fouskas, Sociologist, European Public Law Organisation (EPLO) and University of West Attica (UNIWA), Greece

The 2019 EMN Study attempts to put together an overview of the asylum status granted in Member States and Norway, to trace the differences among procedures and the needs present in the protection status which are not covered, though, in the relevant EU Directives. More specifically the study attempts to map out the different categories of protection statuses granted



based on specific reasons, the relevant procedures followed in order to grant international protection or subsidiary or temporary protection and the fundamental rights deriving from each of the above statuses (eg. Integration, access to health services, education). A presentation of the various categories of national protection and their legal status is also included in the study, such as granting asylum status based on the constitution, which are provided for prior to the harmonised protection

statuses, while they may be granted for humanitarian or other special reasons such as climate change. Statistical data are also included which concern access to healthcare services, education, accommodation, family reunification as well as the current protection status for special circumstances in force in Member States. This EMN Study is basically an updated version of the previous EMN study of 2010 since it presents the statuses that have emerged since 2010, tracing at the same time, those that are no longer in force.

- **Detecting fraudulent documents: using the MRZ**

Assistant Professor **Evangelos Sakkopoulos**, University of Pireaus, Greece

A theoretical and practical approach to the method of numerical calculation or 'catch-the-eye' calculation without the use of a scanner, of the data recorded in the machine readable zones (MRZ) of the passports. This control method is particularly appropriate in cases of falsified birth and expiry dates.

- **New Technologies in detecting document fraud**

Assistant Professor **Evangelos Sakkopoulos**, University of Pireaus, Greece

The former Ministry for Migration Policy has contributed to the development of an application which is used to determine the authenticity of Greek residence permits of third-country nationals and which provides the advantage of being developed based on ICAO specifications and therefore can also be used in the authenticity controls of passports with ICAO specifications. It has been designed to function in an android environment for low budget mobile devices with NFC technology,



which can immediately be translated into a massive increase of authenticity controls. Concerning the residence card, contactless communication through the use of this application allows us to read all the data recorded on a second, non-visible chip of the card which is the same as the data printed on its surface. This data is electronically signed and, as a result, any unauthorized modification

to the data is immediately detected, in other words it can be determined whether the modification came from the competent Ministry which is also the central issuing authority. Just this specific application in a simple mobile phone can replace the high technology devices used in the Ministry for the final control before the delivery of the residence card to its rightful recipient. The card has a system of access control with a code for the safe reading of the card data.

- **Techniques in the identification of third country nationals in the asylum procedure (Part I)**
- **Techniques in the identification (Part II) : The use of DNA for the identification of third-country nationals**

Ad van der Meijden, Operation Specialist, Chief Inspector and **Monika van Kempen**, Centre of Expertise Aliens, Identification and Human Trafficking, Police, Netherlands

Forensic investigation is the criminal investigation based on physical and biometric traces from the analysis of the crime scene, which have a high identification value and constitute reference material. The forensic identification process is necessary for the migration chain as well with regard to the identification process. The registration of data is the most important part of identification because it contributes to the creation of the relevant reference material. Without a biometrical and administrative identity the only thing left is the statement from the part of the third-country national. In Holland the identification office has the form of a kiosk with a document scanner and connection with all the national and international databases such as Eurodac, VIS, SIS II and the registration – identification – verification takes place once by connecting the DNA collected with a specific individual. The most crucial developments in the ID-kiosk are the systems that are expected to be applied by 2022 (EES, ETIAS, ECRIS-TCN, SIS, VIS, ESP, CIR,MID), the use of data carriers (SIM cards, mobile phones, laptops) and the data analysis based on the use of the system called 'Athens' which can make a smart comparison and contrast of data. In the context of the use of artificial development reference is made to the pilot system called DEMS (Data Excellence Management System) which recommends the synergy between man and machine. Based on document insufficiency the identification of the future shall most probably be based on the mobile phones which are the most widely used devices and the information they carry is hard to access.



- **Discussion, Q&As**
- **Closing remarks of the technical seminar**