

Carriers Working Group of 14 April 2026

Summary

Subject: Monthly Carriers Working Group meeting

Sea and Land Carriers at 10:00– 12:00 CEST

Participants: Carriers representing sea and land industry, their declared service providers, carrier associations, European Commission (DG HOME), Member State (MS) experts, Frontex and eu-LISA (altogether 92 participants).

<p>1. Introduction a. Agenda b. Carriers meeting calendar</p>	<p>eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 53rd Carriers Working Group (CWG) the first meeting held after 10 April 2026 which marked the completion of the progressive roll-out of the Entry/Exit System (EES). As of that date, air, sea and international coach operators are required under EU law to perform pre-departure checks for third-country nationals holding a single or double-entry visa and travelling to the Schengen Area, using the Carrier Interface (CI).</p> <p>The CWG took note of the next CWG meeting which is scheduled for 7 May 2026.</p>
<p>2. Legal updates (European Commission)</p>	<p>The European Commission provided an update on the full deployment of EES. The date of 10 April 2026 marks a significant milestone in European border security as the EES becomes fully operational across all 29 Schengen Member States (MS). Passport stamping is being replaced by digital records of entries and exits of non-EU nationals coming for short stays. Travellers’ facial images, fingerprints and personal data from the travel document are also recorded. The Commission informed that the Central System is functioning well and confirmed that, as of 10 April 2026 passport stamping has ceased. Since its introduction, more than 52 million entries and exits were registered, with over 27 000 refusals of entry, of which over 700 persons were identified as posing a security risk to the Union.</p> <p>Regarding the impact of EES on the carriers’ obligations, the Commission underlined that the obligation to query the CI started on 10 April 2026. It recalled that the purpose of querying the CI is to verify that travellers holding a single/double entry visa still have valid entries remaining for travel to the Schengen area. It was further highlighted that the carriers shall keep verifying the stamps affixed in the travel documents until 6 October 2026 (included).</p>

	<p>Furthermore, the Commission reiterated the key developments and upcoming milestones for ETIAS and the revised Visa Information System (rVIS) noting that ETIAS is expected to become operational in the final quarter of 2026. The system will introduce new obligations for the carriers, namely they must verify whether third-country nationals (TCNs) who are visa-exempt possess a valid ETIAS Travel Authorisation (TA).</p> <p>The Justice and Home Affairs Council approved on 5 March 2026 a revised roadmap for the interoperability of the EU’s large-scale IT systems for Justice and Home affairs, including key milestones for the rollout of the revised VIS (rVIS). This rollout will be carried out in phases.</p> <p>The first phase planned for the last quarter 2028, will see the short stay visa and automated queries against other EU databases being implemented while the residence permits (RP) and long-stay visas (LSV) are scheduled for the second phase, namely the third quarter of 2029. Following the completion of this first phase, the Carrier Interface will be able to provide a response which takes also into consideration the remaining days of authorised stay for the TCN.</p> <p>Until the second phase is completed, CI responses will not include information on RPs and LSVs. In such cases, carriers will receive a “NOK” response, and the passengers will need to present themselves at a counter to provide proof of valid authorisation to enter the Schengen area.</p> <p>The Commission strongly recommended that carriers inform their staff about this limitation and reflect it in their business procedures. It is essential that passengers are given the opportunity to demonstrate they hold a LSV or RPs.</p> <p>Several sea carriers shared detailed insights from various border crossing points (BCPs), providing practical insights on the full EES implementation and on the initial days of the mandatory checks of the CI.</p>
<p>3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>eu-LISA shared the latest Carrier Implementation figures along with an update on progress status across different implementation areas. 28 new registrations were completed last month and 143 registration requests are ongoing. The Agency highlighted that, due to the high number of tickets received in COBST in recent weeks, a prioritisation process was introduced. Under this approach, registration requests are assigned a lower priority than the technical tickets.</p> <p>Regarding the web portal and mobile application, the community was reminded that completing the staff training and submission of the required confirmation to eu-LISA are prerequisites for accessing the live environment. In addition, 164 carriers have not completed the security convention (Form F07) and only 187 carriers (ready for operations) have declared that Staff training for the Carrier Web Portal is completed, out of a total of 1231 carriers requesting web portal or mobile application access. Currently, only few carriers are using the Carrier Web Portal in Production.</p> <p>An overview of the production traffic was also presented along with statistics on the tickets registered in COBST.</p>

	<p>Concerning the new enhancement for travellers holding a multi-entry visa (MEV), eu-LISA announced that the interface will return a “Not Applicable” response for all travellers holding a valid MEV . Until the feature is activated, queries submitted without the “out of scope” flag for such travellers will return a “NOT OK” response. In these cases, carriers are requested to disregard the response and continue verifying the visa sticker manually, in line with existing procedures.</p> <p>Furthermore, the community received an update on the Service Provider (SP) topic in COBST. A second option is currently being implemented, under which new COBST accounts will be provided to the declared SP SPOCs. The first option (already available) allows SP to access COBST via a carrier account as authorised staff. In this scenario, the Carrier SPOC shares the COBST access with the declared service provider for technical assistance and support on behalf of the carrier.</p> <p>Finally, eu-LISA presented anew the CI replies before the ETIAS EiO, also including the new MEV update.</p>
<p>4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates and sea scenarios (Frontex)</p>	<p>Frontex presented a summary of the statistics and types of requests related to technical, operational matters, and cases of technical impossibility received in COBST between 9 January 2026 and 12 April 2026. The presentation also highlighted a list of most common operational and technical requests. Furthermore, it was underlined anew that the Emergency Phone Line is a backup solution only when COBST is not available.</p> <p>Several key messages were also presented. The mandatory query of the Carrier Interface started on 10 April 2026. Carriers must continue to verify the passport stamps until 6 October 2026. Carriers should not send a request on behalf of another carrier. For technical requests, the timestamp + error message (if applicable) need to be added. The unregistered carriers or carriers who are still in testing phase cannot send a Technical Impossibility (TI). TI is a declaration meaning that impacted MS are informed. The carriers must be sure that the issue is not a technical request. The impacted MS for TI declaration are the EU MS of destination.</p>
<p>5. Q&A</p>	<p>During the Q&A session, eu-LISA, the Commission and Frontex addressed several topics and responded to questions and feedback received from the Carriers on the travellers’ experience following the full launch of the EES and the suspension mechanism, replies from the CI, requests in COBST and overall experience with the tool.</p>

Carriers Working Group of 14 April 2026

Summary

Subject: Monthly Carriers Working Group meeting

Air Carriers at 13:30– 16:00 CEST

Participants: Carriers representing air industry, their declared service providers, Carrier associations, European Commission (DG HOME), Member State (MS) experts, Frontex and eu-LISA (altogether 171 participants).

<p>1. Introduction a. Agenda b. Carriers meeting calendar</p>	<p>eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 53rd Carriers Working Group (CWG) the first meeting held after 10 April 2026 which marked the completion of the progressive roll-out of Entry/Exit System (EES). As of that date, air, sea and international coach operators are required under EU law to perform pre-departure checks for third-country nationals holding a single or double-entry visa and travelling to the Schengen Area, using the Carrier Interface (CI). The CWG took note of the next CWG meeting which is scheduled for 7 May 2026.</p>
<p>2. Legal updates (European Commission)</p>	<p>The European Commission provided an update on the full deployment of EES. The date of 10 April 2026 marks a significant milestone in European border security as the EES becomes fully operational across all 29 Schengen Member States (MS). Passport stamping is being replaced by digital records of entries and exits of non-EU nationals coming for short stays. Travellers’ facial images, fingerprints and personal data from the travel document are also recorded. The Commission informed that the Central System is functioning well and confirmed that, as of 10 April 2026, passport stamping has ceased. Since its introduction, more than 52 million entries and exits were registered, with over 27 000 refusals of entry, of which over 700 persons were identified as posing a security risk to the Union. Regarding the impact of EES on the carriers’ obligations, the Commission underlined that the obligation to query the CI started on 10 April 2026. It recalled that the purpose of querying the CI is to verify that travellers holding a single/double entry visa still have valid entries remaining for travel to the Schengen area. It was further highlighted that the carriers shall keep verifying the stamps affixed in the travel documents until 6 October 2026 (included).</p>

	<p>Furthermore, the Commission reiterated the key developments and upcoming milestones for ETIAS and the revised Visa Information System (rVIS) noting that ETIAS is expected to become operational in the final quarter of 2026. The system will introduce new obligations for the carriers, namely they must verify whether third-country nationals (TCNs) who are visa-exempt possess a valid ETIAS Travel Authorisation (TA).</p> <p>The Justice and Home Affairs Council approved on 5 March 2026 a revised roadmap for the interoperability of the EU’s large-scale IT systems for Justice and Home affairs, including key milestones for the rollout of the revised VIS (rVIS). This rollout will be carried out in phases.</p> <p>The first phase planned for the last quarter 2028, will see the short stay visa and automated queries against other EU databases being implemented while the residence permits (RP) and long-stay visas (LSV) are scheduled for the second phase namely the third quarter of 2029. Following the completion of this first phase, the Carrier Interface will be able to provide a response which takes also into consideration the remaining days of authorised stay for the TCN.</p> <p>During the first phase, CI responses will not include information on LSV. In such cases, carriers will receive a “NOK” response and the passengers will need to present themselves at a counter to provide proof of valid authorisation to enter the Schengen area. The Commission strongly recommended that carriers inform their staff about this limitation and reflect it in their business procedures. It is essential that passengers are given the opportunity to demonstrate they hold a LSV or RPs.</p> <p>Several air carriers shared feedback from various border crossing points (BCPs), providing practical insights on the full EES implementation and on the initial days of the mandatory checks of the CI.</p>
<p>3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)</p>	<p>eu-LISA shared the latest Carrier Implementation figures along with an update on progress status across different implementation areas. 28 new registrations were completed last month and 143 registration requests are ongoing. The Agency highlighted that, due to the high number of tickets received in COBST in recent weeks, a prioritisation process was introduced. Under this approach, registration requests are assigned a lower priority than the technical tickets.</p> <p>Regarding the web portal and mobile application, the community was reminded that completing the staff training and submission of the required confirmation to eu-LISA are prerequisites for accessing the live environment. In addition, 164 carriers have not completed the security convention (Form F07) and only 187 carriers (ready for operations) have declared that Staff training for the Carrier Web Portal is completed, out of a total of 1231 carriers requesting web portal or mobile application access. Currently, only few carriers are using the Carrier Web Portal in Production.</p> <p>An overview of the production traffic was also presented along with statistics on the tickets registered in COBST.</p>

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<p>4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates (Frontex)</p>	<p>Frontex presented a summary of the statistics and types of requests related to technical, operational matters, and cases of technical impossibility received in COBST between 9 January 2026 and 12 April 2026. The presentation also highlighted a list of most common operational and technical requests. Furthermore, it was underlined anew that the Emergency Phone Line is a backup solution only when COBST is not available.</p> <p>Several key messages were also presented. The mandatory query of the Carrier Interface started on 10 April 2026. Carriers must continue to verify the passport stamps until 6 October 2026. Carriers should not send a request on behalf of another carrier. For technical requests, the timestamp + error message (if applicable) need to be added. The unregistered carriers or carriers who are still in testing phase cannot send a Technical Impossibility (TI). TI is a declaration meaning that impacted MS are informed. The carriers must be sure that the issue is not a technical request. The impacted MS for TI declaration are the EU MS of destination.</p>
<p>5. Q&A</p>	<p>During the Q&A session, eu-LISA, the Commission and Frontex addressed several matters and responded to further questions on several aspects such as revised VIS milestones, suspension mechanism, MEV enhancement, COBST requests, replies from the CI.</p>