

Carriers Working Group of 27 August 2025

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 88 participants).

1. Introduction a. Agenda b. Carriers meeting calendar	eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 45th Carriers Working Group (CWG) to the participants. The CWG took note of the Carriers meeting calendar with the dates of upcoming meetings until December 2025. The next CWG meeting is scheduled for the 29 of September 2025. Ad hoc meetings can be organised upon request, however, eu-LISA kindly requested to share the discussion topics in advance.
2. Legal updates (European Commission)	The Carrier community was informed about the adoption of the European Commission Implementing Decision determining the date from which the Entry/Exit System (EES) is to start operations, namely the 12 of October 2025. It was announced that the Regulation introducing the progressive start of EES was adopted in July 2025 and is available on the official website of the European Union. Additionally, the community received the latest information on the updated Travel to Europe website. Furthermore, the Commission reminded the community about the overall scope of the EES and its benefits and highlighted once more the obligations for the carriers stemming from the legislation. Member States will continue stamping the passports during the progressive start of operations of EES. From 12 October 2025 until the 6 October 2026 included, carriers will have to verify stamps on passports. As of the 9 January, carriers may start using the web service on a voluntary basis. From 10 April, carriers will be obliged, at the earliest 48 hours prior to the scheduled time of departure, to send verification queries via the Carrier Interface (CI), to check if a third country national holding a single or double-entry visa has remaining authorized entries available on their visa.

	The interface will reply with an “OK” or “NOT OK” answer. Other information systems such as ETIAS and the revised VIS, are foreseen to enter operations at a later stage, thus the scope of the Carrier Interface will broaden allowing additional checks to be performed. The Commission recalled the objective of the EES progressive start of operations is to facilitate the EES start of operations by giving Member States the option to deploy the system progressively, including the collection of biometric data, at their external borders. By the end of the 180-day progressive period, the EES shall be used at all BCPs, and all third country nationals travelling to the Schengen area and falling in the scope of the EES shall be recorded in the system by borders authorities. The Commission has encouraged the carrier industry to establish communication with the Member States to be aware of how they plan to roll-out the EES. The Regulation foresees the possibility for Member States to suspend the EES in exceptional circumstances during the progressive period. As for the retro-planning for the EES start of operations on 12 October 2025, the Commission informed that the Member States together with the Commission and eu-LISA are finalising the preparations. It was announced that the adaptation of the information campaign to reflect the progressive start of EES is being finalised and it is planned to be launched in September (target launch date 15 September).
3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)	eu-LISA updated the CWG on the latest Carrier Implementation Figures and on the status of the different implementation areas. An overview of the S2S CT for carriers and Service Providers was presented. For the web portal and the mobile application, eu-LISA informed that the progress regarding the staff training is not adequately advanced and reminded the community the importance of completing this phase to ensure the carriers receive the necessary credentials once the EES goes live. The carriers who have not completed all the necessary forms were urged to provide the necessary documentation so they can advance in their preparations. Furthermore, the community was informed about the scenario of a travel document with unknown date of birth (DOB). For the purposes of ETIAS, an applicant whose travel document contains only a partial DOB or no DOB is able to apply for an ETIAS Travel Application. As for the Carrier Interface, the DOB is a mandatory field to be provided for all type of queries. eu-LISA informed that no fictitious DOB has been defined yet to manage the travel documents with partial or no DOB and requested the industry to provide input on handling such cases with interactive API systems or travel authorisation systems. Alignment is needed in case there is agreement on using a common fictitious date of birth.

	Finally, the community was informed about the high-level planning of the availability of the Carrier Onboarding and Support tool (COBST) which will be the main communication channel between carriers, eu-LISA and Frontex on all technical, operational, business topics as of January 2026. It was announced that eu-LISA foresees a limited time window of opening the test environment to carriers. More information on the time window and accessing the test environment along with an interactive demo of the tool will be provided during the September 2025 CWG meeting. The goal is to make the COBST available before the CI goes live in January 2026
4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates and sea scenarios (Frontex)	Frontex updated the CWG about the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for carriers' assistance exercise which was concluded in June 2025. The aim is to have an alignment between the SOP document and the COBST v.3 during the time window of opening the test environment to carriers. The final revision and distribution of the document will occur before January 2026. The main topics raised by the carriers who participated in the exercise were related mainly to the role and responsibilities of Carrier SPOC (24/7) and Backup SPOC, carrier functional mailbox for operational purposes, COBST access how/when, the Service Provider role and functions, the user management request. Finally, an overview of the assistance mechanism was presented which consists of FAQ as first-level support followed by the SOP for Carriers assistance as second-level support. Regarding the latter, the possibility to send requests via COBST is foreseen for registered carriers and the use of the Emergency Phone Line (EPL) only as a backup solution when the COBST is not available.
5. Q&A	During the Q&A session, eu-LISA, the Commission and Frontex addressed several topics and responded to questions posed by Carriers on various legislative, operational and technical topics, such as the national roll-out plans and a central coordination mechanism for informing the community, the Commission's information campaign, and the SOP document.

Carriers Working Group of 27 August 2025

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 175 participants).

1. Introduction a. Agenda b. Carriers meeting calendar	eu-LISA presented the agenda of the 45th Carriers Working Group (CWG) to the participants. The CWG took note of the Carriers meeting calendar with the dates of upcoming meetings until December 2025. The next CWG meeting is scheduled for the 29th of September 2025. Ad hoc meetings can be organised upon request, however, eu-LISA kindly requested to share the discussion topics in advance.
2. Legal updates (European Commission)	The Carrier community was informed about the adoption of the European Commission Implementing Decision determining the date from which the Entry/Exit System (EES) is to start operations, namely the 12th of October 2025. It was announced that the Regulation introducing the progressive start of EES was adopted on 18 July 2025 and is available on the official website of the European Union. Additionally, the community received the latest information on the updated Travel to Europe website. Furthermore, the Commission reminded the community about the overall scope of the EES and its benefits and highlighted once more the obligations for the carriers stemming from the legislation. Member States will continue stamping the passports during the progressive start of operations of EES. From 12 October 2025 until the 6 October 2026 included, carriers will have to verify stamps on passports. As of the 9 January, carriers may start using the web service on a voluntary basis. From 10 April, carriers will be obliged, at the earliest 48 hours prior

	to the scheduled time of departure, to send verification queries via the Carrier Interface (CI), to check if a third country national holding a single or double-entry visa has remaining authorized entries available on their visa. The interface will reply with an “OK” or “NOT OK” answer. Other information systems such as ETIAS and the revised VIS, are foreseen to enter operations at a later stage, thus the scope of the Carrier Interface will broaden allowing additional checks to be performed. The Commission recalled the objective of the EES progressive start of operations is to facilitate the EES start of operations by giving Member States the option to deploy the system progressively, including the collection of biometric data, at their external borders. By the end of the 180-day progressive period, the EES shall be used at all BCPs, and all third country nationals travelling to the Schengen area and falling in the scope of the EES shall be recorded in the system by borders authorities. The Commission has encouraged the carrier industry to establish communication with the Member States to be aware of how they plan to roll-out the EES. The Regulation foresees the possibility for Member States to suspend the EES in exceptional circumstances during the progressive period. As for the retro-planning for the EES start of operations on 12 October 2025, the Commission informed that the Member States together with the Commission and eu-LISA are finalising the preparations. It was announced that the adaptation of the information campaign to reflect the progressive start of EES is being finalised and it is planned to be launched in September (target launch date 15 September). Regarding the implications of EES for air crew, the Commission underlined that to be exempted of registration in the EES, an air crew member must hold a Crew Member Certificate and must be in the performance of their duties. If these conditions are not met, the exemption of registration does not apply, and the air crew member will be registered in the EES by border authorities. The Commission emphasised that the registration in the EES is an entry requirement to the Schengen Area for third Country nationals coming to the Schengen Area for a short stay, meaning 90 days within a 180-day period. The Commission indicated that the condition for civilian air crew members to be exempted of visa obligation are different. Airlines were encouraged to reach out to national authorities to obtain further information on the exemption application of visa regulation for their air crew members. After the progressive start of operations of the EES, airlines will need to verify in the carrier interface the status of their crew members not holding a CMC when these are subject to visa obligations and are travelling in the performance of their duty with a single or a double entry visa.
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3. Technical updates (eu-LISA)	eu-LISA updated the CWG on the latest Carrier Implementation Figures and on the status of the different implementation areas. An overview of the S2S CT for carriers and Service Providers was presented. For the web portal and the mobile application, eu-LISA informed that the progress regarding the staff training is not adequately advanced and reminded the community the importance of completing this phase to ensure the carriers receive the necessary credentials once the EES goes live. The carriers who have not completed all the necessary forms were urged to provide the necessary documentation so they can advance in their preparations. Furthermore, the community was informed about the scenario of a travel document with unknown date of birth (DOB). For the purposes of ETIAS, an applicant whose travel document contains only a partial DOB or no DOB is able to apply for an ETIAS Travel Application. As for the Carrier Interface, the DOB is a mandatory field to be provided for all type of queries. eu-LISA informed that no fictitious DOB has been defined yet to manage the travel documents with partial or no DOB and requested the industry to provide input on handling such cases with interactive API systems or travel authorisation systems. Alignment is needed in case there is agreement on using a common fictitious date of birth. Additionally, eu-LISA presented the interface of the carrier Web Portal and Mobile app, and the process for requesting access. Finally, the community was informed about the high-level planning of the availability of the Carrier Onboarding and Support tool (COBST) which will be the main communication channel between carriers, eu-LISA and Frontex on all technical, operational, business topics as of January 2026. It was announced that eu-LISA foresees a limited time window of opening the test environment to carriers. More information on the time window and accessing the test environment along with an interactive demo of the tool will be provided during the September 2025 CWG meeting. The goal is to make the COBST available before the CI goes live in January 2026
4. Carriers and Travellers Support - Operational updates (Frontex)	Frontex updated the CWG about the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for carriers' assistance exercise which was concluded in June 2025. The aim is to have an alignment between the SOP document and the COBST v.3 during the time window of opening the test environment to carriers. The final revision and distribution of the document will occur before January 2026. The main topics raised by the carriers who participated in the exercise were related mainly to the role and responsibilities of Carrier SPOC (24/7) and Backup SPOC, carrier functional mailbox for operational purposes, COBST access how/when, the Service Provider role and functions, the user management request.

	Finally, an overview of the assistance mechanism was presented which consists of FAQ as first-level support followed by the SOP for Carriers assistance as second-level support. Regarding the latter, the possibility to send requests via COBST is foreseen for registered carriers and the use of Emergency Phone Line (EPL) only as a backup solution when the COBST is not available.
5. Q&A	During the Q&A session, eu-LISA, the Commission and Frontex addressed several matters and responded to further questions on several aspects such as the CMC topic and carriers' obligations for querying their crew members in the CI, the precise timeline of the obligation to query the CI, the Commission's official information campaign, the fictitious DOB in the scenario of a travel document with unknown DOB .