



Passport inspection

It will take some years until everyone has an ePass, because the old passports will continue to be valid until their specified expiry date. As the number of electronic passports in use gradually increases, the border crossing points will be equipped with appropriate document readers. At passport inspection, the biometric features stored in the chip can then be automatically matched with the person presenting the ePass. The picture taken at the inspection point must match the image data stored in the ePass. Starting in 2007, it will also be possible to match fingerprints.

Federal Police officers will still be responsible for performing inspections, since biometric matching procedures are only one tool to assist the officers, but they cannot replace traditional inspection methods completely. Enhanced security results from the combination of tried and tested procedures with the new technical possibilities provided by biometrics.

Frequently asked questions about the ePass

How much does the ePass cost?

Due to the technical requirements to ensure security and data protection, the fee for issuing a passport had to be increased. Additional costs are incurred by the passport booklet, the storage chip, the enrolment of biometric data and its incorporation in the passport. The ePass with a validity of ten years will cost € 59 in Germany. Compared with other countries, Germany still ranges at the lower end of the price scale. The fee for an ePass with a validity of five years issued to persons under 26 years of age is € 37.50.

How can citizens check the data stored on their ePass?

Passport authorities will be equipped with ePass readers, so that citizens can see their personal data stored on the chip.

Will old passports continue to be valid?

Passports issued before 1 November 2005 will continue to be valid for ten years until their original date of expiry. This will also be true for new-generation passports issued after 1 November 2005 and up to early 2007, which only store the passport photograph on the chip. For this reason both old and new passports will be valid during a transitional period.

Will electronic passports issued before spring 2007 be "retrofitted" with digital fingerprints?

No. The data stored on the chip will be electronically signed by the issuing authority and after production the chip will be sealed against deletion or alteration of data. "Retrofitting" is not possible.

What happens to my ePass if the chip stops working?

Should the chip no longer work, the passport will still be a valid travel document and can still be used for conventional passport inspection.



Additional public information on the ePass

Federal Ministry of the Interior websites concerning the ePass

www.ePass.de

www.bmi.bund.de

Service center of the Federal Office for Information Security on specific questions on the (security) technology of the ePass

phone: +49 1805 274 300

(from 8.00 to 17.00 hrs German local time)

e-mail: ePass@bsi.bund.de

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The
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Traveling securely with the ePass



www.ePass.de



Electronic passports offer enhanced security

On 1 November 2005 the Federal Republic of Germany was one of the first countries in the European Union to introduce the electronic passport with biometric data (called "ePass"). Initially, the chip integrated into the ePass will store the usual passport data and the passport photograph. Starting in March 2007, it will also include two digital fingerprints. In the next few years, not only the Member States of the EU, but also Japan, the United States, Australia, Russia, Canada, Switzerland and others will introduce passports with an electronic biometric function.

Biometric features stored in passports are nothing new. Physical features such as eye colour, height and facial image have been used for decades to identify persons. What is new is storing biometric features on a computer chip, which allows the stored data to be checked automatically against the biometric features of persons during border controls.

This enhances passport security in two different ways. On the one hand, the chip in the ePass presents an additional obstacle to forgery. Thanks to this new technology Germany will continue to have one of the most tamper-proof passports in the world. No terrorist should be able to enter the country with forged travel documents. On the other hand, the chip enhances protection against the misuse of passports. The chip makes it possible to check electronically whether the person presenting the passport is the same person to whom the passport was originally issued. Both aspects are important to ensure the security of our country.



New: Passport photograph with a full-frontal image



Former requirement for passport photographs: three-quarter face position



Requirement for new passport photographs: full-frontal face position

A new type of passport photograph is required for the ePass so that it complies with international standards and can be used for biometric controls. The ePass photograph will no longer be a three-quarter face position as in former passports, but a full-frontal image. New sample photographs and templates have been distributed to photographers and passport authorities so that they can check whether photographs can be used for biometric purposes.

Both three-quarter and full-frontal photographs will be accepted for German identity cards to make it easier for photographers and users to comply with the new requirements.

Legal basis and standards

The binding legal basis for the introduction of electronic passports throughout the EU is the **Council Regulation on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents issued by Member States**, which entered into force in January 2005. In Germany, the Bundesrat approved the introduction of electronic passports on 8 July 2005.

On the basis of the EC regulation, all EU Member States will introduce the facial image and fingerprints as biometric identifiers in the coming years. The two different biometric identifiers will make it possible to choose between two automated control procedures: whenever face recognition is not possible (for example because of poor lighting), the stored fingerprints can be matched with those of the passport holder.

Data protection and data security

Data protection and data security of electronic passports were important factors when the technical standards were drawn up in Germany and by European and international bodies.

The biometric features are captured from the citizen and then exclusively stored on the chip as provided for by the EC regulation. German law does not allow this data to be kept in a nation-wide database.

Specific technical arrangements drawn up by the Federal Office for Information Security (Bundesamt für Sicherheit in der Informationstechnik, BSI) and the Federal Criminal Police Office (Bundeskriminalamt, BKA) are intended to protect the personal data of individuals. For example, technical measures protect against the unauthorized reading of biometric data.