



What has the EU been doing to make ID cards better recognised and more secure?



23 July 2024

Secure and trustworthy ID cards make it easier for EU citizens to travel in the EU and use them in their daily lives. Their high level of protection against forgery is also supporting authorities' fight against terrorism and organised crime. Member States have adapted their ID cards to the new rules, and outdated existing ID cards are being phased out.



More secure ID cards has meant...

- Fewer problems in having ID cards accepted in other Member States, including through the addition of an EU flag symbol on the front of the card.
- National ID cards contain a contactless chip and are made of solid plastic instead of paper.
- The highly secure chip includes a facial image and two fingerprints, which is the most reliable way to verify the identity of a person and the authenticity of a travel document.
- Increased protection for citizens against falsification, copy, fraud and misuse of their documents.
- Easier checks resulting in faster and more efficient controls, for example at airports.
- ID cards that are compliant with these rules are valid for a maximum of ten years to take into account changes to the facial image and future security developments. ID cards issued to persons aged 70 and above may be valid for more than ten years.
- Old and not sufficiently secure ID cards currently in use are in the process of being replaced to eliminate security gaps.



More secure ID cards has NOT meant...

- Compulsory ID cards. Member States that don't have ID cards for their citizens are not obliged to introduce them. Member States can decide whether the holding of an ID card is voluntary or compulsory.
- That anyone can access your data. Only authorised public authorities are able to access your fingerprints stored on the chip of the card, which are encrypted using modern standards also used to protect passports.
- Groundbreaking changes. Biometric identifiers, such as facial images and fingerprints, had already been included in EU passports.

State of play:

- Following the judgment by the Court of Justice of the European Union in case C-61/22, the Commission adopted, on 23 July 2024, a proposal correcting the legal basis for the rules on ID cards. This proposal will now be discussed by the Member States in the Council, and the European Parliament will be consulted.
- Not sufficiently secure ID cards currently in circulation (for example paper-based ID cards) will have to be replaced by 2026 at the latest.
- Relatively secure ID cards currently in circulation that nevertheless do not comply with EU standards (for example machine-readable plastic cards) will have to be replaced by 2031 at the latest.
- Relatively secure ID cards of persons aged 70 and above are not affected by the phasing-out periods and will be replaced when they expire.

