



ABSTRACT

Edgar Beugels

Research and Development Unit, Frontex, Warsaw/Poland

Building European Integrated Border Management

The external borders of the European Union are crossed by more than 300 million travellers each year. This highlights the need for efficient and secure border management. The EU border management policy aims to achieve a balance between on the one hand promoting movement of persons and goods, and enabling cross-border collaboration, and on the other hand providing a high level of security by preventing illicit cross-border activities.

The European Commission has recently launched two initiatives on border security. One outlines the development of a European border surveillance system (EUROSUR), which aims to create a “system of systems” creating a common situational awareness of the areas surrounding the external borders of the European Union.

The other initiative concerns the use of biometrics and automation to make the identity checks at the border crossings more efficient and more secure. Biometrics has already been introduced in the EU passports and from 2009 biometrics will also be introduced in visas for foreigners visiting the EU.

Frontex plays a key role to support the Member States to develop interoperable systems to increase the security as well as convenience of the European citizens. As examples can be mentioned an evaluation of the concept of automated border crossing, where Frontex has studied four European systems for registered travelers and one system that is based on the electronic passport. The study proves the concept of automated border crossing and shows that the biometrics perform well. There are, however, several design issues that need to be addressed to make the systems more user friendly.