



**WORKING PAPER**

**FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)**

**FOURTEENTH MEETING**

**Montréal, 20 to 24 April 2026**

**Agenda Item 3: Amendments to Annex 9 — *Facilitation***

**HARMONIZATION OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS. A UNIFIED  
STANDARD OF PASSPORT “DILAPIDATION”**

(Presented by the Russian Federation)

**SUMMARY**

This working paper highlights the evident facilitation benefits of implementation of a unified Standard of passport “dilapidation” and the financial risks for air carriers related to the lack of the Standard.

**Action by the FAL Panel:**

The FAL Panel is invited to consider the proposal(s) described in this paper, amend Annex 9 and agree that this issue is placed on the work agenda of the Annex 9 Working Group.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In 2026, air carriers stay bearing full legal and financial responsibility for transporting passengers with “improper” documents – documents declared invalid by the immigration authorities of the State of arrival due to their dilapidation or damage. Each individual State sets its own requirements for the status of the document condition in accordance with the criteria and standards within the jurisdiction of that State. Air carriers fail to determine the degree of dilapidation of the document and the criticality of damage for each individual State and get trapped in subjectivity: refusal to transport a passenger often results in legal costs, and, vice versa, acceptance for transportation can cause an immigration fine.

1.2 The discrepancies in the assessment of the physical (technical) passport condition by the immigration authorities of the States of departure and destination lead to financial risks and legal uncertainty for the airlines. The key conflict in the current situation is the lack of the Unified Global Standard for assessing the passport condition (the unified standard for passport "dilapidation") for air carrier to rely on in their work.

<sup>1</sup> Russian version provided by the Russian Federation.

1.3 Main problem areas in the evaluation criteria:

1.3.1 Subjectivity of document wear and tear. While some countries allow minor scuffs, immigration authorities in others may consider even a tiny tear on a page or a stain on the cover as grounds for refusing entry.

1.3.2 Technical damage. Air carriers often face the dilemma:

- a) the integrity of the (Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chip visually is not violated, but when reading of personal data by technical means the chip gives out incomplete information about passport bearer; or
- b) the RFID chip is partially or completely separated from the document, but the information read from the chip is complete and corresponds to the biometric data in the document. Airlines are forced to check the performance of RFID chips at check-in counters, as an unreadable chip in a biometric passport is often equated to an invalid document.

1.3.3 Penalties. In case the passport is declared invalid upon arrival, the airline is obliged to return the passenger to the initial departure point at its own expense and pay a fine (an average of 2,000 to 5,000 euros per person, depending on the jurisdiction).

1.3.4 Court costs. Suspending a passenger from transportation may result in legal proceedings and additional costs for airlines. The courts adhere to the jurisdiction of their State due to the absence of a unified global standard.

1.4 Annex 9 does not contain Standards and Recommended Practices (SARPs) related to the criteria for assessing travel document condition.

## 2. DISCUSSION

2.1 Implementation of a unified standard of passport “dilapidation” highlights the evident facilitation benefits. It will assist to:

- create a unified objective line for assessing of passport condition both by immigration authorities and air carriers, thereby to fasten the passport control procedure;
- for air carriers to exempt the checks of the performance of RFID chips at check-in counters, thereby to reduce the time required for passengers to complete pre-flight procedures;
- to approve unified technical requirements for the condition of RFID chips and lamination;
- eliminate subjectivity when making a decision on passenger admission.

2.2 The clear enough criteria for assessing the physical condition of a passport are established by the legislation of the Russian Federation. In accordance with the Russian standards the assessment of the passport condition is based on its suitability for identification and data reading (in visual or technical way). The passport is considered to be unsuitable (damaged) if possessing the following signs:

2.2.1 Mechanical damage

- a) integrity violation: absence of pages or serious damage to the pages, cover, and security lamination;
- b) seam damage: violation of the integrity of the firmware by the security threads connecting the pages;
- c) wear and tear: significant scuffing or contamination, which makes it impossible to visually identify the owner's data or the security features of the document.

2.2.2 Data modification and unauthorized marks

- a) extraneous inscriptions: the presence of unofficially altered drawings, marks or stamps;
- b) unreadability: blurring or fading of records, seals and stamps (for example, due to exposure to water or chemicals);
- c) photo modification: damage to the photo, making it difficult to identify, or signs of self-replacement of the image.

2.2.3 Technical condition (for biometric passports)

2.2.3.1 Chip malfunction: damage to the electronic storage medium if it prevents the reading of personal data by technical means;

2.2.4 Additional criteria

2.2.4.1 Filling in all the pages: there are no free pages for affixing the necessary stamps and marks.

3. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 The Panel is invited to:

- a) review the information contained in this paper;
- b) advise how to create a unified global standard of passport “dilapidation”;
- c) consider the Appendix A containing the proposed amendments to Annex 9 and amend Annex 9 as appropriate;
- d) consider the Appendix B containing the list of criteria for assessment of passport condition presented in the current document for the further work on the unified global standard creation;
- e) submit the overall issue of the unified global standard of passport “dilapidation” for further consideration to the Annex 9 Working Group.

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## APPENDIX A

### Proposed amendment to Annex 9 "Facilitation"

#### A. Definitions and general principles

**Improper documents.** Documents that do not comply with the established requirements and cannot serve as a legal basis for entry. These include invalid, damaged/dilapidated, incorrectly issued or fraudulent travel documents.

### CHAPTER 3. ENTRY AND DEPARTURE OF PERSONS AND THEIR BAGGAGE

#### H. Inspection of travel documents

**3.xx** Contracting States shall adhere to the uniform standard of passport "dilapidation" when assessing the condition of the travel document.

**3.xx** Contracting States shall not require the aircraft operator to transport a passenger from the point of departure or transit to the intended final destination in cases where the travel document presented by that passenger is considered by the State to be improper due to its dilapidation or severe damage.

### CHAPTER 5. INADMISSIBLE PERSONS AND DEPORTEES

#### B. Inadmissible persons

**5.5** Contracting States shall ensure that a removal order is issued to the aircraft operator in respect of a person found inadmissible. The removal order shall include information regarding the inbound (arriving) flight carrying such person and, if known, the name, age, gender, and citizenship of the person in question, as well as the reason for the denial of entry.

**5.xx** Contracting States shall adhere to a uniform format of the removal order, in which "Technically defective document" is included in the list of potential reasons for refusal of admission.

**5.14** Contracting States shall not fine aircraft operators in the event that arriving and in-transit persons are found to be improperly documented, where aircraft operators can demonstrate that they have taken necessary precautions to ensure that these persons complied with documentary requirements for entry into the receiving State.

**5.xx** Contracting States shall not fine aircraft operators in the event that arriving and in-transit persons hold documents deemed invalid due to technical damage or wear and tear (dilapidated), where the aircraft operators can demonstrate that the condition of the passport/ travel document complies with the uniform global standard for passport "dilapidation".

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**APPENDIX B****Proposed criteria for assessing of passport condition**

<b>Signs of passport damage/ dilapidation</b>	<b>Data is read incompletely or incorrectly</b>	<b>Security features are violated</b>	<b>Access to MRZ, bio data, photo</b>	<b>Possibility of falsification</b>	<b>The decision – Passport is INVALID</b>
<b>Mechanical Damage</b>					
<b>Violation of Page Integrity</b>					
a) the page tear is less than 2/3	<b>V</b>				<b>V</b>
b) the page is completely torn off/ or tear more than 2/3					<b>V</b>
c) lack of a page/ pages in a passport					<b>V</b>
<b>Seam damage</b>					
a) thread tearing less than 2/3 of a page		<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>
b) The page is completely torn off at the seam/ or thread tearing more than 2/3 of a page					<b>V</b>
c) the page block is detached from the cover		<b>V</b>		<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>Wear and tear</b>					
significant scuffing or contamination, which makes it impossible to visually identify the owner's data or the security features of the document	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>Data modification and unauthorized marks</b>					

extraneous inscriptions: the presence of unofficially altered drawings, marks or stamps					V
<b>Unreadability</b>					
blurring or fading of records, seals and stamps (for example, due to exposure to water or chemicals)	V	V		V	V
photo modification: damage to the photo, making it difficult to identify, or signs of self-replacement of the image	V	V		V	V
<b>Technical condition (for biometric passports)</b>					
the integrity of the RFID chip visually is not violated, but when reading of personal data by technical means the chip gives out incomplete information about passport bearer	V			V	V
the RFID chip is partially or completely separated from the document, but the information read from the chip is complete and corresponds to the biometric data in the document.		V		V	V

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**APPENDIX C**

**NEW or REVISED SARP PROPOSAL: AMENDMENT \_, ANNEX 9, CHAPTER \_,  
 [STANDARD/RECOMMENDED PRACTICE \_]**

**IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

1. What is the problem that this proposal is designed to address?

*Please include specific details*

This working paper highlights the evident facilitation benefits of implementing a unified Standard of passport “dilapidation” and the financial risks for air carriers related to the lack of such a Standard.

2. What alternatives to SARPs were considered to solve the problem?

None	Circular	Manual	Policy	<i>Other (please explain)</i>
X				Annex 9 does not contain SARPs related to the criteria for assessing the condition of travel documents.

3a. What is the impact of this proposal on a State?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Implementing this proposal will enhance civil aviation safety			X		
<i>Rationale:</i>					
Neutral, no change					
Implementing this proposal will increase air navigation capacity and improve efficiency			X		
<i>Rationale:</i>					
Neutral, no change					
Implementing this proposal will enhance global civil aviation security and facilitation (taking into account impact on human rights, health and privacy, if any)	X				
<i>Rationale:</i>					
This proposal will ensure a harmonized objective line for assessing passport conditions by both immigration authorities and airlines, and will speed up the passport control procedure. It will ensure abolition of extra document verification at check-in counters, including checks of RFID chips for operability, and will fasten the time for pre-flight procedures;					
Implementing this proposal will foster the development of a sound and economically-viable civil aviation system	X				
<i>Rationale:</i>					
This proposal will ensure a harmonized system between all States, airlines will not have to adhere to different rules for every State. It will help minimize financial risks for airlines on immigration fines and court costs.					
Implementing this proposal will minimize the adverse environmental effects of civil aviation activities			X		

Rationale:

Neutral, no change

3b. Do the benefits of this proposal justify the cost of its implementation?

Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable
x			

4a. What is the impact of this proposal on **Industry**?

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
Implementing this proposal will enhance civil aviation safety			x		
<i>Rationale:</i> Neutral, no change					
Implementing this proposal will increase air navigation capacity and improve efficiency			x		
<i>Rationale:</i> Neutral, no change					
Implementing this proposal will enhance global civil aviation security and facilitation (taking into account impact on human rights, health and privacy, if any)	x				
<i>Rationale:</i> Implementing of a uniform standard of passport “dilapidation” has the evident facilitation benefits: it fosters elimination of subjectivity when making a decision on passenger admission, prevents operational disruptions, speeds up the pre-flight procedures.					
Implementing this proposal will foster the development of a sound and economically-viable civil aviation system	x				
<i>Rationale:</i> Implementing of a uniform standard of passport “dilapidation” is crucial for fair economic competition in aviation. It reduces administrative burdens and ensures level playing field among airlines.					
Implementing this proposal will minimize the adverse environmental effects of civil aviation activities			x		
<i>Rationale:</i> Neutral, no change					

4b. Do the benefits of this proposal justify the cost of its implementation?

Yes	No	Not sure	Not applicable
x			

5. How long would it take for States and Industry to implement this proposal?

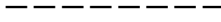
Already implemented	0-1 years	1-2 years	2-5 years	5-10 years	More than 10 years
		x			

Change of legislation may take 2 years, for States where the criteria for assessment of passport “dilapidation” differ from the uniform global standard.

6. Financial implications of the proposal

The positive cost impact on States would include: reduction of the administrative burden on the government.

The positive cost impact on the industry would include: significant reduction of costs for immigration fines and legal expenses.



**IMPLEMENTATION TASK LIST AND OUTLINE OF GUIDANCE MATERIAL**

**1. IMPLEMENTATION TASK LIST**

**1.1 Essential steps to be followed by a State in order to implement proposed amendments<sup>1</sup>**

1.1.1 For States that have established legislation, regulations and/or policies in implementing standards of passport “dilapidation” that are aligned with ...SARPs, no action may be required. For those that do not, the essential steps are the following:

- a) identify established legislation, regulations and/or policies;
- b) gap analysis between established legislation, regulations, and/policies, and ...SARPs;
- c) decisions on whether to introduce new provision to align with ICAO guidance material;
- d) modification and/or development of provision;
- e) official adoptions of provisions;
- f) implementation of newly adopted provisions by applicable entities;
- g) modification of an oversight framework; and
- h) supervision by the State of provisions, as appropriate.]

**2. STANDARDIZATION PROCESS**

2.1 Effective date: ■ [Month/Year]: to be completed by Secretariat

2.2 Applicability date: ■ [Month/Year]: to be completed by Secretariat

**3. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:**

3.1 ICAO documentation:

Title	Type	Publication date
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<sup>1</sup> Amendment of a format or clarification nature are not allowed in this Appendix.

	Manual/Other Guidance Material/Web page	

3.2 External documentation:

Title	External Organization	Publication date

4. **IMPLEMENTATION ASSISTANCE TASKS**

Type	Global	Regional
[Seminar/Symposium/Workshop/etc.]		

5. **UNIVERSAL SECURITY AUDIT PROGRAMME (USAP)  
 OR UNIVERSAL SAFETY OVERSIGHT PROGRAMME  
 (USOAP)**

5.1 [No] [additional] protocol questions required under USAP [USOAP].

— END —