



FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

SIXTH MEETING

Montréal, 10-14 May 2010

Agenda Item 6: Amendments to Annex 9

PROPOSAL TO DELETE NOTE 2 OF STANDARD 3.4 OF ANNEX 9 — *FACILITATION*

(Presented by the Secretary)

SUMMARY

The validity of machine readable travel documents cannot be extended. Note 2 of Standard 3.4 was included in Annex 9 to give States time to amend national legislation or regulations allowing manual extensions of their travel documents. Six years have passed since the inclusion of this Note in Annex 9, sufficient enough time for States to have changed the relevant legislation or regulations. Thus, this paper proposes that Note 2 be deleted.

Action by the FAL Panel:

The Panel is invited to consider the proposal described in this paper and agree that Note 2 appended to Standard 3.4 be deleted as indicated:

3.4 Contracting States shall not extend the validity of their machine readable travel documents.

Note 1.— Specifications for machine readable travel documents (Doc 9303, Series) do not permit alteration of the expiration date and other data in the machine readable zone.

Note 2.— States whose national legislation or regulations currently allow for the extension of the period of validity should undertake to amend the appropriate text in a reasonable period.

1. DISCUSSION

1.1 The validity of a travel document is indicated by its date of expiry. States customarily have been able to extend its validity by means of a rubber stamp and/or a hand-written notation, by indicating a new expiry date. This is most common in passports as they contain blank pages that allow for such entries.

1.2 In a machine readable travel document, say, Machine Readable Passport (MRP), the date of expiry is one of the mandatory identification details (data elements) included in both its visual inspection zone (VIZ) and machine readable zone (MRZ). The specifications for MRPs (Doc 9303, Part 1) make no allowance for any amendments to the information found on the data page of a passport. Hence, the manual extension of MRPs is not technically possible. Any change requires the issuance of a new document altogether. Thus, if a manual entry is made in blank page of an MRP to “extend” the validity of the document, the intended new expiration date will not agree with the date contained in the data page of the passport.

1.3 A person travelling with a “manually extended” MRP is, in effect, travelling with an “expired” passport as far as a machine reader is concerned. Mechanical devices providing “self-service” check-in or border inspection (such as those used for ‘trusted traveller’ programmes) would also reject such a passport. In order to avoid negating the benefits derived from the substantial investment of resources in issuing MRPs, it became necessary to urge States to refrain from attempting to extend the validity of these documents by manual means. In modern passport production systems, *the only practical way to update an MRP is to issue a new one.*

1.4 In 2004, therefore, in order to formalize this advice in the context of Annex 9, the Twelfth Session of the Facilitation Division (FAL/12) recommended the adoption of Standard 3.4 to emphasize this point and proscribe States from extending the validity of their machine readable travel documents. Note 1 was appended to the Standard to explain why the expiry date of such documents cannot be extended.

1.5 During the discussions, the point was raised that States needed some time to change their (then-existing) legislation permitting manual extensions of passports and other travel documents. As a result, the Division agreed that a second Note be added to the text. Subsequently, the ICAO Council adopted Standard 3.4 and Notes 1 and 2 for inclusion in Annex 9.

2. CONCLUSION

2.1 It can perhaps be assumed that the six year-period that has passed since the adoption of Note 2 to Standard 3.4 has been sufficient for States to have amended their national legislation or regulations regarding the manual extension of the period of validity of their travel documents. Consequently, the Secretariat is of the opinion that Note 2 is no longer required, and should be deleted.

2.2 Anecdotal evidence suggests that several States continue to manually “extend” the validity of their MRPs. Therefore, deletion of the Note would also remove any possible incentive that might have been made available by the Note, for States to continue this practice.