



TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP ON MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Sixteenth Meeting

(Montreal, 26 to 28 September 2005)

Agenda Item 3: Universal Implementation of Machine Readable Travel Documents Agenda Item 3.2: Report of the Education and Promotional Working Group

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

(Presented by the Education and Promotion Working Group)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Educational and Promotion Working Group (EPWG) of the TAG/MRTD develops means of presenting information to governments on travel documents/passports, document and issuance security and passport issuing technology. The Group's principal aims are to encourage States that currently do not issue MRTDs to do so; to assist States in meeting recommended best practices in other aspects of the passport issuing process, for example, the arrangements surrounding the handling and issuance of their passports; and providing guidance to States on the development of e-Passports.

1.2 Following a very successful expert workshop in Vienna early in 2004, the EPWG has been asked to provide expert speakers at a number of international seminars/workshops. With a continuing focus on the identity of travellers and the development of biometrics, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of requests for EPWG assistance. EPWG welcomes the opportunity to participate in such events as it brings together government representatives in one location. However the amount of resource and effort required responding to the requests over the past year has been substantial and should not be underestimated.

2. EXPERT WORKSHOPS

2.1 The EPWG has participated in a number of workshops sponsored or supported by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). The partnership that has been forged with IOM has been very successful and has allowed both parties to meet their own individual aims. It is also appropriate that

through the events that have taken place over the past year, EPWG with the help of IOM, has focused on areas of the world that have hitherto not benefited from the expertise that the Working Group can bring to such events. It is apparent that IOM's knowledge, contacts and funding is crucial to the success of EPWG's outreach programme in support of the promotion of ICAO's Doc 9303 standards. IOM's ability to facilitate interaction with our target communities through provision of conference facilities, interpreters and translation of documents has been pivotal to the success of the outreach work completed during 2004/2005. The EPWG aims to continue to explore ways by which such events can be made to be even more effective.

2.2 The format of these workshops has generally included topics on travel document security, MRTDs, issuance standards, printing technology, document fraud and biometrics. Individual members of EPWG or an EPWG 'team' have carried out presentations. The success of these events is very much down to the pool of expertise that exists within the membership of the group both in the government members and those from the private sector. Without the active participation of EPWG members, such events could not be supported effectively.

2.3 EPWG members took part in workshops, reviews and seminars in the following locations over the past year – Bangladesh, Nassau, Trinidad, Vancouver, London, and Niger. The majority of those events were in partnership with IOM. The event in Niger was the most significant as it involved a team of EPWG experts providing presentations over a three day period to CEN-SAD (The Community of Sahel-Saharan States). Whilst it is clear that the delegates from CEN-SAD obtained much from the event, it is true to say that EPWG members also learnt much about migration problems in this part of the world. Whilst much of the developed world is moving forward with biometrics, it has to be acknowledged that there are some countries (maybe few in number) who are still issuing hand written passports and many others who have not yet begun to issue MRTDs. The other events were delivered to groups as diverse as Canadian Consular officers based in Europe to a regional conference on migration focusing on people trafficking and migrant smuggling to a Caribbean event on mixed migratory flows.

2.4 Other opportunities to raise the profile of Doc 9303 and EPWG's role have been taken where appropriate. For example, at the April 2005 meeting of the G8 Lyon-Roma group in London, an agreement was reached on a best practice identity paper that will be forwarded shortly to ICAO with the recommendation that it become an informative annex to Doc 9303. This will follow the example set by previous EPWG members, also members of G8 delegations, who have produced best practice papers that have been incorporated within Doc 9303. The contribution that Government members of EPWG, in particular, can make is not insignificant. There is an increasing involvement by Governments in international sharing of expertise and the opportunity to explain the role of the MRTD Programme and Doc 9303 arises fairly regularly. Consequently it is to be expected that there will be greater awareness of ICAO's role in setting and developing passport specifications, standards and best practice. This in turn can only lead to an increase in the numbers of requests for assistance.

2.5 In conclusion, the increased profile of the EPWG has stretched the current resources that are available to respond to requests for outreach support. The 2010 deadline for ICAO's Contracting States to begin issuing MRPs will inevitably result in an increased demand for the type of educational activity provided by EPWG. The effective partnerships that have been built up with the IOM and OSCE seem likely to require an increase in the amount of resources to support this effective means of communicating ICAO's messages on MRTDs, passport issuance and associated areas. In order to meet these requests, EPWG believes that it will need to call upon members of other working groups to assist in outreach. It is hoped that such requests will be looked on favourably by the respective Chairs of the other working groups.

3. **ACTION BY THE TAG/MRTD**

3.1 The TAG/MRTD is invited to:

- a) note the programme of outreach activities undertaken by EPWG since TAG15;
- b) recognise the value of the contribution of groups such as IOM and OSCE in the furtherance of the aims of the MRTD Programme; and
- c) endorse the continued commitment of the EPWG to work with such organisations.

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