Analysis of results of the public consultation on ID cards and residence documents

1. Introduction

A shorter summary of this analysis was part of Annex 2 (Stakeholders consultation) of the Impact Assessment SWD(2018) 110 final of 17.4.2018 accompanying the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council strengthening the security of identity cards of Union citizens and of residence documents issued to Union citizens and their family members exercising their right of free movement.

Between 12 September and 5 December 2017, the European Commission carried out an open public consultation (OPC) to collect views on identity (ID) cards and residence documents. The Commission sought views from EU citizens, their family members, businesses, organisations, academics and any stakeholders concerned with EU citizenship and free movement. Three separate questionnaires were issued, one for EU citizens (including nationals of Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland), one for family members of EU citizens that are not themselves EU citizens; and one for businesses requiring identification from their clients.

The results of this consultation are intended to inform the Commission’s assessment of the scope for introducing specific action at EU level related to ID cards and residence documents of mobile EU citizens and their family members, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity. The present report contains a factual summary of the main results of the consultation, without providing an exhaustive analysis of each individual reply.

It is in the nature of this form of consultation that respondents and the views they express cannot be taken to be representative of the full population of EU citizens or any particular stakeholder groups.

2. Headlines

- 398 EU citizens from across the EU responded to the questionnaire for EU citizens, and 211 of those had lived in another EU Member State in the last five years. 15 businesses from 11 Member States responded to the business questionnaire. 34 non-EU citizens responded to the questionnaire targeting residence documents for TCN family members

- The respondents were very mobile with 55% (220) travelling every month to another EU country.
• **80%** of responding citizens hold ID cards, **79%** used their ID cards outside their home state, and **25%** reported encountering difficulties in doing so.

• **Three quarter** (**296**) of the respondents want strong security features for their ID cards (**141** want the strongest possible) to reduce the risk of document fraud and identity theft. **272** want features which make the documents more accessible for visually impaired people.

• There was general support for eID features and **30** respondents indicated a willingness to pay more for cards with such features.

• **Three quarters** of respondents (**303**) considered that the state should bear or share the cost of introducing more secured ID cards, and they were split on whether they should cost up to €15 (**129**) or between €15 and €50 (**116**), or be free (**74**).

• **55** of respondents had held or held a registration certificate, **39** a residence card and **26** a permanent residence card.

• The main advantages of registration cards or certificates were that they enable them to prove to the authorities of their host Member State that they are legally resident and to prove residence to their home national authorities. Residence cards were also held out of obligation, to prove ID, and to prove residence as a step towards obtaining permanent residence. Permanent residence cards were sought in particular in the UK as a step towards obtaining nationality.

• Recognisability for authorities and private companies were the main motivations for harmonisation for these residence documents.

• **Around a third** of the TCN family members of EU citizens travel within the EU several times a year. Most felt their cards were useful to prove their status, for travel within the EU, and to apply for a permanent card after 5 years. Around half wished to use their cards to prove their identity, and problems doing this were frequently mentioned for both temporary and permanent residence cards of this type.
Detailed analysis

398 EU citizens responded to the public consultation questionnaire for EU citizens. The results are further analysed below and in particular in section 1 (ID cards), sections 2 and 3 (residence documents), and section 4 (eID).

Of the total of 398 individual EU citizens responding, 375 (95%) were of working age (18 to 65). Only 15 respondents were above, and 8 under 18 (see figure below).

The 398 answers were received from all Member States (see Table 1 below), with a high level of answers from Italy (68) and a cluster of Member States with an answer rate of around 30: Spain, the United-Kingdom, Germany, France, Bulgaria and Belgium. Then follow the Netherlands, Greece and Finland with around 20 respondents each. Only Malta, Cyprus and Luxemburg have only one respondent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Nationality (398 replies)</th>
<th>Country of residence (398)</th>
<th>Other EU country of residence in the last five years? (208 replies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Several EU nationalities</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Replies</td>
<td>Filled</td>
<td>Not filled</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liechtenstein</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

34 non-EU citizens replied to the specific questionnaire for non-EU citizens. The results are mainly relevant to residence documents for third country national family members of EU citizens (TCN FAM cards) in section 3.

15 ‘businesses’ (including 7 civil society organisations) from across the EU replied to a specific business questionnaire, and of those five uploaded more specific content. The results are integrated in the following sections and not in a dedicated section.
1. ID cards

Of the 398 respondents, 318 (almost 80%) hold a national ID card and 289 use their ID to travel in the EU. However, a quarter (72) of them reported difficulties:

- 36 mention problems at airport to get their ID accepted as a travel document, principally in the United-Kingdom for two-thirds; 18 reported longer queues than for passport holders;
- Several problems with paper ID cards were reported by Italian and Greek citizens: deterioration or no expiry date (for Greek ID cards);
- The differences in cards were also reported as causing problems: lack of Latin alphabet in Greek cards, unusual format of the Czech (booklet) and of Romanian cards, specific kinds of ID cards (e.g. specific colour of ID cards of Italians from South Tyrol), or the use of several surnames on Spanish ID cards; 2 French citizens mentioned problems with ID card with prolonged validity not indicated on the cards themselves.
- 3 cases reported non-European or European low cost airlines refusing to accept ID cards for intra-EU flights;

250 respondents (79%) used their ID cards in other Member States, in most cases for contacts with administrations, local authorities, at banks and post offices. In more than one third of the cases (91), proof of identity was problematic, for example when no address was mentioned on the card or it used non-Latin alphabet, or the age or the date of issue was missing.

Problems regarding acceptance and authentication of ID cards, as well as problems of citizens identifying themselves at borders and with private sector service providers, such as airlines, were also reported by civil society organisations.¹

¹ EU Rights Clinic (University of Kent; ecas/ European Citizen Action Service)
As regards **strong security features to reduce the risk of document and identity fraud**, a large majority wants strong (155 respondents) or even the strongest possible (141 respondents) security features to reduce the risk of fraud. Only 22 believe that strong security features are not essential to reduce the risk (see below).

**Civil society organisations** support Member States phasing out paper-based identity cards as soon as possible and argue for minimum harmonisation as regards security features and format but without the need ‘that the ID cards should necessarily look exactly the same’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘An identity card can be used for travel and identification purposes throughout the EU. Which of the following statements do you agree most with?’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong security features are unnecessary. I’m not worried about document fraud or identity theft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The strongest possible security features are needed to reduce the risk of document fraud and identity theft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong security features are essential to reduce the risk of document fraud and identity theft.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the increased costs of **ID cards with increased security features**, respondents answered that this should be borne by the national budget (51%) or shared between the national budget and applicants (45%). **129 respondents recommended a price less than €15, and 116 a price between €15 and €50.** Only 15 respondents felt that all costs should be paid by the applicant, while 74 respondents felt that an ID card should be free.

No further specific questions regarding the application and issuance procedures for ID cards or residence were asked in the public consultation.

A comment from a German citizen suggested an opt-out of the biometric chips, so citizens may choose themselves to keep the price of their ID card down. Other comments suggested to in the situation where a citizen loses his or hers ID card before the expiration date, he or she should borne the full costs of the replacing ID card.
On the appearance of ID cards, 278 (70%) respondents are in favour of a European format for national ID cards, with a slightly lower percentage for respondents who hold currently no ID cards (67.5%):

272 (68.3%) respondents believe that ID cards should have special identity features for people who are visually impaired (e.g. braille) for easy recognition by them.
This is also supported by civil society organisations\(^2\) responding to the 'business' questionnaire. In addition to Braille, those organisations want ID cards (and where relevant residence document) to meet additional criteria to address the needs of persons with disabilities: maximise readability; mark orientation; use of Braille (see above); low-slip cards (easy to handle); easy to understand; provide the card information in other formats (see section 4 e-ID).

\(^2\) European Blind Union, European Disability Forum
2. Residence documents of EU citizens

Of the 398 EU citizens responding to the public consultation, more than half (211) have lived in another EU country in the past 5 years. Only a little more than half of them held residence documents: 54 held a registration certificate (section 1), 39 a residence card (section 2) and 26 a permanent residence card (section 3).

1. Registration certificates

Most of the registration certificates of those surveyed are paper documents (32), with the remaining 22 respondents possessing a registration certificate in card form.

The main advantage of a registration certificate according to the respondents is that it enables them to prove to the authorities of their host Member State that they are a legal resident (37).

A second use for registration certificates is to be able to prove residence to national authorities (34).

Others also mentioned that it is considered an added value when applying for permanent residence after 5 years of residence (12), and that they use it to prove their residence in another Member State in their Member State of origin after they have returned (11).
Regarding difficulties encountered when using the registration certificate, only 7 of the 55 respondents noted experiencing difficulties. The majority of these difficulties relate to the paper format of the registration certificate, which is deemed not to be robust enough for such an important document. Others note the requirement of an additional apostille when using the document outside of their host Member State, and the embassies of their Member State of origin requiring them to be translated into their native language.

![Chart](https://chart.png)

Regarding the advantages of EU harmonization of registration certificates, most respondents considered that it would make it easier for the national authorities to recognize the registration certificate (45), as well as making recognition easier for private companies (33). Others noted that it would make it easier to carry the document due to a better size and shape (30), as well that registration certificates could benefit from higher production standards (especially those from IT and EL).

2. Residence cards for EU citizens

36 respondents possessed residence cards in the EU country where they lived or continue to live. The main reason for the respondents applying for residence cards was because they were obliged to apply for one (23)(BE, NL, ES, DK), wanted to have a document to prove their legal residence in the host Member State (17) and to have a useful document when contacting public authorities or private companies (16).

A residence card is required for essential services such as entering into a contract, opening a bank account and paying taxes or receiving wages, with some citizens considering it an unwanted but necessary formality. Other reasons include proving one’s identity (33), proving residence status when applying for a permanent residence card (17) and proving residence status when returning to the EU country of origin (16).
Most residence cards look similar to ID cards or residence card for TCN's, making them easy to confuse (30). Others are distinct documents which are not easily mixed up with other EU documents (7), or cards which are not comparable to other documents (6). As opposed to registration certificates, only 4 respondents had residence cards made of paper, in Italy. At the other end of the spectrum, Swedish residence cards include a picture, signature and biometrics.

Regarding views on the advantages of EU harmonization, the main improvement was felt to be making it easier for national authorities to recognize the residence card (32), to improve the size and shape of the document (21) and to enable private companies to more easily recognize the document (21). Comments also noted that EU harmonization would create a stronger sense of ‘Europeaness’, and two respondents called for integrating the residence card function into their national ID cards.

3. Permanent residence cards for EU citizens

26 respondents indicated having permanent residence cards. 23 of these respondents indicated that they did so because they considered it useful to prove their residence status, especially in the light of Brexit. Other respondents thought that it would prove useful in case they needed to identify themselves (8). 3 respondents noted that a permanent residence card is also a prerequisite for applying for UK nationality.

Other comments suggested incorporating the permanent residence card into documents already available such as national ID cards or driver licences (2), to permit all MS authorities to access the information found on the these identification documents.
What is (or was) your permanent residence card like?

- 46.2%: Paper document (7)
- 23.1%: It looks like a residence card or identity card (12)
- 26.9%: A formal document that does not resemble a residence card or identity card (6)
- 3.8%: Other (please specify): (1)
- No Answer: 372
3. Residence document for TCN family members of EU citizens

Thirty-four non EU citizens responded to the specific questionnaire, of diverse nationalities and residing in various EU Member States, with the highest numbers of residents in Belgium (5), Germany (5), Italy (4), Spain (4) and the UK (4).

Most respondents are young, 26 below the age of 45. The majority are spouses of EU citizens, with only 4 being their registered partners and 3 dependent direct relatives. Almost a third of respondents claimed they travel within the EU several times a year.
18 respondents hold or held EU residence card as family members of EU citizens, 8 a permanent residence card of family members of EU citizens, and 7 a residence permit.
1. Third-country-national family members – residence cards

A majority of respondents claimed their residence card is useful for proving their status as a legal resident (16), for travelling in the EU without a visa (14), and for being able to apply for a permanent residence card after 5 years (13). Moreover, respondents stated it is useful for online signature and access to online services, for applying for jobs, working and paying taxes in another country, and for proving the relationship with an EU citizen.

As a respondent from Spain stated, ‘aside from the above benefits mentioned, the EU residence card improves my sense of independence and confidence when establishing credibility, and most importantly [provides for an] access to standard social integration that may require the specific document. For example, [it is useful] when opening a bank account, when trying to rent an accommodation, employment, health and safety.’

A similar number of respondents stated that they should be able to use their residence card to prove their identity (16), to prove their residence status to national authorities (16), to prove their residence status when going back to the home EU country of the mobile EU citizen (14), to prove their residence status when applying for a permanent residence card (14), and to apply for jobs (1). One of the respondents, resident in Germany, suggested that residence card should have the same status as an ID card for EU citizens, which would in particular eliminate the obligation to hold a passport.

15 respondents consider the main advantage of all residence cards looking exactly the same in all EU countries that it would be easier for national authorities to recognise the documents (15), easier to carry due to better size and shape (11), and easier for shops/private companies to recognise (8). One of the respondents, resident in Belgium, wrote: ‘the residence card of a family member of an EU citizen has to be uniformed so the rights of the card holder can be easier recognized in another country. In Belgium the F card looks like Belgian national ID card which is very misleading for many people and even could be misused. To give another example, Portugal still issues paper version of the card which is very unpractical and unsecure.’ Furthermore, as another respondent described, such a uniform card would ‘improve communication and neutralise the tension that bureaucracy usually creates.’
2. Third-country-national family members – permanent residence cards

Permanent residence cards in the EU Member States in which the respondents reside either look like a regular residence card for non-EU nationals (4), are formal documents which are not like a residence card or identity card (2), or are paper documents (1). For instance, a respondent from Slovenia described that their permanent residence card is just an ID-sized paper with their picture and identification number, without any biometric features.

6 respondents found their permanent residence card useful in proving that they are legally resident, 3 for travelling in the EU without a visa, and 1 did not find the card useful. The respondent dissatisfied with the usefulness of their permanent residence card was requested to present their passport to board a plane to Venice since, they were told, the Belgian F+ permanent residence card was not a proof of identity. This sentiment was repeated by another respondent who raised the issue with Belgian residence card, which involved a lengthy procedure and did not facilitate cross-border work in Germany.

Residents think they should be able to use their permanent residence card to prove identity (7), to prove residence status to national authorities (5), to prove residence status when going back to the home EU country of the mobile EU citizen (5), and to prove residence status when re-applying for a permanent residence card (5). A respondent from Belgium added that ‘the permanent residence card should grant access to the labour market without need of a work permit.’

Respondents stated that if permanent residence cards looked exactly the same in all EU countries, it would be easier to carry due to better size and shape (6), easier for national authorities to recognise (5), and easier for shops/private companies to recognise (3).

Civil society\(^1\) feedback pleads for full harmonisation of TCN FAM cards on the basis of the uniform format for residence permits.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) To distinguish the TCN FAM cards from other documents such as residence permits Member States should use a standardised code, such as ‘fam.res.Art.10 Dir. 2004/38/EC or ‘fam. perm.res.Art.20 Dir. 2004/38/EC
4. e-ID for EU citizens

Electronic ID cards and the possibility to pass through electronic border control gates were noted as additional functions that just over 30 respondents would be willing to pay more for.

Such technical features, in the view of some citizens, would facilitate border control, voting, or access to many online services or even contactless payments. Moreover, technical features including personal digital signature, biometric information, chip, secure encryption key or centralised data storage also recurred throughout the responses.

Several citizens suggested 'e-government functions' that e-IDs could be useful for and with which they could be integrated (i.e. through creation of an 'electronic personal file'), in aspects such as social security, healthcare, driving license, insurance. One respondent expressed willingness to ‘pay for the possibility to have a virtual version of my ID Card/e-Passport securely stored and accessible on my mobile to authenticate with higher assurance and trust to online services.’ Other highlighted statements by citizens on the issue:

- I would like my card not only to travel but to remotely access public and private online services across the EU but current support of this is very limited. I think that airplanes boarding security should be further enhanced, harmonized and streamlined, to ensure that correspondence between boarding passes – e-ID Cards/e-Passports and biometric traits of passenger is established.
- Being able to access e-government functions, social security/health system, etc. in all EU countries.
- Beyond security features integration with other systems - health, insurance, driving licence would be beneficial. All data in one card readable across countries. Medical status, marital, social security, pension... there are huge barriers, member states are imposing certifications on certifications.
- E-Gates crossing should come at no additional cost and be as easy and quick as with e-Passport. Possibly I would pay for the possibility to have a virtual version of my ID Card/e-Passport securely stored and accessible on my mobile to authenticate with higher assurance and trust to online services. I would also welcome the assurance of reinforced law enforcement cooperation to investigate e-ID crimes.
- Personal insurance + EU Health card info could be ‘contained’ in the card’s chip and/or information container. This will facilitate EU travel a lot, because such important things will be in one place - the ID card.
- ID should provide links (via microchip?) with your employment status, social security rights etc.
- NFC or other tech? Border gate features sounds ok. Bank service features?
- No- the benefit of those e-services and automated controls being also for national authorities (less staff/facilitated process) I am not ready to pay for those type of services.
- Pass through electronic border control gates and health insurance validity
- Pass through electronic border control gates, validate identity of e-Services online, vote online
- Passing through electronic border control gates; ID should be associated to a personal, secure profile on government websites
- Payment function, id card as an app
- Social security card functions, allowing to pass through electronic border control gates
- Yes, I would like to use everything electronic, including border control gates, online signature and services.
- I believe countries should make better use of the electronic ID card, for example by checking private information of public institutions, like personal judgements, taxes, pension, voting, ...
- Standardized procedures at European level should be enforced to ensure cards security mechanisms do pass checks according to stringent security certifications to avoid e.g. very recently discovered vulnerabilities in digital certificates present in large number of issued e-ID cards in a number of EU countries.

Nevertheless, some respondents admitted they considered citizens should not pay more for such technical features, as they ‘allow the authorities to save money.’

While e-ID and the possibility to cross electronic border control gates would generally be welcomed by many respondents, some concerns about data protection and privacy were also raised. For instance, one of the respondents emphasised the necessity to ensure an opt-out possibility with regard to biometric data. Another citizen stated that ‘standardized procedures at European level should be enforced to ensure cards security mechanisms do pass checks according to stringent security certifications to avoid, e.g. ‘vulnerabilities in digital certificates present in large number of issued e-ID cards in a number of EU countries.’