

Automated Border Control Gates for Europe

More focus on cross-border crime - ABC4EU-project harmonising the automated border checks

Ever since automated border control was introduced alongside the traditional face-to-face inspections at certain EU border crossing points, EU citizens faced a new challenge: all the European automated border control systems differed from one another, mainly with how they work. Hence, Automated Border Control Gates for Europe -project (ABC4EU) began in January 2014 under the European Commission's grant agreement in order to address this issue.

The project aims to make border checks more flexible and user-friendly for passengers at the EU external borders by harmonising the functionalities of border check automation. Greater harmonisation should create a better passenger experience and encourage people to use ABC gates at border crossing points. Another main aim is to update and integrate current ABC systems and extend their use to future ePassports. Simultaneously, states can fight cross-border crime and illegal migration more efficiently, and provide a higher level of internal security. The system will also benefit different stakeholders, such as transport operators, as the increasing flow of travellers will be handled in an efficient way.

New generations border control automats

In 2015-2016 the new generation ABC gate prototypes are field-tested in the pilot-phase at different border crossing points in the EU. To reach this notable milestone, the ABC4EU consortium has created many guiding frameworks on privacy, security and usability amongst other aspects in the first 1,5 years. These frameworks guided the design of the new ABC gate prototype, and will ensure that the new system fulfills the set demands. Field tests help to further develop a state-of-the-art solution, which can be harmonised across the EU and Schengen external border crossing points. The pilot phase will collect experiences so that the project will end up with a fully functioning new system, and a suggestion for the legislators on the future of automated border control systems. Passenger needs and requirements as well as the combination of different views, requirements and constraints are taken into account in the scope of border management. It is done to enrich the research activities performed in the project and serve the main purpose of harmonisation.

Automated border control to handle increasing passenger flows

The automated border control consists of the same procedures as are done in the conventional, face-to-face control. The only difference is that the passenger may do the steps as self-service. The authenticity of the used travel document must be verified by checking the integrated security features. User identification must be done by comparing the biometric data incorporated into travel documents against its present holder. Both the document and traveler's information must be compared against the authorities' background databases. If the comparison score, or match, between the issued document against the real-life equivalent is high enough, and no background information is found, the passenger is let through the ABC gate. Usually the gates are faster than the conventional check, especially if there are any queues.

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Automated Border Control Gates for Europe (ABC4EU) is a part of an European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no 312797. The project began in January 2014 with main aim to make border checks more flexible and user-friendly for passengers by harmonising the functionalities of border check automation. Project consortium has 13 different partners from 8 EU member states with 17 million euros funding from EU.



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