

Press Release

New joint EMN-OECD inform published: The use of digitalisation and artificial intelligence in migration management

To what extent could digital services support migration and asylum management? This joint EMN-OECD inform focuses on specific areas in the asylum, migration and acquisition of citizenship procedures, and border control management, where digital technologies may be used.

Brussels, 10 February 2022

Over recent years and following the increased use of digital technology during the COVID-19 pandemic, Member States have or plan to enhance the deployment of digital services in a number of areas related to the management of migration and asylum. This joint EMN-OECD inform draws on the contributions of 24 Member States¹ and inputs from the OECD, including additional information for non-EU OECD countries. The publication provides an overview of the potential for digital technologies to support the management of migration, acquisition of citizenship, asylum procedures and border control, also considering the fundamental rights implications, including data protection.

Among the many questions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic was how to perform identity controls without exposing law enforcement and immigration services staff to health risks. The vast majority of EU Member States and Georgia reported making use of online systems to process residence permits and citizenship applications, to allow applicants to make an appointment at immigration authorities or an embassy, with some Member States also offering more sophisticated digital services, such as making online applications and tracking progress remotely.

While most EU Member States, other OECD countries and Georgia already make use of online systems and digital tools for managing residence permit applications, several EU Member States use blockchain technology for migration management, with more countries currently piloting blockchain infrastructure or planning to do so. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used in Member States for several purposes, such as: language identification and assessment to verify third country individuals' knowledge and language proficiency, as well as country of origin; for identity document fraud detection purposes; and, for case management, to assess the complexity and estimate cost price of each individual case.

With respect to regulatory implications, Member States making use of online systems and digital technology not only need to comply with fundamental rights, such as the right to private and family life (Article 7) and protection of personal data (Article 8), guaranteed by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union², but also with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR Regulation (EU) 2016/679)³ and the corresponding national legislation when processing personal data.

¹ Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

² Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2012, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012P%2FTXT>, last accessed on 24 June 2021.

³ Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02016R0679-20160504&qid=1532348683434>, last accessed 06 January 2022.

Background:

The study

- Title: “The use of digitalisation and artificial intelligence in migration management”.
- Period covered: The report reflects on the impact of the use of online systems, both pre-existing and developed during 2020, paying particular attention to the impact COVID-19 has had on the use of technology and digital procedures.
- Subject: The potential of new digital technologies in the management of migration and asylum.

The EMN

The European Migration Network (EMN) is a Europe-wide network consisting of National Contact Points (NCPs) in the EU Member States, Norway, Georgia and Moldova, providing information on migration and asylum. The EMN was set up in 2008 by the European Commission on behalf of the European Council in order to satisfy the need for a regular exchange of reliable information on migration and asylum related issues on a European level.

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