New EMN inform analyses adoption and use of digital-only identity documents and residence permits for third country nationals

The latest inform from the European Migration Network (EMN) on the "Digitalisation of identity documents and residence permits issued to third-country nationals" provides an in-depth analysis on the challenges and advantages in adopting digital-only immigration procedures within 23 EMN Member States and two Observer Countries, namely Georgia and Ukraine.

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A new EMN inform offers a detailed examination of practices, challenges, and advantages across EMN Member and Observer Countries. The majority of EMN Member and Observer Countries, as well as Georgia and Ukraine, currently issue physical residence permits, incorporating biometric data and electronic elements. Notably, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland have started issuing digital-only residence permits and identity documents.

The inform sheds light on the motivations behind adopting digital-only documents in certain EMN Member and Observer Countries, where high numbers of arrivals and applications for residence stemming from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine prompted a shift towards digital solutions. Countries like Estonia followed suit by digitalising the procedure to apply for temporary protection – aiding with the administrative burden of approximately 41,000 applications in December 2022. Likewise, Lithuania successfully avoided the production of more than 42,000 physical documents through full digitalisation.

The advantages cited include enhanced security, resource savings, and streamlined procedures. Moreover, the inform underscores that while the majority of EMN Member and Observer Countries still rely on physical documents, countries like Finland and Germany are actively exploring digital alternatives, with [Finland piloting Digital Travel Credentials](#) ([DTC](#)).

However, the inform also underscores particular concerns surrounding digital-only documents, emphasising the importance of addressing issues related to digital literacy, potential fraud, and the need for interoperability during border checks. One of the aspects that the reporting EMN Members and Observer Countries emphasised was the importance of ensuring that vulnerable populations are not left behind and highlights the necessity for fallback solutions and common EU standards if digital-only documents are to be widely adopted.

This inform serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders involved in shaping the future of identity documents and residence permits for third-country nationals in Europe.

The inform

- Title: "Digitalisation of identity documents and residence permits issued to third-country nationals"

- Subject: The EMN's latest inform analyses the emerging adoption of digital identity documents and residence permits to third country nationals throughout EMN Member and Observer Countries, offering enhanced security and efficiency.

The EMN

The European Migration Network (EMN) is a Europe-wide network consisting of National Contact Points (NCPs) in the EMN Member (EU Member States except Denmark) and Observer Countries (NO, GE, MD, UA, ME, AM, RS), the European Commission and supported by the EMN Service Provider (ICF), 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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