



European
Commission

SECURING EUROPE'S EXTERNAL BORDERS

SYSTEMATIC CHECKS AT EXTERNAL BORDERS

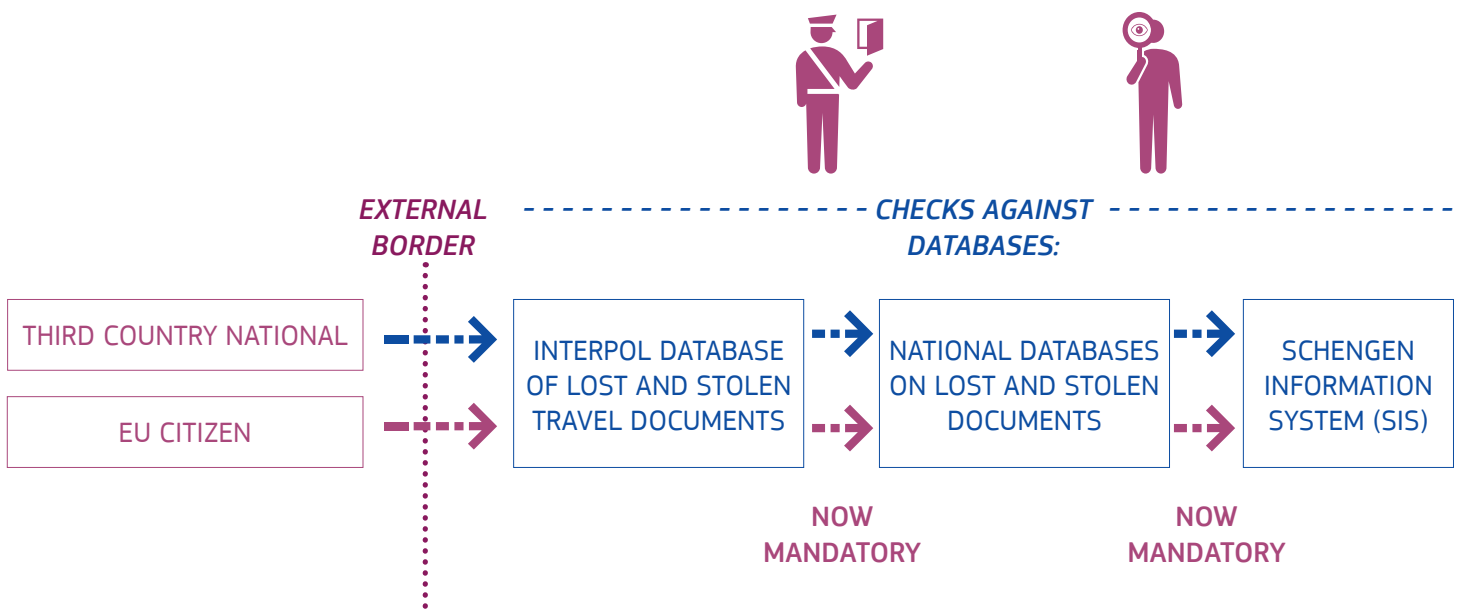
Checks at the external borders remain one of the main safeguards of the Schengen area without controls at the internal borders. Checks help prevent any threat to the internal security and public policy of the EU's Member States. As recent terrorist attacks have demonstrated, the threat can come also from EU citizens enjoying the right of free movement under Union law. Controls at the external borders thus need to be reinforced in order to be able to identify such persons and minimise risks to the internal security of the Schengen area.

It is estimated that **5,000 EU citizens** have travelled to conflict zones and joined terrorist groups like ISIS. When they have come back to Europe, some of these returning foreign fighters have been involved in recent terrorist attacks.

EXTENDING SYSTEMATIC CHECKS



The Commission is proposing a targeted modification to the Schengen Borders Code to make checks on EU citizens against all relevant databases – which are already possible – mandatory. Systematic checks of third country nationals are already and continue to be mandatory.



ENTRY AND EXIT CHECKS



Checks on all third country nationals and EU citizens will now be mandatory both when entering and when exiting the European Union. Currently, exit checks against databases are only mandatory for third-country nationals.

PROTECTING FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS



The systematic checks in the databases are done on a 'hit/no hit' basis. Using the databases in this way means that personal data rights are only impacted to a very limited extent, and is justified by the security objectives.

A PROPORTIONATE APPROACH, AVOIDING DELAYS



In principle, authorities should be able to consult relevant databases without delaying border crossings. At airports for example, passports are already swiped against computers to check they are valid and running the same data through additional databases will not take more time.

If, however, systematic checks at certain land or sea borders would have a disproportionate impact on the flow of traffic, the rules allow some flexibility. In such cases Member States can, based on risk assessments, decide to carry out only targeted checks at some land and sea borders crossings.