

Germany to create a visa abuse database

The German government on 25 May approved a bill concerning the creation of a register of people committing visa abuses, which was prepared by the Interior Ministry. The creation of such a database has been one of the priority tasks as part of German security policy since 2005. This move also fits in with the tendency to strictly regulate border traffic, also within the Schengen Area, observed in Germany.

The database, the creation of which was envisaged in the agreements of both the Grand Coalition in 2005–2009 and the present CDU/CSU/FDP coalition, is to include the data of individuals applying for a German visa who committed visa abuses in the past (for example, stated untrue data in a visa application), illegally crossed the border or have been illegally staying in Germany. The database may also include details of people who invited foreigners and who gave untrue information in these invitations. It will not store the data of citizens of those countries which are not covered by the visa regime. Access to the database (which will be kept by the Federal Administrative Office reporting to the German Interior Ministry) will be provided to government agencies dealing with foreigners and German consulates as well as to law enforcement services; however, the latter will have access only when visas are granted under the extraordinary procedure at the time of crossing the border.

The database is being introduced in response to the overly liberal visa policy adopted with regard to citizens of Eastern European countries in 1999–2000, which was used by criminal groups for human trafficking. Additionally, the decision to create the database was influenced by reports on visa fraud and corruption among the staff of several German consulates in 2010. The implementation of this project is also a response to Germans' fears of an influx of illegal workers from the countries for which the German labour market has not been opened. This is also one of the reasons for Berlin's unwillingness to admit Bulgaria and Romania to the Schengen Area. Germany is also afraid of a wave of North African immigrants from other Schengen Area member states. <zawil>