

Fact sheet

Facilitating passenger security checks: For an informed debate on the use of body-scanners

The Association of European Airlines and Airports Council International Europe deplore the misunderstanding around the introduction of body-scanners to screen passengers at European airports, and wish to bring some clarity to the debate.

- The technology is based on two different families of scanners – the millimetre wave scanner and the backscatter scanner. Only one of these families (the backscatter scanner) uses X-Ray technology.
- The technology has been tested (on a trial and voluntary basis) in a few EU airports. Feedback from passengers and crew, who were given the option to pass through the body-scanner instead of being submitted to the usual manual search (which is per se a very intrusive security screening method), was overwhelmingly positive.
- The existing trials have already taken into account the privacy concerns which such a technology scanning the human body may raise. The review of the images is taking place in a remote place from the actual screening point, meaning that the screener has no mean to identify/match the body outline with the person screened, and the images are not stored in any local or networked informatics system, making it impossible for them to end up in a government database or on the internet.
- The system does also allow for certain pre-defined sensitive parts of the human body to appear covered and undisclosed to the screener while maintaining the quality of the security control.
- The new technology allows not only a higher quality of the security control but also a better throughput at the airports security checkpoints (by reducing waiting times) and, therefore, sensibly increases the quality of the traveller's experience.

AEA and ACI EUROPE look forward to contributing to an informed debate on the testing and introduction of any new technologies likely to make air transport an even safer, and more pleasant experience.

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