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Signature of the EU-Australia agreement on Passenger Name Records (PNR)

The EU and Australia signed today their new agreement on the processing and transfer of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data by air carriers to the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service ([10093/11](#)). It will replace the existing agreement from 2008.

Jan Tombinski, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Poland to the EU, signed on behalf of the EU. For Australia, the agreement was signed by Brendan Nelson, Ambassador, Head of the Mission of Australia to the EU.

The European Parliament will now be asked to give its consent to the agreement, which is necessary before the Council can adopt its decision on the conclusion of the agreement.

Why a new agreement?

The EU currently has agreements on the transfer and use of passenger name records (PNR) with Australia, Canada and the United States of America. In May 2010, the European Parliament decided to postpone its vote on the request for consent on these existing PNR agreements with the US and Australia. These two agreements have therefore not been concluded yet and have been applied on a provisional basis since 2007 and 2008, respectively. In a resolution, Parliament demanded that new agreements should be negotiated with the US and Australia as well as with Canada, with which a PNR agreement has been in force since 2006.

While negotiations on the PNR agreement with Australia have now been finalised, those on revised PNR agreements with the US and Canada are still ongoing.

P R E S S

Main elements of the agreements

The main aspects of the new PNR agreement with Australia are:

- a strict purpose limitation, the use of PNR data being limited to the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences or serious transnational crime;
- a legally binding commitment from the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service to inform the Member States and EU authorities of any EU relevant intelligence leads flowing from the analysis of these PNR data;
- a robust data protection regime with an absolute prohibition of the use of sensitive data, strong data security and integrity requirements;
- rights of access, rectification and erasure and the possibility to obtain administrative and judicial redress;
- a limited storage of PNR data for a period of five years and a half; after the first three and a half years all elements of PNR data which could lead to the identification of passengers are already deleted.

Background

Concerning PNR agreements with third countries, the Commission issued in September 2010 a communication on the global approach to transfers of PNR data to third countries ([13954/10](#)).

Responding to a request by the Council, the Commission also tabled in January 2011 a proposal for a EU PNR system for protection against terrorist offences and serious crime ([6007/11](#)).

PNR data is the information voluntarily provided by passengers and collected by air carriers during the reservation and check-in procedures. It includes information such as name, dates of travel and travel itinerary, ticket information, address and phone numbers, means of payment used, credit card number, travel agent, seat number and baggage information.