



PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

HEATHROW FINGERPRINTING SUSPENDED BUT NOT ABANDONED

EXPATS' GROUP MAINTAINS ADVICE TO AVOID HEATHROW AIRPORT

Travellers should avoid using London's Heathrow airport until it finally abandons plans for the mass fingerprinting of passengers. That continues to be the advice from NO2ID Expats' Group. Other hubs, whether in the UK or in other EU countries, should be preferred for the time being. This may entail using airlines other than BA. Rail or sea links may also be an option in some cases.

Heathrow wants to fingerprint and photograph both domestic passengers and international travellers with onward flights to other airports in the UK and Ireland. But on 26 March, just before the new Terminal 5 came into operation, the fingerprinting was reportedly suspended. This followed a warning from the UK Information Commissioner that the measure may be illegal. BAA, the company that runs Heathrow, has not abandoned the idea of fingerprinting. The BBC reported that talks were under way 'between the Information Commissioner and BAA, which insists it wants to bring in checks in the future'.

The photographing of passengers is going ahead. BAA's website has removed references to fingerprinting at Heathrow, but it continues to list "biometric capture" among the procedures for transit passengers, whether or not Terminal 5 is involved in the transfer. And it still states that the photographing is "required by the Department for Transport". So the confusion over responsibilities is still as described in NO2ID Expats' press release of 24 March². For all of the reasons set out in that statement, NO2ID Expats maintains its advice that travellers should avoid using Heathrow until it finally and unequivocally abandons the "biometric capture" of passengers.

NO2ID Expats' Group has active supporters in 39 countries. It is a branch of the British organisation NO2ID, which is campaigning against the introduction of ID cards and the database state in the UK. NO2ID is backed by a wide range of organisations and political parties. More details on its main website: www.no2id.net

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¹ http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7315415.stm

² <http://no2id-expats.chown.ch/resources/pr080324heathrowexpats.doc>