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欧州渡航情報認証制度（ETIAS）と EU 専門機関の役割： 責任論の観点から

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The European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) and the role of EU Agencies: from responsibility perspectives

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本研究は、欧州渡航情報認証制度（ETIAS）を事例に、デジタル国境管理における責任の帰属をめぐる構造的
問題について分析した。文書分析と聞き取り調査を通して、eu-LISA、Frontex、Europol、加盟国の任務と説明
責任の手段・帰属先が明記される一方で、実質的な責任遂行に不可欠な自律性と情報アクセスが損なわれる可能
性と説明責任の分散の問題を指摘した。本研究は、渡航管理においてアルゴリズムや自動処理に依拠する制度設
計の課題を明らかにした。

This research examined “responsibility” in the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), the EU’s forthcoming pre-travel screening mechanism for visa-exempt short-term visitors. Drawing on the ETIAS Regulation and expert interviews, the research finds that, while the Regulation formally assigns responsibilities to eu-LISA, Frontex, Europol and member states, the conditions for substantive active responsibility (autonomy and access to information) can be compromised. Accountability arrangements remain fragmented across actors, and meaningful remedy for refused applicants is limited in practice. This raises questions about relying on algorithmic and automated processing in migration and border controls.

1. 研究内容

1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) is set to launch a new border and migration control system, the European Travel Information System (ETIAS) in the last quarter of 2026. This is an electronic pre-travel authorisation system for visa-exempt short-term visitors to enter the Schengen Area. Once operational, citizens of over 60 countries will be subject to automated risk assessment prior to travel.

Unlike similar systems such as the US ESTA and Australian ETA, a refusal under ETIAS bars entry to the entire Schengen Area with no visa application available as an alternative, which places travellers in vulnerable positions. Moreover, ETIAS mobilises multiple EU and national level actors, which makes it difficult to determine who is responsible for the organisation’s conduct in the last instance – this is known as the “problem of many hands” in complex

organisations, and the question of responsibility is not only practically but also analytically significant. Scholars have raised concerns over interoperability, privacy and the ethical and human rights implications of algorithmic profiling, and accountability has been questioned from institutional perspectives. However, the literature has not systematically examined who bears what responsibility.

Focusing on three EU agencies (eu-LISA, Frontex and Europol) and member states, this research addresses the gap by developing a conceptual framework for responsibility, examining what responsibility arrangements have been made in the ETIAS Regulation. Ultimately this research tries to address responsible use of information technology in border and migration control, including travellers' access to sufficient explanation and meaningful channels to seek remedy in case of refusal.

2. Conceptual framework

Responsibility can be organised along with two dimensions. The first one is passive responsibility, corresponding to accountability or the obligation to explain and justify one's decisions and actions to oversight forums. Accountability can be undermined when arrangements on paper do not work in practice. It can also be problematic when no single actor is adequately held accountable for a collective outcome in complex organisations.

The second dimension is active responsibility, which concerns both tasks (roles formally assigned to actors) and virtue

(a disposition to take those roles seriously, to deliberate and to attend to possible norm violations on one's own initiative). This research examined two essential conditions for active responsibility to be performed: autonomy in performing one's tasks, and access to sufficient information to recognise when an applicant is being treated unjustly. The research also paid attention to some structural problems possibly undermining these conditions: epistemic dependence, where actors validate algorithmic outputs rather than deliberating independently; decontextualisation, where aggregating data from multiple large-scale databases impairs the capacity to recognise norm violations in individual cases; and system-level bureaucracy, where algorithmic outputs *de facto* diminish some room for human judgement.

3. Data collection

Data was collected through documentary research and semi-structured expert interviews. Documentary research focused on the ETIAS Regulation (EU) 2018/1240 and other related official documents concerning eu-LISA, Frontex and Europol. Interviews were conducted in Brussels in January and February 2026 with officials and representatives from the European Commission DG HOME, eu-LISA, Frontex, the European Parliament and European Digital Rights. These interviews helped corroborate findings from documents, clarify stakeholder perspectives and issues of which the researcher was initially unaware of.

4. Analysis

4.1. Actors and the divisions of tasks

The ETIAS Regulation assigns roles to four main actors. eu-LISA develops and maintains the technical infrastructure; Frontex manages both automated processing and manual verification of “hits”; Europol manages the ETIAS Watchlist, a database of persons suspected of terrorist or serious criminal offences and provides opinions upon consultation; and member states take the final decision to issue or refuse a travel authorisation. Responsibility as task ownership is thus formally distributed across the entire process.

4.2. The procedure of the ETIAS application screening process

Table 1 sets out the flow of the ETIAS

application screening process.

The flowchart shows that human intervention and oversight are embedded before decisions are taken. While the Regulation prohibits automatic decisions, whether officials maintain meaningful access to the logic behind the automated processing remains unclear.

4.3. Active and passive responsibility

Table 2 shows the key questions and issues that undermine active responsibility at each stage of the screening processes.

Table 3 shows the passive responsibility (accountability) arrangements for each actor.

5. Main findings and further work

The central findings are as follows. On active responsibility, ETIAS formally

Table 1: Flowchart of the ETIAS application screening process

1. Submission of application by travellers (via the ETIAS online application portal)
2. Automated processing 2.1. With no “hit”, travel authorisation is automatically issued. 2.2. With a “hit”, the application proceeds to step 3. This stage involves: cross-check against large-scale databases; cross-check against the ETIAS Watchlist (Europol inputs data); and specific risk indicators (a profiling algorithm operated by Frontex under inter-agency governance).
3. Frontex manually verifies the hit 3.1. If the hit does not correspond to the applicant’s data, the application proceeds to authorisation. 3.2. If the hit is confirmed as genuine, the application proceeds to step 4.
4. The responsible member state manually processes and makes decisions. 4.1. If no risk is identified, travel authorisation is issued. 4.2. If it is deemed to pose a risk, the application is refused. The applicant receives notification of the grounds for refusal based on a standardised closed list. (Applicants may appeal only to the court of the member state responsible, under its national law.)
Note: The entire technical infrastructure is developed and maintained by eu-LISA.

Table 2: Active Responsibility across the ETIAS Processes

Stage	Focus of this study	What is at stake	Issues
Automated processing	Are the databases fit for assessing applications?	Risk of false positives; no human oversight at this stage.	Decontextualisation (undermining human deliberation at subsequent stages)
Europol data input	Does Europol ensure the accuracy and lawfulness of Watchlist data?	Individuals may be wrongly flagged even though formal rights for remedy exist	Information asymmetry and lack of transparency regarding Europol's internal assessment.
Frontex verification	Can Frontex deliberate, or only validate?	Whether human review is a meaningful deliberative act or procedural routine	Epistemic dependence; procedure rather than deliberation
Member state decision	Is the individual assessment at this stage substantive or merely formal?	The exercise of substantive task ownership in the final decision	Epistemic dependence; constraining the space for individual judgement

Table 3: Accountability Arrangements under the ETIAS Regulation

	eu-LISA	Frontex	Europol	Member states
Oversight mechanism	Yes, by EDPS	Yes, by EDPS	Yes, by EDPS	Yes, by national authority
Obligation to provide reports	Yes, to the three main EU institutions	Yes, to the European Commission	Yes, to eu-LISA, Frontex and the European Commission	Yes, to eu-LISA, Frontex and the European Commission
Other notable arrangements	Liability regulations	Self-monitoring mechanism	Self-monitoring mechanism	Self-monitoring mechanism; Penalties; Liability in case of
Obligation to explain to applicants	None	None	None	Yes, but explanation is limited to a closed list

preserves human agency. Yet the conditions supporting active responsibility, autonomy and access to information, can be compromised. This research finds that the Regulation does not preclude epistemic dependence, decontextualisation or system-level bureaucracy. On passive responsibility,

accountability arrangements are also fragmented. When a travel authorisation is refused, the reasons are drawn from a closed list; security risk, illegal immigration risk or epidemic risk, and it is not clear whether more details would be disclosed to the refused applicants.

These findings may have implications beyond ETIAS. As the digitalisation of border and migration control expands, the issues embedded in interoperable, large-scale database arrangements and use of automated processing arrangements are likely to happen. Responsible use of information technology requires institutional environments in which human actors can recognise misconduct and exercise judgement based on deliberation. The researcher acknowledges the need for further work, including examining the operation of ETIAS following its launch in late 2026 and conducting a comparable analysis with systems in other countries. She also plans to develop this research into a finalised journal publication.

2. 発表（研究成果の発表）

Horii, Satoko (2026) “Accountability and Responsibility in EU Migration Control”, *The 2026 Annual Conference of the Japan Association for Migration Policy Studies (JAMPS)*, 31 May, Tokyo, Japan.

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