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REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD OPINION

Impact assessment / European Social Security Pass (ESSPASS)

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD

Brussels,
RSB

Opinion

Title: Impact assessment / European Social Security Pass (ESSPASS)

Overall opinion: POSITIVE WITH RESERVATIONS

(A) Policy context

The Social Security Coordination (SSC) Regulation No 883/2004 on the coordination of social security systems and its Implementing Regulation (EC) No 987/2009, support free movement of persons within the single market. While the Electronic Exchange of Social Security Information (EESSI) enables faster, secure, cross-border exchanges of information among social security institutions, the exchange of data between individuals and administrations in cross-border scenarios remains cumbersome, mostly relying on paper-based procedures. The ESSPASS initiative builds on the existing digital systems like EESSI, aiming to make interactions between individuals and administrations more effective and efficient and forms part of broader efforts to digitalise services, reduce administrative burdens and improve labour mobility across Europe. It also supports wider EU goals on competitiveness, innovation, and full digital access to key public services by 2030.

(B) Key issues

The Board notes the additional information provided and commitments to make changes to the report.

However, the report still contains significant shortcomings. The Board gives a positive opinion with reservations because it expects the lead Service to rectify the following aspects:

(1) The analysis of problems and their drivers is not sufficiently underpinned by observational evidence and does not differentiate between stakeholders' groups.

(2) The specific objectives are not sufficiently SMART. The logic behind the design and structuring of the policy options is not clear.

(3) The report does not sufficiently justify all key assumptions, in particular those driving the cost and benefit analysis. The sensitivity analysis is not sufficiently developed.

This opinion concerns a draft impact assessment which may differ from the final version.

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(C) What to improve

(1) The report should clarify the scope of the initiative regarding the portable documents to be covered in the short and longer run. Beyond the initial focus on portable documents A1 and EHIC, the report should explain the phased roll-out of other portable documents.

(2) The report should improve the problem definition, building on available evidence, in particular observational data. The problems and their drivers should be analysed with more granularity, allowing to understand the magnitude of problems faced by the specific stakeholder groups, e.g. (a) workers, differentiated where relevant by self-employed and posted workers, (b) businesses, with a possible focus on SMEs and (c) administrations. The report should also better differentiate the problems stemming from the legal base and those linked to implementation. The report should better analyse the simplification and digitalisation potential.

(3) The report should frame the overarching objective more strategically and link it better to the Commission priorities. The specific objectives should be drafted in a SMARTer way, considering in this context how success will be measured.

(4) The report should improve its intervention logic by better explaining the approach for constructing the policy options and providing a more detailed description of the policy measures, especially as regards their implementation. The voluntary options should be used for sensitivity analysis only or discarded early on.

(5) The report should improve the analysis of costs and benefits based on a strengthened assessment of economic, social and environmental impacts. The key assumptions, particularly those driving the outcome of the analysis, should be transparently disclosed and justified (e.g. data sources, evidence base, related uncertainties) and where relevant be a subject of sensitivity analysis. A summary of all costs and benefits, accompanied by sufficient explanations on the cost structure, their nature (one-off vs recurrent) and distribution (who bears them) should be provided. Based on the improved analysis, the report should provide a more robust comparison of options.

(6) The coherence with existing or proposed policy initiatives (e.g. EUDI or e-declaration proposal) should be further developed.

(7) The monitoring and evaluation framework should be accompanied by well-defined indicators, data sources, baseline/benchmarks and, where relevant, quantified targets. The framework would benefit from specifying indicators that are stakeholder-specific (e.g. SMEs, verifiers, citizens, etc.). Indicators covering cybersecurity should also be included.

Some more technical comments have been sent directly to the author Service.

(D) Conclusion **The lead Service may proceed with the initiative.** **The lead Service must revise the report and its executive summary in accordance with the Board's findings before launching the interservice consultation.**	
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