

Press Release

EES solution from one source: secunet and SSARM make Bulgaria's border controls fit for the future

[Essen/Germany, 21 October 2021] In cooperation with the general contractor SSARM, the cybersecurity company secunet has implemented a secure turnkey solution for EES-compliant border controls at Sofia, Varna and Burgas airports. As one of the first EU countries, Bulgaria has thus prepared its air borders with secunet border gears for the EU-wide Entry/Exit System EES and is ready for operation long before its launch in May 2022. The future required processes which considerably increase the workload for the authorities and significantly prolong waiting times for passengers at border control, will be simplified and accelerated with the user-friendly, automated systems for biometric data capture.

While international air traffic is only slowly returning to normal, preparations for future regular operations are already in progress at the Bulgarian border authorities. With the recently installed EES-compliant border control systems, the busiest airports - Sofia, Varna and Burgas - are already well prepared for the future border control processes of the Entry/Exit System. Under the Smart Borders Initiative, third-country nationals will have to register with a facial image and four fingerprints at land, sea and air borders from May 2022.

SSARM, which is specialized in the delivery and integration of IT applications, was awarded the contract last year - following a call for tenders from the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior - and relied on solutions from secunet for the implementation. Thanks to the efficient cooperation and dedicated commitment of the local partner, the new border control systems were installed on schedule despite the challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. At the airports in Sofia, Varna and Burgas, a total of 20 secunet easygates with facial and



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fingerprint verification are now in use. EU passengers can thus cross the borders automatically and more quickly. Eight secunet easykiosk systems enable travellers from third countries to pre-enrol their biometric data independently. At the stationary border control desks, 66 secunet easytowers and fingerprint scanners also support the biometric capture of facial images and fingerprints. Finally, the technical components were adapted to the airport-specific environment as well as individual customer requirements.

Security plays a key role in automated systems, for example, to protect against circumvention attempts. Border control officers can monitor data entries at the easykiosk via cameras to ensure that the biometric data indeed belongs to the traveller. Additional sensors protect against possible attacks with forged photos and fingerprints using Presentation Attack Detection (PAD).

"The Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior has implemented a secure and efficient border control strategy at Sofia, Varna and Burgas airports with the turnkey solution from the secunet border gears product portfolio, which represents an important step towards EES compliance and thus into the future," concludes Marco Breitenstein, Head of Division Homeland Security at secunet.

Nikolay Paunov, General Manager SSARM, explains further: "The implementation of the EES-Ready solution at Sofia, Varna and Burgas airports is the second project that SSARM is carrying out for the Bulgarian Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with secunet. A major challenge was the realization during the COVID pandemic. SSARM, together with the Ministry of Interior, the Border Police and secunet, managed to ensure a smooth delivery, installation and integration process despite the circumstances. The solution relies on current biometric technologies and provides secure automated border control that is compliant according to European EES regulations. Above all, travelers will benefit: the border control process will be significantly



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accelerated and the travel experience for passengers at airports will be improved remarkably."

Press contact

Patrick Franitza
Spokesman

secunet Security Networks AG
Kurfürstenstraße 58
45138 Essen/Germany
Phone +49 201 54 54-1234
Fax +49 201 54 54-1235
E-mail: presse@secunet.com
<http://www.secunet.com>

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