

1. In your opinion, how effective do you think it is to use a fingerprint database in order to stop people from using multiple identities?

Reliability of a ID-document depends on the fact that a person described in the card is really the person in question. From the trust perspective it would be optimal to verify that biometrics, meaning fingerprints and facial image, don't change (except of course they age) when new card is issued. Meaning that I shouldn't be able to acquire official ID-card with your alphanumeric information and my picture and/or fingerprints. Identity management is one of the key processes for the modern society, as many rights and obligations are connected to features related to identity. In an optimal process fingerprint database provides possibility to compare new applicant to the person who previously got the card. In that sense fingerprint database can be effective, but at the same time it must be noted that biometric identifiers are sensitive information. Of course same effect can be achieved if it is possible to do comparison with the old ID-card/passport, but sometimes they are lost or destroyed, so there is no possibility to collect them from the card.

2. Do you think that a "national fingerprint database" such as the one you have in Finland could be an effective tool in Sweden as far as helping the authorities in solving the problem of people using multiple identities?

National fingerprint database can be one effective tool in preventing persons to have multiple identities with official identity documents. However, it is not only the database and comparison of fingerprints that define the reliability, but one must put the whole process under scrutiny, from the data collection, to issuance (including comparison process), to the document security features that prevent falsification after issuance.

3. People who are residing in Finland but who are not Finnish citizens do not get Finnish passports or Finnish national identity cards. Do you have any kind of established systems using fingerprints to make sure that foreigners in Finland do not use multiple identities? If so, is there a difference if the person in question is citizen of a country belonging to EU/EES or not?

Questions related to residence permits (RP) fall under the Finnish Immigration Authority and I am not expert on the specificities, but in general every applicant over 6-years must give their fingerprints when applying RP. EU-citizens, who stay in Finland, must register they stay, if they stay over 3 months in Finland. However, they of course don't get residence permit, but they can use their national ID-card or passport in Finland. In order to increase the safety of these documents, there is the EU-regulation (EU) 2019/1157 that is aimed to strengthen the security of EU Member States ID-Cards, RP's and registration certificates.

4. Is there people who have managed to acquire multiple identities in Sweden and other countries causing any problem in Finland, taking these identities with them to Finland, or is this a very minimal problem?

To my knowledge this is not a major issue in Finland, but I am not an expert in this. However let me also note that detection of multiple identity is difficult, which means that the phenomena can be bigger than our statistics imply.

5. People from outside of the EU/EES have to have their fingerprint taken when they migrate to Sweden and their fingerprints are stored in the Eurodac database. As a fellow

EU country I guess this procedure is the same for Finland. Now after ten years Eurodac erases all fingerprints. Do you know if you in Finland store fingerprints of immigrants even after ten years, even if they are erased from the Eurodac database? In Sweden this is not the case, after ten years you can in principle seek asylum in Sweden again in another identity because your fingerprints are erased.

Once again, I am not an expert on this specific question of national data retention period, but in general there is always limits to the storage time of information. This of course means that there is also a possibility to misuse systems after certain period, but on the other hand it protects the privacy of the persons, who do everything legitimately.

6. Do you have anything else you would like to add on this subject?

You are touching very important topic of identity management. There are many different systems in Europe and wide variety of solutions, based on historical and cultural reasons. In some countries the right to privacy and right to be forgotten is higher than in others and vice a versa. As the Nordic and European countries get more interlinked, also the importance of reliable identity management is crowing. At the same time we must also be aware of possible misuse and try to ensure privacy by design.

(Samnytt.se ställer frågor till och får svar från den finländske gränspolisen Matti Pitkäniitty)