

Belgium plans collection of plane, train, ferry users' data

August 31 2015



People wait to pass through new automated border control gates at Brussels Airport in Zaventem on August 3, 2015

Belgium on Monday unveiled plans for a controversial system to collect data on all airline passengers, as well as international train and ferry travellers, in the wake of a foiled attack on a train running between Belgium and Paris.

Interior Minister Jan Jambon said he floated the plan at a meeting Saturday in Paris of ministers from nine European Union countries linked by train.

The ministers from Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland met to discuss tightening security on trains after a thwarted jihadist attack on a Thalys train on August 21.

Ayoub El Khazzani, the 25-year-old Moroccan arrested over the attack, boarded the Amsterdam-Paris train in Brussels.

"I argued for a European PNR (Passenger Name Record system)," Jambon told a Belgian parliamentary commission.

The European Parliament has been considering a PNR system for airline travellers since 2011 but the measure sought by the United States has been held up by concerns among lawmakers over privacy concerns.

"My personal opinion is that it must be done for airline traffic but that we must also examine whether we can extend it to trains and other modes of transport, including boats," the minister said.

"We must check whether the identity given is correct. If the name is on a blacklist we can arrest them before they board," he added.

Jambon called for the European PNR to be adopted "by the end of the year", adding that he was working on a parallel bill to establish a Belgian passenger [data collection](#) system that he hoped would be also be implemented by the year's end.

Khazzani was already on the radar of several European intelligence agencies, who had flagged him as a radical Islamist, when he took his

seat in the Thalys.

Shortly after the train crossed from Belgium into France he came bursting out of a toilet armed with an assault rifle, 270 rounds of ammunition and a Luger pistol. He was quickly overpowered by a group of passengers.

Three EU countries—Britain, Italy and Spain—already have a national data collection system for [airline passengers](#).

Belgium is however the first country to suggest extending the measure to trains and boats.

A European Commission spokesman said Monday that the issue of transport security would be discussed by EU transport officials on September 11, ahead of a meeting of EU transport ministers on October 7.

But it was "far too soon to think about extending" passenger data collection to other transport forms beside planes, he said.

© 2015 AFP

Citation: Belgium plans collection of plane, train, ferry users' data (2015, August 31) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-08-belgium-plane-ferry-users.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.