



ICAO ELECTRONIC PASSPORTS FOR BELGIUM

In addition to issuing passports for Belgium (since 1999) within the framework of an exclusive contract, Oberthur has, since 2003, also been in charge of the personalization of these all-important travel documents.

In 2004, Oberthur submitted, to the Belgian authorities, the first electronic passport in the world compatible with the ICAO standard, featuring a cover with an antenna created using a screen printing process, and comprising a chip with an Oberthur Java Card OK, assembled using flip chip technology. This passport was manufactured, in its entirety, by Oberthur in its Chantepie plant (Brittany, France) including the screen printing (of the antenna), component setting and booklet assembly.

The personalization center, the equipment, as well as the software applications are all owned by Oberthur Technologies. Moreover, Oberthur Technologies retains complete responsibility for all personnel, maintenance and consumables. Specifically, this involves collecting and then processing passport requests from 640 municipalities all around Belgium, and delivering finalized, personalized documents five days later. Requests for Embassies and emergency applications are processed within 24 hours or the same evening, respectively.

Since 2004, Oberthur has been developing a personalization system now able to deliver about 500,000 electronic passports each year, in 5 formats, and 3 languages, with varying total page counts per passport type. Concretely, this means that the Oberthur system is able to manage over 12 passport booklet categories.

In 2007, Oberthur made a significant modification to the component used, by switching to a more recent component technology (ID-One ePass v1 - more details given below) and a native mask.

Since February 2008, Oberthur has been providing the Belgian authorities with a new passport generation with extra-high physical security features.

In 2004, Oberthur developed their specific version of the Fasver Imaprotek® laser printer, with double mounting, hot rolled, and completed the securitization (or securizing) of the personalization page with a Fasver Fasprotek®, also hot rolled.

With this new model, Oberthur is in a position to apply, in just 10 seconds using a press, a varnish whose substrate is not sewn into the passport (materiel and raw material provided by Hologramme Industrie).

At a glance:

- ❖ Number of passport types: 12
- ❖ Laminate and lamination used:
 - from 2003 to 2007: heat-sealable laminate sewn into the passport with a personalized insert (Fasver);
 - since start 2007: Hologramme Industrie press and varnish.
- ❖ Personalization:
 - 2003 to 2007: directly on the passport choosing bubble jet (Diletta) and on the insert in black-and-white laser printing;
 - since start 2007: directly onto the passport using visible bubble jet ink under UV (Diletta), laser etching on polycarbonate (Muehlbauer).
- ❖ Processing volume and time: 500,000 passports each year
 - Delivered in 5 days in all standard cases;
 - Delivered in 48 hours for embassies;
 - Delivered the same day in the case of top priority applications.