

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-000713/26
to the Commission
Raquel García Hermida-Van Der Walle (Renew)
(19 February 2026)**

Subject: EU allowing US access to national biometric databases in EU Member States

Under the ‘Enhanced Border Security Partnership’, the United States has threatened to revoke visa-free access for citizens of EU Member States that do not grant it access to their national biometric databases before 31 December 2026.

On 16 December 2025, the Council adopted a decision authorising the Commission to start negotiations for a new framework agreement allowing the United States to access biometric data for security and identity verification related to border procedures and visa applications. The first round of negotiations took place in January 2026.

Against this background:

1. Why did the Commission give in to this threat from the US government and immediately start negotiations in the current geopolitical context, and does it consider the past two months to be an appropriate negotiating climate with the United States on access to such sensitive data? If so, why?
2. Will the Commission suspend negotiations with the United States until all threats against EU Member States have been explicitly withdrawn? If not, why not?
3. What countermeasures will the Commission take if the United States revokes visa-free access for EU citizens, and will the Commission use the EU’s economic position and temporarily suspend the visa waiver for US citizens under the EU’s visa reciprocity mechanism, until EU citizens are able to travel to the United States without a visa again?

Submitted: 19.2.2026

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(21 April 2026)**

The decision to enter negotiations with the US was taken by the Member States on 16 December 2025 when the Council adopted a decision authorising the opening of negotiations for a framework agreement between the EU and the US on the reciprocal exchange of information for security screenings and identity verifications relating to border procedures and visa applications ⁽¹⁾, and appointed the Commission as the EU negotiator.

Key priorities for the Commission during these negotiations are to ensure a fair, reciprocal and proportionate information exchange which would bring security benefits to the EU and ensure respect of EU’s standards on the protection of personal data.

The visa waiver reciprocity is a principle under the EU’s common visa policy and an objective which the EU pursues in a proactive manner in its relations with third countries — including the US.

As long as the Commission continues to see sustained progress through its engagement with the US, it considers that full visa reciprocity for all EU nationals can be best achieved through continued diplomatic cooperation with the US, and in close coordination with the Member States concerned.

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision (EU) 2025/2640: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/2640/oj/eng>.