

## Blazing a trail

**The Privium scheme at Schiphol airport has played a pioneering role in the growth of the registered traveler program phenomenon. A closer look at the program as it reaches its five-year anniversary**



Frits Bosch,  
director of Dartagnan Biometric Solutions

**B**ack in 2001, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol implemented a customer loyalty scheme, Privium, using biometric technology. This program provides frequent travelers with dedicated facilities to expedite their journey whilst at the airport. Frits Bosch, director of Schiphol Group's full daughter company Dartagnan Biometric Solutions, looks back at five years of Privium operation and share his views on future developments for Automated Border passage and Registered Traveler programs.

**What is Privium? How does it work? Can anybody register for the scheme?**

Privium is an airport service program aimed at the business traveler and other frequent users, and is designed to provide members with priority, speed and comfort whilst at the airport. Services include convenient fast pass border passage using iris recognition, priority parking, business class check-in regardless of ticket-type, one-call telephone airport assistance and discounted valet parking. Privium is designed to reward the airports most loyal users.

The program is open to European, EEA and Swiss Nationals, and applicants can apply to join firstly via the website and then by making an appointment to visit the Privium

Service Point for enrolment into the program. Enrolment includes an eligibility assessment by the Dutch Border Police. Upon a positive outcome of this assessment, pictures of each iris are taken which are stored on a personalized smart card. The new Privium member is then given the opportunity to practice using the iris recognition camera in the comfort of the lounge environment to become familiar with the automated border passage process. Finally, the Privium card is activated and is ready for use at the automated border passage gate and other Privium facilities.

Each journey, the passenger places their Privium smart card

into a reader, and a check for valid passport is performed with the Dutch authorities and valid membership of the scheme is also verified. The person's iris information is then compared against the iris information stored on the card. The border passage process takes around 12 seconds.

For all the services and facilities Privium membership costs €119 per year. Privium Basic membership costs €99 per year and entitles the member to use the fast border passage only.

### Why was the Privium program implemented?

In the late 90's Schiphol Group decided to develop the program to anticipate the needs of frequent travelers for additional services. Passenger profiles showed that a relatively small number of very frequent travelers constituted an extremely important passenger group for Schiphol and that certain problems could be solved for them. Offering our most valuable customers added value was a way of increasing their quality perception and strengthening the customer relationship.

### What is the customer feedback on the scheme?

Privium membership has grown to more than 30,000 members and the program has an annual renewal rate of 95%. Recent re-

search among members shows an extremely high level of satisfaction, with 91 percent rating Privium products as 'good' or 'excellent'. Similarly, 95 percent were highly satisfied with the levels of service at the Privium Service Point. The speed and convenience of the service program are particularly attractive to our customers as is the ability to park right next to the airport terminal, the possibility of making use of business class check-in and the use of special lounge facilities at the Privium Service Point.

Privium was at least five years ahead of its time – it is only now that other airports are contemplating adopting similar schemes. We have built up considerable experience through running Privium that we are leveraging for other programs at the airport such as staff access control, for example. More than 35,000 airport workers are currently in possession of the new ID cards that contain their biometric information.

### Which stakeholders were involved in the realization of Privium?

There were multiple stakeholders involved in the program: the Schiphol Group operating the airport, the Immigration and Border Police Authorities responsible for border crossing, and the airlines with their check-in operation. The stakeholders worked together to make the Privium program a

## Meet Frits Bosch

Frits Bosch joined Dartagnan Biometric Solutions as managing director in 2003 having spent the previous four years as senior vice president of Wholesale & Carrier Services at Global Crossing Europe, where he built the business from scratch into a US\$ 350 million recurring annual revenue in 2002. From 1985 until 1999 Bosch held several senior positions with AT&T/Lucent Technologies: firstly as managing director of AT&T China, then as director of business management Global Public Networks, directing the business activity of the transmission systems business in the EMEA region, and finally as vice president Global Accounts & New Operators Europe. He has degrees in electrical engineering and business administration from the Netherlands and completed an advanced management programme at Insead in France.

“

Privium was at least five years ahead of its time - it is only now that other airports are contemplating adopting similar schemes

”

reality. In addition, we had to meet all rules and regulations of the Netherlands as well as the specific requirements of the Dutch Immigration authorities. We eventually agreed on conducting a one-year pilot for the automated border passage with the Government, and with its success we were given the green light to continue.

What still makes Privium unique is the Public Private Partnership that Amsterdam Airport Schiphol has with the Border Control Authorities for the operation of the Automated Border Passage facilities. These facilities are operated by the airport operator under supervision of the Royal Dutch

Marechaussee who remains in full control of every border passage that takes place. I believe that this type of Public Private Partnership can serve as a model for the aviation industry given the many innovations that will take place in border management and passenger facilitation in the coming decade.



*The border passage process takes around 12 seconds with the Privium scheme and involves the passenger comparing his iris information with the information stored on the card*

### **Are there any future developments planned to enhance the Privium service?**

We are looking to cooperate with airport and Government authorities in other countries to develop fully automated border crossing between countries so registered travelers can pass seamlessly through international airports. Schiphol Group has the experience and know-how to build and run these so-called registered traveler programs and is making this available to other interested parties. For this reason Schiphol Group has also created a subsidiary company named Dartagnan Biometric Solutions. We have just recently launched a registered

traveler scheme in South East Asia under the brand name Sapphire.

### **Five years later and only now are we seeing other airports implementing biometrics. Why?**

Schiphol has always been a very innovative airport. Besides that, I think it is also down to the fact that it takes time to understand and get to know a new technology before investment is made in the technology. Moreover the benefits of biometric technology are now more widely understood by the public. Security is high on the agenda and with the wider adoption of ePassports, government authorities and the aviation industry are looking to improve their existing processes to incorporate this new technology. The introduction of the ePassport is an important driver for the biometrics and security market.

Market players are gearing themselves up to meet these new challenges. A few weeks ago, for example, LogicaCMG, one of Europe's leading IT services companies, announced its partnership with Dartagnan and multi-modal and fusion experts WCC Smart Search and Match. The partnership is aimed at offering customers complete identity management solutions. It includes face, iris and fingerprint recognition capabilities that can be integrated into the fast, complex

processes surrounding the monitoring of passenger and employee movements.

### **What is the future of biometrics in border crossing?**

The Privium Program has, to a certain extent, blazed a trail for these new phenomena known as registered traveler programs. In many countries around the globe, governments are looking into the possibility of distinguishing trusted from non-trusted individuals for border passage and/or security checks. Trusted means that in exchange for voluntary upfront vetting and background checks, the traveler is entitled to expedited clearance facilities for border passage and/or security.

By increasing the group of frequent travelers that have undergone upfront checks and by processing these individuals in an automated way, less pressure will be put on the traditional manual checks that are taking place. As a result, existing border and security resources can focus more on non-trusted travelers. Registered Traveler programs, such as Privium and Sapphire, are a great example of this principle. For the 'non-trusted' travelers the biometrically enabled ePassport will be an additional means of assessing the authenticity of travel documents.