

Zetes and Thales selected by Belgium to provide next generation ePassports

- The Belgium Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs (BUZA) renewed its contract with the consortium including Zetes and Thales for the issuance of highly secure ePassports to Belgian citizens.
- The new passport produced by Thales will be completely redesigned including a data page made of 100% polycarbonate.
- The contract will last for seven years, during which time Thales is expected to deliver an average of 550,000 passports a year.

After a first seven year contract for the current award-winning passport, the Belgium Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs has chosen to renew its relationship with the consortium run by Zetes, and including Thales. Both companies have built a trusted cooperation over the past few years, with Zetes offering personalisation services and Thales providing its range of ePassport booklets. The consortium will supply the Federal Public Service with a highly secure, innovative ePassport, in an effort to fight counterfeiting.

The new passport for Belgium citizens will introduce a new design for visa pages, sophisticated security assets and a modernized data page made of polycarbonate technology.

To combat forgery, unique security features have been integrated into the new passport to create one of the most secure documents on the market. These include laser-engraved pictures, laser perforated information and embedded data that can only be read using UV light. These physical security features are combined with digital protection inside the chip in the data page (where the citizens' data is securely stored). In a world first, the passport number will also be laser engraved across the hinge and data page as an additional counter measure against ID fraud.

*"We are proud to work with Zetes to provide the Belgium Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs one of the most secure passports. To respect privacy and fight fraud, we have developed a unique passport design and modernized the data pages with rugged polycarbonate technology, making them extremely safe", said **Pierre Thepaut, VP Sales Europe, Thales Digital Identity and Security.***

About Thales

Thales (Euronext Paris: HO) is a global technology leader shaping the world of tomorrow today. The Group provides solutions, services and products to customers in the aeronautics, space, transport, digital identity and security, and defence markets. With 83,000 employees in 68 countries, Thales generated sales of €19 billion in 2019 (on a pro forma basis including Gemalto over 12 months).

Thales is investing in particular in digital innovations — connectivity, Big Data, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity — technologies that support businesses, organisations and governments in their decisive moments.



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