

NO2ID

Â EXPATS TO PROTEST OVER UKâ€™s ID INTERROGATION CENTRES Â On 26 March 2007, British expatriates around the world will be telling the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of their opposition to plans for ID cards and a database state in the UK. Â The event is part of ID-Day, organised to protest against the opening of the first ID interrogation and fingerprinting centres in the UK. Behind the dayâ€™s action is NO2ID, the non-partisan British organisation campaigning against the introduction of ID cards and a database state. NO2ID has seen rapid growth in its support recently, both within the UK and in the overseas British community, where it has an Expatsâ€™ Group. As their contribution to ID-Day, expat supporters will be conducting an e-mail lobby of the FCO, which is the passport issuing authority for British citizens living abroad. Â Full details and the link to the FCO are on the NO2ID Expatsâ€™ Group website at <http://no2id-expats.chown.ch> Â All British citizens living outside the UK are invited to take part, via the website.

Given the linkage made by the present UK government between its ID scheme and entitlement to British passports, expats will be seeking assurances that they will not be subject to interrogation nor to fingerprinting or iris-scanning at a British consulate or embassy when renewing their passports. The NO2ID Expatsâ€™ Group warns that an interrogating role for consulates and embassies would inevitably damage their relationship with British citizens living abroad. But it is also concerned by reports that interrogation and biometric enrolment of British citizens abroad might be subcontracted to private firms. It points out that subcontracting would raise data security risks even greater than those already created by the proposed scheme. In the UK, the interrogation and fingerprinting centres will soon start processing first-time passport applicants. In the near future, the new United Kingdom Identity & Passport Service (UKIPS) will also refuse to renew existing passports inside the UK unless applicants attend an official interview and agree to be fingerprinted and give a wide range of personal information for a database, the National Identity Register (NIR). At the same time, they will be offered a national ID card. Whether applicants accept the card or not, their biometrics (including fingerprints) and other details will go on to the NIR and will remain there for as long as it exists. The biometric ID cards and the register to be introduced in the UK are considerably more intrusive than those used so far in other countries. Records of card use will rapidly build up an "audit trail" on each individual within the NIR. Citizens will have no right to know when their file is consulted, and by whom. Under its current leadership, Britainâ€™s Labour government is pledged to make ID cards compulsory if it wins the next general election. All other significant political parties in the UK are committed to scrapping the scheme. Â NO2ID is backed by a wide range of organisations and political parties. Affiliates include the National Union of Journalists. Â Details of action in the UK are on NO2IDâ€™s main website at www.no2id.net