Passport price to rise?

source: NO2ID Expats Group, 26 March 2007Â STEEP PASSPORT PRICE HIKE FOR BRITISH EXPATS Â
RENEWALS BEFORE 1 APRIL WILL BEAT THE RISE Â For British citizens living abroad, the price of a passport will
rise to 119 pounds sterling from 1 April (about â‚¬176 or US$223.40 at todayâ€™s rates). With a few monthsâ€™ delay, passpo
charges to British expats are following those applied within the UK itself. The steep increase will help to pay for
interrogations, ID cards, fingerprinting and a new, intrusive database, the National Identity Register, which will build up an
â€œaudit trailâ€• of each citizenâ€™s ID use. British passports will now be among the most expensive in the world. Â News o
price rise emerged today during a campaign by British expats to mark ID-Day, organised to protest against the opening
of the first ID interrogation and fingerprinting centres in the UK. A campaigner who phoned a British consulate was told
about the increase during the conversation. Behind todayâ€™s action is NO2ID, the non-partisan British organisation
campaigning against the introduction of ID cards and a database state. Â Contacted by a member of the NO2ID Expatsâ€™
Group, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) confirmed that the cost of a passport will be going up by â€œa
lotâ€• on 1 April â€œall over the worldâ€•. An official said that she did not know the precise figure, but that 119 pounds sounde
â€œabout rightâ€•. Â The NO2ID Expatsâ€™ Group campaign of e-mail protests continues. Full details and a link to the FCO
the NO2ID Expatsâ€™ Group website at http://no2id-expats.chown.chÂ 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 are 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 reply, one British consulate confirmed today that it is â€œcurrently awaiting guidance on the future role of our Post in
delivering local biometric servicesâ€•. Meanwhile, it has emerged that the biometrics in the new ePassports issued by EU
countries will in any case not comply with US requirements. In a bid to salvage its widely discredited US-VISIT border
control programme, the US will soon be demanding ten fingerprints instead of two. Austrian public service broadcaster
the ORF questioned the German government about this. Germany currently holds the EU presidency. The German
interior ministryâ€™s reply, as quoted by the ORF: â€œThe aim of introducing electronic passports is the secure comparison of
the checked person and the document when crossing a border [1:1 verification], for which two fingerprints are suitable
and entirely adequate ... The European concept does not provide for a database comparisonÂ [1:n identification] such as
takes place, for example, in the USA within the framework of the US-VISIT programme.â€• The Austrian broadcaster also
notes that the EU passports cannot even be matched against European police databases of criminalsâ€™ fingerprints,
currently being networked EU-wide. So â€œwanted criminals who get a corrupt official anywhere in the EU to issue them with
 a passport in another name, but with their own fingerprints, cannot be identified by this meansâ€•. Â NO2ID is backed by
a wide range of organisations and political parties. Details of action in the UK are on NO2IDâ€™s main website at
www.no2id.net