

Exchange of information between countries with common borders: the case of Canada and the United States

Owing to the intensity of traffic between Canada and the United States, this is a perfect example of the exchange of information on border crossings. Flows from the United States to Canada are of such magnitude that for more than fifteen years the Canadian authorities prepared statistics enabling them to distinguish and measure arrivals of travellers from countries other than the USA. This was known as the Official Canadian Government Travel Survey.

Canada's border authorities have been providing information on entries and re-entries into the country ever since 1920. Wide-ranging information is gathered on the number of international travellers, broken down by category and means of transport, and on the number of vehicles of all kinds crossing the borders. The categories in question are: (a) residents of Canada returning from the USA; (b) residents of the USA travelling to Canada; (c) residents of other countries travelling to Canada; and (d) other travellers (crew members, diplomats, military personnel, immigrants and former residents).

These findings, besides being used in various statistics and by a number of Canadian institutions for such purposes as the Tourism Satellite Account and the Balance of Payments and by the Canada Travel Commission and the Canadian immigration authorities, and besides being sent to various international bodies such as the World Tourism Organization, are made available to the Department of Commerce of the United States of America.

U.S. - Canada Smart Border/30 Point Action Plan Update

In December 2001, Governor Tom Ridge and Deputy Prime Minister John Manley Signed the Smart Border Declaration and Associated 30-Point Action Plan to Enhance the Security of Our Shared Border While Facilitating the Legitimate Flow of People and Goods. The Action Plan Has Four Pillars: the Secure Flow of People, the Secure Flow Of Goods, Secure Infrastructure, and Information Sharing and coordination in the enforcement of these objectives.

#1 BIOMETRIC IDENTIFIERS

The United States and Canada have agreed to develop common standards for the biometrics that we use and have also agreed to adopt interoperable and compatible technology to read these biometrics. In the interest of having cards that could be used across different modes of travel, we have agreed to use cards that are capable of storing multiple biometrics.

Our countries have begun to integrate biometric capabilities into new programs being deployed. For example, the NEXUS-Air pilot program will evaluate iris scanning technology and the new Canadian Permanent Resident Card is biometric-ready.

#13 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The United States and Canada have worked together to provide technical assistance to developing countries to deal with threats to our shared security. These cooperative efforts will continue. Joint interdiction exercises and joint training programs will assist other countries to combat document fraud and irregular migration. Such assistance includes improving document integrity, providing expertise on border controls, and joint training.

In addition, the United States and Canada conducted a joint presentation to the European Community CIREFI (Immigration Centre of the Council of the European Union) meeting in June, regarding the immigration items in the Smart Border Action Plan.

More information on the data sources and methodology used by Canada and the United States is available at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/20021206-1.html>
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/sdds/5005.htm#Section1>