

# Munich Airport implements biometric screening for secure ID control

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Passengers undergo biometric screening using facial recognition at Munich Airport Terminal 2. Photo credit: Future Travel Experience

[Munich Airport](#) has implemented biometric screening using facial recognition at its Terminal 2 so travellers no longer need to present their passports or boarding passes. Instead, they approach the gate, show their face and are securely admitted through Gunnebo's biometric e-gate.

Munich Airport Terminal 2, which houses all Lufthansa and Star Alliance flights, has been using Gunnebo's Biometric E-Gates since its pilot project launch in late 2020. The goal of the gates was to improve passenger flow amid projected increases in traveller numbers, [the press release states](#).

"Every passenger who uses biometrics is a happy user," said Tim Dettloff, Manager of Aviation Processes at Munich Airport Terminal 2. "You don't have to look for your boarding pass in several pockets or wallets to find it. You just use your face and pass the checkpoint."

The terminal has had Gunnebo's non-biometric BoardSec gates installed since 2018, but required an upgrade for biometric screening using facial recognition leading to Gunnebo retrofitting the existing gates.

This meant upgrading hardware to include biometric cameras and user displays, updating the gate PC for a new high-speed computer and installing a new biometric platform software while improving IT connections from the gate PC.

## **Overcoming challenges**

The main challenges with implementing the new biometrics project were privacy, COVID-19, speed and lighting environment, according to a press release. Privacy was a key issue because of the EU's strict General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that guarantees an individual's right to the protection of personal data. To comply with these regulations, facial recognition images had to be taken in a specific way without capturing information about the person's surroundings.

The Gunnebo technology operates with integrated biometric sensors that are activated by the passenger approaching the gate at a specific distance and zone, to avoid capturing images of bystanders.

Biometric screening in Terminal 2 was implemented in late 2020 when masks were widely worn among passengers due to COVID-19. This meant that the screening software needed to work with and without face masks. The Gunnebo biometric screening allows good facial recognition even when a portion of the face is covered. The process is touchless for passengers, requiring no physical contact with the gate or other surfaces during screening.

The speed of the screening process is less than two seconds to streamline the flow of passengers and avoid bottlenecks in the airport. The gate computer was upgraded to an IB917 computer system with the latest generation processor for high image-matching speeds, the press release said.

The press release also stated that while lighting is sometimes an issue with these types of facial recognition tools, light levels in the Munich Airport were sufficient and no upgrades were required.

## **Biometric screening in the future**

In April 2022, Gunnebo biometric BoardSec gates were also installed at Hamburg Airport. Additional lighting next to the cameras had to be installed there due to insufficient airport lighting for capturing images, according to the press release.

Passengers only have to register once when transiting through airports using this biometric screening. They must download the Star Alliance App and capture a photo of their face and passport to register. From there, the app creates a biometric token that is used on any Lufthansa, Swiss or Austrian Airlines flights with biometric e-gates.

The system creates a gallery of passenger images for those scheduled to fly on a specific date. The gates then match the passenger's facial screening with the biometric token in the system.

The press release stated that Star Alliance is extremely pleased with the success of its e-gates and plans use biometric e-gates for 50 percent of its ID controls by 2025.

"Biometrics is really a game-changer in terms of customer experience," said Christian Draeger, Star Alliance's VP of Customer Experience. "This has been highlighted by the pandemic, but even before that, it was clear this technology would bring significant improvements to the customer experience in terms of a seamless flow through the different touchpoints. Biometrics achieves this in a very intuitive manner."