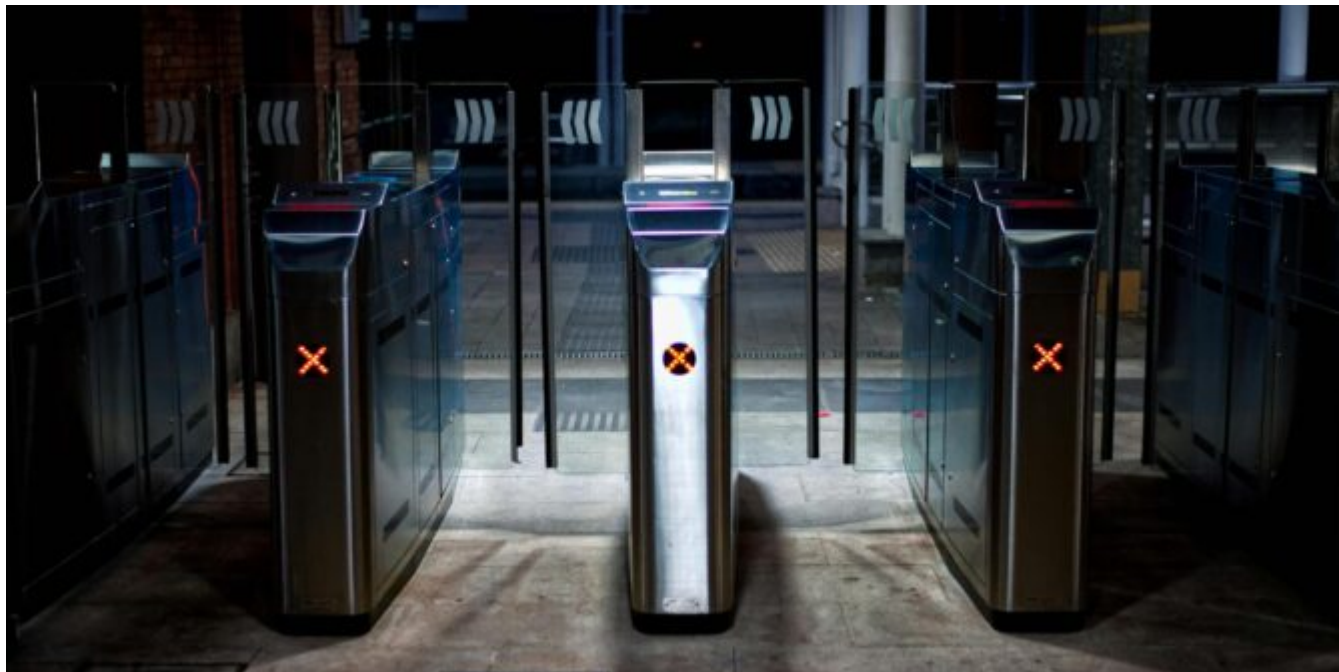


EU-LISA: New Europe Travel Requirements, the BizAv Guide

David Mumford
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Key Points

- **Operators bringing passengers to most countries in Europe will soon need to be registered with the EU's new electronic Entry/Exit System for passenger screening.**
- **Update 18 Mar 2025:** The EES phase of this program (the digital system to replace the manual stamping of passports at the border) has been postponed to October 2025. The next phase, ETIAS (the thing that is similar to the US ESTA program), is expected to start from the end of 2026.

What is EES?

EES stands for **Entry/Exit System**.

When it's happening: This was meant to launch in 2024, but this has been postponed to October 2025. Apparently several countries said their systems were not ready in time.

Big picture: EES will be turning manual passport stamping and visa checking into a digital process instead.

For travellers: The idea is that it makes it quicker and easier for travellers to pass through border control. The first time they arrive at a border crossing point, they get fingerprints scanned and their photo taken, their passport does not get stamped, and this info is then stored in the system for next time they exit/enter.

For the authorities: It allows the authorities to have a much clearer picture of who is where, and whether people have over-stayed.

Who it's for: The system will be used to register non-EU nationals* (both visa holders and visa exempt travellers) travelling for a short stay (up to 90 days within any 180-day period), each time they cross the external borders of the 29 European countries doing EES.

**Non-EU national: means a traveller not holding the nationality of any European Union country or the nationality of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland.*

In the initial phase of EES, only single and double entry visas will be logged in the system. This means that the travellers with others type of visa (multiple entry, short-stay, long-stay or airport transit visa) or authorizations (residence permits, diplomatic passport, visa-exempt) will still have to be checked manually.

The 29 European countries doing EES:

 Austria	 Estonia	 Iceland	 Malta	 Slovakia
 Belgium	 Finland	 Italy	 Netherlands	 Slovenia
 Bulgaria	 France	 Latvia	 Norway	 Spain
 Croatia	 Germany	 Liechtenstein	 Poland	 Sweden
 Czech Republic	 Greece	 Lithuania	 Portugal	 Switzerland
 Denmark	 Hungary	 Luxembourg	 Romania	

What is ETIAS?

ETIAS stands for **European Travel Information and Authorisation System**.

When it's happening: Expected to start from the end of 2026.

Big picture: This is the EU's version of a visa waiver, similar to the US ESTA program.

For travellers: With an ETIAS travel authorisation you can enter 30 European countries as often as you want for short-term stays (normally up to 90 days within any 180-day period). An ETIAS authorisation is linked to a traveller's passport, and valid for up to three years or until the passport expires, whichever comes first.

Who it's for: Nationals of visa-exempt countries/territories – these are the people who will need to apply for an ETIAS. It's not for people who need visas! If you currently need a visa to travel to Europe, you'll still need one. There are a bunch of oddities and exemptions to this, which you can read about here. But basically, travellers will simply apply for their ETIAS online, pay the 7 Euros fee, get the confirmation email, and they're done. When ETIAS starts (hopefully end of 2026) there will be a grace period of at least 6 months when travellers should get an ETIAS but won't be refused entry without one.

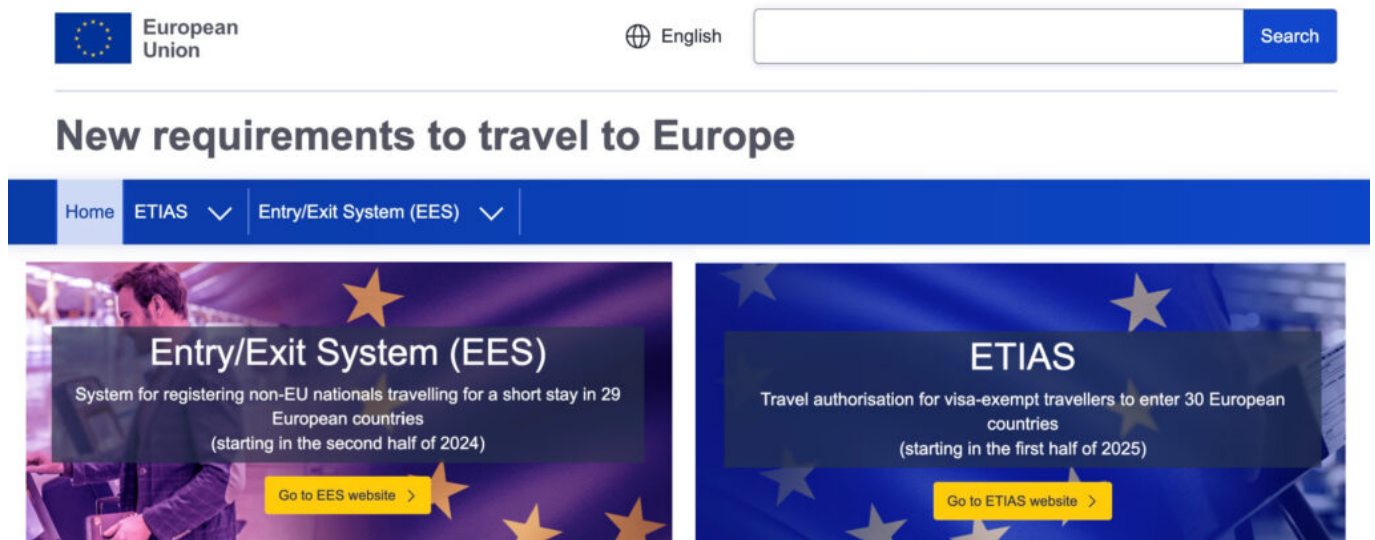
The 30 countries that will require ETIAS:

 Austria	 Denmark	 Hungary	 Luxembourg	 Romania
 Belgium	 Estonia	 Iceland	 Malta	 Slovakia
 Bulgaria	 Finland	 Italy	 Netherlands	 Slovenia
 Croatia	 France	 Latvia	 Norway	 Spain
 Cyprus	 Germany	 Liechtenstein	 Poland	 Sweden
 Czech Republic	 Greece	 Lithuania	 Portugal	 Switzerland

The only difference between the EES countries and the ETIAS countries? **Cyprus is doing ETIAS but not**

EES. Not sure how that's even possible, but there you go.

For more info on all the **basic stuff of EES and ETIAS**, check out the homepage here:



What do operators have to do?

Now: Get registered with EU-LISA for the EES system as soon as possible! To do this, go here, download the form and fill it in electronically (i.e. do not print & scan), and then e-mail it to carriers_onboarding@eulisa.europa.eu. EU-LISA will then reply with follow-up guidance.

EES (postponed to October 2025): Operators flying to one of the 29 EES countries will need to log in to the system to verify electronically whether passengers have already used the number of entries authorised by their visa. This must be done anytime from 48 hours before the scheduled time of departure. And remember, you only need to do this for passengers with single/double entry visas; for everyone else, they will get their docs checked manually on arrival instead. So for visa-exempt passengers (i.e. pax from the US, for example), operators won't need to anything until ETIAS starts.

ETIAS (from the end of 2026): Operators flying to one of the 30 ETIAS countries will need to verify, prior to boarding, that their visa-exempt passengers have an ETIAS travel authorisation. Again, this must be done anytime from 48 hours before the scheduled time of departure.

For more info, you can check the EU-LISA homepage for operators here:

Carriers

Carriers Registration now open for EES and ETIAS!



Explanatory Materials

› [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) in support of all carriers](#)

› [Carrier Implementation Process](#)

› [ETIAS Info Pack \(July 2024\)](#)

› [Carrier Interface Overview](#)

› [Variable Geometry in the EES/ETIAS Carrier Interface Context](#)

› [Carrier Interface Timeline and Registration](#)

› [Crew Exceptions](#)

Are private flights exempt?

Yes. We asked EU-LISA this question many times, and in many different ways. They have consistently told us that **private flights don't have to do any of this**. Here's a summary:

OPSGROUP: Is EES/ETIAS only required for commercial flights, and not required for private flights?

EULISA: You are correct. A private flight with non-fee paying passengers on board does not fall under the scope of EES/ETIAS. Regarding checks on private flights you can refer to Regulation (EU) 2016/399, section 2.3. Checks on persons on private flights.

OPSGROUP: Just to double-check something on this... Passengers on private flights don't need to do EES/ETIAS, even when being flown by pilots who are being paid to fly the plane?

EULISA: You are correct. Passengers on private flights do not need to undergo the EES or ETIAS process, even when being flown by pilots who are being paid to operate the aircraft. Natural or legal persons that use private owned aircrafts and do not transport passengers as their profession are not considered carriers and do not need to query the carrier interface.

OPSGROUP: Can we ask for one further item of clarification. A lot of US companies operate private aircraft to the EU. These aircraft are owned and operated by the company. Under US rules, they are private flights. But can you confirm that they fall under your definition of private flights?

EULISA: Please note that the definition of private flights takes into consideration the fact that private flights do not transport passengers commercially but operate for private reasons.

However! Several OPSGROUP members who operate private flights have told us that they have **registered for the EES system anyway**. The benefit of doing this is that you will be able to confirm prior to the flight that your passengers have all the proper documentation they need - potentially avoiding

any nasty surprises on arrival.

With the **EES system**, passports will no longer be stamped, so in the case of a limited visa that only allows a certain number of visits, operators will have no way of confirming that all the allowed visits have not been exhausted unless they check the system.

Also, similar story when ETIAS starts. Though there will be a website to confirm a passenger has an **approved ETIAS**, EU-LISA says there are a lot of reasons for an ETIAS to be revoked, so checking the system prior to the flight will help make sure the ETIAS is still valid.

More info for operators

For answers to pretty much all the questions we can think of, including how to actually use the system as an operator, check this FAQ document provided by EU-LISA.

And for a video guide for operators with more info, check this out from PnrGO.