



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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European Union - European Passenger Registration System (ETIAS) Operational in 2021

The European Council¹ adopted a regulation establishing a European travel information and authorization system (ETIAS) on 5 September 2018.² Visa-exempt third-country nationals will be required to obtain a travel authorization from ETIAS before their trip to the European Union (EU) at a fee of EUR 7 per application. The authorization will be valid for three years. ETIAS is expected to be operational in January 2021.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Today, more than 30 million people enter the EU without a visa every year.³ The EU's ETIAS will require that people apply and pay for an authorization beforehand. Before boarding, air carriers and sea carriers will need to check whether the third-country nationals subject to the European registration requirement have the necessary approval. If the approval is not in place, the passenger will be denied on-boarding.

Even though the majority of applications is expected to be processed within the deadline of four days and without a need for further investigation, the introduction of the registration system will significantly impact visa-exempt travellers to the EU. Currently, there are 61 countries that are not in the EU, but are visa-free/exempt.⁴

Changes in Detail

The implementation of ETIAS is motivated mainly by the increased risks around growing numbers of travellers worldwide and better management of the EU's borders.

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ETIAS will entail an online application that will require a submission of personal data, including information about education and business experience, official travel documents (e.g., passport), member state of first intended stay, questions about previous criminal records, presence in conflict zones, etc. Upon the filing of the application, applicants between the ages of 18 and 70 will be required to pay a fee of EUR 7.

The application will then be checked against several databases, e.g., EUROPOL, etc. If there is a “hit” in any of the databases, the application will be handled manually and eventually the applicant will receive either approval or a denial. The approval will be valid for three years or until the expiry of the travel document if it expires before three years.

Finally, it is important to note that the approved travel authorization under the ETIAS does not guarantee entrance into the EU. The approved ETIAS does not guarantee entry into the EU. This is at the discretion of the border authorities and according to the established rules for entry of third-country nationals in the EU.

At land borders, the ETIAS application request can be made at application kiosks.

ETIAS can be revoked by a member state if it is found that:

- the conditions for the authorization are no longer met;
- the travel document is reported lost or stolen; or
- it is believed the approval is fraudulently obtained.

KPMG NOTE

These rules will apply to those countries that are member states of the EU when the system becomes effective in January 2021. This means the status of the U.K.’s future participation in ETIAS and the application of the rules to U.K. nationals, at this point, remain unclear. With an agreement on Brexit still unresolved, it seems quite possible that U.K. nationals travelling to the EU starting in January 2021 will be required to apply for travel authorization under ETIAS.

This situation should be monitored by U.K. nationals with plans to travel to the EU in 2021 and their global mobility managers and travel service providers.

FOOTNOTES:

1 The EU Council defines the EU's overall political directions and priorities. Its members are the heads of state or government of the 28 EU member states, and its current president is Donald Tusk.

2 For more information on ETIA, see the European Parliament’s “EU Legislation in Brief” at: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599298/EPRS_BRI\(2017\)599298_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2017/599298/EPRS_BRI(2017)599298_EN.pdf).

3 See: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20180424IPR02424/pre-screening-visa-exempt-travellers-for-increased-security>.

4 See: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/apply_for_a_visa/docs/visa_lists_en.pdf.

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