

EU Entry/Exit System

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Information about changing requirements for UK nationals travelling to countries in the Schengen area.

The European Union's (EU) Entry/Exit System (EES) started on 12 October 2025. This is a new digital border system that has changed requirements for British citizens travelling to the Schengen area.

The countries in the Schengen area are:

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

The Republic of Ireland and Cyprus are not within the Schengen area, and therefore EES is not applicable when travelling to either of these countries.

If you are travelling to a country in the Schengen area for a short stay using a UK passport, you may be required to register your biometric details, such as fingerprints and a photo, when you arrive. You do not need to take any action before you arrive at the border, and there is no cost for EES registration.

EES registration is replacing the current system of manually stamping passports when visitors arrive in the EU.

EES may take each passenger extra time to complete so be prepared to wait longer than usual at the border.

If you are travelling to the Schengen area

On your first visit to the Schengen area, you may be asked to create a digital record at the port or airport on arrival. You may be asked to submit your fingerprints and have your photo taken at dedicated booths. You don't need to provide any information before travelling to a Schengen area country. The checks may take slightly longer than previously, so be prepared to wait during busy times.

If you enter the Schengen area through the Port of Dover, Eurotunnel Le Shuttle at Folkestone or Eurostar, St Pancras International, any EES checks will be completed at the border, before you leave the UK.

You may also be asked to provide either your fingerprint or photo when you exit the Schengen area.

If you frequently travel to the Schengen area for work and/or leisure purposes, you must ensure that your total stay in the Schengen area is no more than 90 days in every 180 days. You must be aware of the penalty and enforcement approach for exceeding the immigration limit in any individual Member State you plan to travel to, or through.

Your digital EES record is valid for 3 years.

Why the EU has introduced EES

EES is designed to improve border security within the EU and its neighbouring countries, and reduce illegal migration in the Schengen area. It automates border control checks to help the EU stop visitors overstaying.

EES is part of wider work the EU is doing to strengthen their border security. From Autumn 2026, the EU is expected to start operations of the new European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS). No action is required from travellers at this point. The European Union will announce the specific date for the start of ETIAS before its launch. Any website selling ETIAS at this time is doing so fraudulently, and you should only apply on the official EU website when able to.

When ETIAS is introduced, you will need to apply for authorisation to enter Schengen area countries if you are using a UK passport and don't already have a visa or residence permit. You will need to provide personal information and details about your trip, and pay a 20 Euro fee, as part of the authorisation process. The EU has already set out more information on ETIAS, including what information will be required from each nationality, on the EU's official Travel Europe website.

How EES affects travel to the Schengen area

The UK government has been working closely with the European Commission, Member States, local authorities and the travel industry to prepare ports for EES. The government is supporting ports and carriers to ensure EES registration is simple for people travelling to the Schengen area.

UK government support includes providing Eurostar, Eurotunnel and Port of Dover with £3.5 million each, to spend on registration kiosks and infrastructure.

UK and non-EU travellers using Eurostar from London St Pancras International may be asked to use self-service pre-registration kiosks, which are located in three areas of the station, before going through the ticket gates.

Eurotunnel Le Shuttle at Folkestone has developed a purpose-built pre-registration area for non-EU and UK passengers to use self-service kiosks for EES checks. Please follow advice provided when booking.

The Port of Dover has developed a purpose-built processing area for EES checks, at their new Western Docks. Please follow advice from the Port of Dover and your travel operator when booking.

UK and non-EU travellers entering the Schengen area by air or by ferry services departing from ports other than Port of Dover will be registered at the border on arrival in their destination country.

In all locations, travellers should follow directions from their travel operator, and port, or airport and make border staff aware if they anticipate any issues completing biometric checks.

Travelling by ship cruises

Sailings that start and finish their journey outside of the Schengen area (for example, at a UK port) will usually be exempt from EES checks for any day trips into the Schengen area that are part of their itinerary. Under some circumstances, passengers may be required to complete EES checks; this is at the discretion of the port authorities.

Travellers who disembark a cruise within the Schengen area, and travel on to a further destination, including an alternative port, by other means, may need to complete EES checks when leaving the ship. Any travellers boarding a cruise within the Schengen area may need to complete EES checks at their initial entry point to the Schengen area.

Exemptions to EES

Some UK nationals are exempt from EES. The full list of exemptions is on the EU's official Travel Europe website.

These travellers should not register for EES. Instead, upon arrival at the border, they should present their exempting documentation to a border guard.

If for any reason an EES record is created for them, this should retrospectively be deleted. Normally, this can be done at the border by a border guard, or by the relevant authorities within the Schengen area. In some cases, EES records may be deleted automatically, for example, where the traveller has been granted a residence permit after entering the Schengen area.

Find out more information on the EU's Entry/Exit System on the EU's official Travel Europe website.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-entryexit-system>