

ETIAS Will Now Launch in 2025: Its Impact on Over 1 Billion Travelers to Europe

Update

- In an August 2023 Client Alert, we previously reported on the 2024 ETIAS launch and its requirement that travelers obtain approval prior to traveling to Europe.
- It was recently announced that due to a variety of complications, challenges, and concerns, **the ETIAS roll-out has been postponed to 2025.**
- Multiple factors have contributed to the delayed roll-out, including (but not limited to):
 - Technical challenges, including software glitches and data integration problems,
 - Data privacy concerns, including ensuring that ETIAS complies with the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulations,
 - Additional work on the security upgrades required to provide ongoing support to ETIAS and
 - The Paris 2024 Olympics. With the upcoming Olympics in Paris in 2024, officials felt that the ETIAS system was not ready to handle the additional anticipated volume of European travelers.

Overview

- Once in force, all U.S. citizens (and non-European travelers) will need to plan ahead and obtain ETIAS approval prior to traveling to Europe.
- The exact roll-out date has not yet been confirmed, but when ETIAS launches in 2025, it will impact visa-exempt travelers to 30 European countries.
- Travelers from over 60 countries will now be required to complete this process in order to enter most European Countries.
- ETIAS will specifically apply to travelers from countries that do not require a Schengen Visa.
- This process is similar to the U.S.' Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) program, as it is a visa waiver, not a visa specifically.
- Even if a traveler has previously traveled to Europe, as of 2025, this process must be completed prior to traveling to Europe, in addition to ensuring that their passport is valid.

What is ETIAS?

- ETIAS stands for the European Travel Information and Authorization System.
- It will keep track of all European travelers from countries who do not require visas to enter these 30 European countries including Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden, plus future Schengen countries such as Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, and Romania. The ETIAS system will also cover countries under the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), such as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, as well as European microstates with open borders, including Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, and Vatican City.
- The electronic system will conduct a detailed security check on each applicant, which is linked to their passport. This means that travelers will need to complete this process again if they obtain a new passport.

How to apply and validity details

- Log into <https://etias.com/> to complete the application on mobile or desktop.
- The traveler must hold a passport that does not expire in less than three months at the time of completing the ETIAS application.



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- The fee is €7, and the system provides a variety of payment options.
 - Note: Applicants under 18 or over 70 are exempt from this fee.
- The ETIAS travel authorization is valid for three years or until the passport expires, whichever occurs first.
- The ETIAS authorization must be valid for the entire stay in Europe.
- The ETIAS system will provide all applicants notification of their status, either “approved,” “refused,” or “manual processing” within 96 hours of application submission. However, most will receive a notification within a few hours.
- The entire application should only take approximately ten minutes to complete.

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- Travelers should plan accordingly and complete this process at least two weeks before their travel to Europe. There are currently no options to expedite processing.
 - Travelers must ensure that their passport meets the requirements, specifically, that it does not expire in less than three months at the time of completing the ETIAS application.
 - Those with a criminal record might not be automatically denied but may be subject to additional scrutiny and/or lengthier processing time.
 - ETIAS has been delayed multiple times, but it appears that it will be rolled out in 2025, so all impacted travelers should plan accordingly.
 - There is a possibility that for the first three to six months, ETIAS may not be mandatory to enable a smoother roll-out, but these details will most likely be provided by the end of 2024.
 - Cozen O'Connor can assist with the application process and assessment of requirements, especially in situations where multiple travelers are traveling from multiple locations.
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