

THE IMPACT OF ETIAS ON EUROPEAN TRAVEL



Millions of young American tourists head to Europe each year. With its varied culture and rich history, the continent has much to offer visitors from across the pond.

For students, visiting European countries provides a valuable opportunity to practice languages. Spending a few weeks abroad during the summer months is a great way to complement French or Italian studies, using what has been taught in the classroom in real-life situations.

Until now, U.S. citizens have taken advantage of visa-free travel to the 26 Schengen Area states. Americans have been able to spend up to 90 days in a 180-day period in popular destinations such as France, Germany, and Italy using just their passport.

This, however, is set to change. If you're thinking about a summer vacation to Europe, then you need to be aware of the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) — a pre-travel visa-waiver program to be launched towards the end of 2022.

Why ETIAS is Being Introduced

ETIAS is being introduced to boost security across the Schengen Area. By running background checks on foreigners, individuals who could pose a threat can be prevented from crossing borders, much like the United States's ESTA program.

Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, will also play a vital role in providing greater border security.

The introduction of ETIAS is a positive step towards further reducing the threat of terrorism, creating a safer environment for young travelers and greater peace-of-mind for parents.

Applying for ETIAS: What You Need to Know

Applicants need to meet the ETIAS visa waiver requirements, which include being in possession of a valid passport, credit or debit card and email address.

When filling in the form, some personal information and passport details are requested, this information is then cross-checked using several security databases. Providing nothing is flagged up, the authorization should be approved within a few minutes.

Despite fast processing times, it's advisable to apply at least 3 business days before departure in case you are required to submit any further documents.

It is essential to check that all information is completed correctly, erroneous data or mistakes such as typos can result in the ETIAS being denied and the fee being lost.

How long is the ETIAS valid for?

An approved ETIAS has a validity period of 3 years and allows for stays of up to 90 days within a 6 month period. It's possible to take language classes or attend conferences or workshops in Europe using the ETIAS. The permit is multiple-entry meaning it's possible to leave and enter the Schengen Area as desired.

Notably, those who plan to visit various countries don't need to apply for the ETIAS for each place, only for the point of entry. This makes it more convenient for students using summer vacations to travel from country to country.

The ETIAS is linked to the passport used to make the application. This means that, should the passport expire during the ETIAS validity period, a new authorization must be applied for.

Countries Which Require ETIAS

Originally scheduled to become operational in late 2022, the date was postponed to late 2023, ETIAS will become mandatory for travelers entering any of the 26 countries which make up the Schengen Area.

Some of the most popular European cities amongst American students are

- Berlin, Germany: historical sights and a diverse nightlife scene
- Paris, France: the Eiffel Tower and Louvre Museum are must-see attractions
- Madrid, Spain: a lively capital city and top study destination for Americans
- Milan, Italy: fashion capital and the world-famous Duomo
- Amsterdam, Netherlands: a charming bike-friendly city famous for its canals

When planning your itinerary, it's important to remember that the maximum permitted stay is 90 consecutive days.

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