

## European Travel Information and Authorization System (E.T.I.A.S.)

While you may have heard that if you are a U.S. citizen, you will have to get a visa before traveling to many European countries starting in 2021, that is not necessarily true. Currently, American citizens traveling to **26 Schengen-area countries\*** of the European Union for stays of less than 90 days do not require visas or travel authorization.

Starting on January 1, 2021, citizens of more than 60 countries - including the United States, Australia, Canada, and Mexico - that currently travel visa-free to the European Union will have to register online and pay a small fee (\$8) to visit or travel to the 26 Schengen-area countries of Europe.

Registration through the European Travel Information and Authorization System (E.T.I.A.S.) is not technically a visa since travelers will not be required to visit a consulate to file any kind of application, and less information will be asked than is expected of visa applicants. The E.T.I.A.S. authorization will be valid for three years and allows an unlimited number of entries.

In an expected 95% of cases, approval will be granted in minutes, and this change is for the positive as it is part of a new security system in the EU that is intended to screen visa-free travelers. The system is meant to improve detection of human trafficking, criminal activity, and people who may pose security threats.

*\*The Schengen area is made up of 26 European countries without internal borders that allow free movement between nations: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.*

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