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Jane Golding, Chair, British in Europe

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13 March 2026

Dear Zoe, Monique and Jane

Thank you for your email of 18 February 2026 to the Minister for Migration and Citizenship about the impact of ETA enforcement. Your correspondence has been passed to the FBIS Programme.

Further to our recent Ministerial response regarding some of the concerns you raised, we have now provided a comprehensive response below.

As you are aware, the UK has moved to a 'digital permission' system by which everyone (except British and Irish citizens and some other exempted cohorts) wishing to travel to the UK will need a permission to travel. Wherever possible, the permission is digitally linked to the passport being used. This permission to travel must be shown through an ETA, eVisa, or other acceptable physical proof.

The Government recognises the need to support British dual nationals in navigating these changes. This is why public information strongly advising dual citizens to travel with a valid UK passport or Certificate of Entitlement has been available since October 2024, including official guidance on GOV.UK. We also announced in November 2025 that ETA enforcement would begin on 25 February 2026, with dual citizens required to have appropriate travel permission: [No permission, no travel: UK set to enforce ETA scheme - GOV.UK](#). Additionally, I am sure you will have seen that in the period leading up to ETA enforcement, we issued temporary operational guidance to carriers on the acceptance of alternative documentation. I am satisfied that, collectively, the approach we have taken has helped mitigate the impact on British dual nationals overseas.

I have responded to your main points below:

1. Request to Delay ETA Enforcement

The ETA scheme was launched in October 2023 with over 24.8m ETAs granted up to end of 2025. Phased rollout brought EU nationals into scope in April 2025 and, since then, it has become a universal requirement for all eligible non-visa national visitors, which is now being enforced. Public and stakeholder communications have been ongoing since 2023 and we continue to update guidance on GOV.UK, work with FCDO posts and engage directly with carriers and the travel and tourism sector.

With the ETA requirement now in force, carriers such as airlines are required to check passengers hold the appropriate permission before they travel. Linked to this, carriers may be liable to a penalty if they bring someone to the UK who does not have the correct documentation or permission. Passengers can also check their ETA status and expiry online: [Check your electronic travel authorisation \(ETA\) - GOV.UK](#).

Carriers are now effectively enforcing the ETA requirement. There will be no reversal of this position. The ETA scheme has been rolled out to eligible nationalities since October 2023, and our approach has been clearly communicated throughout. A further transitional phase has been in place since roll out completed in April 2025, meaning the requirement to have an ETA was not strictly enforced by carriers, giving passengers time to prepare.

Alongside this, we have supported carriers to prepare for these changes through sustained engagement, technical readiness work, partner materials, webinars and the introduction of a 24/7 Carrier Support Hub. We have engaged with over 55,000 check-in agents globally to embed these checks in day-to-day operations.

Recognising the potential impact on dual British nationals, we have issued temporary operational guidance to carriers on the acceptance of alternative documentation. This includes carriers accepting, at their discretion, an expired UK passport (issued 1989 or later) alongside a valid non-visa national third country passport, where biographic details match. This is a short-term transitional measure and remains an operational decision for carriers. It does not replace the requirement to hold a valid UK passport or a valid CoE.

Carriers may also contact the Carrier Support Hub, who may be able to confirm British citizenship for those with a digital record on the UK's immigration and passport systems. This service is available to carriers only and our clear advice to passengers remains that they should travel with a valid British passport or CoE to ensure the smoothest experience. Carriers remain responsible for ensuring that passengers are adequately documented for travel; carrier liability requirements remain in force, and carriers may face charges if they transport passengers who do not have the required permission to travel. Carriers also set their own operating processes, and the decision on whether to carry a passenger is their commercial and operational decision.

Emergency Travel Documents remain available for urgent travel in defined circumstances. Adults and children who have previously held a UK passport issued after 1 January 2006 can apply where they need to travel urgently. [Travel urgently from abroad without your UK passport: Who can apply - GOV.UK](#). Where a person has not previously held a UK passport, they can only apply if their urgent travel meets the exceptional circumstances criteria, for example urgent medical reasons or attending the funeral of a close relative. This long-standing arrangement is unaffected by ETA enforcement, but it does not remove the need to hold the correct documentation for future travel.

We have also recently clarified our guidance for British dual nationals with EU Settlement Scheme status: [Dual citizenship - GOV.UK](#). EUSS status holders can travel using their other nationality passport or identity card (where they are an EU, other EEA or Swiss national) providing that document is linked correctly to their UKVI account.

In line with current practice, on arrival at the UK border, Border Force will continue to assess a person's suitability to enter the UK and may conduct additional checks if required.

We will continue to take a compassionate and pragmatic approach to travellers who experience genuine difficulty while this process settles. The clearest way to ensure a smooth journey remains travelling with a valid UK passport or a CoE to the right of abode.

2. Temporary Authorisation for Verifiable British Citizens

The Government recognises the concerns raised about the practical impact of ETA enforcement on some British citizens who hold dual nationality. However, applying an ETA like authorisation to British citizens - even on a temporary basis - would risk blurring this clear legal distinction and could create confusion about the status of British citizenship at the border. Under the Immigration Act 1971, British citizens cannot be granted an ETA, a visa or other immigration permission.

To support those who may face genuine difficulty while the ETA scheme is being enforced, the Home Office has put in place temporary, transitional measures as detailed above. These measures are short-term and do not replace the legal requirement to hold a valid British passport or Certificate of Entitlement.

The transition to a **digital Certificate of Entitlement**, is making it easier for eligible people to demonstrate their right of abode without creating a new form of permission or authorisation.

We do not agree that a 'temporary authorisation' of the kind you outline in your letter is proportionate, or warranted, at this time. We have already put in place temporary guidance to carriers on the acceptance, at their discretion, of expired UK passports. Carriers have long been able to contact the Home Office's carrier support hub, who may check the department's records for evidence of UK nationality. This is the correct approach for us to have taken, recognising that the decision on whether to board a passenger is ultimately an operational decision for the carrier to take.

3. Alternative Transitional Measure for Complex Cases

We have taken active steps to raise awareness of what ETA enforcement means for dual British citizens. Public information strongly advising dual nationals to travel with a valid UK passport or a Certificate of Entitlement has been available since October 2024, including official guidance on GOV.UK, and we included guidance for dual citizens in our ETA communications campaign running since 2023.

Transitional arrangements of one form or another have been in place since the introduction of this scheme in 2023, during which time the ETA requirement has not been enforced.

With ETA enforcement now in effect, additional short-term measures as detailed above have been introduced to assist carriers and passengers, which include the discretion to accept expired British passports in certain circumstances.

Whilst there is no single requirement that a British citizen travel to the UK on a British passport, it has long been the case that any British citizen seeking to enter the UK may

only evidence their right of abode in the UK at the border with a valid British passport, or a certificate of entitlement (CoE).

The standard time for processing a first time passport is 3 weeks in the UK and 4 weeks overseas, if no further information is required. The standard time for processing a renewal is an average of 9 days, with 98.5% processed within 13 days. Our preference would be for dual British citizens to obtain a British passport – which costs just under £100 for an adult and is valid for 10 years.

Emergency Travel Documents (ETDs) are for available adults and children who have previously held a UK passport issued after 1 January 2006.

ETDs are also available for adults and children who have not previously held a UK passport where the need for urgent travel meets the exceptional circumstances criteria. These include the need for urgent travel for medical reasons, or to attend the funeral of a close relative.

Accordingly, and given the temporary measures to which I allude above, I do not think it is necessary for an additional bespoke permission to be created at this time.

4. No Penalties for British Dual Nationals who travel on an ETA linked to their non-British passport

As already set out above, immigration products such as ETAs and visas are not compatible with the status of British citizens. The ETA requirement does not apply to British and Irish nationals with dual citizenship. They are not eligible for an ETA and should not apply for one.

We have published an ETA guide specifically for dual nationals. The onus is on the individual to establish their status and apply for the appropriate permission. There is also guidance on GOV.UK to help people determine whether they qualify for British citizenship at: <https://www.gov.uk/check-british-citizenship>.

We are continuously reviewing how we signpost guidance within the application journey to ensure it is as clear and intuitive as possible.

The intention of the ETA scheme is not to penalise people who unwittingly travel without the correct permission, or with a permission to which they are not legally entitled. It is about securing the UK border. In terms of specific ‘penalties’ for British dual nationals, I am sure you are aware that s.24A (1) of the Immigration Act 1971 disappplies the offence of obtaining an ETA by deception to British nationals.

5. Provision for Particularly Complex Cases (e.g., Children, Family Separation)

We recognise that there will be a small number of particularly complex family circumstances, including where parents are separated and do not each have access to all of a child’s travel documents. We appreciate the hardship this can cause for families seeking to travel. It was partly with this in mind that we gave the additional temporary operational guidance to carriers on the acceptance of expired UK passports.

As mentioned above, we will continue to take a compassionate and pragmatic approach to travellers who experience genuine difficulty while this process settles.

6. Reducing the Cost of Certificate of Entitlement (CoE) where British Citizenship can be straightforwardly established

The Home Office keeps fees under review. However, those who have been issued with a digital Certificate of Entitlement will only need to pay for it once, as the digital Certificate of Entitlement can be linked to a new passport. As such, they will no longer need to apply and pay for a new Certificate when their passport expires.

It is the Government's policy that those who use and benefit most from the immigration system should contribute towards the cost of operating the system. Fees charged by the Home Office for immigration and nationality applications are an essential part of the Department's funding settlement.

All applications must follow the same published process, including the same baseline verification checks. It is therefore not straightforward to separate 'simple' from 'complex' cases at the point of application without creating additional decision points and risks of inconsistency.

7. GOV.UK guidance for dual nationals be expanded to include any transitional measures implemented.

Comprehensive guidance for British dual nationals travelling to the UK can be found here: [Electronic travel authorisation \(ETA\): guide for dual citizens - GOV.UK](#). This page clearly sets out what documents are required and explains that people may be unable to board without them.

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Home Office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ros Blundell', written in a cursive style.

Ros Blundell
Delivery Director – Digital Permissions
Future Border & Immigration System Programme

