



Home Office

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Zoe Bantleman
Legal Director, Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA)

Monique Hawkins
Policy & Research, the3million

By email only
HO ref: TRO/1346897/25

04 July 2025

Dear Zoe and Monique,

Thank you for your correspondence of 11 June 2025 to Minister Malhotra regarding EUSS, eVisa, Carrier communication and ETA. Your correspondence has been passed to the Future Borders and Immigration System (FBIS) Programme for a response.

We trust that you will also now have received a response to your letter of 16 April 2025, but we wanted to address the additional points you made. We welcome input from stakeholders such as yourselves and value the engagement you have with the Home Office, through various forums and advisory groups, helping ensure the UK continues to have an effective border and legal migration system.

People with an EUSS CoA

Carriers currently receive a response from the Home Office into their departure control system when the passenger data they have submitted matches a digital status we have in our database. For EU citizens, for example, this could be an ETA, pre-settled or settled status or an eVisa, and will result in a valid permission to travel message to the carrier.

As we set out in our response dated 03 July 2025, we are not currently enforcing ETA, which means carriers can board non visa required nationals (including EU/EEA

national Certificate of Application (CoA) holders), subject to them having a valid travel document. All EU citizens who do not have an ETA, pre-settled, settled status or an eVisa will, until ETA implementation, result in “authority to carry” message, which is the same result that a British or Irish citizen would receive.

People unable to generate a share code

If a person has a valid immigration status, and is travelling on a document known to the Home Office, then the iAPI system will reflect this, regardless of whether they have created a UKVI account, can access their eVisa or generate a share code.

Where someone is unable to generate a share code for proving their right to work or right to rent, checkers can confirm these rights through the [Employers Checking Service \(ECS\)](#) or [Landlord Checking Service \(LCS\)](#) both of which send a webform email to Status verification enquiry Checking (SVEC) team. If a government department requires information in relation to benefits and healthcare, they can also contact SVEC directly if there is an issue.

For travelling to the UK, a share code is not necessarily needed as the eVisa system allows most carriers to confirm the valid UK immigration status for whom we have a digital record, when that carrier submits their passenger data to the Home Office as part of their pre-departure checks. Where we can match passenger details submitted by a carrier to a valid digital immigration record we will return a valid permission to travel response to the carrier. We encourage people to carry a share code as one mitigation in case the carrier does not receive confirmation of the passenger’s immigration status, however, where it is not possible to create a share code, or the carrier is unable to check status using a share code, they can instead contact the 24/7 Carrier Support Hub for advice.

Carriers utilising iAPI system

All aviation carriers into the UK are integrated into, and able to use, the iAPI service from locations from which they fly directly. All carriers submit passenger data via a passenger data system (including the iAPI system). Every time a carrier submits data for a passenger we will return a response. In addition to this response, carriers can also check valid physical immigration or exemption documents.

You asked about the proportion of destinations that do not have carriers flying directly to the UK who use the iAPI system, however it is not possible to know this. Carriers are only required to provide notification of direct routes into the UK. These carriers and ground handlers have all integrated to iAPI. They may also be using these in ports where they do not have direct flights, however, this is not something that we would be aware of. Any carriers who do not have direct routes into the UK would not have an iAPI connection.

Proving status with carriers

We have frequent and regular communication with carriers to ensure that systems are running smoothly, and they are following the correct guidance. As outlined above, the majority of aviation carriers are able to use the iAPI system which provides a response for each passenger. When carriers receive a 'valid permission to travel' response, they do not need to request further proof of a passenger's immigration status. However, carriers can conduct manual checks using valid physical documents, share code or by contacting the carrier support hub, if required. The most common scenario where a passenger may be asked to prove their status is if they have not kept their travel documents up to date in their UKVI account, for example, not updated their account when they have been issued a new passport.

We are actively highlighting, across multiple channels, the need for people to keep their UKVI accounts up to date and ensure their current travel documents are linked. As one of our key stakeholders with an interest in ensuring the UK continues to have an effective border and legal migration system, we would welcome your support to amplify this important point across your networks and clients, and specifically people with EU Settled Status, to ensure they are keeping their records updated via their online account.

In addition to the iAPI system, the Carrier Support Hub is the backstop which will provide clarity and support to the carrier if and when needed. If you have any specific examples of airlines not following this protocol, please do share any evidence of this, and we will provide targeted engagement to resolve this.

ETA Enforcement

The Government recognises that the introduction of the ETA scheme is a substantive change for millions of travellers. We are therefore taking a phased approach to implementation to provide ample time to ensure all those who are impacted are acquainted with the changes and avoid disruption to travel. The requirement to hold an ETA is not currently being enforced, either at the point of boarding/carriage (by carriers) or at the UK border (by Border Force). We are aiming to begin enforcement of ETA in 2026. We will release more information in due course, as we have committed to giving the travel industry and key stakeholders sufficient notice before we begin the enforcement of ETA.

We engage with carriers in a range of ways including carrier alerts which all carriers receive, and regular close engagement. We have delivered a series of over 300 carrier engagement sessions globally and reached tens of thousands of operational staff directly to reiterate the ETA implementation period, and the guidance not to deny Non-Visa Nationals boarding if they do not currently hold an ETA. As mentioned, we have committed to give key stakeholders sufficient notice before ETAs are enforced. We will continue to engage closely with carriers throughout this period to ensure the correct processes and guidance is followed.

We have given clear messaging to carriers that strict enforcement of the requirement to hold an ETA is not currently in force. Accordingly, no additional 'recourse' should

be needed, although we have also established a 24/7 carrier support hub to assist airlines to understand the universal permission to travel requirement. In order to avoid delays at the point of carriage or at the UK border, it is recommended that British nationals in this position make the necessary arrangements (e.g. obtaining a British passport) now, to avoid difficulties at a later date. Carriers are increasingly adapting their systems to take account of developing global travel document requirements, which will further minimise the likelihood of delays.

The transition period is an operational decision, to allow the public and carriers time to adapt to the requirements of the ETA scheme. We do not consider it necessary or proportionate to amend the Immigration Rules to include this period.

You also asked about EU citizens who have an ICAO compliant biometric national identity card. EU citizens with existing rights under the Withdrawal Agreement are able to use ID cards to travel to the UK and those who have ID cards that include a chip that complies with the applicable ICAO standards related to biometric identification will, in accordance with Article 14(1), be able to continue to use these cards after 31 December 2025. The position in relation to EEA national identity cards which are not compliant with those ICAO standards will be communicated prior to 31 December 2025.

We thank you for your feedback and continued engagement, as we develop our services to make sure the UK Border and Immigration System is as smooth as possible for everyone interacting with it. We keep the system constantly in review to ensure people always have support when they need it.

Yours sincerely,

Future Borders and Immigration System (FBIS) Programme