

To: Mike Tapp MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Minister for Migration and Citizenship)

CC: D3SF (Digital Status Services Stakeholder Forum)
FBIS (Future Borders and Immigration System) Engagement Team
ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation) Engagement Team
IMA (Independent Monitoring Authority)

24 November 2025

Dear Mike Tapp MP,

Concerns over impact of ETA enforcement on eVisa holders

We are writing to you following today's announcement, "No permission, no travel: UK set to enforce ETA scheme",¹ confirming that from 25 February 2026, visitors will not be able to travel to the UK without obtaining permission in advance.

The announcement, aimed at visitors, states that delaying strict enforcement until February 2026 has given "visitors ample time to adjust to the new requirement".

However, over the last three years both ILPA and the3million have been raising concerns about the impact of ETA enforcement on the ten million people living in the UK with an eVisa:

- In November 2022 the3million compiled a report for the Independent Monitoring Authority, setting out our concerns about the impact of digital borders on travel on eVisa holders.² This included a chapter dedicated specifically to future rollout of Universal Permission to Travel.
- In March 2024 the3million and ILPA members gave evidence to the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee inquiry into 'Electronic Border Management Systems'.³ We set out the impact of ETA on non-British/non-Irish people living in the UK, but were disappointed that this aspect of the ETA was not referenced in the Committee's response to the inquiry.
- In December 2024 we jointly wrote to the Immigration Minister regarding concerns around travel for people with eVisas.⁴ We were very pleased that shortly afterwards the Minister announced a dedicated Passenger Helpline. Unfortunately this helpline was closed within 3 months of opening, and we wrote to express our disappointment about this closure in April 2025.⁵
- In April 2025 we jointly wrote to the Immigration Minister to ask how those with pending EU Settlement Scheme (EUSS) applications can board a carrier to the UK after the enforcement of ETA.⁶

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/no-permission-no-travel-uk-set-to-enforce-eta-scheme>

² <https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2022112301>

³ <https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2024031201>

⁴ <https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2024120501>

⁵ <https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2025041701>

⁶ <https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2025041601>

- In June 2025 we jointly wrote to the Immigration Minister about ETA and the impact on travel on those with eVisas, pending EUSS applications and dual British nationals.⁷
- In October 2025 the3million were requested to submit evidence to the House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee, for their electronic border management systems followup inquiry, about the issue of dual nationals travelling between the UK and the EU in the context of ETA and EU schemes.⁸

We do not feel that these concerns have been taken sufficiently seriously, and we continue to receive daily reports from people who have faced difficulties when trying to travel back to their homes in the UK.

The Home Office response⁹ to our letter of June 2025 states: *“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.”*

However, we continue to receive many reports from people who have properly linked their travel document to their eVisa and have passed through either online or in-person check-in, yet are asked again to demonstrate their permission to travel at the boarding gate.

Many passengers struggle to do this, because they are told that the only acceptable way is to log in to the Home Office View & Prove in front of the staff member. They are told that the staff member does not have access to the iAPI process at this pre-boarding stage, and that the staff member will not accept a share code and log in to UK Government websites on their personal device.

At this stage there is a very great power imbalance, with passengers being told for example:

“She told me I want to travel, not her, so the burden of proof is on me”.

Another passenger told us:

“At the boarding gate I was asked to prove settled status, I said you should see it when you scan my passport. They ignored it and sent me back to queue so I can find proof. I managed to login but I don't know what could I have done without internet/phone. It made me anxious, my husband also had to do this and I was worried he wouldn't have the login details on hand as he hasn't used it a few years. It is very uncomfortable not to have physical proof of my status and cannot rely on staff to be informed.”

Others are told that even at the check-in stage, carriers are not able to use the iAPI system:

“I was doing the check in at Vienna's airport on 1st of November to fly back to the UK after a holiday. I have Settled Status linked to my current passport. She asked to see proof of it . Initially, I refused to provide it as I knew that the iAPI system usually gives the airlines that information in advance.

The lady called her supervisor and he insisted that I had to log in on my UK visa account to show them my profile or I wouldn't be able to embark my flight. When I asked if he had no access to the iAPI system he said no., “I have no way of checking your status here”

⁷ <https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2025061101>

⁸ <https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2025102501>

⁹ <https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2025070401>

Finally I managed to log in on my UK Visa account using the airport wifi (I didn't have any internet data on my phone so I was lucky I could use airport one). They checked my profile on my phone and allowed me to proceed with my check in and I could, finally, embark on my flight."

We therefore ask that you respond to the following questions:

- Q1. Please reconfirm that all aviation carriers are integrated and using (rather than "able to use") the iAPI service from locations from which they fly directly to the UK. If this is not the case, please list all carriers and their locations from which they fly directly to the UK where iAPI is not used.
- Q2. If all aviation carriers are integrated into, and using, the iAPI service from locations from which they fly directly to the UK, what is the reason for passengers who have successfully passed the check-in stage (whether online or in person) nevertheless being asked to prove their permission to travel to the UK before being allowed to board?
- Q3. If your response to the above question is that the Home Office does not require this practice of re-checking, and that this is solely down to a carrier decision, will the Home Office accept that such practice puts unreasonable requirements on UK eVisa holders and will it commit to requesting carriers to stop such practice? This practice is likely in response to the UK's carrier liability rules and the obligation to return passengers who are refused entry to the UK, yet passengers cannot continue to bear the brunt of having the burden of proof to demonstrate an online-only proof of status in person under time pressure, when the airline has already received a 'Universal Permission to Travel' message via the iAPI.
- Q4. Has the Home Office conducted any impact assessment of ETA enforcement on that subset of approximately 10 million eVisa holders in the UK who are non-visa nationals?
 - a. If so please provide details of these impact assessments, and please publish or share these impact assessments in reply to this letter.
 - b. If not please set out why it was considered such an impact assessment was not required.
- Q5. EU citizens and their family members with pre-settled status under the EUSS have the right to travel while they have a pending application for settled status under the EUSS. They frequently wait for several months while their settled status application is decided, and during this time they are unable to link a new travel document to their UKVI account. From 25 February 2026, an iAPI check on their new passport will not return a positive result. What guidance and training is the Home Office issuing to carriers to ensure that such passengers are not denied boarding, and what guidance is the Home Office issuing to individuals in such a situation?
- Q6. Will the Home Office reinstate its Passenger Helpline with immediate effect, to be operational 24/7 until at least a year after full enforcement of ETA? We are of course aware of the Carrier Support Hub available to carriers only, but passengers need to have agency at the point of facing a denial of boarding and be able speak to someone in the UK who is fully knowledgeable about eVisas and carriers.
- Q7. The announcement of 'No permission, no travel: UK set to enforce ETA scheme' includes "*The UK government strongly advises dual British citizens to make sure they have a valid British passport or certificate of entitlement, to avoid problems like being denied boarding when travelling to the UK from 25 February 2026.*" Will the Home Office write to all people who have naturalised as British citizens,

both to their email and postal address where known, to advise them that without a British passport they will face problems like being denied boarding when travelling to the UK from 25 February 2026?

- a. If so, when will the Home Office have written to all naturalised British citizens for whom they have contact details?
- b. If not, why will the Home Office not undertake to contact naturalised British citizens for whom they have contact details?

Q8. The Home Office response to our questions about how those with pending EUSS applications can board a carrier to the UK after ETA enforcement states: *“We have noted your suggestions regarding the processing of CoA holders at the border, and the applicability of ETAs for this group. These arrangements remain under review, and we will consider whether further changes are necessary.”*¹⁰ What changes if any will be made to ensure that those with an EUSS Certificate of Application can board a carrier from 25 February?

Q9. Many dual British citizens experience problems when travelling, because they need to provide their non-British passport when travelling to the EU or to the US, and their British passport when travelling to the UK, and many carriers will not provide for this. Please provide details of all engagement with and guidance to carriers specifically around travel processes for dual British nationals travelling to the UK.

Q10. We continue to receive many reports from people unable to either access their eVisa or link new travel documents to their eVisa, who have reported this to the Home Office but are finding that the Home Office is not fixing their problem in a timely manner. The Home Office auto-response to submitting an error form¹¹ continues to include the wording *“We are currently receiving a very high volume of enquiries and as a result, we are not able to respond within our published timeframes.”*

- a. What are the published timeframes for providing an individual (rather than auto-reply) response to someone reporting an error on their eVisa?
- b. When will the Home Office resume responding within published timeframes when someone reports an error on their eVisa?

Q11. The Home Office continues to refuse to release data on the volume of errors reported via their error reporting form. Parliamentary questions have faced responses including *“the relevant data could only be collated and verified for the purpose of answering this question at disproportionate cost”*¹² and *“will be, in due course, publishing management information on the volumes of eVisa error correction webforms received”*¹³. Freedom of Information Requests have been refused on the basis of *“this information is exempt from disclosure, under Section 22 of the FOIA. This exemption provides that information can be withheld if it is intended for future publication.”*¹⁴. Given the serious impact of

¹⁰ <https://the3million.org.uk/publication/2025070301>

¹¹ <https://www.gov.uk/evisa/report-error-evisa>

¹² <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-06-04/57409> and <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-07-22/hl9775>

¹³ <https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2025-11-17/91336>

¹⁴ https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/evisa_error_reports

denied boarding that eVisa holders with ongoing eVisa problems will face when ETA is fully enforced from 25 February 2026:

- a. How many errors have been reported via the Home Office “Report an error with your eVisa” form since it was created, broken down by month?
- b. Will the Home Office urgently increase resources to properly fix people’s eVisa errors in a timely manner so that no-one is denied boarding?

Q12. Please set out in detail the contingency measures to mitigate for periods of planned maintenance and unplanned outages of both the iAPI system and the eVisa View and Prove system.

Yours sincerely,

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