

# Fact sheet: Schengen Entry/Exit System (EES)

16 June 2026

## What is the EES?

The EES is an automated IT system that registers non-EU nationals travelling for a short stay of up to 90 days each time they cross the external borders of 25 EU Member States<sup>1</sup> in the Schengen area, as well as Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. The EES replaces passport stamping with a digital system that records when travellers enter and exit the EU. Passengers travelling within the passport-free Schengen zone are not subject to EES checks. The system registers the person's name, travel document data, biometric data (fingerprints and captured facial images) and the date and place of entry and exit.

## Who manages the EES?

Eu-LISA<sup>2</sup> is the European agency responsible for managing the EES. EU Member State border police are responsible for carrying out border checks and rolling out the infrastructure. European airports host the physical border infrastructure and are responsible for guiding travellers before the border crossing. Airlines have no control over EES border-processing times and are obliged to verify that non-EU nationals have a short-stay visa (where required) and have not exceeded the number of entries authorised by their visa.

## What are the obligations for airlines in case of disruptions?

- Airlines are required to provide care and assistance to passengers whose flights are delayed if within the scope of Regulation (EC) No 261/2004 and related case law.
- Airlines may voluntarily offer assistance to passengers in case of disruptions like EES congestion and delays.
- Airlines are not obliged to delay departures in case passengers have not yet boarded at the gate closing time. Airlines are not liable for delays passengers may experience at border control because of EES or other reasons.
- If an airline waits for passengers delayed at border crossings, then it is liable<sup>3</sup> to compensate passengers on subsequent flights that are delayed as a result.

## What does A4E recommend to prevent and reduce EES-related delays?

A4E has been liaising with the European Commission and national authorities across Europe to prevent and reduce EES delays. Our **recommendations**:

- Border authorities should partially suspend EES – whenever congestion is likely to occur at peak travel times - meaning biometric data are not registered at the border.
- Border authorities should deploy more staff and adapt rosters during peak arrival and departure times.
- National authorities should deploy more automated gates and self-service kiosks at airports, and work with airport management to ensure border crossing points are adequately staffed.
- The EES mobile application should be swiftly implemented by all EU Member States, allowing travellers to pre-register before arriving at border control.