VON WOBESER

MEXICAN LEGAL NEWS

ETIAS: European Travel Information and Authorisation System – What Mexican Nationals Need to Know

We would like to inform you that the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) is expected to introduce a new pre-travel requirement for nationals of visa-exempt countries, including Mexico, who travel to the Schengen zone.

What is ETIAS?

ETIAS is a new entry requirement for nationals of visa-exempt countries—including Mexico—traveling to the Schengen zone. It is an electronic pre-travel authorisation similar to the United States ESTA. A valid ETIAS authorisation allows short stays of up to 90 days in any 180-day period; however, it does not guarantee automatic entry, because border guards will verify that all other entry conditions are met.

Who does it apply to?

ETIAS will apply to approximately 1.4 billion third-country nationals who currently travel visa-free to the Schengen zone, including Mexican citizens traveling for business, tourism, or transit. The Schengen zone is not the same as the European Union.

Application process

Applicants must provide personal information, including sex, date of birth, nationality, current residential address, occupation, education, and the Member State of intended first entry. The application fee is €7; applicants under 18 and over 70 are exempt.

The information is automatically cross-referenced against the Schengen Information System (SIS), the Visa Information System (VIS), Europol, the ETIAS watchlist, and algorithmic screening rules.

Public order check

The application includes four key security questions: (i) convictions for terrorism within the last 25 years; (ii) convictions for other serious crimes within the last 15 years, including trafficking, corruption, fraud, cybercrime, money laundering, drug trafficking, and violent crimes; (iii) stays in conflict zones within the last 10 years; and (iv) departure orders issued by any country within the last 10 years.

The system also uses algorithm-based profiling that compares applicant data against specific risk indicators and may generate alerts based on statistical patterns associated with the applicant's country of origin.

What happens if there is a "hit"?

If the system generates an alert, the National ETIAS Unit of the responsible Member State will review the case manually and may contact the applicant for additional information.

If authorisation is denied, the applicant may appeal under the national law of the country that issued the denial and may seek urgent interim measures before the courts where travel urgency exists.

Even minor offenses—such as unauthorized possession of protected species—could trigger an alert if reported, underscoring the importance of a preventive review.

Interaction with the Entry/Exit System (EES)

ETIAS will operate together with the Entry/Exit System (EES), which will electronically register entries and exits of third-country nationals at Schengen borders. The systems complement each other for migration control and are intended to detect stays exceeding the permitted 90 days.

Implementation date

ETIAS was originally scheduled for January 2021 but has experienced multiple delays. The current estimate is for implementation in the second half of 2026 or the first half of 2027.

Recommendations for Mexican nationals

- Plan ahead for business travel in 2027, as ETIAS authorisation may be required for travel to Europe.
- Review your criminal background and identify any conviction or circumstance that could generate an alert in the system.
- Verify that you have no prior overstays or records reflecting stays beyond the permitted 90-day period.
- Monitor official updates regarding the definitive launch date.
- Seek specialised legal advice before applying if you have questions about your background or a potential alert.

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