

16 January 2025

Ref/ 8540

Briefing note

Updates on Travelling to the UK, EU and US

There has been several recent updates on the upcoming UK and EU travel authorisation systems, as well as the processing times of US O and P visas.

Pearle* advises you to inform artists and cultural professionals travelling to these destinations in the course of 2025 about the new requirements.

Below you can find more information.

Table of contents

Travelling to the UK: New UK Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) System	1
What is an ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation)?.....	1
Application Process	2
Border Control and Security	2
What if an ETA is Denied?	2
Travelling to EU: Update on ETIAS and EES	3
Travelling to the US: Update on US O and P visa processing times	3
Pearle*-EFA publication – latest Cookbook on Third-Country National Artists working in the EU	4

Travelling to the UK: New UK Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) System

The UK is introducing the Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system to create a more streamlined, secure, and digital immigration system, enhancing security and efficiency at the UK border. The ETA will apply to eligible non-visa nationals visiting or transiting through the UK for short stays or working as Creative Workers under specific conditions.

What is an ETA (Electronic Travel Authorisation)?

An **Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA)** is a travel permission required for specified non-visa-required nationals, including EU nationals, who intend to enter or transit through the

United Kingdom. This applies to visitors, those arriving for short-term stays, **and Creative Workers under the provisions of Appendix Temporary Work - Creative Worker (CRV).**

ETAs are digitally linked to passports, enabling enhanced pre-travel checks. While an ETA grants permission to travel to the UK, it does not guarantee entry, travellers must still obtain permission to enter upon arrival.

The requirement applies to all routes and modes of entry, including controls and travel through the Common Travel Area (CTA). **Each traveller, including children and babies, must obtain their own ETA.**

The cost of an ETA is £10, and it remains valid for multiple trips of up to six months over a two-year period or until the associated passport expires, whichever occurs first.

Note: British and Irish citizens are not required to obtain an ETA. Third-country non-visa nationals lawfully resident in Ireland and travelling to the UK to visit from elsewhere in the CTA, are also exempt from an ETA.

The ETA is undergoing a phased implementation:

- **For eligible non-European nationals:** Applications can be made as of **27 November 2024**, with travel permitted starting **8 January 2025**.
- **For eligible European nationals:** Applications open from **5 March 2025**, with ETA required for travel starting **2 April 2025**.

Application Process

Eligible applicants can apply through the [UK ETA app](#) or via [GOV.UK](#), providing basic biographic, biometric, and security details. Required application details include:

- Passport and contact details
- Digital photo and responses to security questions
- Payment of the application fee

Processing Time: Most applications are processed within **three working days**. Travelers using the UK ETA app may receive faster processing.

When to Apply: Travelers are advised to apply well in advance of their travel date to allow sufficient time for processing, especially if additional information or security checks are required.

Border Control and Security

As mentioned above, ETA holders must still meet entry requirements at the UK border, where they are subject to standard border checks. The ETA provides travel authorisation but does not guarantee entry, as border officials retain the right to refuse entry.

What if an ETA is Denied?

If an ETA application is rejected, the applicant will receive a reason for refusal and may reapply. If denied, no appeal is available, but a visa application remains an option for those needing to pursue entry.

Travelling to the EU: Update on ETIAS and EES

In parallel with the UK's ETA system, the EU had planned to implement the European Entry/Exit System (EES) in Autumn 2024 and the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) by spring/mid-2025.

However, these plans have been delayed, and the Commission is now proposing to introduce a progressive start of operations for the EES. The proposal, once it has been approved and the Commission has set a date for the start of the system, will give Member States 6 months to deploy the EES.

Once the EES is in place and operational the ETIAS will be deployed in the months following.

More info:

- https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees_en
- https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias_en
- [See the Pearle* briefing note of 13 May 2024](#)

Travelling to the US: Update on US O and P visa processing times

O and P visas are the most frequently type of visas used for artists working and performing in the USA. Last year, changes in USCIS procedures directed all O and P visa petitions to the Texas Service Center, which then forwards them to either the California Service Center (CSC) or Vermont Service Center (VSC). While VSC processing times have remained steady, CSC has seen unprecedented delays, with processing times exceeding seven months. This forces performing arts organisations to use USCIS's \$2,805 Premium Processing service, effectively increasing visa costs by over 500%. These delays have created significant challenges for cultural mobility and event planning in the performing arts sector.

Tamizdat and the League of American Orchestras, alongside the Performing Arts Visa Working Group, brought this issue to USCIS and the Ombudsman's Office, supported by data covering over 350 cases. They highlighted the untenable situation where organisations must either pay the expedited fee or cancel performances. Both USCIS and the Ombudsman's office expressed concern and committed to identifying and resolving the issue. Early signs of improvement in CSC processing times are already visible.

Pearle*-EFA publication – latest Cookbook on Third-Country National Artists working in the EU

Pearle*-Live Performance Europe and the European Festivals Association (EFA) launched a new edition of the *Ultimate Cookbook for Cultural Managers* in December, offering guidance on employment and immigration rules for third-country national artists and cultural professionals temporarily working in the EU.

The Ultimate Cookbook for Cultural Managers: Third-Country Nationals Working in the EU simplifies the complex patchwork of immigration rules across Member States. While EU legislation provides a common framework, many countries impose specific requirements for non-EU nationals, creating administrative challenges, particularly for touring artists moving across multiple EU countries in one trip.

This resource supports live performance professionals in navigating these complexities with greater clarity and ease.

Thank you for further circulating the publication to your members and contacts.

 [Download a copy of the cookbook here](#)

Useful Links and Materials

- [UK Gov – Apply for and ETA](#)
- [ETA Factsheet](#)
- [Arts Infopoint UK – ETA Webinar](#)
- [UK Standard Visitor](#)
- [Appendix Temporary Work - Creative Worker \(CRV\)](#)
- [Pearle* Newsflash on US Artist Visa Petitions](#)
- [Pearle* Briefing on ETIAS and EES](#)
- [Pearle* Resource Centre](#)