

Rt Hon Lord Foster of Bath
Chair, Justice and Home Affairs Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0AA

22 July 2025

Dear Lord Foster,

The Home Secretary has asked me to write to you following the Committee's recent oral evidence session on the work of the Home Office, to set out further details of this Government's ongoing work with the EU on the European Entry/Exit System (EES) and our Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) Scheme.

European Entry/Exit System

The Home Office and Department of Transport are working collaboratively with French counterparts in the Ministry of Interior and the Police aux Frontières (PAF), and ports and stakeholders such as Kent Police and the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum, on the processes and operational procedures required to mitigate any risks of disruption following EES implementation, which is anticipated in Autumn 2025.

The Home Office secured agreement from both the European Commission and France for Port of Dover to open a new coach facility at their Western Docks, which will allow for coach passengers to register for EES and complete border control checks away from the existing facility at Eastern Docks, improving processing volumes, fluidity and passenger experience. In October 2024, specific agreement was also received from the Commission to pilot the car passenger registration process for EES at the Western Docks, including the use of a pioneering combination of ANPR and AI technologies by the Port of Dover to provide secure transit between their Western and Eastern Docks.

Ultimately, EES is an EU system and responsibility of the PAF at the juxtaposed ports. However, provided there is significant justification and where all other options to mitigate disruption have been exhausted, the new implementation plans do provide PAF with an option to pause EES registration. We will have cross government monitoring and reporting in place for the duration of the implementation period to ensure that any trends are identified quickly, with proportionate responses being put in place as necessary.

There continues to be extensive and positive engagement with France at all levels to ensure security and fluidity across our common border crossing points, and minimise the impact on travellers. The UK-France Leaders Declaration published on 10 July 2025 commits to maintain our working relationships on the introduction of EES within the agreed EU framework and timetable, and there is extensive ongoing contact at official level.

Electronic Travel Authorisation

In the session, you asked whether information relating to the ETA would be translated into other languages. Simon Ridley clarified that the application form itself is only available in English, and that as of March 2025 we have granted 5.4 million ETA applications. The application form is extremely short, with an identity capture process accompanied by a few short questions. Feedback gathered from users who are not native English speakers has been positive, with users reporting that the mobile app is simple and easy to use.

However, we have translated our wider suite of ETA communications products into key languages, including French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Dutch, to make the application process as simple as possible for non-English speakers. This includes translations of our digital displays, stakeholder factsheets, printable assets, and social media assets. It is also possible to add translated subtitles quickly and simply in over 100 languages to the existing Gov.uk ETA information video via the YouTube platform.

I trust this addresses any ongoing concerns you have.

With best wishes,

Seema Malhotra MP
Minister for Migration & Citizenship