

Written evidence submitted by Acklams Coaches Limited (EEE0013)

Acklams Coaches Limited Response to House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee - Call for Evidence: Entry/Exit System (EES) and European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS)

Introduction:

Acklams Coaches Limited welcomes the opportunity to submit evidence to the House of Commons European Scrutiny Committee on the proposed Entry/Exit System (EES) and European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS). As a CPT member operating 100 vehicles from East Yorkshire, specialising in private hire and european tours, we have a vested interest in the smooth and efficient movement of passengers across borders.

Concerns regarding EES:

- **Delays at ports and airports:** We have grave concerns about potential delays at borders due to EES implementation. Increased processing times for passenger checks could significantly impact coach travel schedules and passenger experience. This could discourage tourism and negatively affect the entire coach industry. We already have in the region of 140 planned coach bookings for private hires and 64 planned european tours. With delays at port, this will affect our operations and planning as drivers can only work for so many hours in the day before taking their legal rest breaks. We have in the past sent new drivers over to Calais but this is a massive increase in costs for the operator which we just cannot sustain.
- **Impact on frequent travellers:** The EES's close scrutiny of passport holders crossing the EU frequently could raise concerns for our drivers and couriers who regularly travel for business. Unintentional overstays due to misunderstanding the 90-day rule could lead to unexpected consequences for them.
- **Cost and logistical burden:** Additional administrative tasks for verifying travel documents and complying with EES procedures could increase operational costs and burdens for coach operators.

Alternative solutions:

- **Streamlined passenger processing:** We urge the Committee to consider streamlined passenger processing systems for coach passengers, possibly through designated lanes or the preferred option of pre-registration mechanisms. This could minimise disruption and delays for legitimate travellers. We've seen huge delays at ports in 2023 and none of this passenger detail processing was taking place. A lot of the people we transport are elderly going on holiday or under 16 on schools trips. Both will require additional help and so for this to be done before they leave home would be ideal.
- **Clarification and education:** Clear and accessible information campaigns about the 90-day rule and EES procedures are crucial for both passengers and drivers/couriers. This can prevent unintentional overstays and ensure compliance.
- **Exemptions for coach drivers/couriers:** We propose exploring simplified procedures for professional drivers and couriers regularly crossing the EU for business purposes. This would mitigate the administrative burden and protect their livelihoods.

Conclusion:

While we acknowledge the security objectives of EES, we believe its implementation must be balanced with the need for efficient and affordable European travel. We urge the Committee to consider the specific concerns of the coach industry and advocate for solutions that ensure smooth border crossings, protect frequent travellers, and minimise negative impacts on our business.

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