



Seema Malhotra MP
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
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22 January 2025

Electronic Travel Authorisation fee increase

Dear Minister,

I write to register our utmost concern about the recently announced decision to increase the fee to apply for an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) by 60%.

We have worked closely with Home Office officials on the development of ETA and its roll-out. We of course have concerns about the impact on tourism from the new requirements as I set out in my letter to you dated 12 August 2024 to which I was sent a reply from a policy official on 6 September 2024 (DECS Reference: TRO/1182713/24).

In that letter I set out our concerns about the ways in which the UK ETA would be uncompetitive as regards the forthcoming EU ETIAS scheme in terms of cost, exemptions, and validity period. At a cost of £10 per person, and with far fewer exemptions, ETA would already place us at a competitive disadvantage in appealing to tourists given that the ETIAS is due to come in at a price point of EUR7. To have this increased by 60% is – as we were bound to say publicly – completely staggering, especially as this will be implemented just as the scheme is to be rolled-out to European travellers who will now have to apply and pay for this advanced permission to travel for the first time ever.

It is also worth noting that this decision was announced without any consultation with or advance notice given to the tourism industry.

We warmly welcomed the Government's ambition recently announced by the Tourism Minister to grow our inbound tourism to 50m visitors by 2030 up from, 38m in 2023. Hitting that target will not happen if the Government keeps viewing tourists simply as a cash cow. Tourists make decisions in a competitive global marketplace. We are already 113th out of 119 countries for price competitiveness. We need the Government to help address that challenge, not compound it, if the industry is to grow and realise its full potential, and help the Government achieve its economic growth mission.

I am also bound to question if this decision is proof that a problem that has plagued tourism policy over many years – a lack of joined-up thinking and decision-making across Government

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– is still something that needs to be addressed. Many of the policies which impact inbound and indeed outbound tourists and tourism are made in the Home Office, Department for Transport, Treasury and elsewhere in Whitehall. We are hopeful that the forthcoming tourism growth strategy which the Tourism Minister also recently announced will address some of these structural problems in the long-run, but in the meantime, we are left with a decision which will surely stifle the very ambition at heart of that strategy.

We urge you to reconsider this decision, allow ETA to be implemented at £10, and ensure there is a full review of ETA's impact on tourism before any cost increases be considered.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Toomer
Executive Director

cc Sir Chris Bryant MP, Minister for Creative Industries, Arts, and Tourism; Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Mike Kane MP, Minister for Aviation, Maritime and Security; Department for Transport

Lord Livermore, Financial Secretary to the Treasury

Chris Webb MP, Chair All-Party Parliamentary Group for Hospitality and Tourism; House of Commons

Dame Caroline Dinenage MP, Chair, House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee

Saqib Bhatti MP, Shadow Tourism Minister; House of Commons