Q1: What is EES?
A1: The Entry/Exit System (EES) is an automated IT system for registering non-EU nationals travelling for a short stay, each time they cross the external borders of any of 29 European countries using the system.

For the purpose of the EES, 'non-EU national' means a traveler not holding the nationality of any European Union country or the nationality of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland.

'Short stay' means up to 90 days within any 180-day period. This period is calculated as a single period for all the European countries using the EES, and the system will automate identification of travelers that have overstayed 90 days, possibly resulting in entry denial or forced exit.

Q2: When will EES be implemented?
A2: It is scheduled to begin on November 10, 2024. In accordance with the NATO SOFA and applicable defense agreements, U.S. Government officials are engaging with the EU, NATO Allies, and Partners to obtain exemptions from EES for members of the force and the civilian component, dependents, and contractors assigned temporarily or permanently in a NATO country.

Q3: What countries will be using ESS?
A3: Twenty nine (29) countries will use EES:

Austria	Greece	Norway
Belgium	Hungary	Poland
Bulgaria	Iceland	Portugal
Croatia	Italy	Romania
Czechia	Latvia	Slovakia
Denmark	Liechtenstein	Slovenia
Estonia	Lithuania	Spain
Finland	Luxembourg	Sweden
France	Malta	Switzerland
Germany	Netherlands	

Q4: How will the EES work? What is new during the border checks?
A4:
If the EU does not grant an exemption and you arrive at a border crossing point for the first time following implementation of the EES:

- You will have to provide your personal data. Passport control officers will scan your fingerprints or take a photo of your face. This information will be recorded in a digital file.

- Your passport (biometric or non-biometric) will not be stamped.

- This process can be quicker if you register some of your data in advance. You can do this by using:

    o the dedicated equipment ("self-service system"), if available at your border crossing point; and/or

- o   a mobile application - if made available by the country of arrival or departure.

- In any of the instances above, you will meet a passport control officer.

If you have crossed the borders of the European countries using the EES more than once since the EES started
- Your fingerprints or the photo of your face will already be recorded in the EES.

- The passport control officers will only verify your fingerprints and photo, which will take less time. In rare cases, it may be necessary to collect and record your data again.

- If you hold a biometric passport, you will be able to enter more quickly using the self-service system (if available at that border crossing point). If your digital file is clear of any impediments to travel, you will usually not need to go via a passport control officer.

- Please be aware that all the other conditions for entry or exit remain valid and passport control officers may, at any time, take measures as necessary, such as collecting again the image of your face, etc.

Q5: Is a passport required for EES?
A5: Yes. In principle, both biometric and non-biometric passports will be accepted when crossing the borders, if valid and all the other entry conditions are fulfilled.

You only need biometric passport if you want to use automated ways to cross the borders ("self-service systems"), which are available at certain border crossing points.

Q6: I am a U.S. Department of Defense service member and have always just used my ID card and orders instead of a passport for official travel to NATO countries. Will that still be the case under EES?
A6: U.S. Government officials continue to engage the EU, Allies, and Partners to ensure the movement of DoD personnel continues without disruption, but as of late August 2024, EU officials have not issued an official policy regarding how NATO SOFA exemptions will be handled within EES. Until procedures regarding NATO SOFA exemptions are clarified, DoD affiliated travelers should attempt to handle border crossings as before but be prepared to present all necessary travel documents, including passports and orders. DoD travelers should also familiarize themselves with the EES requirements and expect delays when transiting into and out of the countries participating in EES.

Q7: Will U.S. Department of Defense service members on leave (not official travel) still be exempt from the EES requirements?
A7: As of late August, 2024, EU officials have not yet established a position as to whether members of the U.S. forces on leave will be exempt from EES.

Q8: How will EES affect civilian employees, dependents, and contractors?
A8: EU officials have not yet established a position as to whether civilian employees, dependents, and contractors conducting official or personal travel will be exempt from EES.

Q9: What can I do now to be prepared for EES implementation?

A9:

- Ensure all official identification documents for you and your dependents are valid. Renew passports that will expire within 6 months of the EES implementation date.

- Take all of your identification and official travel documents with you when you travel. Until the EES procedures for DoD personnel are firmly established you may have to present passports (official and tourist), DoD ID card, orders, leave documents, and other applicable documents during a border crossing.

- Plan for longer travel processing times at transportation hubs once EES requirements go into effect.

- Stay tuned to official information sources for updates.

For more information, check out these official sites

EU Entry/Exit System (EES) website: https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees_en
U.S. State Department travel site: https://www.state.gov/travelers/
U.S. EUCOM website: https://www.eucom.mil/staff-resources/quarterly-updates-for-personnel-and-dependents