

# FRONTEX



EUROPEAN BORDER AND COAST GUARD AGENCY

## ETIAS in the news - dealing with narratives and misinformation

24 October 2023

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Senior stakeholder management officer



# SPOTTING MISINFORMATION

ETIAS.OUTREACH@FRONTEx.EUROPA.EU

## ETIAS MEDIA MONITORING REPORT



### Summary

- In Europe, the coverage focused on the new requirements for tourists visiting the EU, as well as on the status of the implementation of the EES.
- Latin American and Asian media introduce the new European travel requirements.
- Finish Border Guard launch a pilot program to test a digital travel document at Helsinki Airport.

### Who got it wrong: incorrect reporting/misinformation about ETIAS

- Spain | *20minutos* refers to the unofficial ETIAS website [etias.es](http://etias.es).
- US | *Forbes* incorrectly states that ETIAS, valid for the Schengen countries only, already came into effect this year and refers to the unofficial ETIAS website, [etias.org](http://etias.org).
- Argentina | *La Nación* incorrectly says that ETIAS will start in November 2023 and it refers to unofficial website [etiasvisa.com](http://etiasvisa.com).
- Latin America | *NTN24* states that ETIAS is required in the Schengen countries only. *Bloomberg Línea* referred to ETIAS as a visa to be required from the end of 2023.

The correct information can be found on the official ETIAS website: [europa.eu/etias](http://europa.eu/etias)

## EUROPE

### What is ETIAS and how will it affect Spanish tourism?

In Spain, the local news outlets inform about the introduction of ETIAS, said to be scheduled for the beginning of 2024. *20minutos* explains the online application procedure, making reference to the official ETIAS website in the body of the article, but adding the link to an unofficial [etias.es](http://etias.es) site. The

# COUNTERING MISINFORMATION - WHAT THE MEDIA GOT WRONG RECENTLY

- Fake websites still main source of info
- ETIAS is a new type of visa
- There is no official ETIAS website
- Date of entry into operations (January 2024)
- Confusion as to number of countries ETIAS applies to
- Only people between 18 and 70 will need ETIAS
- Medical information necessary to apply
- Travellers should apply for a visa if ETIAS refused



## Example: medical information as part of the application process

When filling out the application, provide ETIAS with the following information about you:

1. Name and surname
2. Number and place of birth
3. Information about citizenship
4. Email address and contact number
5. Education and work experience
6. EU country you intend to visit (If you are traveling to several countries, then you should write the name of the country where you are going to arrive for the first time)
7. Information about **health status**
8. The passport, which must be attached to the application.



Applicants will have to fill out a personal details questionnaire digitally which will include marital status, employment status, **medical status**, criminal history and other data.

The Limited Times

**No medical information collected in the application!**

← Tweet

 **Dr Clare Craig (not one of her impersonators)**   
@ClareCraigPath

"It is expected that the European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS) will be operational in 2024."

"An application will be refused if the applicant... is considered to pose... a high epidemic risk."

Even after  failure?

[travel-europe.europa.eu/etias/faqs-eti...](https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias/faqs-eti...)

## Refusals, cancellations and appeals

What are the reasons for a refusal to grant an ETIAS travel authorisation?

An application will be refused if the applicant:

- used a travel document that was reported lost, stolen, misappropriated or invalidated.
- is considered to pose a security, illegal immigration or high epidemic risk.
- fails to reply to a request for additional information or documentation within the given deadline, or fails to attend an interview.
- has previously been refused entry and stay, accompanied with an alert recorded in the relevant information system.

An application will also be refused if there are reasonable doubts about the reliability and veracity of the data, statements or documents provided by the applicant.



**KB Technologies LLC** @CrptoDIC · 7 Jun

EUROPE = no go 4travel, has gone LOCO for travel visa



39



**Tadhg Kelleher** @sulanstudios · 7 Jun

Time to leave the EU. It is now a totalitarian regime



6

305



**Mandy** @Mandy2081556653 · 7 Jun

European people need to start thinking about what their future will look like if they don't rise up and start to fight against them



4



31

850



**Laurence Kimberley** @ebmejk · 7 Jun

Big pharma will gain billions from the jobs imposed !!!



1



1



7

869



**Woody** @Woody10002214 · 7 Jun

Schengen = illegal migration.

I know many people outwith the EU that never intend to visit due to the abuse of powers by Schengen.

If the rest of the globe say no, this will fall too.



1



1



2

471



## Then the hell broke loose

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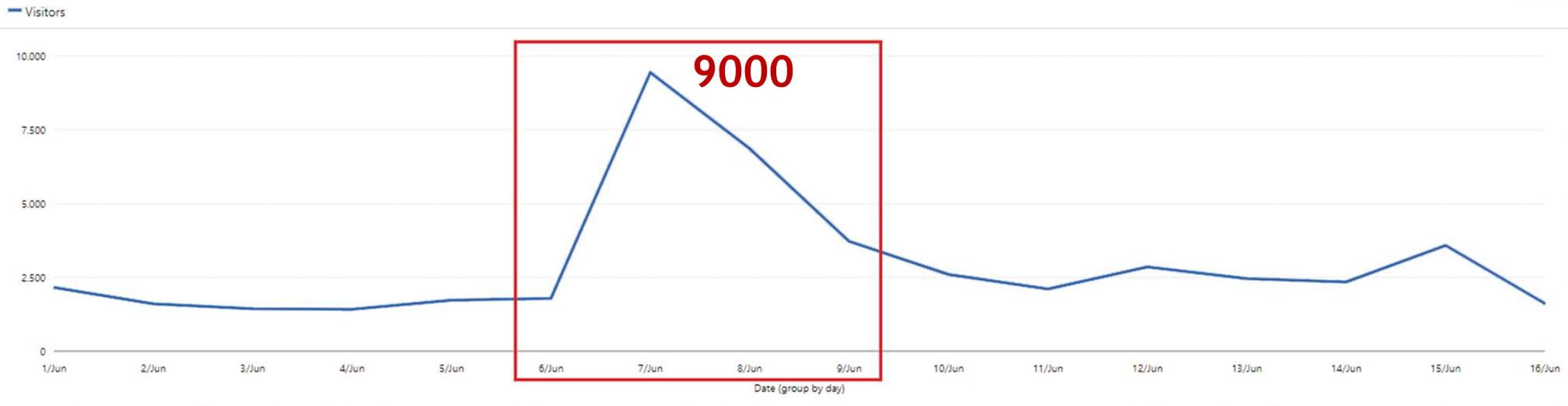
**bam @bam575**  
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policy to contr

**Hugh Cameron**  
Welcome to th  
nice holiday ca  
again?

**Mark Webber** @MarkWeb02726440 · 8 Jun



**WHO**  
THE FUCK DECIDED THESE  
UNELECTED SNAKES WOULD  
HAVE AUTHORITY OVER  
SOVEREIGN STATES



**6-9 June**  
**528% increase of visitors to the official ETIAS website**

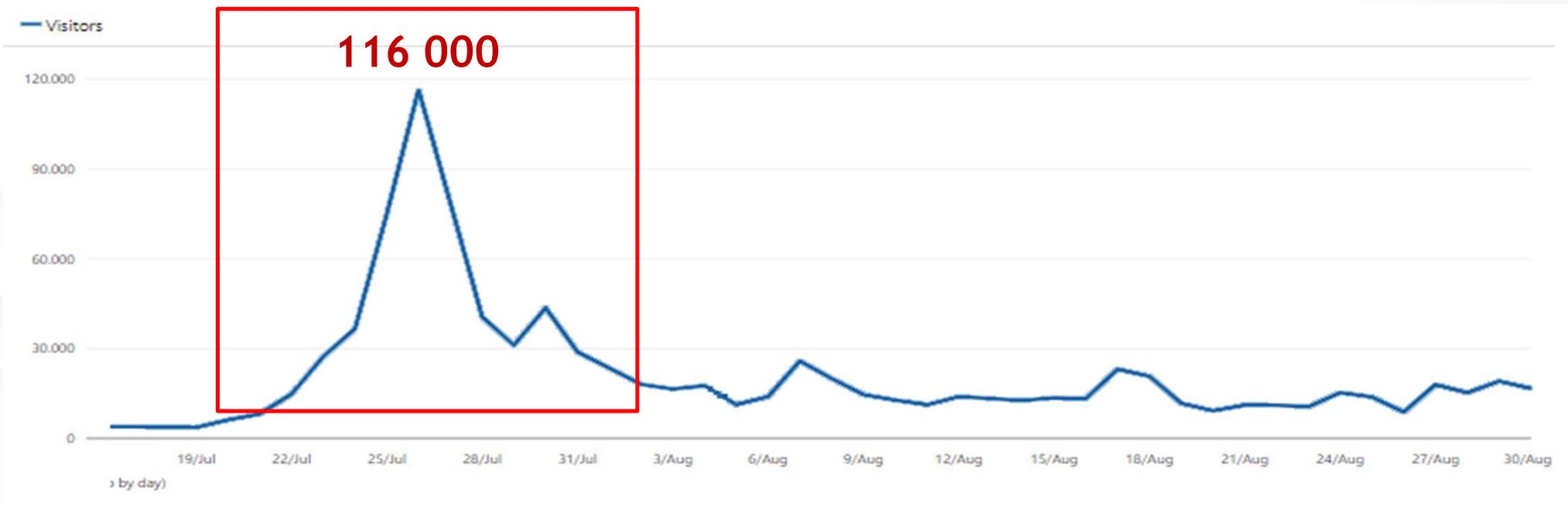
# WE RESPONDED



# DONALD TRUMP ON ETIAS:

- US media reported about the new changes to Europe travel plans for U.S. travellers.
- Trump : ‘I will put an end to the ETIAS requirement if re-elected’.
- Unprecedented 1 mln visitors to the ETIAS official website.

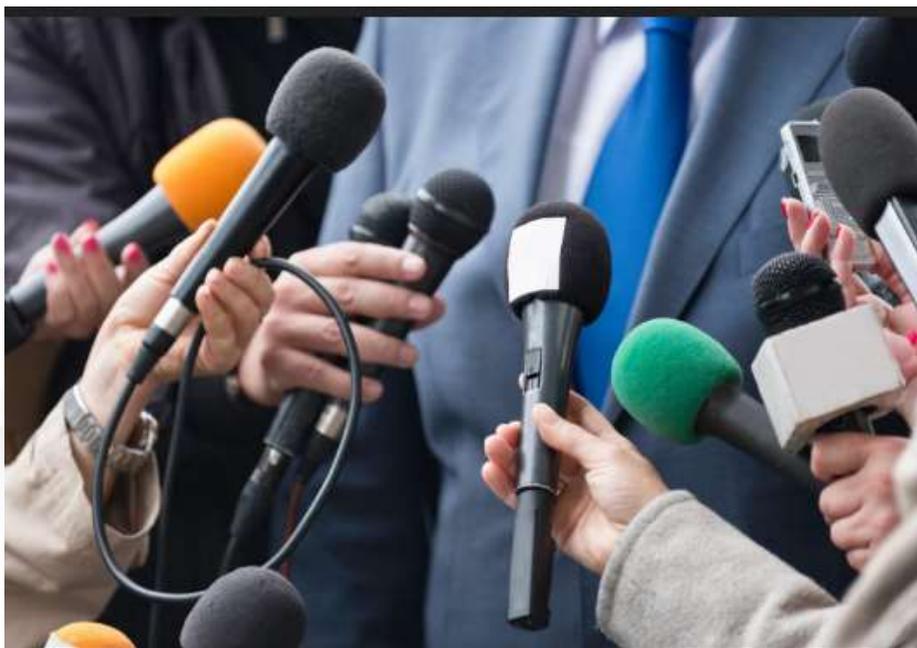




**26th July**  
**Almost 800% increase of visitors**

# COUNTERING MISINFORMATION/PROMOTING THE ETIAS NARRATIVE

## PRESS OFFICERS' NETWORK - 110 members



# COUNTERING MISINFORMATION/PROMOTING THE ETIAS NARRATIVE

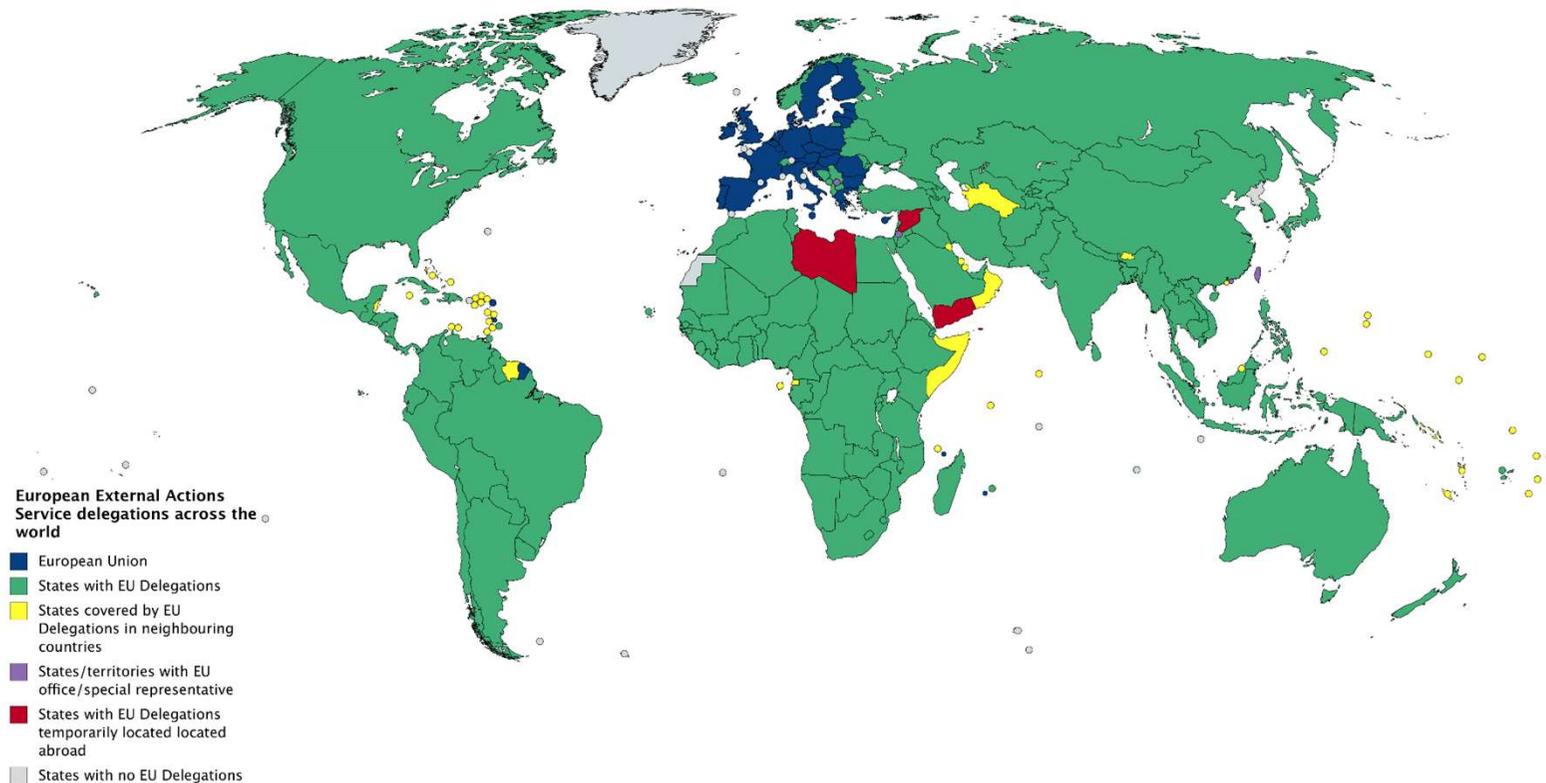
## ETIAS advisory group on communications

Gathers communications experts from:

- transportation
  - tourism industries
  - travel sector
  - European Travel Commission
  - Frontex, European Commission
  - eu-LISA
- Member States (rotating member from the country holding the presidency of the Council of the EU, (Spain))



# COUNTERING MISINFORMATION: EXPANDING OUR WORK WITH EU 50+ DELEGATIONS



# ADDRESSING MISINFORMATION - ETIAS INFO PACK



## Key messages for press officers

- ETIAS is not a visa
- There is only **one** official ETIAS website: [europa.eu/etias](http://europa.eu/etias)
- Beware of scammers

## Social media posts

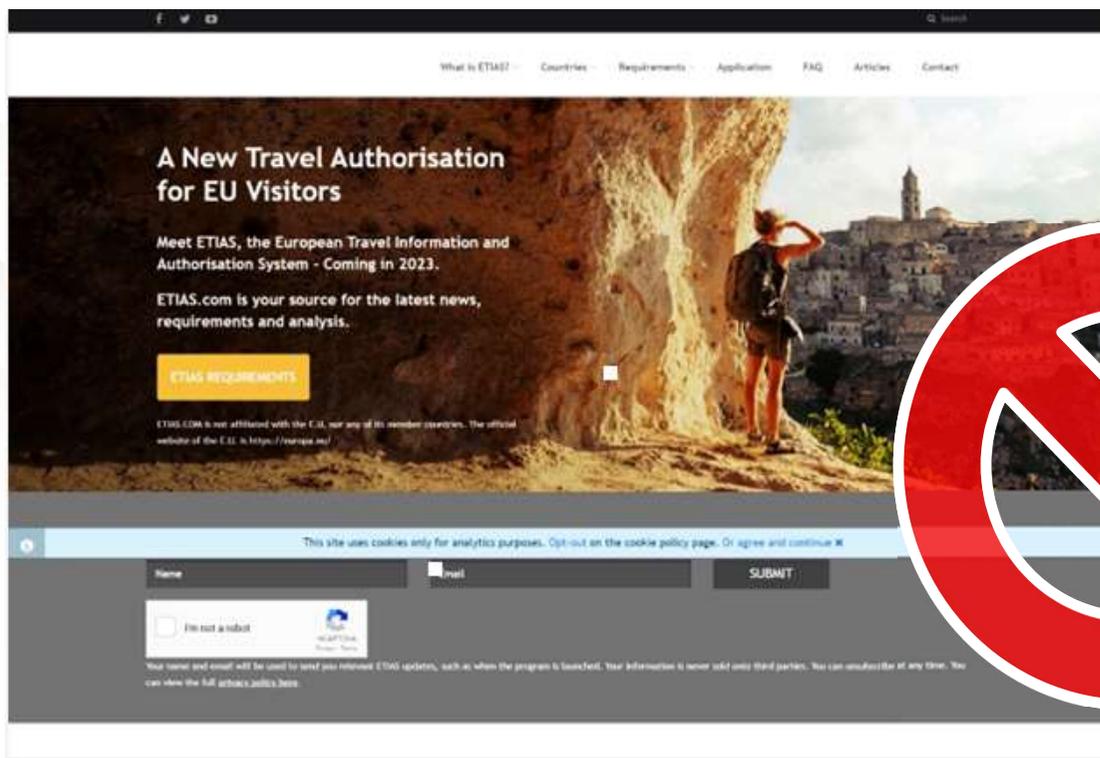
- #1 The rules for visa-free travel to Europe will change next year. Starting from early 2024, travellers from over 60 countries will need to apply for an ETIAS travel authorisation.  
Check out the official ETIAS website for more information: [www.europa.eu/etias](http://www.europa.eu/etias)
- #2 ETIAS travel authorisation is a new entry requirement for visa-free travellers to visit 30 European countries.  
- from early 2024  
- cost: EUR 7  
- Check the official ETIAS website [www.europa.eu/etias](http://www.europa.eu/etias) for more information.
- #3 In early 2024, the rules for visa-free travel to 30 European countries will change. Travellers from around 60 visa-free countries will need to apply for an ETIAS travel authorisation before they start their trip to Europe.  
The application process will be quick and easy and it will cost EUR 7.  
Read more on the official ETIAS website: [www.europa.eu/etias](http://www.europa.eu/etias)
- #4 The official ETIAS website is LIVE. Check [www.europa.eu/etias](http://www.europa.eu/etias) to know more about the new European travel authorisation.
- #5 Beware of scammers! There is only one official ETIAS website [www.europa.eu/etias](http://www.europa.eu/etias)

Below are the most common mistakes in media coverage about ETIAS.

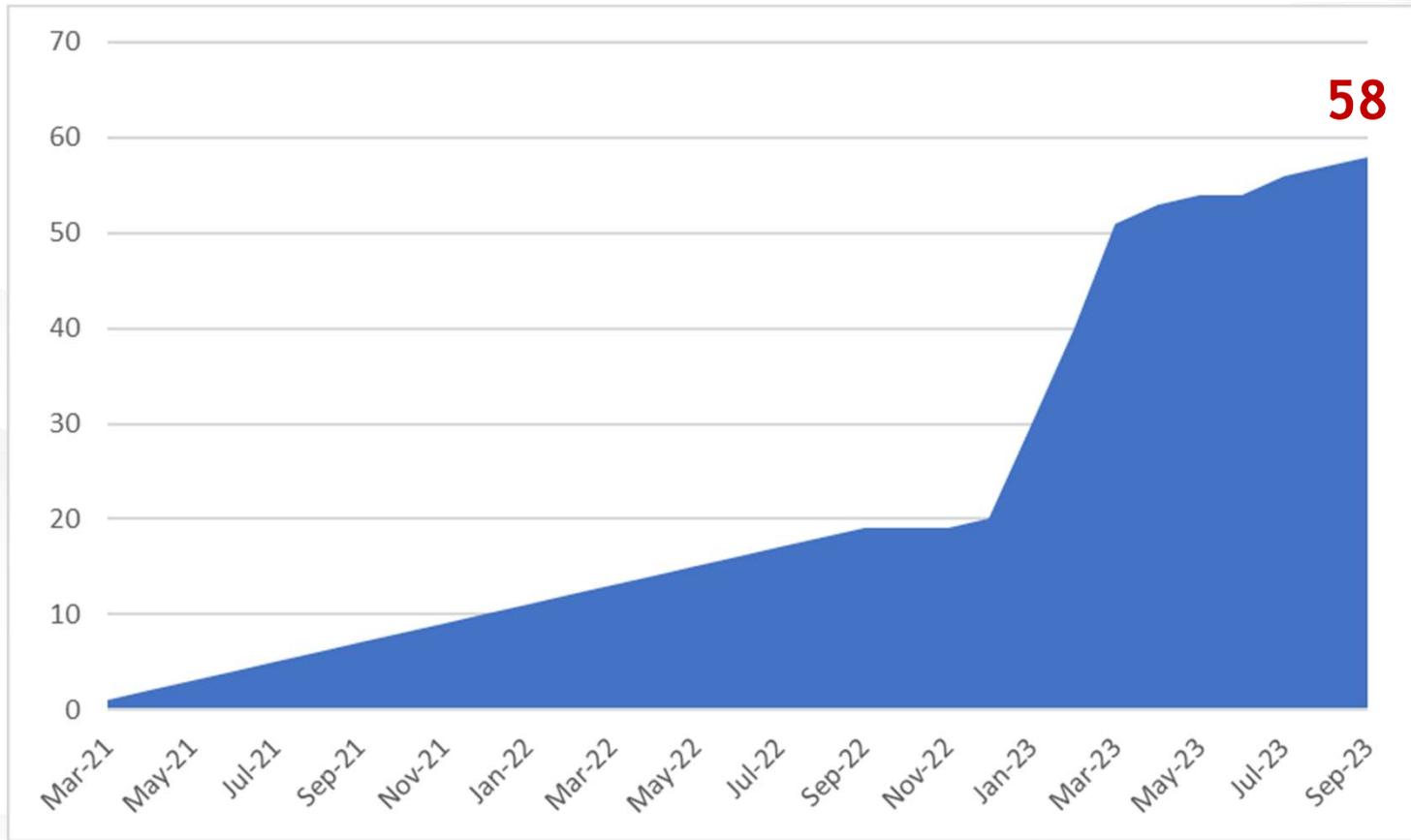
Date of entry into operation	<del>November-2023</del> January-2024	Date will be announced in autumn 2023
Number of European countries requiring ETIAS	<del>26</del> 29	30 (see the list <a href="#">here</a> )
Medical information required to apply for ETIAS	<del>needed</del>	not needed ( <a href="#">more</a> information on what is needed to apply)
Official ETIAS website	<del>etias.com</del> <del>etias-info</del> <del>no-official-website</del>	<a href="http://europa.eu/etias">europa.eu/etias</a>
ETIAS validity	<del>3 months + 5 years + 10 years</del>	3 years or until passport expires, whichever comes first
ETIAS is a visa	<del>new visa</del> <del>electronic-visa</del> <del>eurovisa</del>	not a visa, similar travel authorisations are implemented by the US, Canada and Australia
Application fee	<del>not yet announced</del>	EUR 7
Who should apply	<del>only people between the ages of 18-70</del>	all visa-free travellers regardless of age
In case application is refused	<del>apply for Schengen visa</del>	not possible to apply for a visa (see <a href="#">link</a> what should be done instead)
Databases applications are checked against	<del>Both EU and international databases</del>	EU databases, including VIS, SIS, EES and ECRIS-TCN

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# 58 UNOFFICIAL OR FAKE ETIAS WEBSITES EXIST, SOME CONTRIBUTE TO MISINFORMATION



# UNOFFICIAL ETIAS WEBSITES KEEP MUSHROOMING



# WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE UNOFFICIAL/FAKE ETIAS WEBSITES

- Commercial intermediaries allowed
- Request to provide sensitive data: personal data, credit card numbers
- Some collect personal data of users in a form of questionnaire
- One claims to have processed 671 applications
- One offers a 40% for early applications
- Some use EU logo - illegal
- Worldwide reach
- Quoted by the media widely
- Often tailored made for the country (Japan, Mexico, Spain, UK)
- Some copy & paste content of the official ETIAS website

**FAKE**

## TRAVEL & PASSENGER TRANSPORT INDUSTRY PROACTIVELY APPROACHED BY UNOFFICIAL/FAKE WEBSITES

- A major air carrier published an article about the new travel requirements to Europe
- Added a link to the unofficial ETIAS website
- The news immediately picked up by a huge number of travel industry magazines
- Misinformation was corrected, **but media had already picked up the story**

# Travel search engines also use links to unofficial websites!

The screenshot shows a Skyscanner article page. At the top left is the Skyscanner logo. Below it, the text reads "Travel news, tips & inspiration from Skyscanner". On the right side, there are links for "Help" and "Log in", and a search bar labeled "Search all articles". The main heading of the article is "What is ETIAS and how does it work?". Below the heading is a photograph of a woman in a light-colored jacket and pants, smiling and looking at a smartphone in her hands. Underneath the photo, the text states: "UK travellers will need an ETIAS to enter EU countries in the Schengen Area in the coming years. But what is it and how does it work? Here's everything you need to know". To the right of this text is a section titled "Our latest travel articles" with a list of four items: "Travel Trends 2024: redefining value through experience", "Four great US road trips picked by Formula 1 drivers", "48 hours in Belfast: the ultimate winter break in an unforgettable city", and "Sign up for Skyscanner's free newsletter". Below the main text, there is a sub-section titled "What is ETIAS?" with a red box highlighting the word "ETIAS". The text explains that ETIAS is an acronym for the European Travel Information and Authorisation System, created in September 2018 to improve the security of EU member states within the Schengen region. It captures data on travellers that visit the 26 countries within the Schengen Area without a visa. A note at the bottom states: "It's important to know that ETIAS is not a visa, it is a visa waiver, similar to an ESTA for entering the US." In the bottom left corner of the screenshot, a red-bordered box contains the URL "https://etias.com".

<https://etias.com>

## TYPES OF POSSIBLE ABUSE

- Identity theft (personal details)
  - Bank details
- Charge unreasonable amount (ETIAS only costs EUR 7)
- Charge money without providing travel authorisation

Ruin the trip

# WE NEED YOUR HELP TO PROMOTE THE OFFICIAL ETIAS WEBSITE, WARN TRAVELLERS AGAINST POSSIBLE ABUSE

- Promote the official website
- **Publish the link to the official website**
- **Warn against abuse**
- Engage the media & our respective stakeholders
- Use the ETIAS press pack (social media posts and press lines for the network)
- Repost articles on info corner



# BEWARE OF UNOFFICIAL ETIAS WEBSITES

There is only one  
official ETIAS  
website:

[europa.eu/etias](https://europa.eu/etias)





# ETIAS

European Travel Information  
and Authorisation System

official website: [europa.eu/etias](https://europa.eu/etias)

