

BUSINESS TRAVEL ISSUES

BREXIT: WHAT IT MEANS FOR BUSINESS TRAVEL

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
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INTRODUCTION

Since the U.K.'s exit from the EU (European Union), rules affecting business travel between the U.K. and EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland (collectively referred to in this report as Europe) have changed, largely as a result of the [EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#). Changes mostly affect U.K. citizens making trips to Europe, but business travel from Europe to the U.K. will see some changes too. And these changes may apply not just to U.K. and European citizens; anyone traveling for business between Europe and the U.K. could be affected under some circumstances.

This document summarizes some of the key changes that travel managers and travelers need to look out for.

VISAS AND PASSPORTS

If traveling to the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland, U.K. citizens now need a passport with at least six months validity, and which is less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left). These rules do not apply for trips to Ireland, where passports can be used as long as they're valid for the length of the stay.

From October 1, 2021, EU, EEA, or Swiss national ID cards will no longer be valid for entering the U.K. There are some exceptions, where ID cards may be used until at least December 31, 2025. More information can be found from the [UK Government](#). In most cases, European travelers will need a passport to enter the U.K., which must be valid for the duration of the stay.

U.K. citizens are permitted 90 days visa-free travel in Europe in any rolling 180-day period. Before travel, this means counting back 180 days and calculating how many days have so far been spent in Europe. There are different rules for Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, and Romania, with each country having its own 90-day limit. There is no limit on the time that may be spent traveling to or working in Ireland, as it is in a Common Travel Area (CTA) with the U.K.

In contrast, European citizens may typically stay in the U.K. for up to 6 months and are allowed to enter the country multiple times during this period.

To ensure travelers stay within their allowance, travel managers may need to track the time each traveler spends in the U.K. or Europe for both business and leisure purposes. They may also need to record business trips for income tax purposes.

Penalties for overstaying in Europe will vary by country, as the EU has no common policy. These penalties include deportation for overstayers, a fine, and for the worst offenders, travel bans, possibly for as long as three years.¹ Such bans could apply to future travel to all EU member states and not just the country where the offence occurred.

It's possible that visa infringements, however minor, may inconvenience travelers on future trips, as they face extra scrutiny of their travel documents when crossing the border.

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¹ [Schengen Visa Info](#), Jan. 7, 2021

CROSSING BORDERS

Immigration officials may now require people traveling in either direction to provide proof that a return or onward trip has been booked. Travelers may also need to show they possess sufficient financial means for the duration of their trip and have appropriate medical insurance. By compiling and confirming this information pre-trip, travel managers may reduce the chances of a disrupted journey.

U.K. and EU passport holders will now find themselves in different immigration queues, and this may cause some confusion and delays when crossing borders. What's more, U.K. citizens can no longer use self-service eGates when entering the EU, although they may use them when leaving to return to the U.K. EU passport holders are not subject to the same restrictions when entering the U.K. and can continue using eGates. Delays are possible as travelers and immigration officials familiarize themselves with the new queuing protocols.

Travelers should allow extra time when crossing borders, as this may be needed if officials decide to scrutinize documents more closely.

The increased risk of border delays means travelers should allow more time if their journey requires a landside connection in the U.K. or EU onto a domestic flight or high-speed rail service. Otherwise they may miss connections, adding to travel costs and disruption.



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BUSINESS TRIPS

U.K., EU, EEA, or Swiss citizens are unlikely to require a visa if making a short business trip. This is particularly the case if the trip is for one of the following 11 reasons:²

- Meetings, conferences, and consultations with business associates
- Research and design activities – technical, scientific, and statistical
- Marketing research and analysis
- Training seminars – activities are confined to observation, familiarization, and classroom instruction
- Trade fairs and exhibitions to promote a company or its products and services
- Sales – taking orders and negotiating agreements, but excluding direct sales to the public and the delivery and supply of services
- Purchasing – buyers purchasing goods and services for a company
- After-sales and after-lease services – installation, repair, maintenance, training required to meet a supplier's contractual obligations
- Commercial transactions – management and supervisory personnel and financial services personnel engaging in a commercial transaction
- Tourism staff – tour and travel agents, tour guides or tour operators attending or participating in conventions or accompanying a tour
- Translation and interpretation – translators and interpreters supporting someone on a short-term business trip



There are some exceptions. Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic and the U.K. require business visitors to work for enterprises other than non-profit organizations.

Consistent with the rules for all travelers, EU-based business travelers can stay in the U.K. for up to 6 months and can enter the country multiple times during this period. A visa would be needed for longer stays.

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² [EU-UK Trade Cooperation Agreement](#), Annex Servin-3

While in the U.K., European business visitors may not do paid or unpaid work for a U.K. company or on a self-employed basis, undertake a work placement or internship, or sell directly to the public or provide goods and services. Further detail about the general business activities allowed on trips to the U.K. may be found under [Home Office Immigration Rules](#).

U.K. and European travelers face very specific and detailed rules when traveling to provide professional services.³ Telecoms workers, mining engineers and lawyers are among the business travelers who may need a work permit, depending on the specialist knowledge they possess and economic benefit they offer. The restrictions vary by country and can be quite detailed. Consulting Annex Servin 4 of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement is a good starting point, while contacting the embassies for each country will provide confirmation of the specific requirements and restrictions.

Professional qualifications, which might be a critical factor when providing a professional service, may no longer be recognized in some countries. And even when they are still recognized, there are likely to be additional requirements before a traveler may exercise their profession. These include registering with local authorities, demonstrating desired language skills, providing proof of character and obtaining professional indemnity insurance.⁴

If it is still not clear whether a visa or work permit is required for a business trip, or if professional qualifications are valid, contact should be made with the local representative (embassy, consulate) of each country being visited.



Contacting the embassies for each country will provide confirmation of the specific requirements and restrictions.

³ [EU-UK Trade Cooperation Agreement](#), Annex Servin-4

⁴ [EU-UK Trade Co-operation Agreement](#), Annex Servin-6

HEALTHCARE

Individual European Health Insurance Cards (EHIC) held by U.K. citizens remain valid until their expiry date. As U.K. citizens may replace their expired EHICs with a (global) GHIC, for free, they can retain access to emergency healthcare while in the EU/EEA and Switzerland, including for pre-existing and chronic conditions.

Travelers to England from the EU may continue using a valid EHIC issued by their home country to access healthcare if they fall ill or have a medical emergency during their trip.⁵ The EHIC also provides cover for pre-existing medical conditions. But it is not an alternative to travel insurance, which would be essential for any private medical healthcare, repatriation or lost or stolen property.

Instead of an EHIC, Norwegian travelers must present their passport to access treatment. Visitors from Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland may have to pay for treatment, which is charged at 150% of the national NHS (National Health Service) rate.

Note that different rules apply for European travelers using NHS services in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

As local health service providers may not initially be clear on the new rules, travelers may be inclined to buy enhanced health cover, with the extra cost this implies.



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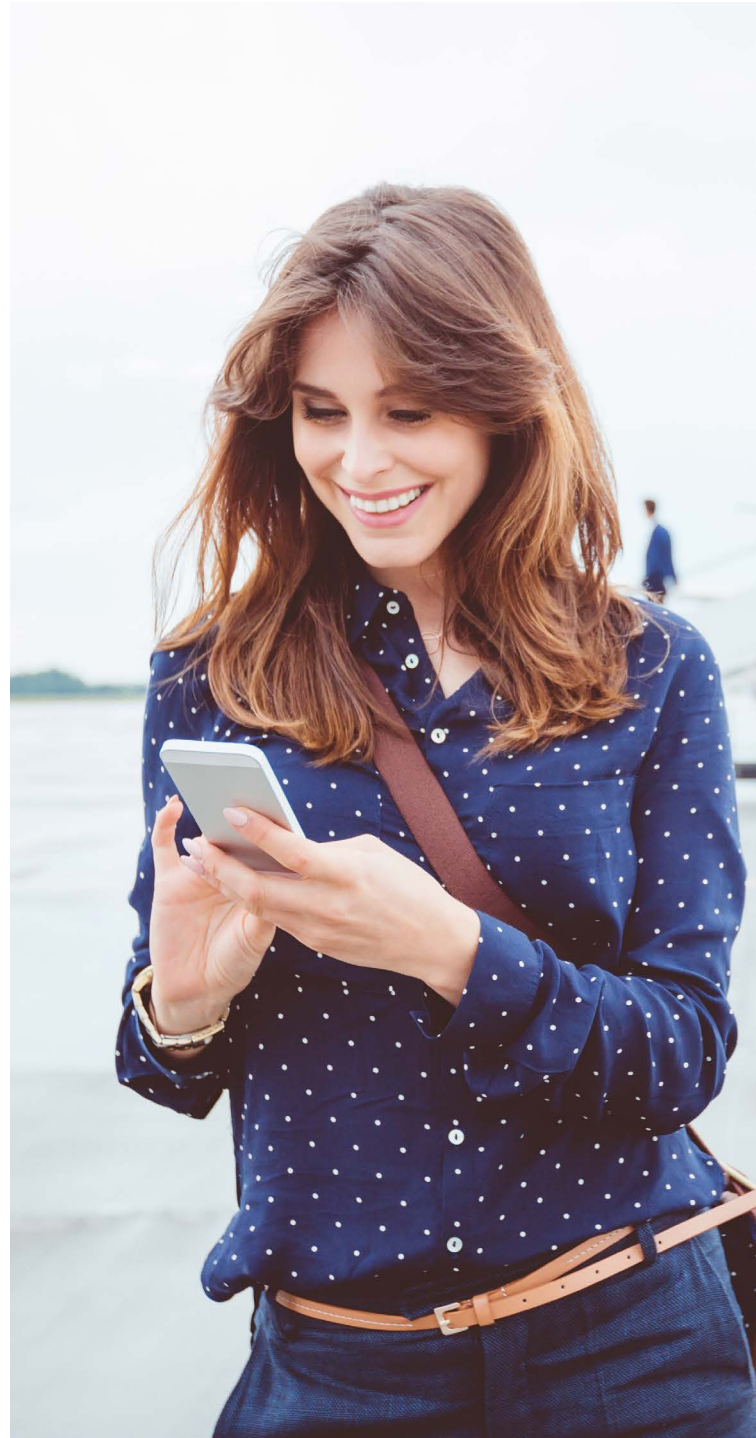
⁵ [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/healthcare-for-visitors-to-the-uk-from-the-eu), Healthcare for visitors to the UK from the EU

MOBILE ROAMING

The guarantee of free mobile phone roaming throughout the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway has ended. When abroad in the EU or U.K., travelers may in future have to pay roaming charges to their mobile service provider. At this stage mobile phone network operators have declared no immediate plans to reintroduce roaming charges, but it's worth checking to see if they have made any changes to mobile contracts. New laws protect U.K. travelers from getting mobile data charges above £45 without their knowledge. Once £45 is reached, users may opt in to continue using and paying for the internet while abroad.

Travelers on longer trips abroad or with high data usage could explore local phone contracts to reduce costs. Wi-Fi may also help avoid roaming costs, but it should be used with care.

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BIOSECURITY

As the U.K. is now regarded as a “third country,” new rules apply for travelers bringing certain foodstuffs into the EU. A ban on personal goods containing meat, milk or their products means passengers risk being stopped by customs officials for bringing in a cheese or ham sandwich, and possibly even a chocolate bar. There are also restrictions on other foodstuffs, including carrots, maize, cut flowers, potatoes, and some leafy vegetables.

Anyone arriving in the U.K. from Europe may still bring in meat, dairy and other animal products. Phytosanitary certificates are needed to bring in certain unprocessed fruit and vegetables, e.g. most common fruits, cut flowers and some seeds.⁶

Biosecurity checks at borders may add extra time to the journey, and fines may apply to anyone breaking the rules.

As these new restrictions may discourage travelers from bringing meals and snacks with them, they may be inclined to spend more on food & beverages at the airport or destination.



Biosecurity checks at borders may add extra time to the journey and fines may apply to anyone breaking the rules.

⁶ [Gov.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/personal-food-plant-and-animal-product-imports), Personal food, plant and animal product imports

SUMMARY

The new relationship between the U.K. and EU means anyone traveling between the two areas can expect to see some changes. The real impact may only become apparent once travel returns closer to pre-pandemic levels.

When meaningful levels of travel resume, it's important to listen, learn and share the experience of travelers who have made the journey between Europe and the U.K., to ensure a seamless experience for those that follow them.

Share your thoughts

Do you have questions or comments regarding this report? Please email [Mike Eggleton](#) to share your thoughts.



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