

National Interest Exceptions for Certain Travelers from the Schengen Area, United Kingdom, and Ireland

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Certain business travelers, investors, treaty traders, academics, and students may qualify for national interest exceptions under Presidential Proclamations (PPs) 9993 (Schengen Area) and 9996 (United Kingdom and Ireland). Qualified business and student travelers who are applying for or have valid visas or ESTA authorization may travel to the United States even as PPs 9993 and 9996 remain in effect following the procedures below.

Students traveling from the Schengen Area, the UK, and Ireland with valid F-1 and M-1 visas do not need to contact an embassy or consulate to seek an individual national interest exception to travel. Students seeking to apply for new F-1 or M-1 visas should check the status of visa services at the nearest embassy or consulate; those applicants who are found to be otherwise qualified for an F-1 or M-1 visa will automatically be considered for a national interest exception to travel.

Business travelers, investors, academics, J-1 students, and treaty traders who have a valid visa or ESTA authorization that was issued prior to PP 9993 or 9996's effective date or who are seeking to apply for a visa, and believe they may qualify for a national interest exception should contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate before traveling. If a national interest exception is approved, they may travel on either a valid visa or ESTA authorization, as appropriate.

The Department of State also continues to grant national interest exceptions for qualified travelers seeking to enter the United States for purposes related to humanitarian travel, public health response, and national security.

Granting national interest exceptions for this travel to the United States from the Schengen area, UK, and Ireland, will assist with the economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and bolster key components of our transatlantic relationship.

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We appreciate the transparency and concerted efforts of our European partners and allies to combat this pandemic and welcome the EU's reciprocal action to allow key categories of essential travel to continue.