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

Last Updated: March 2, 2021

On March 2, 2021, the Secretary of State rescinded the previous national interest determination regarding categories of travelers eligible for exceptions under Presidential Proclamation (PP) 10143 as related to the Schengen Area, United Kingdom, and Ireland. The previous national interest determination covered certain technical experts and specialists, senior-level managers and executives, treaty-traders and investors, professional athletes, and their dependents.

The Secretary of State also made a new national interest determination covering certain travelers seeking to provide vital support for critical infrastructure. Travelers in these categories, as well as academics, students, and journalists for whom National Interest Exception (NIE) criteria has not changed, may qualify for NIEs to PP 10143 as related to the Schengen Area, United Kingdom, and Ireland. No previously-issued visas or NIEs will be revoked due to the new policy. Qualified travelers who are applying for or have valid visas or ESTA authorization may travel to the United States following the procedures below even as PP 10143 remains in effect.

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 NIE 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 an NIE to travel.

Travelers who wish to visit the United States to offer vital support to critical infrastructure sectors, as well as academics, J-1 students, and journalists who have a valid visa in the appropriate class, an ESTA authorization, 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 NIEs for qualified travelers seeking to enter the United States for purposes related to humanitarian travel, public health response, and national security. These travelers and any others who believe their travel to be in the United States national interest should also review the website of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for instruction on how to contact them.

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.