

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001242/26  
to the Commission  
Tomáš Zdechovský (PPE)  
(25 March 2026)**

*Subject:* EES roll-out: impact on truck drivers from the Western Balkans and implications for EU transport and Schengen rules

The gradual roll-out of the Entry/Exit System (EES) is strengthening enforcement of the 90/180-day rule for non-EU nationals in the Schengen area. However, it is creating serious tensions, particularly for professional truck drivers from the Western Balkans, who often spend extended periods in the EU as part of cross-border logistics operations. The situation has already led to political pressure and coordinated border blockades in January 2026. At the same time, discussions are ongoing on possible solutions, such as long-stay visas or specific residence permits for professional drivers, while some Member States oppose any derogations from EES registration on security grounds.

In this context:

1. How does the Commission assess the impact of the EES roll-out on the functioning of EU freight transport and supply chains, particularly regarding drivers from the Western Balkans?
2. Does the Commission envisage an EU-level solution, such as long-stay visas or a specific facilitation regime, for drivers exceeding the 90/180-day limit for work purposes?
3. How will the Commission ensure that national measures remain compatible with EU law, preserve Schengen area integrity and avoid fragmentation across Member States?

Submitted: 25.3.2026

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission  
(20 May 2026)**

The entry into operation of the Entry/Exit System (EES) has marked a significant milestone for the Schengen area with a positive impact on the security of the EU, including by systematically detecting overstayers.

The roll-out of the EES has not changed the rules for the length of stay in the Schengen area, as set out in the Schengen Borders Code, but it has strengthened the enforcement of with these rules.

Therefore, economic operators within and outside the EU need to adapt their relevant business processes to be able to comply with the rules on the length of stay withing the Schengen area.

The Commission notes the concerns raised by freight transport operators from the countries neighbouring the EU and has actively engaged with relevant stakeholders to clarify the current legal framework and the functioning of the EES.

The Commission has announced in the Visa Strategy <sup>(1)</sup> that it will explore options to extend the limits of stay for professionals who are third-country nationals and are requiring a high degree of mobility within the Schengen area. In that context, the Commission has launched dedicated discussions with Member States on this matter.

Member States may, under their national legislation, issue long stay visas, or residence permits to third-country nationals, including professional drivers.

It is the nature of such national measures that they may imply a certain fragmentation in approach. The Commission remains engaged with the relevant partner countries and Member States in order to exchange information and best practices.

---

<sup>(1)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM\(2026\)43&lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=COM(2026)43&lang=en).