

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002000/24
to the Commission
Assita Kanko (ECR)
(9 October 2024)**

Subject: Launch of the new Entry/Exit System (EES)

On 3 September 2024, the Commissioner for Home Affairs announced that the new Entry/Exit System (EES) would finally launch on 10 November 2024.

The EES Regulation ⁽¹⁾ stipulates that the Commission should set an operation launch date only when eu-Lisa has declared the successful completion of a comprehensive test in cooperation with the Member States, and after the Member States have declared their readiness.

As the launch of EES will challenge border infrastructure and is likely to increase traveller processing times, at least initially, any lack of preparedness may lead to long queues and disruption. While I fully agree that EES should be put in place as soon as possible to enhance security, everything should be done to avoid negatively affecting legitimate travellers who contribute to our economy and transport sector.

I understand that three Member States have not yet declared their readiness. I also understand that the Commission is considering a partial launch of EES, which would be limited to the Member States that have declared their readiness.

1. Can the Commission confirm that a full EU-wide launch will only happen when the required legal conditions are in place?
2. Can the Commission explain what a partial launch would look like?
3. Can the Commission confirm that contingency plans are in place should the launch of EES present difficulties, including excessive delays, for travellers?

Submitted: 9.10.2024

**Answer given by Ms Johansson on behalf of the European Commission
(13 November 2024)**

1. The Entry/Exit System (EES) will be launched as soon as all the required conditions are met, in accordance with the EES Regulation ⁽¹⁾.
2. On 25 September 2024, the EU-LISA ⁽²⁾ Management Board invited the Commission to assess the feasibility of a progressive start of operation of the EES in all Member States. This approach was discussed in the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 10 October 2024 and it has been considered as the best way forward for a swift progress. The Commission is now finalising its legal assessment and therefore is not in a position to provide further details.
3. The EES is designed to offer a better travel experience and gradually reduce waiting times at the external borders, especially when using tools such as automated border control systems, the pre-registration application and national facilitation programmes. Each Member State is responsible for managing its external borders and activate these tools as appropriate. In this respect, Member States have reported that they have adapted their procedures and taken risk mitigating measures, as well as set up security plans, business continuity and disaster recovery plans. These contingency measures aim at addressing exceptional circumstances that may result in excessive waiting times. Moreover, the Commission has equipped Member States with information materials to ensure that travellers are adequately informed which will further support the acceleration of the border crossings.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011 (OJ L 327, 9.12.2017, p. 20, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/2226/oj>).

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2017/2226 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2017 establishing an Entry/Exit System (EES) to register entry and exit data and refusal of entry data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Member States and determining the conditions for access to the EES for law enforcement purposes, and amending the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement and Regulations (EC) No 767/2008 and (EU) No 1077/2011.

⁽²⁾ European Union Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice.