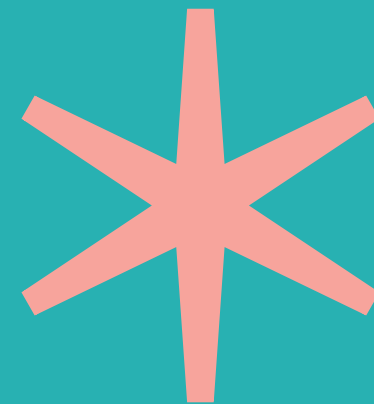


Understanding Schengen Rules: What Artists and Cultural Professionals Need to Know

21 October 2025

Arts Infopoint UK Webinar

International Artist Mobility Coffee Morning



- **The Schengen Area**
- **Schengen-Level Entry Requirements**
- **The 90/180-Day Rule**
- **The Entry and Exit System (EES)**
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- **ETIAS vs the Schengen C Visa**
- **What cultural professionals can do during short-term stays in Schengen?**
- **What activities can cultural professionals carry out in the Schengen Area?**



Understanding Schengen Rules: What Artists and Cultural Professionals Need to Know

The Schengen Area

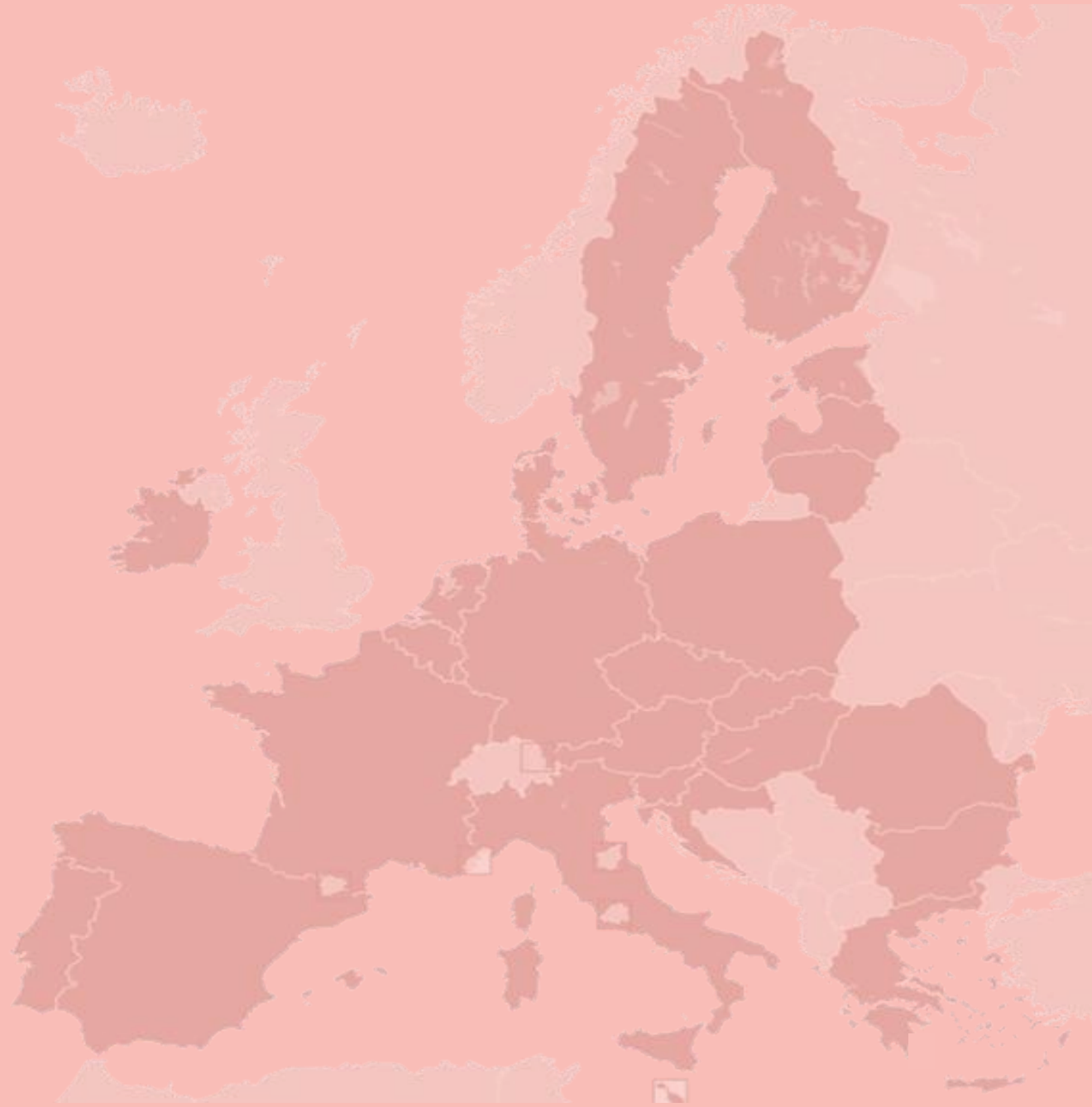
● The **Schengen Area** is a zone of **free movement** where **member countries** have abolished internal border controls.

■ Freedom of movement: People can travel across member countries without internal border checks.

■ Facilitated mobility: Citizens and third-country nationals can move for work, study, tourism, or cultural activities more easily.

■ Economic benefits: Businesses can operate and trade more efficiently across borders.

■ Stronger external borders: While internal borders are open, external borders are jointly managed to ensure security and coordinated visa policy.



The Schengen Area



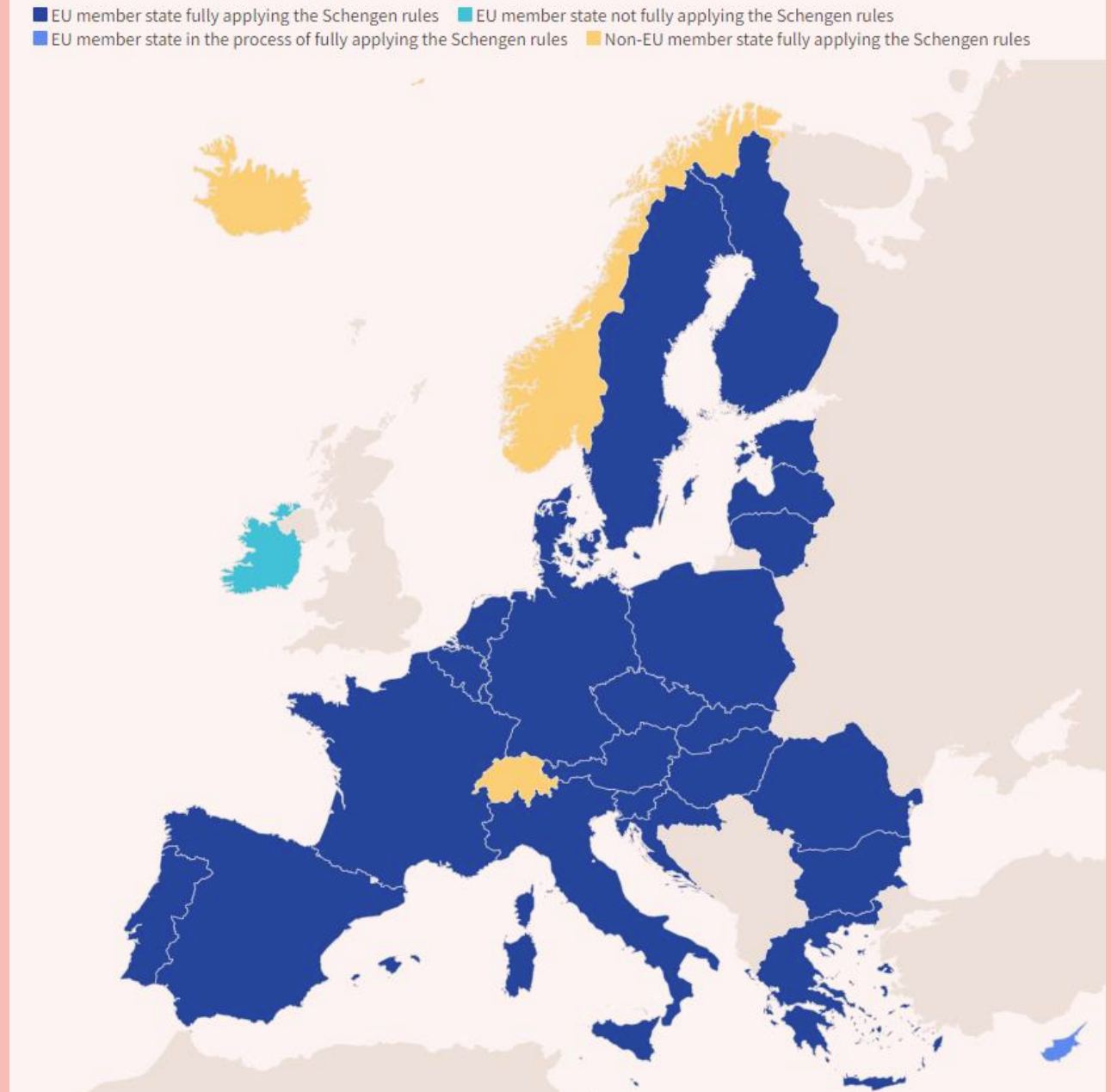
25 of the 27 EU Member States are part of the Schengen Area.



EU non-Schengen countries:
Cyprus, Ireland.



Non-EU Schengen countries:
Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein.



Source: European Council

Schengen-Level Entry Requirements

Common documentation required for all non-EU travellers entering the Schengen Area



Valid Passport

Valid for at least 3 months beyond intended departure date
Issued within the last 10 years



Proof of Accommodation

Hotel reservations
Invitation letter from host
Other documentation confirming lodging arrangements



Sufficient Financial Means

€45-60 per day (general guideline)
Bank statements or other proof of funds



Return/Onward Ticket

Proof of planned departure from the Schengen Area
Documented travel itinerary



Travel Medical Insurance

Minimum coverage of €30,000
Coverage for medical expenses, hospitalization, and repatriation



Important Note

These requirements apply to all non-EU citizens entering the Schengen Area, regardless of their specific entry point or purpose of visit.

Individual member states may have additional requirements.

The 90/180-Day Rule

What is the 90/180-Day Rule?

No more than 90 days can be spent in the Schengen area *during any 180-day period, looking backwards*: **business purposes, personal purposes, etc**

- This is a cumulative total across **all Schengen countries**, not individual per country.

Visa-exempt nationals

- They are allowed to stay in the Schengen Area for a **maximum of 90 days in any 180-day rolling period** (the so-called “Schengen allowance”).

Visa-required nationals

- They are **allowed to stay as long as indicated on the visa sticker** and **within the validity period** stipulated on it.

How It Works

The 180-day monitoring period starts with any day of entry into the Schengen area and looking back 180 days into the past.

- If the day in question is the 90th day, the individual must leave the Schengen area that day.
- With days progressing, old stay days fall out of the determination period as they drop behind the 180 days.
- **Entry** and **Exit** days count as a full day each, irrespective of the entry/exit hour.

Schengen Calculator: An assistance tool that allows the calculation of the Schengen allowance in any given period. This tool **does not grant a right of stay resulting from its calculation.**

The Entry and Exit System (EES)



The **EES** is a fully automated IT system that registers the entry and exit of third-country nationals travelling to the Schengen Area.



Implementation began on October 12, 2025.



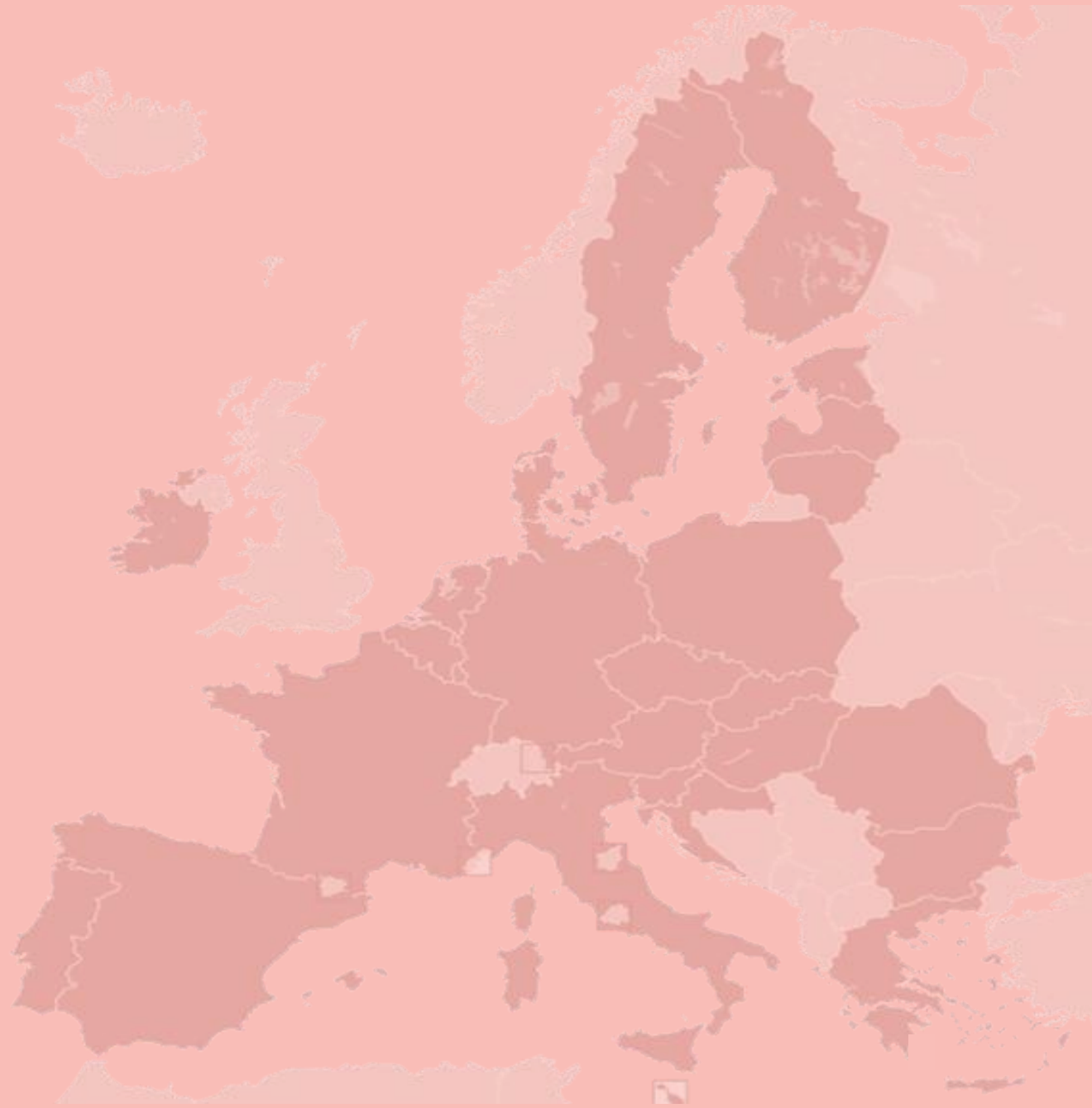
It will be progressively introduced across the Schengen Area's external borders, with **full implementation expected by 10 April 2026**.



It **applies to both visa-exempt and visa-required nationals** travelling for 90 days in any 180-day period.

This system will replace the current system of manual passport processing **and collect data electronically** (name, type of travel document, etc.).

It will **record overstayers**, and **refusal of entry**, and ultimately **prevent identity fraud**.



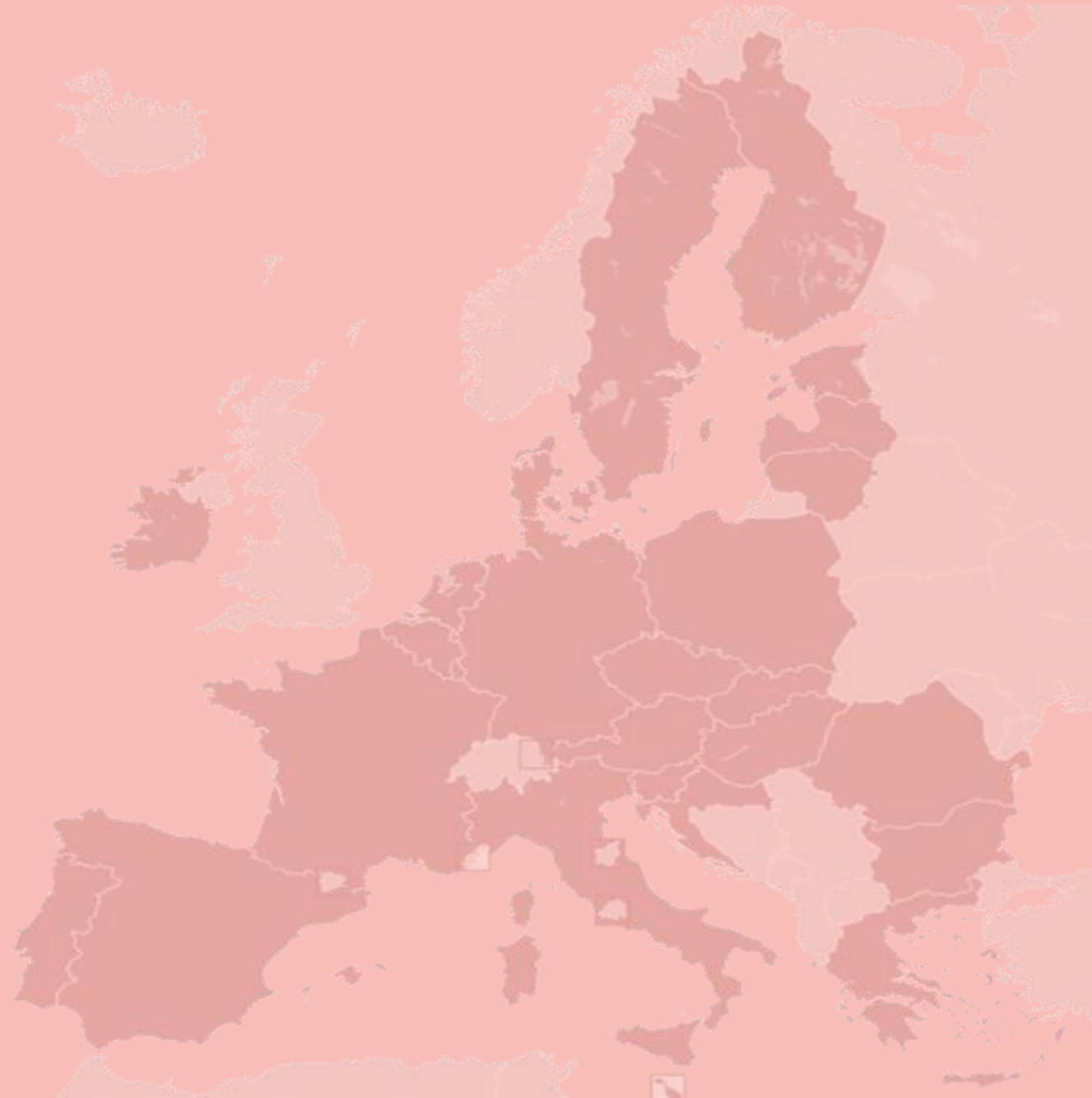
How does the EES work in practice

When arriving at the Schengen border (by air, land or sea) **the traveller will undergo border control, and their data will be recorded in the system.**

The system will record:

- name of the individual;
- biometric data (e.g. fingerprints and facial images);
- type of travel document;
- date and place of entry and exit into the Schengen Area.

Records of entries, exits, and refusals of entry will be stored for 3 years, starting on the date on which they were recorded.



How does the EES work in practice

What will happen on your first trip?

- You will have to **provide your personal data**.

***Note:** Carriers are likely to request travellers to submit their data in advance.*

- Passport control officers will **scan fingerprints and take a photo** (face). This information will be recorded in a digital file.
- Your **passport (biometric or non-biometric) will not be stamped**.

This process can be quicker if you register some of your data in advance using the dedicated equipment ("self-service system"), if available at your border crossing point; and/or a mobile application (if made available by the country of arrival or departure).



How does the EES work in practice

What will happen in the following trips?

- The passport control officers will **only verify** your fingerprints and photo since they are already in the system, which will take less time.
- If you hold a **biometric passport**, you will be able to enter more quickly **using the self-service system** (if available at that border crossing point). If your digital file is clear of any impediments to travel, you will usually not need to go via a passport control officer.

Use the **“short-stay calculator”** as a helping tool to check your remaining Schengen allowed stay.

Passport control officers at external borders can also provide this information for this information.



The European Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS)



ETIAS will be a pre-travel authorisation system required for visa-exempt nationals travelling to the Schengen Area (and Cyprus) for a maximum of 90 days in any 180-day period.



Implementation is expected by Q4 2026.



The following **are exempt** from applying for ETIAS:

- EU residence permit holders;
- Visa-required nationals;
- UK nationals who are beneficiaries of the Withdrawal Agreement (holding valid proof of such status) and their core family members;
- Refugees or stateless persons who reside in any EU country;
- Diplomats;
- Persons remaining in the international transit area.

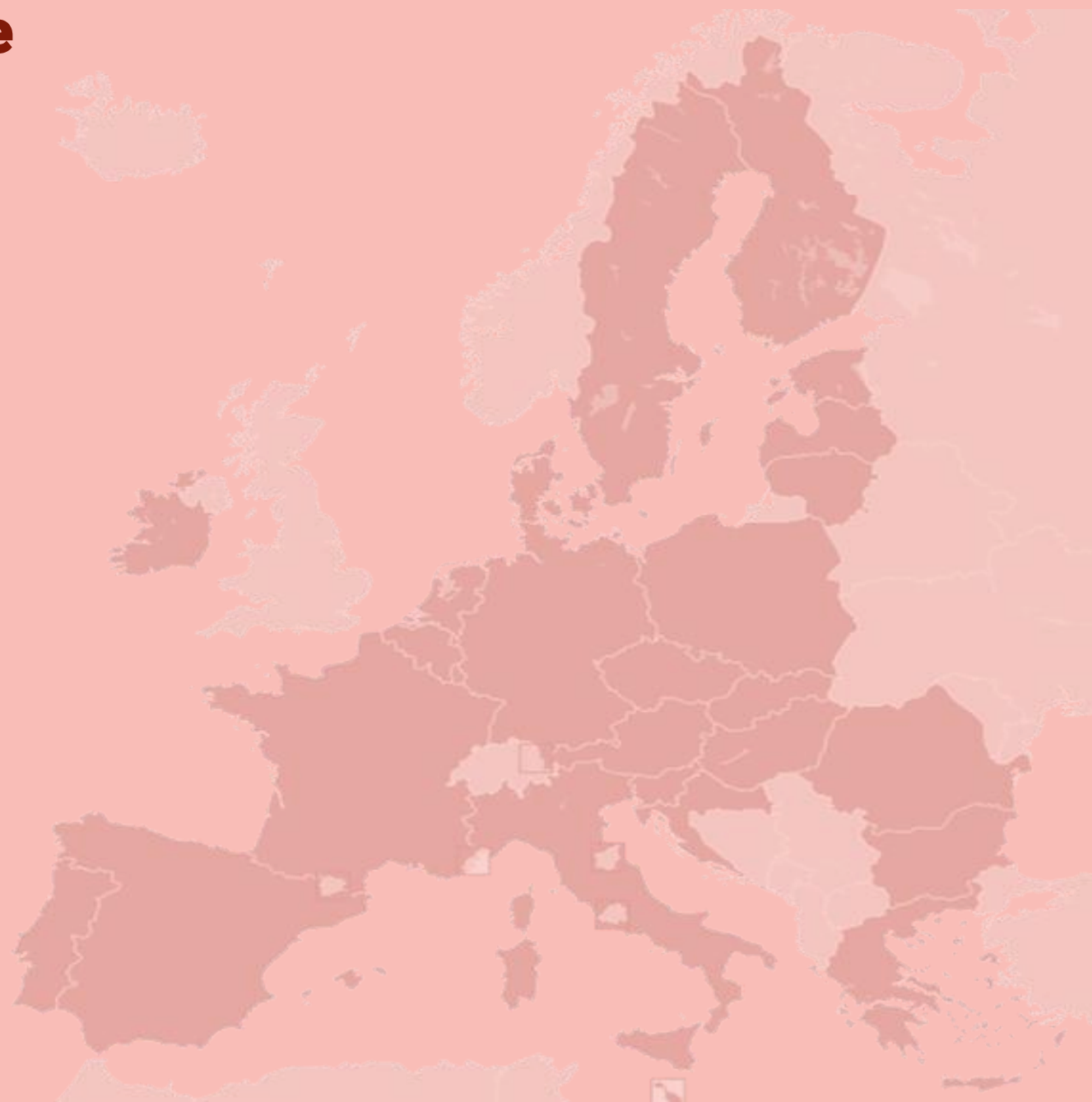
After implementation, there will first be a transitional period of 6 months, followed by a grace period of (at least) 6 months.

How will the ETIAS work in practice

Online Application via an official EU website or App (available in all official EU languages).

***Note:** The application can be made by the individual concerned or by a third party.*

- Authorization is required at **least 96 hours before** the travel date.
- It will **cost 20 EUR**.
- **Processed in minutes** (for most applicants). **Or between 14 days to 30 days** (if more information or an interview with national authorities is required.)
- **Authorization will be provided to the applicant by email.**
- **Validity of 3 years** or maximum of passport validity.



How will the ETIAS work in practice

How is the application processed?

- Once submitted, the application is **automatically sent to the ETIAS Central System for processing.**
- If a **hit is reported**, the application needs to be further **assessed manually.** In this scenario, the **MS responsible for processing the application is the one that issued the data that triggered a hit**, or in case of multiple hits, the MS which issued the most recent one.

A previous refusal does not automatically lead to an automatic refusal of a new application.

Applicant has the right to appeal (processed by the country that rejected the application and in accordance with its national law).

In cases of rejected the reasoning will be indicated in the decision:

- Use of a travel document that was reported lost, stolen, misappropriated or invalidated;
- Security, illegal immigration or high epidemic risk;
- Failure to reply to a request for additional information or documentation within the given deadline, failure to attend an interview;
- Previous refusal of entry and stay, accompanied by an alert recorded in the relevant information system;
- Reasonable doubts about data reliability.

ETIAS vs the Schengen C Visa

ETIAS

- Required by **visa-exempt nationals**.
- **Online registration process** that takes a few minutes (for some applicants) or 14 to 30 days (if interview with national authorities is required).
- **Cost:** 20 EUR
- **Valid for 3 years** (or until the passport expires)
- Allows **multiple entries to the Schengen Area**
- **Electronically linked to the passport** and checked at the border

Short-stay Visa (C Visa)

- **Visa-required nationals**
- In-person application process that requires an appointment at the consulate of the country of destination, documents collection and biometric data
- **Cost:** 90 EUR
- **Valid for up to 90 days** within a 180-day period
- May allow **one, two, or multiple entries** depending on the type of visa
- A **physical sticker on the passport**

What cultural professionals can do during short-term stays in Schengen?



In general, short-term visitors may enter the Schengen area for **personal or tourism purposes**, or to carry out **activities that fall within the scope of business visitor activities**.

- Participate in cultural or artistic events, such as concerts, theatre performances, or exhibitions;
- Engage in rehearsals, training sessions, or artistic collaborations, provided no formal employment relationship is established in the host country;
- Attend meetings, conferences, or networking events related to their professional field;
- Negotiate or sign contracts or prepare future projects or tours.

These activities are generally permitted under short-stay rules (up to 90 days within any 180 days), but **national rules may further specify or limit what counts as a “permissible activity” for third-country nationals**.

In addition to business visitor activities, third-country nationals may also carry out certain **work permit-exempt activities**, depending on the **national rules of the host country**.

- The same activity may be work permit-exempt in one country but require a work authorisation in another.
- There is no harmonised EU definition of “work permit-exempt activities” - each Member State determines its own rules.

What activities can cultural professionals carry out in the Schengen Area?

Country	Stays up to 90 Days	Additional Remarks
Austria	Work permit exemption for employed or self-employed artists for stays of: • one day, or • up to 8 weeks within an overall artistic production to ensure the realisation of a concert, event, performance, film production, or live broadcast. Note: Employment between one to 8 weeks must be notified by the event organiser or producer to the regional office of the public employment service (AMS) before or at the latest on the day of work commencement.	For stays exceeding the specified days or for individuals not covered by the exemption a Visa C or Visa D may be issued for temporary employment not exceeding 6 months in a 12-month period after this period a residence permit will be required. For stays over 6 months a Residence Permit - Artists can be granted for one year, with options for extension.
Belgium	Work permit exemption for stays of: • up to 90 days within 180-day period in Flanders, and up to 90 days per year in the Brussels region, for self-employed artists and their self-employed support personnel; • up to 90 days within 180-day period in Wallonie, for artists having concluded an artistic service agreement with an operator subsidized by the French Community. • up to 21 days per quarter for 'artists of international renown' and support personnel (also exempt from Limosa) – in Brussels and Flanders.	Self-employed: a Professional Card will be required for stays over 90 days. Employed: a work permit is required for stays over 21 days for renowned artists; for other artists, a permit is required regardless of the duration. Note: There are no specific permits for the cultural sector.

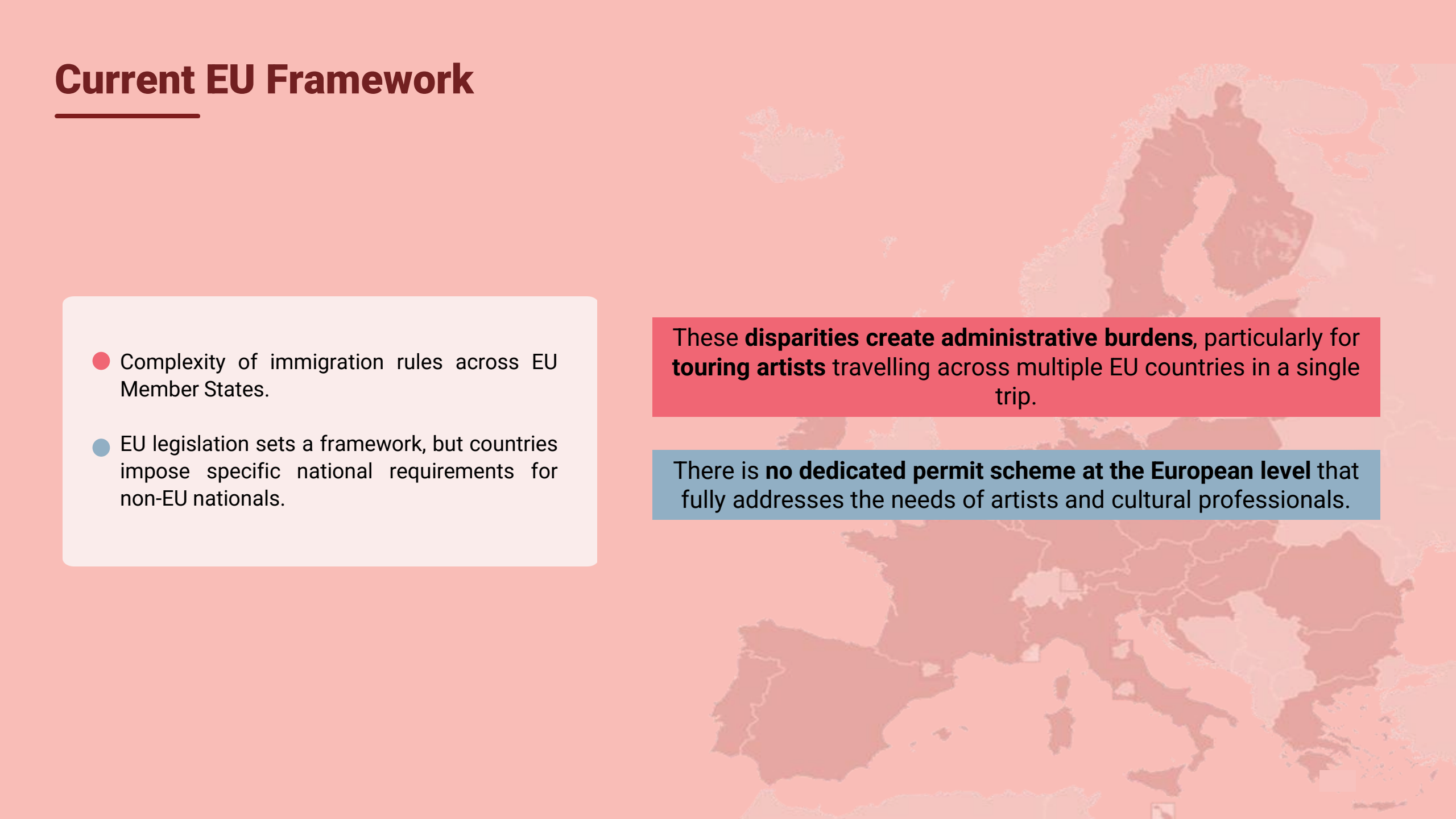
Touring or cultural projects often require stays exceeding 90 days.

- In such cases, artists and cultural professionals need **another type of authorisation** beyond the Schengen short-stay allowance.
- This may take the form of a **long-stay visa** or **residence/work permit**, depending on the **Member State's national legislation**.
- **Application procedures, documents, and timelines** differ across Member States.

Some countries have **specific visa categories** for cultural or artistic activities.

Others require applicants to apply under **general employment or self-employment provisions**.

Current EU Framework



- Complexity of immigration rules across EU Member States.
- EU legislation sets a framework, but countries impose specific national requirements for non-EU nationals.

These **disparities create administrative burdens**, particularly for **touring artists** travelling across multiple EU countries in a single trip.

There is **no dedicated permit scheme at the European level** that fully addresses the needs of artists and cultural professionals.

To keep in mind

A Short-stay Schengen C Visa applies to
VISA REQUIRED Third-country Nationals



ETIAS applies to **VISA EXEMPT**
Third-country Nationals



EES system applies to **ALL** Third-country
Nationals



The introduction of new travel requirements will **increase the administrative burden for travellers**, who will need additional documentation and must pay the ETIAS application fee.

It will also require artists and cultural professionals to **plan their trips further in advance** to meet all pre-travel obligations.



EES will enable TCNs to know exactly how many days they can stay in the Schengen area at any time, helping artists and cultural professionals plan their visits accurately.

With reinforced border controls, any cases of **overstaying will be more easily detected**.

Traveller checklist



Verify Visa/ETIAS Requirements

Check the entry requirements for your nationality (visa-exempt or visa-required).



Check Passport Validity

Ensure your passport is valid for at least three months beyond your intended departure date and was issued within the last 10 years.



Prepare Required Documents

Gather all necessary supporting documents, including proof of accommodation, evidence of sufficient financial means, a return ticket, and travel insurance.



Be Ready for EES Biometrics

Anticipate biometric data collection (fingerprints and facial image) at the border upon entry and exit, as part of the EES.



Monitor Stay Duration

Keep track of your 90-day limit within any 180-day period across the entire Schengen Area to avoid overstaying.



Consult National Rules

Always check the specific entry and stay requirements for your primary destination country.



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