



# Mobility: Immigration Alert

July 2021

## South Korea

### Electronic Travel Authorization for Visa-Free Entry for Foreign Nationals; Official Launch in September 2021

#### Executive summary

In May 2021, the government of South Korea launched a pilot project for Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) for visa-free entry for foreign nationals.

The ETA policy was introduced to decrease the number of visa rejections and to avoid instances of illegal stay of visa-free entrants while at the same time maintaining favorable diplomatic relations with other countries and not negatively impacting the number of tourists travelling to Korea.

The pilot project will end in August and the ETA policy will be in effect officially from September 2021.

#### What is ETA?

ETA is a travel permission granted to foreign nationals who wish to enter Korea without a visa. An ETA application, compared to a visa application, is very simple and processed very quickly (within 24 hours) to facilitate eligible traveller's entry to Korea.

Please note that an ETA is not a work permit. If a traveller intends to enter Korea and work in Korea, they must apply for a work permit, not an ETA.

#### What will be different?

Once the ETA policy is implemented, visa-free entry travellers who intend to enter the Republic of Korea for tourism purposes will be required to obtain permission in advance by providing personal and travel related information online. The benefit of this process will be the exemption of the requirement to submit entry documents, (e.g. an arrival card) at the airport which will enable

travellers to enter Korea quickly and conveniently. An ETA will be valid for two years from the filing date, so that eligible travellers will not be required to file an application for each travel to Korea within this period.

#### Who will be subject to ETA application?

All visa-free entry travellers\* that fall within the below categories will be subject to ETA application:

- 1) Those who do not have a valid Korean visa at the time of filing
- 2) Those who plan to visit Korea for a short-term visit (less than 90 days) for the purposes of tourism, family visits, meetings, seminars, or events (i.e. not related to work) under visa waiver or visa-free agreements.

\*Total 112 countries: nationals of 66 visa waiver countries and nationals of 46 designated visa-free countries.

*Countries under Visa Waiver Agreements (Total 66 countries): Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Federation, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Saint Kitts-Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark,*

Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, Israel, Lesotho, Morocco, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates

Designated Visa-free Entry Countries (Total 46 countries and regions): Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, Macau, Taiwan, Argentina, Canada, Ecuador, Guyana, Honduras, Paraguay, United States, Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Holy See, Monaco, Montenegro, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Australia, Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Bahrain, Botswana, Eswatini, Kuwait, Mauritius, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, South Africa

Due to COVID-19-related travel disruptions, eligible applicants for an ETA will be:

- 1) Nationals of 21 countries\* that can currently enter the Republic of Korea without a visa.
- 2) Priority entry persons, such as business persons, from the 91 countries that have temporarily suspended visa-free entry.

21 countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, Mexico, Nicaragua, Dominican Federation, Barbados, Venezuela, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Kitts Nevis, Malta, Ireland, Guyana, Monaco, Vatican City, San Marino, Andorra, Albania, Slovenia, Guam, New Caledonia, Palau

Please be informed that the list of applicable countries may change anytime due to the COVID-19 situation.

#### What EY can do for you

EY global and local teams can provide assistances with preparation of the eligibility requirements, filing of the application, pre/post-filing communication and validity check for multiple entries.

If you would like further information, please contact your local EY representative or one of the contacts listed below.

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EYG no. 005976-21GbI

2101-3682263  
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