

Travelling to the EU with a UK passport if there's no Brexit deal

Summary

Check whether you would be affected by changes to rules for British citizens travelling to some European countries after March 2019 if the UK leaves the EU with no deal.

Detail

The entry requirements for British passport holders, including those with passports issued by the Crown Dependencies (Guernsey, Isle of Man, and Jersey) and Gibraltar, travelling to Schengen area countries will change after the UK leaves the EU.

After 29 March 2019, you'll need to check the details of your passport and, if necessary, apply for a new one before you travel to a Schengen area country. For most people no action will be required, but if your passport will be older than 9 years and 6 months on the date you plan to travel, you will need to renew it in advance.

A scenario in which the UK leaves the EU without agreement (a 'no deal' scenario) remains unlikely given the mutual interests of the UK and the EU in securing a negotiated outcome.

Negotiations are progressing well and both we and the EU continue to work hard to seek a positive deal. However, it's our duty as a responsible government to prepare for all eventualities, including 'no deal', until we can be certain of the outcome of those negotiations.

For two years, the government has been implementing a significant programme of work to ensure the UK will be ready from day 1 in all scenarios, including a potential 'no deal' outcome in March 2019.

It has always been the case that as we get nearer to March 2019, preparations for a no deal scenario would have to be accelerated. Such an acceleration does not reflect an increased likelihood of a 'no deal' outcome. Rather it is about ensuring our plans are in place in the unlikely scenario that they need to be relied upon.

This series of technical notices sets out information to allow businesses and citizens to understand what they would need to do in a 'no deal' scenario, so they can make informed plans and preparations.

This guidance is part of that series.

Also included is an [overarching framing notice](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-governments-preparations-for-a-no-deal-scenario/>) explaining the government's overarching approach to preparing the UK for this outcome in order to minimise disruption and ensure a smooth and orderly exit in all scenarios.

We are working with the devolved administrations on technical notices and we will continue to do so as plans develop.

Before 29 March 2019

Most EU countries (though not the UK) are members of the Schengen Agreement. This agreement removes passport checks and border controls at the borders between [countries within the Schengen area](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/docs/schengen_brochure/schengen_brochure_dr3111126_en.pdf). People can travel around the area as if it is one country.

If you're a British citizen, as an EU national, you're currently able to enter the Schengen area if you have a valid passport. There's no requirement for British passports to have a minimum or maximum validity period remaining when you enter or leave the Schengen area.

The following are members of the [Schengen Agreement](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/docs/schengen_brochure/schengen_brochure_dr3111126_en.pdf): Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

These EU countries are not in the Schengen area: Ireland, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Cyprus.

After March 2019 if there's no deal

After 29 March 2019, if you're a British passport holder (including passports issued by the Crown Dependencies and Gibraltar), you'll be considered a third country national - under the [Schengen Border Code](<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32016R0399>) and will therefore need to comply with different rules to enter and travel around the Schengen area. Third-country nationals are citizens of countries (like Australia,

Canada and the USA) which do not belong to the EU or the European Economic Area.

According to the Schengen Border Code, third country passports must:

- have been issued within the last 10 years on the date of arrival in a Schengen country, and
- have at least 3 months' validity remaining on the date of intended departure from the last country visited in the Schengen area. Because third country nationals can remain in the Schengen area for 90 days (approximately 3 months), the actual check carried out could be that the passport has at least 6 months validity remaining on the date of arrival.

If you plan to travel to the Schengen area after 29 March 2019, to avoid any possibility of your adult British passport not complying with the Schengen Border Code we suggest that you check the issue date and make sure your passport is no older than 9 years and 6 months on the day of travel.

For example, if you're planning to travel to the Schengen area on 30 March 2019, your passport should have an issue date on or after 1 October 2009.

If your passport does not meet these criteria, you may be denied entry to any of the Schengen area countries, and you should renew your passport before you travel.

The easiest way to [renew your passport](<https://www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport>) is online. Or find out about [other ways of applying to renew your passport](<https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports>).

If you are planning travel after 29 March 2019, and your passport will be affected by the new validity rules, we recommend you consider renewing your passport soon to avoid any delay, as the passport issuing service can get busy, especially in the spring.

If you are a parent or guardian:

For 5-year child passports issued to under-16s, check the expiry date and make sure there will be at least 6 months validity remaining on the date of travel.

For example, a child planning to travel to the Schengen area on 30 March 2019 should have a passport with an expiry date on or after 1 October 2019.

If a child's passport does not meet these criteria, they may be denied entry to any of the Schengen area countries, and you should renew their passport before travel.

The easiest way to [renew a child's passport](<https://www.gov.uk/apply-renew-passport>) is online. Or find out about [other ways of applying to renew a child's passport](<https://www.gov.uk/browse/abroad/passports>).

Travelling to countries which are in the EU but not in the Schengen area

For countries that are in the EU but not in the Schengen area, you'll need to check the entry requirements for the country you're travelling to before you travel.

Travel to Ireland after EU exit

Travel to Ireland is subject to separate Common Travel Area arrangements which will be maintained after the UK leaves the EU.

[Further details on travel to Ireland can be found here](<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/ireland/entry-requirements>).

Passports with validity over 10 years (5 years for children)

Since 2001, some adult British passports were issued with a validity longer than 10 years. This is because if you renewed your passport before it expired you were allowed to have the time left on your old passport added to your new passport. The maximum validity period possible was 10 years and 9 months. This means you can't use the expiry date to check if your adult passport will be valid under the new rules.

From the beginning of September 2018 extra validity is no longer added to passports and the maximum validity for a new adult UK passport will be 10 years, and for a child passport will be 5 years. We have made this change to follow recommendations set out by the International Civil Aviation Organisation and to help provide clarity about passport validity in the Schengen area in the future.

Crown Dependencies and Gibraltar passports

If your British passport is a Crown Dependency or Gibraltar issued passport and you're going to travel to a country in the Schengen Area from 30 March 2019, these new rules will also apply to you. If your passport does not meet these criteria, you may be denied entry to any of the Schengen area countries, and you should renew your passport before you travel.

You can apply for a new passport at your respective Crown Dependencies or Gibraltar passport offices:

- [Gibraltar](<https://www.gibraltar.gov.gi/new/passports-and-nationality>)
- [Guernsey](<https://www.gov.gg/passports>)
- [Isle of Man](<https://www.gov.im/passports>)
- [Jersey](<https://www.gov.je/Travel/Passports/Pages/default.aspx>)

British passports issued after 29 March 2019

[The design of the British passport will change after Britain leaves the EU](<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/blue-uk-passport-to-return-after-eu-exit>). This will happen in two stages.

Passports printed between 30 March 2019 up until the introduction of the new passport design will be burgundy but will not include the words 'European Union' on the front cover. This includes passports issued by the Crown Dependencies and Gibraltar.

Blue passports will start being issued from late 2019.

If you renew your passport between late 2019 and early 2020, you'll be automatically issued with either a blue or burgundy British passport.

This notice is meant for guidance only. You should consider whether you need separate professional advice before making specific preparations.

It is part of the government's ongoing programme of planning for all possible outcomes. We expect to negotiate a successful deal with the EU.

The UK government is clear that in this scenario we must respect our unique relationship with Ireland, with whom we share a land border and who are co-signatories of the Belfast Agreement. The UK government has consistently placed upholding the Agreement and its successors at the heart of our approach. It enshrines the consent principle on which Northern Ireland's constitutional status rests. We recognise the basis it has provided for the deep economic and social cooperation on the island of Ireland. This includes North-South cooperation between Northern Ireland and Ireland, which we're committed to protecting in line with the letter and spirit of Strand two of the Agreement.

The Irish government have indicated they would need to discuss arrangements in the event of no deal with the European Commission and EU Member States. The UK would stand ready in this scenario to engage constructively to meet our

commitments and act in the best interests of the people of Northern Ireland, recognising the very significant challenges that the lack of a UK-EU legal agreement would pose in this unique and highly sensitive context.

It remains, though, the responsibility of the UK government, as the sovereign government in Northern Ireland, to continue preparations for the full range of potential outcomes, including no deal. As we do, and as decisions are made, we'll take full account of the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland.