



Council of the  
European Union

**Brussels, 4 June 2021**  
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**UK 142**  
**VISA 120**

**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Note Verbale from the UK concerning Art. 492 of the Trade and  
Cooperation Agreement (visas for short-term visits)

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Delegations will find attached a Note Verbale from the United Kingdom dated 27 May 2021 on the above-mentioned subject.

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UK Mission to the  
European Union

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NO.78/2021

The Mission of the United Kingdom to the European Union presents its compliments to the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union and has the honour to refer to the Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community, of the one part, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, of the other part, signed at Brussels and London on 30 December 2020 (hereinafter, the 'Agreement').

With reference to provisions of Part Two of the Agreement (Trade, Transport, Fisheries and Other Arrangements), Article 492 (Visas for short term visits) the Mission of the United Kingdom to the European Union has the honour to:

- 1) notify that EU, EEA and Swiss citizens visiting the UK in order to marry or form a civil partnership (if recognised in UK law), and arriving on or after 1 July 2021, will be required to obtain a marriage and civil partnership visit visa before arriving in the UK;
- 2) confirm that EU, EEA and Swiss citizens visiting the UK for all other reasons permitted under the UK's Immigration Rules for visitors will continue to be able to do this without requiring a visa;
- 3) present the information note in Annex to this Note Verbale, to provide information about the extension of this requirement, which has been in the UK's immigration system since 2005, to EU, EEA and Swiss citizens;
- 4) advise that, in addition to this notification, details of this extension have been publicly available since December 2020 at the following website: <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-visa>.

The Mission of the United Kingdom to the European Union avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union the assurances of its highest consideration.



Brussels, 27 May 2021

To the General Secretariat of the  
Council of the European Union

## Information Note on United Kingdom Visit Visas

The United Kingdom (UK) left the European Union (EU) on 31 January 2020 and free movement of persons between the UK and the EU has ended. Those EU citizens who were resident in the UK by 31 December 2020, and their family members, remain eligible for the EU Settlement Scheme. As of 30 April 2021, over 5.4 million applications have been received and over 5.1 million applications concluded.

The UK welcomes visitors from all over the world who may undertake a wide range of different activities. The UK's Immigration Rules for visitors are available online here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor>

The UK has four different categories of visitor.

**Standard visitors** may stay in the UK for up to six months and can carry out a wide range of activities whilst in the UK. These include tourism, volunteering, recreational study, business activities, studying on short courses, work related training, sports activities, performances at a festival or event, science and academia, private medical treatment and taking part in legal proceedings. Visitors may do one, some or all of these activities during a single visit. Full details of the permitted activities are set out here:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-permitted-activities>.

**Permitted Paid engagement (PPE) visitors** may come to the UK for up to one month and receive payment for six different activities linked to their employment overseas or skills which they have. The details of activities covered are set out in paragraphs V 13.1 – V 13.3 at the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-v-visitor>. In addition, PPE visitors may undertake most of the standard visitor activities.

**Transit visitors** may stay in the UK for up to 48 hours as a break on an international journey. Standard visitors are also allowed to undertake this activity, so this category is mainly used by visa nationals who would otherwise need to apply for a standard visitor visa.

These activities and visitor categories will continue to be permitted and EU, EEA and Swiss citizens will not be required to get a visa for visiting the UK.

The fourth category is **marriage and civil partnership visitor**. In 2005, the UK introduced several measures to deal with those who seek to circumvent UK immigration law by entering into a sham marriage.

One of these measures is a requirement for people who are visiting the UK with the purpose of marrying or entering into a civil partnership, to obtain a marriage and civil partnership visitor visa before arriving in the UK. This enables checks to be made before those seeking entry come to the UK and avoids delays when in the UK. The holder of such a visa will also be exempt from referral to the Home Office under the UK's marriage referral and investigation scheme. Under the scheme the Home Office may extend the notice period before a marriage or civil partnership can take place from 28 to 70 days if the Home Office suspects the relationship is not genuine.

The marriage and civil partnership visitor visa requirement has since its introduction in 2005, applied to both visa and non-visa nationals. From 1 July 2021, this requirement will extend to EU, EEA and Swiss citizens, other than those protected by the UK's domestic implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement, or those who already have permission to remain in the UK. This aligns them with other non-visa nationals in the UK's single global immigration system. The requirement will be the same for all those who are not British, Irish or who do not already have permission to live in the UK. Visa information on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) was updated in December 2020 to reflect the forthcoming change. This information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/marriage-visa> and <https://www.gov.uk/check-uk-visa>.

In summary the key points of the UK's visit system are:

- The vast majority of EU, EEA and Swiss citizens visiting the UK will not require a visa.
- Only a very small number of EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who may wish to visit the UK to get married or form a civil partnership and then return to their home will from 1 July 2021 come under this longstanding requirement in the UK's immigration system and be required to obtain a visa before travelling to the UK.
- This requirement does not apply to ceremonies which, whilst they may be important for religious or cultural reasons, are not recognised in UK law. It applies to all

nationalities equally and is separate from the list of countries which require a visa when coming to the UK for any purpose

(<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-visitor-visa-national-list>).

May 2021