

France blocking Britons from transiting to EU homes

December 30 2021

Britons who live in the European Union can no longer drive through France to their homes elsewhere in the bloc under new regulations that have created confusion for many holiday travellers.

Many Britons take the Channel Tunnel to France, using Eurotunnel's Shuttle service, to drive from the UK to their homes in other EU countries.

But under new travel rules being applied since December 28 by French authorities, only Britons whose official primary residence is in France are being allowed in.

"Unless they hold French residency, British citizens are now considered third country citizens and can no longer transit France by road to reach their country of residence in the EU," Eurotunnel said in a tweet late Wednesday.

P&O Ferries issued a similar tweet warning that "only those with French residency will be permitted to enter France."

A French Interior Ministry official said it had not changed its list of "compelling" reasons enabling Britons to travel to France, but had clarified their application this month by border police.

"It seems logical to consider them like all other third-country citizens, and to not allow their transit toward another EU country," the official

told AFP, asking not to be named.

All tourism and professional travel has been suspended.

The change caught hundreds of Britons off guard as they prepared to return from family visits over the holidays.

"I'm completely lost. It doesn't make any sense," said Fiona Navin-Jones, a professor who is hoping to return to Belgium, where she has lived with her family for 14 years, via the Eurotunnel from the UK.

"I no longer have the right to return home," she said, adding that the new rules appeared to be "using COVID to mask what is really a Brexit issue."

Paris and London have been at loggerheads over a range of thorny subjects, including fishing and [illegal immigration](#), since Britain's official exit from the EU nearly two years ago.

It was not clear if the rules were being applied to the Eurostar train service, which many Britons use to return to homes in Belgium and elsewhere.

One Twitter user who was turned away at the last minute this week by French police as he tried to board the Eurotunnel shuttle wrote that he was able to return to Brussels by train.

"The FR customs said they had been handed the paper in the last few hours that clarified the compelling reasons rule. They even seemed a little frustrated," wrote Roland Moore, a public relations executive in Belgium.

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