

STATES OF JERSEY



FRENCH NATIONAL IDENTITY CARDS AS VALID TRAVEL DOCUMENTATION FOR FRENCH CITIZENS (P.36/2025) – AMENDMENT

**Lodged au Greffe on 27th May 2025
by Deputy P.F.C. Ozouf of St. Saviour
Earliest date for debate: 3rd June 2025**

STATES GREFFE

FRENCH NATIONAL IDENTITY CARDS AS VALID TRAVEL
DOCUMENTATION FOR FRENCH CITIZENS (P.36/2025)–
AMENDMENT (P.36/2025 AMD.) – AMENDMENT

1 PAGE 2 –

After the words “to maintain” insert the words “and extend”.

After the words “travel to Jersey” insert the words “to short stays of up to 72 hours”.

DEPUTY P.F.C. OZOUF OF ST. SAVIOUR

Note: After this amendment, the proposition would read as follows –

THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –

to request the Minister of Justice and Home Affairs, subject to the existing safeguards to protect the integrity of the Common Travel Area, to maintain **and extend** the scheme whereby French citizens can use a valid French national identity card to travel to Jersey **to short stays of up to 72 hours**.

REPORT

Introduction

Jersey's autonomy as a Crown Dependency empowers us to shape immigration policies that enrich our island while honouring the Common Travel Area (CTA). The French National Identity Card Travel Scheme, launched on 22 April 2023 under Paragraph 11A(i) of the Jersey Immigration Rules, has revitalised tourism from our French neighbours, breathing life into our hospitality sector. This report supports a proposition to request the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs to extend this scheme, allowing French nationals to use valid national identity cards for short stays of up to 72 hours, rather than limiting visits to same-day returns. This forward-thinking adjustment will amplify Jersey's economic and cultural vibrancy, preserving the robust safeguards that ensure CTA harmony.

Background

Introduced to counter the post-Brexit decline in French day-trippers, many of whom rely on national identity cards due to low passport ownership, the scheme has been a triumph.

As documented in Jersey's Immigration Powers and the French ID Card Travel Scheme, it restored visitor numbers to pre-Brexit levels, with 31,440 French day-trippers in 2023 and 42,100 in 2024, contributing £3 million and £4.5 million to the local economy, respectively. These visitors have bolstered hotels, restaurants, and small businesses, reinforcing tourism's role as a cornerstone of Jersey's prosperity.

The scheme, effective until 30 September 2025, permits French nationals to enter Jersey via commercial passenger ferries with a valid identity card, provided they hold a same-day return ticket and do not transit to other CTA jurisdictions. Stringent safeguards, including a Memorandum of Understanding with ferry operators, ensure compliance through passenger manifests, immediate reporting of overstays, and refusal of entry for non-compliant travellers. These measures have proven watertight, with only rare, swiftly resolved breaches.

Rationale for Extension

Extending the scheme to allow short stays of up to 72 hours is a natural evolution, building on diplomatic foundations laid through prior discussions. As Minister for External Relations, there was engagement with UK ministers and officials to affirm Jersey's commitment to CTA security, alongside talks with French counterparts, including regional administrations in Brittany and Normandy during fishing permit negotiations. These conversations underscore the mutual benefits of enhanced cross-Channel ties.

The economic case is compelling, particularly given recent public concerns about our hospitality industry's challenges. Overnight stays, now normalised among visitors, drive higher spending on accommodation, dining, and attractions. While precise statistics on overnight visitor trends will be presented during the States' debate, preliminary data suggests each French day-tripper spends approximately £107 per visit. Extending stays to 72 hours could double this, potentially adding £4.5 million annually,

assuming current visitor numbers. I intend to provide detailed figures to illuminate this impact, highlighting the scheme's role in sustaining hotels, guesthouses, and bookable stays like those offered by Jersey Heritage Trust.

Culturally, the extension celebrates our French connections, notably Victor Hugo's transformative years in Jersey. Unlike Guernsey, which has capitalised on Hugo's legacy, Jersey has yet to fully showcase this literary giant's influence—an untapped allure for French visitors.

A 72-hour stay would invite exploration of this heritage, alongside attractions like the imposing Norman medieval castle of Mont Orgueil, with its magnificent view of the Norman coast and the acclaimed hologram of the late Queen Elizabeth II. The bustling streets of St. Helier, coupled with our shared history of occupation and liberation, offer more than a day trip can encompass. These experiences, rich with learning and enjoyment, beckon families, friends, and groups to linger, savouring Jersey's hospitality in our diverse, excellent accommodation offer.

Safeguarding the Common Travel Area

The proposition upholds the CTA's integrity, with Jersey proactively informing the UK Home Office to ensure alignment with regional security priorities. The existing safeguards—ferry operator vigilance, real-time manifests, and swift overstay detection—will remain unchanged. Extending stays to 72 hours introduces no new risks, as these proven controls will apply seamlessly. The scheme's success, with minimal breaches, reflects Jersey's diligent stewardship, further evidenced by our ability to locate and return rare overstayers, as one official noted: "In Jersey, a wayward tourist hasn't a hope of playing hide-and-seek for long."

The UK's Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system, introduced in April 2025, complements this scheme. As identity cards cannot meet ETA's biometric requirements, the arrangement remains Jersey-specific, preventing onward travel to the UK. This tailored approach, aligned with the 2007 Framework for Developing the International Identity of Jersey, reinforces our autonomy while fostering CTA co-operation.

Addressing Potential Concerns

Some may express concerns that extended stays could strain immigration resources or encourage overstays. However, the scheme's two-year track record dispels such worries. The Jersey Customs and Immigration Service, with its razor-sharp efficiency, has managed the scheme flawlessly, and our island's compact geography ensures overstayers are promptly identified. The economic and cultural benefits—bolstering hospitality and celebrating French ties—far outweigh these manageable risks, which are mitigated by existing protocols.

Conclusion

Extending the French National Identity Card Travel Scheme to 72-hour stays is a visionary step to elevate Jersey's tourism and cultural allure. It builds on diplomatic engagements, leverages economic opportunities, and celebrates our French heritage, all while upholding CTA safeguards. This proposition urges the Minister to amend the Jersey Immigration Rules, confident that Jersey's blend of tradition and innovation will shine.

Let us invite our French neighbours to linger in our island's warm welcome, crafting memories that echo Victor Hugo's own.

Financial and staffing implications

There should be no major additional costs as this is the extension of an existing scheme.

Children's Rights Impact Assessment

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) has been prepared in relation to this proposition and is available to read on the States Assembly website.