Portugal Suspends EU Entry System After Severe Airport Delays

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Lisbon, December 31 — Portugal has announced a temporary suspension of the European Union's

Entry/Exit System (EES) for non-EU citizens at Lisbon Airport, citing severe congestion and

prolonged waiting times at border control.

According to the Ministry of Internal Administration, the suspension will remain in effect for

three months. The decision follows mounting operational pressure after passenger arrivals experienced extreme delays, with waiting times on Tuesday exceeding seven hours, causing flight disruptions and missed connections.

To address the situation, authorities have immediately deployed additional personnel and increased the capacity of electronic and physical border-control equipment by approximately 30 percent, the maximum allowed under current airport infrastructure. The ministry said these measures aim to restore operational efficiency and reduce passenger backlogs.

Officials attributed the congestion primarily to the implementation of the EES, which became operational on October 12 and entered its second phase on December 10, introducing mandatory biometric data collection. Since then, border clearance for travelers from outside the Schengen Area has slowed significantly, frequently resulting in hours-long queues.

Lisbon Airport has faced repeated criticism in recent months, with immigration waiting times previously reported to exceed nine hours during peak periods. In response, Portugal's Public Security Police had already deployed 80 additional officers during the Christmas and New Year holidays.

With the EES temporarily suspended, border checks for non-EU arrivals will revert to traditional passport reading and manual stamping. The EES is intended to enhance border security, prevent

identity fraud, and curb illegal immigration by electronically registering non-EU travelers'

passport and biometric data upon first entry into the Schengen Area.