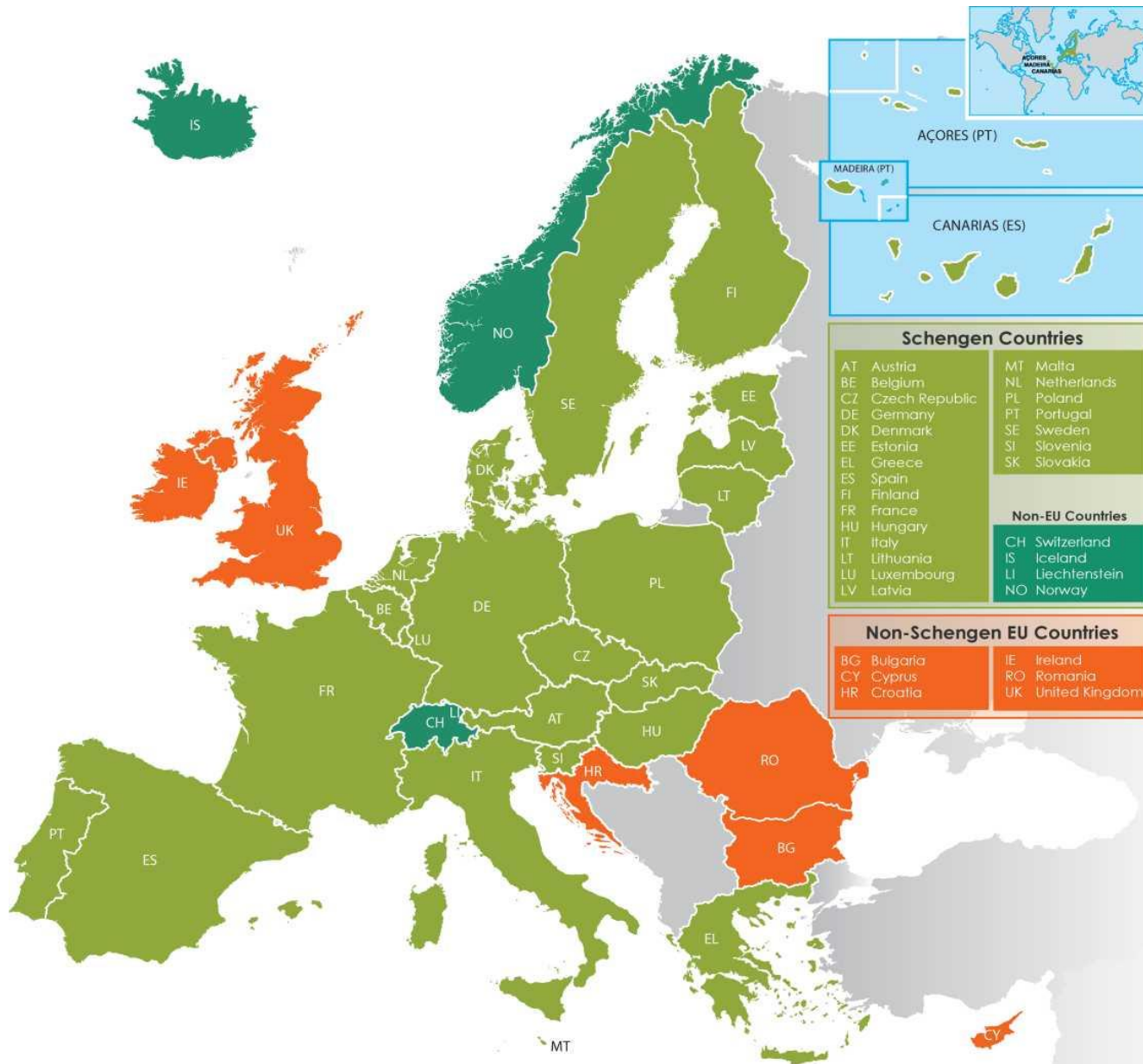


SCHENGEN AREA



SCHENGEN VISA Information for Applicants

Delegation of the European Union &
Schengen Member States in the United States of
America



What is a Schengen Visa?

The Schengen visa is a short-stay authorisation issued by one of the Member States of the Schengen Area. It allows you to stay in or transit through the territory of all the Schengen Member States and to travel between them without any borders, for a duration of no more than 90 days in any 180 days period.

If you intend to stay for more than 90 days (e.g. full-term university studies, residence, employment, commercial establishment, etc.) you should not apply for a Schengen visa but for a long-stay visa/residence permit that can only be issued by the Embassy/Consulate of the country of destination.

There is no legal entitlement to be granted a visa, and the possession of a visa does not confer you an automatic right of entry.

Who can apply for a Schengen visa in the United States?

United States citizens do not need visas to stay in the Schengen area for tourism and business purposes for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. Please note that your US passport must be valid for at least three months after your departure date from the Schengen area. Citizens of third-country nationals¹ who are legally resident in the US are allowed to apply for a Schengen visa in the United States.

Where do I need to go to lodge my visa application?

Applications can be normally lodged directly at a Schengen country embassy or consulate which has jurisdiction over your area of residence. Some countries have outsourced the visa process to an external service provider (visa application center). For detailed information please check the web site of the Member States through the links in the info box.

At which embassy or consulate do I need to apply?

It is essential that you apply for your visa at the correct embassy or consulate (please see below) and not simply at an embassy or consulate of your convenience although entry to and departure from the Schengen zone is possible through any Member State. Otherwise there is a serious risk that you will be refused entry at the border. If you are planning to visit only one country you need to apply at that Member State's embassy or consulate.

- If your visit includes more than one country, you need to apply at the Member State's embassy or consulate that is the main destination of your visit: either the one where you are going to stay longest or the one where the main purpose of your visit lies. Learn more below.
- If no main destination can be determined (because you are

travelling to several countries for the same periods of time or for various purposes), the Member State whose external border you intend to cross first for entering the Schengen zone (e.g. the first airport) is responsible for your visa application.

What is my main destination? Some Examples

- You wish to travel for holiday purposes to country A (for four days) and B (for seven days) via an airport in C (no stay but stop-over): In this case the application must be submitted at the embassy/consulate of country B because country B is the main destination in terms of purpose and length of stay.
- You wish to go to country D for business (two days) and decide to visit relatives in E on the same occasion (six days). You will arrive at and leave through the airport in country F: The main purpose of your trip is the business appointment, and thus the application should be lodged at the consulate of country D.
- You wish to go to country E for a family visit (four days) and have additionally organised a meeting with a business partner in D (two days). You will arrive at and leave from the airport in country F: The main purpose of your trip is the private function, and thus the application should be lodged at the embassy/consulate of country E.

Do I need an appointment for lodging my visa application?

Applicants may be required to fix an appointment for the lodging of an application. This depends on each Member State, so please check the websites through the links in the info box.

How long before my trip do I need to apply for the visa?

You need to apply at least 15 calendar days before the start of the journey. However, in order to make sure that you obtain your visa in time, you should lodge your application as early as possible. This is particularly advised if you are planning to travel during the summer holidays. Applications can be lodged as early as three months before the start of the intended trip.

My passport expires in two months' time. Can I apply for a visa?

In principle you cannot. It is a requirement that the expiry date of your passport is 3 months AFTER the last day of your stay in the Schengen Area.

I have a valid long stay visa/residence permit for a country that is part of the Schengen area. Do I need another visa to travel to other Schengen states?

No. A National (long stay) visa or a residence permit issued by a Schengen State entitles you to travel or stay up to 90 days in any 180-day period in another Schengen State.

Do I need to come in person for the application?

All first-time Schengen visa applicants must appear in person when lodging their application in order to provide their biometric data (digital photograph and fingerprints; there are only a few

exceptions to the latter). Although data will be registered for five years in the system, in individual cases it might be necessary to appear personally again for an interview during the examination of your application.

Which documents do I need to submit for my application?

Please check the list of documents to be submitted upon application on the web site of the embassy or consulate. In individual cases, you may be requested additional documents during the examination of your application.

Which documents do I need to carry during my trip?

Mere possession of a Schengen visa does not mean that the holder is guaranteed the right to enter the Schengen Area. The ultimate decision about admission lies with the border authorities. At the border, you may be requested to produce documents justifying the main destination, purpose and conditions of the intended stay and that you have sufficient means of subsistence.

Links to the websites of the Schengen Member States in the United States

Austria	www.austria.org
Belgium	www.belgiumintheusa.be
Czech Republic	www.mzv.cz/washington
Denmark	www.mzv.sk/washington
Estonia	http://www.nyc.estemb.org/
Finland	www.finland.org
France	http://franceintheus.org/spip.php?rubrique102
Germany	www.germany.info
Greece	http://www.mfa.gr/usa/en/services/services-for-non-greeks/visa-section.html
Hungary	http://washington.kormany.hu/visa-information
Iceland	http://www.iceland.is/iceland-abroad/us/consular-services/passport-and-visa/
Italy	http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it
Latvia	http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/usa/consular-information/visa-requirements-for-latvia-entry-into-schengen-zone
Liechtenstein	www.swissemb.org
Lithuania	https://usa.mfa.lt/usa/en/travel-and-residence/coming-to-lithuania/visas
Luxembourg	http://washington.mae.lu/en
Malta	http://foreignaffairs.gov.mt/en/Embassies/Me_United_States/Pages/Services.aspx
Netherlands	http://www.the-netherlands.org
Norway	http://www.norway.org/studywork/visaandresidence/
Poland	http://washington.mfa.gov.pl/en/
Portugal	http://www.embassyportugal-us.org
Slovakia	www.mzv.sk/washington
Slovenia	http://washington.embassy.si/index.php?id=429&L=1
Spain	http://www.exteriores.gob.es/Consulados/WASHINGTON/Es/Consulado/Paginas/Requisitos%20y%20tramites%20consulares/Visados-y-NIEs.aspx
Sweden	www.swedenabroad.com/washington
Switzerland	www.swissemb.org
EU Delegation	http://www.euintheus.org/what-you-can-do/travelguide/consular-protection/



¹ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/visa-policy/apply_for_a_visa/index_en.htm