

Visa requirements

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Visa procedures, visa conditions for entry and exit

There are currently 26 Schengen countries and all of them are in Europe. Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, The Principality of Liechtenstein, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland are all Schengen countries.

The Schengen visa allows the holder to a total stay of up to 90 days within a period of 6 months for tourist or business purposes.

The Schengen visa has 2 types A and C -depends on travel purpose:

A - An airport transit visa

This visa allows person to transit through the international zone of Schengen airport without entering the Schengen territory.

Citizens of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka requires an airport transit visa. There are exceptions, when aforementioned country citizens visa is not requisite. For particular case has to consult consular officer of Mission.

Short-stay visa - C type

This visa is issued for a short-term visit in, or transit through Schengen member states. It is a short-stay visa which depending upon the purpose of the visit may be issued for one, two or multiple entries.

The validity period of the visa may not exceed 5 years. An entry means crossing the border between a Schengen member state and a non-Schengen state. A foreigner holding a C visa may stay in Schengen member states for up to 90 days in a half-year period, after the first crossing of the border between a Schengen member state and a non-Schengen state. The validity period of visas for one or two entries includes also a 'period of grace' - additional 15 days that do not influence the period of stay indicated in the visa. This means that, when issuing a visa for one or two entries, 15 days are added to the period of validity indicated by the foreign national in his visa application. Thus a foreign national may enter or leave the territory of the Schengen states within the period of validity indicated on the visa, but may stay for as long as indicated in the "duration of stay" section on the visa sticker.

In case of transit, the length of the authorized stay is established corresponding to the time necessary for the purpose of transit. In order to receive a visa for transit, the travel document must bear a visa for the country of destination, if required.

Long stay visa - D type

Foreigner who needs to stay in Latvia more than 90 days in a half-year period depending on the circumstances should apply for a long-stay visa (or a residence permit). Under Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council that came into effect on 5 April 2010, a third-country national holding a valid long-stay visa issued by a Schengen state may travel and stay in the territory of other Schengen states for up to 90 days in any half-year period.

VISA WITH A LIMITED TERRITORIAL VALIDITY

If a third-country national needs to enter a Schengen member state but there are circumstances forbidding him to have a uniform visa valid in all Schengen member states, he may be granted a visa with a limited territorial validity. It means that visa is not valid for entering all Schengen member states, but only those indicated on the visa. If it is said on a visa that visa is valid only for

Latvia, a foreigner is barred from entering other Schengen member states.

Visas with limited territorial validity may be issued for transit or a short-term visit in a Schengen member state that does not exceed 90 days in a half-year period.

B - type visa

Since the coming into effect of the Visa Code, it has become the principal piece of legislation regulating procedures for issuing short-stay visas thus introducing harmonised visa procedures in all member states of Schengen Agreement. It should be noted that the Visa Code simplifies the system of visa types, by abolishing type B, i.e., transit visas, it facilitates issuing multiple-entry visas, as well as simplifies and harmonises the scope of documents to be submitted for obtaining a Schengen visa, thus making it easier for foreigners to visit the Schengen territory, including Latvia.

Determination of the competent state

A foreigner wishing to obtain a Schengen visa must apply at the representation of the competent state. The "competent state" is the state competent for deciding on a visa application, and is a state whose territory constitutes the sole destination of the visit.

If the visit includes more than one destination, the competent state is the one whose territory constitutes the main destination of the visit(s) in terms of the length or purpose of stay.

But if the main destination cannot be established, the responsible state shall be the first state the border of which a foreigner has planned to cross in order to enter the Schengen Area.

If the purpose of the visit is transit, and the transit will take place through only one Member State, the competent state is the Member State concerned. In the case of transit through several Member States, the competent state is the Member State the external border of which the foreigner intends to cross when starting the transit.

If a foreigner requires an airport transit visa, it is issued by the representation of the Member State on whose territory the transit airport is situated. In the case of double or multiple airport transit, the competent state is the Member State whose external border the foreigner has planned to cross in order to enter the Schengen area.

Consular territorial competence

A third-country national must apply for a visa at the consulate of the competent Schengen state in whose territorial competence the applicant legally resides.

It is possible to distinguish following three options:

If the third-country national, who intends to travel to Latvia, legally resides in a state where a Latvian Diplomatic and Consular Mission is present, he or she must lodge their visa application at this Latvian Diplomatic and Consular Mission.

If the third-country national, who intends to travel to Latvia, legally resides in a state without a Latvian Diplomatic and Consular Mission, but there is other Schengen Member State representing Latvia in the issuance of a Schengen visas, he or she must lodge their visa application at this responsible Diplomatic and Consular Mission of the other Schengen Member State. Please be informed that the Diplomatic and Consular Missions of other Schengen Member States represent Latvia only in the issuance of a short stay visas (uniform visa, visa with limited territorial validity and airport transit visa) with a duration of no more than three months in any six-month period from the date of first entry in the territory of Schengen Member State.

If the third-country national legally resides in a place without a Latvian Diplomatic and Consular Mission and there is no other Schengen Member State that is authorised to issue visas on behalf of Latvia or the third-country national is willing to apply for long term visa with a duration of more than three months in any six-month period from the date of first entry in the territory

of Schengen Member State, he or she must lodge their visa application at the Latvian Diplomatic and Consular Mission in whose territorial competence the applicant legally resides.

The territorial competence of the Latvian Diplomatic and Consular Missions is determined by regulations No. 725 "Regulations on the territorial competence on requiring visas at the Diplomatic and Consular Missions of the Republic of Latvia" issued by the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia on 3 August 2010.

!!! Please note that the territorial competence in the above mentioned Regulations is distinguished by two different categories of visas and they are as follows:

In compliance with a Community Code on Visas - a short term visa (uniform visa, visa with limited territorial validity and airport transit visa) with duration of no more than three months in any six-month period from the date of first entry in the territory of Schengen Member State (Annex 1 of the above Regulations);

In compliance with Immigration Law of the Republic of Latvia - a long term visa with duration of more than three months in any six-month period from the date of first entry in the territory of Schengen Member State (Annex 2 of the above Regulations).

A visa application may be accepted by a competent Diplomatic and Consular Mission also if the third-country national is legally present but not residing in the territorial competence of the respective Diplomatic and Consular Mission. However, in this case the applicant has to provide a justification for lodging the application at that particular Diplomatic and Consular Mission. Since it is the Diplomatic and Consular Mission that decides on whether, according to a Community Code on Visas, it is competent to accept a visa application from an applicant who is legally present but not residing in its territorial competence, we suggest that the applicant contacts the relevant Diplomatic and Consular Mission in advance to clarify whether a visa application can be accepted by this particular Diplomatic and Consular Mission.

Documents required when applying for a visa

If a foreign national applies for a visa to enter Latvia or for transit through Latvia, he has to submit the following:

Passport or other travel document with a period of validity extending at least three months past that of the visa, containing at least two blank pages for affixing visas, and issued within the previous ten years

Visa application form completed and signed by the applicant

1 colour photo (35mm x 45mm)

travel medical insurance policy valid for the whole Schengen area and covering the entire period of the foreigner's intended visit in the Schengen area (see section "Travel medical insurance")

payment or confirmation of the payment of visa application fee

When applying for a Schengen visa, the applicant also submits:

documents indicating the purpose of the journey

documents in relation to accommodation, or proof of sufficient means to cover his accommodation

documents indicating that the applicant possesses sufficient means of subsistence both for the duration of the intended stay and for the return to his country of origin or residence

information enabling an assessment of the applicant's intention to leave the territory of the member state before the expiry of the visa applied for

a foreigner applies for a transit visa, he has to hold a valid visa of the state that he intends to enter after leaving the Schengen area, except when a foreigner is not required a visa to enter the country of his destination after exiting the

Schengen area.

When applying for an airport transit visa, the applicant also submits:

documents in relation to the onward journey to the final destination after the intended airport transit

information enabling the assessment of the applicant's intention not to enter the territory of the member states.

Consular officers of the representations decide upon the kind of supporting documents that have to be submitted by foreign nationals. This depends on the purpose of the visit, travelling experience, ties to the state of residence or situation of the state of residence. For more detailed information about supporting documents to be annexed to a visa application, please contact the respective representation where the foreigner intends to apply for a visa, and/or check the information on the homepage of the respective representation.

Supporting documents when applying for a visa to Latvia at a representation of another Schengen state

When applying for a visa at the diplomatic or consular representation of another Schengen state representing Latvia in issuing Schengen visas, a foreign national should be aware of the following:

a translation into English or in the language of the representation in charge of issuing the visa must be attached to the documents produced in Latvian

an invitation approved by the Office of Migration of Citizenship Affairs should be submitted at the relevant representation in paper-form.

The inviting party will be provided with an invitation in paper-form if the diplomatic representation of another Schengen state issuing visas on behalf of Latvia is indicated as the place for applying for a visa. After the receipt of the invitation it must be forwarded to the visa applicant.

Visa application fees at the diplomatic and consular representations of Latvia abroad:

Type of visa Fees

Short-stay visa (type C) 60 EUR

Short-stay visa (type C) for children from the age of 6 years and under the age of 12 years 35 EUR

Airport transit visa (type A) 60 EUR

Visa with a limited territorial validity (type C) 60 EUR

One entry or double entry long-term visa (type D) 43 LVL

Multiple entry long-term visa (type D) 60 LVL

Waiver of the visa fee

The visa fee is waived for:

children under the age of six

school pupils, students, postgraduate students and accompanying teachers who undertake stays for the purpose of study or educational training

researchers from third countries entering the European Community for the purpose of carrying out scientific research

Representatives of non-profit organizations aged 25 years or less participating in seminars, conferences, sports, cultural or educational events organized by non-profit organizations.

New ! As from 24 January 2011 the visa fee is waived for long term (type D) visa applications from citizens of the Republic of

Belarus who at the time of application are living in the territory of Belarus (However please note that this exception does not apply to the short term (type C) visa applications received from the citizens of Belarus).

C visa application fee for citizens of those countries with whom the European Community has concluded agreements regarding the facilitation of visa issuance:

For Russian citizens, C visas application fee:

ordinary procedure - 35 EUR

urgent procedure - 70 EUR

For Ukrainian citizens, C visas application fee:

ordinary procedure - 35 EUR

urgent procedure - 70 EUR

For citizens of Moldova and Georgia, C visas application fee - 35 EUR

For citizens of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, C visas application fee - 35 EUR.

Supporting documents that witnesses purpose and aim of immigration

With supporting applicant of visa verifies:

Purpose of immigration (for example, Office of citizenship and migration affairs issued invitation);

Vehicle using and returning in home country (for example, tickets/ tickets reservation there and back);

Enough subsistence for staying in Schengen countries, which foreigner is planning to visit and for returning in home country (for example, certificate of employment, school, documents of education/)

<https://www.rs.gov.lv/en/visa-requirements>