Visa Information System (VIS)

The border-free Schengen Area cannot function efficiently without a common visa policy which facilitates the entry of legal visitors into the EU, while strengthening internal security. The EU has established a common visa policy for transit through or intended stays in the territory of Schengen States of no more than 90 days in any 180 days period and for transit through the international transit areas of airports of the Schengen States.

What is VIS?

The Visa Information System (VIS) allows Schengen States to exchange visa data. It consists of a central IT system and of a communication infrastructure that links this central system to national systems. VIS connects consulates in non-EU countries and all external border crossing points of Schengen States. It processes data and decisions relating to applications for short-stay visas to visit, or to transit through, the Schengen Area. The system can perform biometric matching, primarily of fingerprints, for identification and verification purposes.

What is the purpose of VIS?

Facilitating checks and the issuance of visas**:** VIS enables border guards to verify that a person presenting a visa is its rightful holder and to identify persons found on the Schengen territory with no or fraudulent documents. Using biometric data to confirm a visa holder's identity allows for faster, more accurate and more secure checks. The system also facilitates the visa issuance process, particularly for frequent travellers.

Fighting abuses**:** While the very large majority of visa holders follow the rules, abuses can also take place. For instance, VIS will help in fighting and preventing fraudulent behaviours, such as "visa shopping" (i.e. the practice of making further visa applications to other EU States when a first application has been rejected).

Protecting travellers: Biometric technology enables the detection of travellers using another person's travel documents and protects travellers from identity theft.

Helping with asylum applications**:** VIS makes it easier to determine which EU State is responsible for examining an asylum application and to examine such applications.

Enhancing security: VIS assists in preventing, detecting and investigating terrorist offences and other serious criminal offences.

How does it work in practice?

10 fingerprints and a digital photograph are collected from persons applying for a visa. These biometric data, along with data provided in the visa application form, are recorded in a secure central database.

10-digit finger scans are not required from children under the age of 12 or from people who physically cannot provide finger scans. Frequent travellers to the Schengen Area do not have to give new finger scans every time they apply for a new visa. Once finger scans are stored in VIS, they can be re-used for further visa applications over a 5-year period.

At the Schengen Area's external borders, the visa holder's finger scans may be compared against those held in the database. A mismatch does not mean that entry will automatically be refused - it will merely lead to further checks on the traveller’s identity.

Who can access VIS?

Competent visa authorities may consult the VIS for the purpose of examining applications and decisions related thereto.

The authorities responsible for carrying out checks at external borders and within the national territories have access to search the VIS for the purpose of verifying the identity of the person, the authenticity of the visa or whether the person meets the requirements for entering, staying in or residing within the national territories.

Asylum authorities only have access to search the VIS for the purpose of determining the EU State responsible for the examination of an asylum application.

In specific cases, national authorities and Europol may request access to data entered into the VIS for the purposes of preventing, detecting and investigating terrorist and criminal offences.

Access to VIS data is limited to authorised staff in the performance of their tasks. They must ensure that the use of VIS data is limited to that which is necessary, appropriate and proportionate for carrying out their tasks.

Rights of Data Subject

Data is kept in the VIS for five years. This retention period starts from the expiry date of the issued visa, the date a negative decision is taken or the date a decision to modify an issued visa is taken. Any person has the right to be informed about his/her data in the VIS. Any person may request that inaccurate data about him/her is corrected and unlawfully recorded data is deleted.

Each EU State must require a National Supervisory Authority (which is the Hungarian National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information in the case of Hungary) to monitor the lawfulness of the processing of personal data by that country. The European Data Protection Supervisor monitors the activities at European level.

Requests have to be lodged to the authority that carries/carried on the procedure. The procedure to exercise data subject's rights are free of charge. More information can be found at the http://konzuliszolgalat.kormany.hu/en webpage. Information can also be requested at the Hungarian Consular Service:

Consular Service

Address: 1027 Budapest, Nagy Imre tér 4.
Telephone: 458-1000 Fax: 201-7323
E-mail: konz@mfa.gov.hu

The authority has the right to refuse requests but is obliged to inform the person about the fact of and the reason for denial. Should you find that the authority is not adequately responsive to your request, you then may turn to the Hungarian National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information:

National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information

Postal address: 1530 Budapest, Pf.: 5.

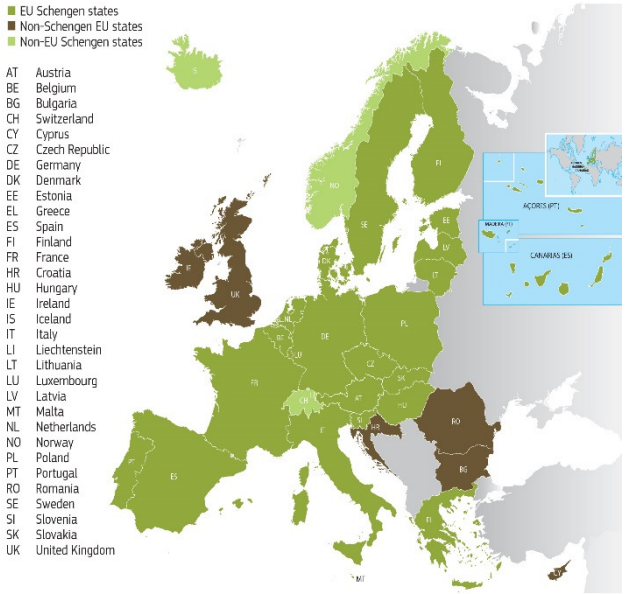
Address: 1125 Budapest, Szilágyi Erzsébet fasor 22/c
Tel: +36 (1) 391-1400
Fax: +36 (1) 391-1410
email: ugyfelszolgalat@naih.hu
web: http://www.naih.hu

NATIONAL AUTHORITY FOR DATA PROTECTION AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

e-mail: ugyfelszolgalat@naih.hu
web: http://www.naih.hu

National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information

INTRODUCTION TO THE VISA INFORMATION SYSTEM



2019.