

Visiting Europe

Common information for Schengen Visa Applicants

If you intend to transit through or visit several **Schengen states** (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain.) for up to 90 days for tourist or business purposes you have to obtain your **Schengen visa** from the **Consulate of the country of your main destination**. If your main destination cannot be ascertained, the country you first enter is responsible for granting your visa.

Please note that Australian citizens holding an ordinary passport do not need a visa for stays up to 90 days for all Schengen states for tourist or business purposes.

Schengen visas for stays over 90 days are not available.

After obtaining a visa please check the visa details in your passport to ascertain for which country or countries your visa is valid (i.e. all Schengen states, only some Schengen states or only one country).

We would like to point out that the border authorities are entitled to examine whether, at the time of entry, the prerequisites for entry continue to apply. This is international practice. If the prerequisites for entry or transit no longer apply, or if you are unable to provide the relevant evidence, you may be refused entry by the border authorities although you possess a valid visa. We therefore recommend that you carry with you the original letter / sponsorship declaration / copies of documents (e.g. proof of finance) which you enclosed with your visa application. This will help make the border control procedure easier and avoid delays at the border.

SCHENGEN VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR TRAVELLERS

- 2 application forms (completely filled in) with photograph.
- valid passport (validity must extend until at least 3 months after the end of the planned journey).
- copy of itinerary with confirmed reservation, airline ticket to be presented prior to issuance of visa.
- proof of sufficient means of support e.g. bank statements, proof of income or an invitation letter and sponsorship declaration from your relatives / friends in a Schengen country.
- letter from your company giving details about your business trip.
- proof of health insurance cover for your stay in the Schengen area to be presented prior to issuance of visa.
- visa fees (please contact the Embassy or Consulate where the application is to be lodged).
- Minors traveling by themselves or with only one custodian need to contact the respective Embassy or Consulate for further requirements.

Please note that there is no guarantee that a visa will be issued and that additional information and/or documents may be required.

[this information courtesy of the Embassy of Germany, Canberra]

Advice from Smart Traveller

Australians are advised that only the country you plan to visit can provide up-to-date information about its specific visa requirements. Travellers should contact the nearest Embassy or Consulate of the countries they plan to visit well in advance of travel.

Generally, Australian tourists planning to spend less than a total of 90 days (within a six month period) in the 'Schengen area' do not require visas from countries which are parties to the Schengen Convention.

The following countries are parties to the Schengen Convention : Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain.

The following countries, which became members of the European Union on 1 May 2004, apply the same requirements for short-term visas as Schengen Convention parties: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Australians should be aware that the **United Kingdom** and **Ireland** are not part of the Schengen area. Australians should consult the nearest high commission and consulate of these countries for visa information.

Australia also has bilateral agreements with a number of countries in the Schengen area. These agreements may allow Australian tourists to stay for longer than 90 days, however, these agreements vary. Australians should obtain specific advice from each of the Schengen countries they intend to visit concerning their visa requirements if they think their stay may exceed the cumulative 90 day limit.

Visa rules relating to work and business visits are governed by the individual countries and inquiries must be made at relevant embassies and consulates.

Schengen land (= the Schengen area, the Schengen countries):

In 1985, five EU countries (France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) agreed to abolish all checks on people travelling between them. This created a territory without internal borders which became known as the Schengen area. (Schengen is the town in Luxembourg where the agreement was signed).

The Schengen countries introduced a common visa policy for the whole area and agreed to establish effective controls at its external borders. Checks at the internal borders may be carried out for a limited period if public order or national security make this necessary.

Little by little, the Schengen area has been extended to include every EU country plus Iceland and Norway, and the agreement has become an integral part of the EU treaties. However, Ireland and the United Kingdom do not take part in the arrangements relating to border controls and visas.

You do not need a visa for travelling within the Schengen area if you are a citizen of one of the Schengen countries. If you have a visa for entering any Schengen country it automatically allows you to travel freely throughout the Schengen area, except Ireland and the United Kingdom.

source: http://europa.eu/abc/euroargon/index_en.htm