



Press Release - European Union
Jerusalem
PR/25/2013
07 November 2013

Visa Information System comes into operation in the occupied Palestinian territory

As of 14th November 2013 a Visa Information System (VIS) will be applied in the occupied Palestinian territory by all EU Member States participating in Schengen cooperation.

The VIS is a central database for the exchange of short-stay visas (up to three months) between Schengen States*. The main objectives of the VIS are to facilitate visa application procedures and checks at external borders as well as to enhance security.

The implementation of the VIS is not specific to the occupied Palestinian territory. On the same date, the VIS will also start operations in Central Asia and South East Asia. Since October 2011, it has been operating successfully in eight other regions (North Africa, the Near East, the Gulf region, West and Central Africa, East and Southern Africa, South America) and it will be deployed progressively in the consulates of all Schengen States worldwide.

For the purpose of the VIS, applicants will be required to provide their biometric data (fingerprints and a digital photograph) when applying for a Schengen visa. As a result, from 14th November 2013, individuals wishing to obtain a visa for Schengen countries will need to appear in person to provide their fingerprints for all applications collected and/or processed in East Jerusalem, Ramallah or Gaza. For subsequent applications within 5 years the fingerprints can be copied from the previous application file in the VIS.

Biometric data, along with the data provided in the Schengen visa application form, will be recorded in the VIS central database. The recourse to biometric technology will better protect visa applicants against identity theft and prevent false identifications, which in certain cases can lead to a refusal of a visa or entry to a person who is entitled to enter. It is used commonly in the EU to make travel documents more secure (e.g.: for the issuance of passports to EU citizens, incl. diplomatic passport holders)

The VIS central database is very secure and data will be processed in accordance with the highest data protection standards. Any person has the right to obtain communication of the data recorded in the VIS related to him/her from the relevant Schengen State and may request that inaccurate data is corrected or that unlawfully recorded data is deleted.

FAQ:

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/documents/news/20131107_faqonvis_en.pdf

*These are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland

Contacts of EU Member States' Consulates and Representative Offices:

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/travel_eu/consulates/index_en.htm