



EUROPEAN UNION

DELEGATION TO BARBADOS
AND THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

The Head of Delegation

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PRESS RELEASE

EU Introduces Biometric Schengen Visas

As of 15 May 2014 persons applying for a Schengen Visa to enter the European Union will have to provide their biometric data (a digital photograph and ten fingerprint scans).

Such biometric data, along with the data provided in the Schengen visa application form, will be recorded in the EU Visa Information System (VIS) which will be strictly enforced. The VIS is a system for the exchange of data on short-stay visas between Schengen States and it is being progressively deployed, region by region, until all Schengen States' consulates worldwide are connected.

Nationals of Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States countries that do not have Schengen Visa Waiver Status – Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines – will have to [apply in person at responsible EU Member State Embassy](#) and provide their biometric [information](#).

The introduction of biometric technology is intended to protect visa applicants against identity theft and prevent false identifications, which in certain cases lead to authorities refusing a visa or entry to a person who is entitled to enter.

Visa applicants will only have to provide such biometric data every 5 years. During this 5-year period, the fingerprints will be copied from the first visa application, so that frequent travellers will only have to complete the procedure once within this period.

Exemptions from the obligation of fingerprinting are provided for the following categories of applicants only:

- Children under 12,
- Persons for whom the collection of fingerprints is physically impossible;
- Heads of State or government and members of a national government with accompanying spouses, and the members of their official delegation when they are invited by Member States' governments or by international organisations for an official purpose.

NB: The four OECS countries in question are included in the Visa Waiver List as approved by the European Council and the European Parliament. The Visa Waiver will only come into force once bilateral agreements are concluded between the EU and each of the four countries.

The list of Schengen States can be found at :

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

For further information see the following websites:

<http://www.ambafrance-lc.org/-VISAS,221->

<http://www.port-of->

[spain.diplo.de/Vertretung/portofspain/en/04/Visabestimmungen/Seite__Schengenvisum.html](http://www.port-of-spain.diplo.de/Vertretung/portofspain/en/04/Visabestimmungen/Seite__Schengenvisum.html)

More information on the VIS system is available on the European Commission website at:

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