



Visa Information System to be introduced by Schengen States in India

--To help streamline visa applications; protect applicants against identity theft and visa shopping--

--Implemented globally, all Schengen consulates worldwide to be connected to VIS by end of November 2015--

New Delhi, 29 October, 2015: As part of the worldwide introduction of the Visa Information System (VIS), the 26 Schengen States (including 22 EU Member States) will launch the VIS in India on 2nd November 2015. The Visa Information System (VIS) is a system for the exchange of data on **short-stay visas** between Schengen States, in particular between consulates, central visa authorities and border guards.

The aim of the global introduction of VIS is to better protect applicants against **identity theft** and to prevent document fraud and so-called "**visa shopping**". Fingerprints are widely used within the EU as a secure means of identification. The use of biometric data for identification is a faster and more accurate way to identify a visa holder by border police.

From 2 November 2015, Indian citizens requesting a short-term Schengen visas (max. 90 days in a calendar period of 180 days) will need to appear in person in order to provide **biometric data** (fingerprints and digital photograph). The procedure for the collection of biometric identifiers is quick, simple and discreet. The biometric data will be copied from the previous visa application included in the VIS for subsequent applications within **5 years**, for any of the Schengen countries. Therefore, the VIS will facilitate rapid examination and efficient processing of visa applications of regular travellers given that the consulates will have access to information on the visa applicant's previous visa applications and visas issued.

There will be no changes for national long-stay visas or in other current procedures for short stay such as visa fee or forms.

VIS is a key element of the EU common visa policy and provides EU Schengen States with a modern and efficient visa application system and represents a major step forward to enhance legitimate mobility and increase security of the citizens when they travel to the EU. The use of biometric technology guarantees safe, accurate and efficient procedures.

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

- Children under 12,
- Persons for whom the collection of fingerprints is physically impossible;

Implemented Globally

Since October 2011, the VIS has been functioning in seventeen (out of 23) world regions. It has been already introduced in Africa, the Middle East, the Americas, Australasia, South-East Asia, Central Asia, Western Balkans, Turkey, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus Region as well as East Asia. In the last leg of implementation, besides India, it is also being simultaneously been launched in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri-Lanka. All Schengen consulates worldwide will be connected to VIS by the end of November 2015.

For further information on VIS, please see:

Visa Information System: <http://ec.europa.eu/vis>

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

FAQs: http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/india/documents/travel_eu/changes-in-schengen-visa-application-process-india_en.pdf