



# NEW EU VISA RULES

February 2020

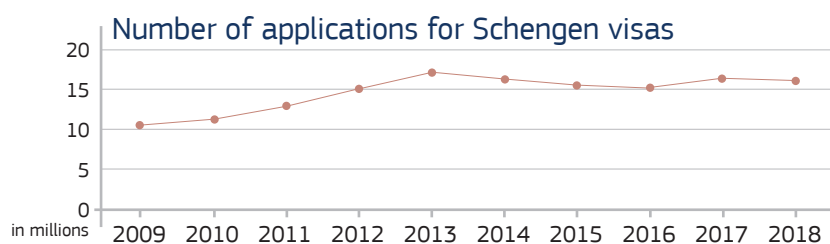
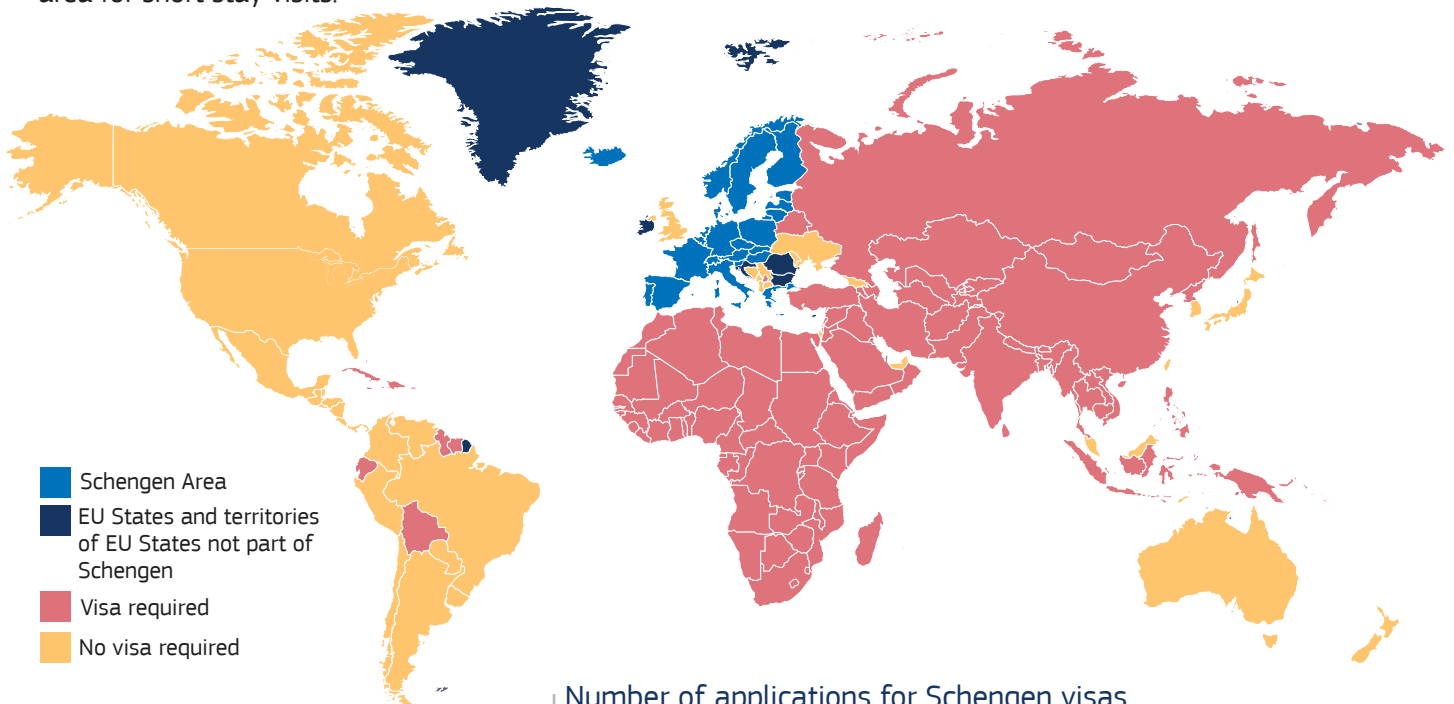
The European Union is among the world's leading tourist destinations – in 2018 alone, over 14 million Schengen visas were issued to travellers visiting Europe.

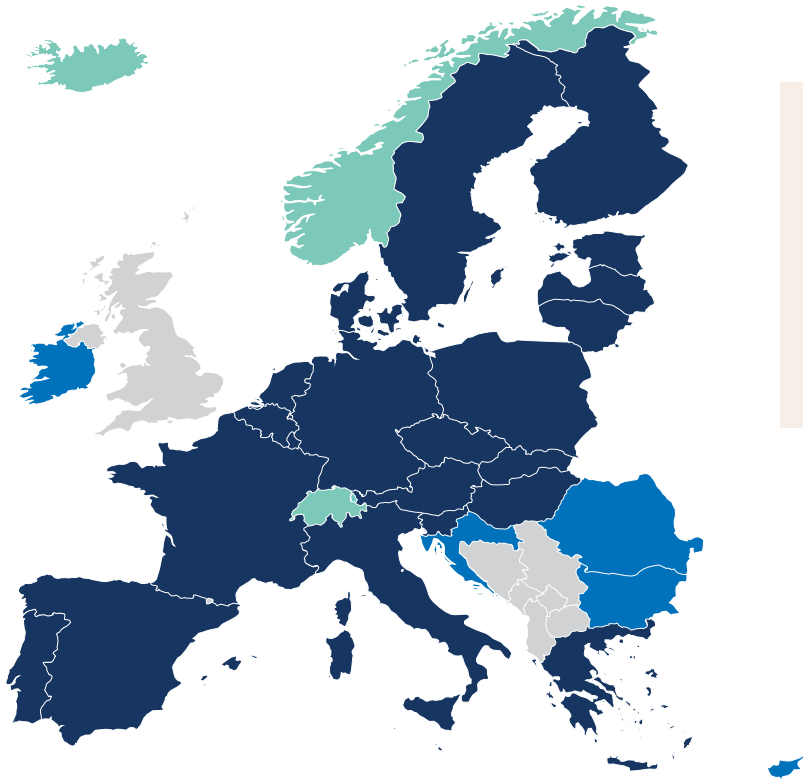
With new rules on short-stay visas applying worldwide as of 2 February 2020, it is now easier for legitimate travellers to visit the European Union for tourism or business purposes, with expected positive impacts on the European economy, people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges.

Member States will now also benefit from additional financial resources to process visa applications more efficiently and improve their capacity to detect potential security and irregular migration risks.

## Who needs a visa to travel to the EU?

Currently, citizens from 105 non-EU countries or entities are required to hold a visa when travelling to the Schengen area for short stay visits.





## Where can travellers go with a Schengen visa?

A Schengen visa allows travellers to visit:

- ▶ the 26 countries of the Schengen area;
- ▶ for a maximum duration of 90 days in any 180-day period.

The Schengen area consists of:

- EU Schengen States
- Non-EU Schengen States

Some EU States are not part of the Schengen area:

- EU States not part of Schengen

## NEW RULES: What changes for travellers?

### MODERNISED APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Travellers now benefit from easier, more flexible, and faster procedures:



**Easier applications:** In most cases, applicants will have the possibility to submit their application at a location close to their place of residence. Where available, they may also fill in and sign the application form electronically.



**Family friendly:** Minors between 6 and 18 years old may be exempted from the visa fee.



**Better advance planning:** Travellers are now able to submit their visa applications up to 6 months ahead of the planned trip, instead of 3 months under the old rules.

### EASIER TRAVEL FOR FREQUENT VISITORS

Regular travellers with a positive visa history will no longer have to apply for a new visa every time they travel to the EU. From now on, travellers with a positive visa history applying for subsequent visas can benefit from **multiple-entry visas**. There are clearer rules on the period of validity of these visas, starting from 1 year up to a maximum of 5 years. Travellers' fulfilment of entry conditions will be thoroughly and repeatedly verified in all cases.

## MORE RESOURCES FOR VISA PROCEDURES

The cost of applying for a Schengen visa is increasing from €60 to €80. This moderate increase is necessary to ensure sufficient financial resources for:

- A wide consular coverage worldwide;
- Upgrades to IT equipment and software to provide faster and user-friendly procedures for visa applicants;
- Better capacity to detect potential security and irregular migration risks during the visa procedures, including by reinforcing consular staff to speed up the process.

*The fee increase is equivalent to the level it would have reached based on the general EU-wide inflation rate since 2006. By international standards, the fee remains comparatively low, with equivalent visa applications costing for example €126 for China, €143 for the United States, €146 for New Zealand, €95 for India and €112 for the UK.*

For travellers, the fee increase is partly offset by savings from the new rules:

- Applicants no longer have to travel to distant locations to submit their visa application;
- Frequent travellers have to apply for a new visa less often.

## IMPROVING COOPERATION on return and readmission



The new rules also support the European Union's irregular migration management policy.

The European Union has engaged with countries of origin to improve cooperation on return and readmission, but there are still difficulties in returning non-EU citizens who do not qualify to stay in Europe.

With the new visa rules, the European Union can adapt conditions for processing visa applications (for example on processing time, visa fees or the issuance of multiple-entry visas) depending on the cooperation with a given country on return and readmission. This brings a very important new element to the European Union's dialogue with partner countries on migration management.

At the same time, any adjustments to conditions will not call into question the right to submit an application for a visa or to be granted a visa.