

## Visa Free Travel in the EU Schengen Area

### Frequently Asked Questions: applicable for Kosovo\* passport holders ONLY after entry into force of the visa waiver on 1 January 2024

#### **1. In which countries will the visa waiver apply?**

The EU Member States covered by the visa waiver are:

- a) the following EU Member States which are part of the Schengen area: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden;
- b) the EU Member States which are not yet part of the Schengen area but do apply the EU acquis related to the EU visa lists Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania;

The visa waiver also applies to the associated Schengen states: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

#### **2. Can I travel without a visa to Ireland?**

No. While being an EU Member States, Ireland is not part of the Schengen Area. They apply other visa regime: for more details, see the respective website of the Embassy/ Consulate.

#### **3. Can I travel without a visa to the UK?**

No. The UK is no longer part of the EU. They apply other visa regime: for more details, see the respective website of the Embassy/ Consulate.

#### **4. How long can I stay without a visa in the Schengen area?**

You can stay 90 days in any 180-day period within the Schengen area. When applying this rule, the following aspects should be taken into account:

- The date of entry is considered as the first day of stay in the Schengen territory;
- The date of exit is considered as the last day of stay in the Schengen territory;
- The 180-day reference period is not fixed. It is a moving window, based on the approach of looking backwards at each day of the stay (be it at the moment of entry or at the day of an actual check, such as inland police control or border check upon departure);
- Absence for an uninterrupted period of 90 days allows for a new stay for up to 90 days. It should be noted that periods of previous stay authorised under a residence permit or a long-stay visa are not taken into account in the calculation of the duration of visa-free stay. Residence permits

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\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

and long-stay visas are subject to different rules and the above explanations and calculations do not apply to them.

**5. Can I enter the Schengen area more than once during that period?**

Yes, you can. However, you must carefully calculate your days of stay as the overall period of stay must not exceed the overall total of 90 days of stay within any 180-day period (see above). The length of authorised stay in the Schengen area can be determined through the use of the 'calculator' which can be found at the following website: [Short-stay Visa Calculator](#)

**6. What travel documents are needed in order to enjoy visa-free travel to the Schengen area?**

A biometric passport issued within the previous 10 years and valid for at least three months after the intended date of departure from the Schengen area.

**7. Does the visa waiver give you the right to enter the territory of the Schengen States?**

The visa waiver does not give an unconditional right of entry and stay.

The Member States have the right to refuse entry and stay in their territories if one or more of the entry conditions are not met.

For stays not exceeding 90 days in any 180-day period, the entry conditions are the following:

(a) possession of a valid travel document (see question 4) or documents authorising them to cross the border;

(b) justifying the purpose and conditions of the intended stay, having sufficient means of subsistence, both for the duration of the intended stay and for the return;

(c) not to be a person for whom an alert has been issued in the Schengen Information System (SIS) for the purposes of refusing entry;

(d) not to be considered to be a threat to public policy, internal security, public health or the international relations of any of the Member States, in particular where no alert has been issued in Member States' national data bases for the purposes of refusing entry on the same grounds.

**8. For which purposes can I travel without a visa to the Schengen area?**

You can come for example as a tourist, to visit friends or family, to attend cultural or sports events, business meetings, for journalistic or media purposes, medical treatment, for short-term studies or training and any similar activities. However, the visa waiver does not apply to persons travelling for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity in the Member States, i.e. for those who come to work in the EU (see question below). Please contact the Embassy/Consulate of the Member State for more information.

**9. Do I need a visa to work in the Schengen area for less than 90 days?**

Yes, most of the Member States require a visa and a work permit if you intend to work there, even if it is for less than 90 days. Please contact the Embassy/Consulate of the Member State where you intend to work to inquire whether a special type of visa and work permit is needed.

**10. Will I need to apply for a visa and/or study permit if I plan to travel to the Schengen area for short-term studies?**

No. You do not need to apply for a study permit in case you intend to undertake studies in the Schengen area with a stay of up to 90 days (within a 180-day period). For longer studies you have to apply for a study permit and the rules vary from country to country. Therefore it is recommended to consult the Embassy/Consulate of the country in which you intend to study.

**11. Once the visa free travel applies, can I travel from one Schengen country into another country?**

Only in exceptional situations Member States may decide to reintroduce controls at their internal borders for a limited period of time. In such case you might be submitted to border controls at such border as any other person (EU citizens included); if you continue to fulfil the entry conditions, your right to travel freely in the Schengen area will not be affected.

Controls are also carried out between Schengen countries and Ireland, which do not belong to the Schengen Area.

Non-EU nationals are obliged to fulfil all entry conditions and might be required to demonstrate that at possible ad-hoc controls in the Schengen area.

**12. If I stay beyond 90 days (without a residence permit or a long term visa) or work in the Schengen area (without a working permit), what can happen?**

A non-EU national who stays in the Schengen area beyond 90 days (without a residence permit or long-stay visa) is considered to be irregularly staying and will be subject to an obligation to leave.

Working in the Schengen area without a work permit is also not allowed (even if less than 90 days). Working without a permit or overstaying in the Schengen area can lead to serious consequences.

If a non-EU national is found to be irregularly staying on the territory of a Member State, they will receive a return decision and will be subject to the obligation to leave the EU and the Schengen area. The return decision can in some cases be accompanied by an entry ban that will prohibit re-entry into the Schengen area for a period of up to 5 years.

Some Member States impose fines for visa overstayers. Furthermore, when there is a risk of absconding, the non-EU national concerned could be detained pending removal.