

# Handbook

## for the processing of visa applications



January 2017

## CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. VIS – VISA INFORMATION SYSTEM .....                               | 3  |
| 1.1. What is the VIS? .....  | 3  |
| 1.2. The VIS in practice/ Biometric data .....                       | 3  |
| 2. OVERVIEW TABLE FOR OBTAINING VISAS FOR TRAVELLING TO LATVIA ..... | 4  |
| If Latvia is represented by another Member State .....               | 7  |
| Additional Assessment/ Prior Consultation .....                      | 8  |
| 3. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED WHEN APPLYING FOR A VISA.....                  | 9  |
| Attention .....  | 10 |

## 1. VIS – VISA INFORMATION SYSTEM

### 1.1. What is the VIS?

The VIS is a system for the exchange of visa data among Schengen Member States. These States share a common area of free movement without internal border controls. They have a common visa policy which includes exchanging information on visa applicants. The specific objectives of the VIS are to facilitate visa procedures, to enhance the security of the visa application process and to facilitate visa checks at the external borders of the Schengen Area.

### 1.2. The VIS in practice/ Biometric data

The visa applicant's biometric data (10-digit finger scans and digital photograph) is collected. Biometric data, along with the data provided in the visa application form, is recorded in a secure central database. 10-digit finger scans are neither required from children under the age of 12 nor from people who cannot physically provide finger scans.

**First-time visa applicants have to appear in person at the Embassy when lodging the application, in order to provide their fingerprints.**

Frequent travelers to the Schengen Area do not have to give new finger scans every time they apply for a new visa. Once finger scans are stored in the VIS, they can be re-used for further visa applications over a 5-year period and, consequently, the visa application may be submitted to the embassy by an authorized representative.

## 2. OVERVIEW TABLE FOR OBTAINING VISAS FOR TRAVELLING TO LATVIA

| If you are a citizen of ... | No visa required | You need a visa | Assessment/<br>prior<br>consultation<br>required | In order to get a visa you have to go to the...   |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| Afghanistan                 |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Latvia (Tashkent)  |
| Albania (Tirana)*           | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Hungary (Tirana)   |
| Algeria (Algiers)           |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Hungary (Algiers)  |
| Argentina                   | X                |                 |  | Consulate General of Spain (Buenos Aires)   |
| Armenia                     |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Lithuania (Yerevan)  |
| Australia                   | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Austria (Canberra)   |
| Austria                     | X                |                 |  |   |
| Azerbaijan                  |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Latvia (Baku)  |
| Belarus                     |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Latvia (Minsk)<br>Consulate in Vitebsk   |
| Belgium                     | X                |                 |  |   |
| Bhutan                      |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Latvia in China (Beijing)  |
| Bolivia                     |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Spain (La Paz)   |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina*     | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Germany (Sarajevo)   |
| Brazil                      | X                |                 |  |   |
| Brunei                      | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Latvia in China(Beijing)   |
| Bulgaria                    | X                |                 |  |   |
| Cambodia                    |                  | X               |  | Embassy of France (Phnom Penh)  |
| Cameroon                    |                  | X               |  | Embassy of France (Yaoundé)   |
| Canada                      | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Latvia in Canada (Ottawa)  |
| Cape Verde                  |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Switzerland in Senegal (Dakar)   |
| Chad                        |                  | X               |  | Embassy of France (N'Djamena)   |
| Chile                       | X                |                 |  | Consulate General of Spain (Santiago)   |
| China                       |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Latvia in China (Beijing) or<br>VFS Global Latvian visa application centers in<br>Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Changsha,<br>Chongqing, Fuzhou, Hangzhou, Jinan, Kunming,<br>Shenyang, Nanjing, Shenzhen, Wuhan, and Xian |
| Colombia                    | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Germany (Bogota)   |
| Congo Dem. Republic         |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Belgium (Kinshasa)<br>Consulate General of Belgium (Lubumbashi)  |
| Costa Rica                  | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Spain (San José )  |
| Croatia                     | X                |                 |  |   |
| Congo Republic              |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Latvia in Egypt (Cairo) or<br>Embassy of Latvia in Turkey (Ankara)   |

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|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Cuba                        |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Hungary (Havana)  |
| Cyprus                      | X                |                 |  |  |
| Czech Republic              | X                |                 |  |  |
| Denmark                     | X                |                 |  |  |
| Egypt                       |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Latvia (Cairo)  |
| Ecuador                     |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Switzerland (Quito)   |
| Estonia                     | X                |                 |  |  |
| Finland                     | X                |                 |  |  |
| France                      | X                |                 |  |  |
| Georgia                     |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Latvia (Tibilisi)   |
| Germany                     | X                |                 |  |  |
| Ghana                       |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Switzerland (Accra)   |
| Greece                      | X                |                 |  |  |
| Hong Kong                   | X                |                 |  |  |
| Hungary                     | X                |                 |  |  |
| Iceland                     | X                |                 |  |  |
| India                       |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Latvia in India (New Delhi) or<br>VFS Global visa centers in New Delhi, Goa,<br>Mumbai, Chandigarh, Jalandhar, Chennai,<br>Puducherry, Kochi, Bengaluru, Kolkata,<br>Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Trivandrum |
| Indonesia                   |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Germany (Jakarta)   |
| Iran                        |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Hungary (Tehran)  |
| Iraq                        |                  | X               | X  | Consular Agency of Poland (Erbil)  |
| Ireland                     | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Latvia in the UK (London)   |
| Israel                      | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Latvia (Tel Aviv)   |
| Italy                       | X                |                 |  |  |
| Jamaica                     |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Spain (Kingston)  |
| Japan                       | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Latvia (Tokyo)  |
| Jordan                      |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Germany (Amman)   |
| Kazakhstan                  |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Latvia (Astana)<br>Consulate General of Hungary (Almaty)  |
| Kenya                       |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Hungary (Nairobi)   |
| Korea                       | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Slovakia (Seoul)  |
| Kosovo                      |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Slovenia (Pristina)   |
| Kyrgyzstan                  |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Switzerland (Bishkek) or<br>Pony Express visa center in Bishkek   |
| Lebanon                     |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Hungary (Beirut)  |
| Liechtenstein               | X                |                 |  |  |
| Lithuania                   | X                |                 |  |  |
| Luxemburg                   | X                |                 |  |  |
| Macedonia*                  | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Germany (Skopje)  |
| Malaysia                    | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Austria in (Kuala Lumpur)   |
| Malta                       | X                |                 |  |  |

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|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|---|
| Mauritius                   | X                |                 |  |   |
| Mexico                      | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Slovakia (Mexico)  |
| Moldova*                    | X                |                 |  | Common Application Centre (CAC)<br>at the Embassy of Hungary (Chisinau)   |
| Monaco                      | X                |                 |  |   |
| Mongolia                    |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Germany (Ulan Bator)   |
| Montenegro                  |                  | X               |  | C.A.C. at the Embassy of Slovenia (Podgorica)   |
| Morocco                     |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Germany (Rabat)  |
| Myanmar                     |                  | X               |  | Embassy of France (Yangon)  |
| Namibia                     |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Latvia in Egypt (Cairo) or<br>Embassy of Latvia in Turkey (Ankara)   |
| Nepal                       |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Switzerland (Kathmandu)  |
| Netherlands                 | X                |                 |  |   |
| New Zealand                 | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Poland (Wellington)  |
| Norway                      | X                |                 |  |   |
| Oman                        |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Latvia in Egypt (Cairo) or<br>Embassy of Latvia in Turkey (Ankara)   |
| Panama                      | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Spain (Panama)   |
| Peru                        | X                |                 |  | Embassy of the Netherlands (Lima)   |
| Philippines                 |                  | X               |  | Embassy of the Netherlands (Manila)   |
| Poland                      | X                |                 |  |   |
| Portugal                    | X                |                 |  |   |
| Qatar                       |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Hungary (Doha)   |
| Romania                     | X                |                 |  |   |
| Russia                      |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Latvia (Moscow)<br>Consulate General (St. Petersburg)<br>Consulate (Pskov)<br>Consular Section's Chancery in Kaliningrad<br>Consulate General of Hungary<br>(Yekaterinburg)<br>Pony Express visa centers |
| Saudi Arabia                |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Germany (Riyadh)   |
| Serbia***                   | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Germany (Belgrade)   |
| Senegal                     |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Switzerland (Dakar)  |
| Singapore                   | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Hungary (Singapore)  |
| Slovakia                    | X                |                 |  |   |
| Slovenia                    | X                |                 |  | C.A.C. at the MFA of Slovenia (Ljubljana)   |
| South Africa                |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Hungary (Pretoria)   |
| Spain                       | X                |                 |  |   |
| Sri Lanka                   |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Germany (Colombo)  |
| Suriname                    |                  | X               |  | Embassy of the Netherlands (Paramaribo)   |
| Sweden                      | X                |                 |  |   |
| Switzerland                 | X                |                 |  |   |
| Syria                       |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Netherlands (Damascus)   |
| Tanzania                    |                  | X               |  | Embassy of France (Dar es Salaam)   |

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|-----------------------------|------------------|-----------------|--|--|
| Taiwan**                    | X                |                 |  |  |
| Thailand                    |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Hungary (Bangkok)   |
| Trinidad and Tobago         | X                |                 |  |  |
| Tunisia                     |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Germany (Tunis)   |
| Turkey                      |                  | X               |  | Embassy of Latvia (Ankara)   |
| Ukraine                     |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Latvia (Kiev)   |
| United Arab Emirates        | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Germany (Abu Dhabi)<br>Consulate General of Germany (Dubai)   |
| United Kingdom              | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Latvia (London)   |
| United States               | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Latvia (Washington)<br>Consulate General of Estonia (New York)<br>Consulate General of Poland (Los Angeles) |
| Uzbekistan                  |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Latvia (Tashkent)   |
| Venezuela                   | X                |                 |  | Embassy of Austria (Caracas)   |
| Vietnam                     |                  | X               | X  | Embassy of Hungary (Hanoi)   |

\*Only for holders of biometric passports

\*\* Only for holders of passports which include an identity card number

\*\*\* Only for holders of biometric passports (excluding holders of Serbian passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate, in Serbian: "Kordinaciona uprava")

Citizens who are holders of one of a United Nations passport, a European Commission passport or a Vatican passport may enter Latvia without a visa and stay for a period of up to 90 days in any 180-day period.

### If Latvia is represented by another Member State

If one legally resides in a state without a Latvian Diplomatic and Consular Mission, but another Schengen Member State issues visas on its behalf, one should lodge one's visa application at the Diplomatic and Consular Mission of the Member State concerned.

## Additional Assessment/ Prior Consultation

During the period of additional assessment the Security Police and the Constitution Protection Bureau shall convey their opinion on whether a third-country applicant constitutes a threat to State security or public order and safety. Before granting the visa the embassy consults the Vision Inquiry Open Border Network VISION. This network is formed by national security authorities from the whole of the Schengen area and lists e.g. crimes and other offences that might serve as a reason behind denying someone a visa. This check can last up to 7 days.



### 3. DOCUMENTS REQUIRED WHEN APPLYING FOR A VISA

If a foreign national applies for a visa to enter Latvia/ transit through Latvia, he/she has to submit the following:

- Passport or other travel document with a period of validity extending at least three months past that of the visa, containing at least two blank pages for affixing visas, and **issued within the previous ten years**
- Visa application form completed and signed by the applicant. If visa is requested at the Latvian embassy, the applicants are kindly requested to complete the visa application form electronically at the home page of Office of Migration and Citizenship Affairs of the Republic of Latvia <https://epak.pmlp.gov.lv/NVIS.EService001.WebSite/> . If visa is requested at the representation of another Schengen Member State issuing visas on behalf of Latvia, applicants are kindly requested to check the information on the homepage of the respective representation.
- 1 colour photo (35mm x 45mm)
- **Travel medical insurance policy valid** for the whole of the Schengen area and covering the entire period of the foreign national's intended visit in the Schengen area. More details at: <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/consular-information/obtaining-visas/travel-medical-insurance> .
  - **!!! Please note that foreigners entering and residing in the Republic of Latvia must have a valid health insurance policy**, which guarantees the covering of expenses related to health care in the Republic of Latvia, including repatriation in cases of serious illness or death. This does not apply to:
    - holders of diplomatic and service (official) passports;
    - to citizens of the EU member states, countries of the European Economic Area and the Swiss Confederation, and their family members, if they wish to reside in Latvia for a period up to 90 days.
- Payment or confirmation of the payment of visa application fee. The following details should be used, in case of covering the visa fee via a bank transfer:

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Account holder     | Treasury of Latvia, 1 Smilsu Street, Riga, Latvia, LV 1919 |
| IBAN               | LV81TREL1060110919100                                      |
| SWIFT Code         | TRELLV22   |
| Correspondent Bank | Citadele banka, 2a Republic Square, Riga, Latvia, LV 1010  |
| Account Number     | LV17PARX0000624870001                                      |
| SWIFT Code         | PARXLV22   |

When applying for a Schengen visa, the applicant also submits:

- documents indicating the purpose of the journey
- documents proving accommodation, or sufficient means to cover accommodation
- documents indicating that the applicant possesses sufficient means of subsistence both for the duration of the intended stay and for return to his country of origin or residence
- information enabling an assessment of the applicant's intention to leave the territory of the member state before the expiry of the visa applied for

### **Supporting documents when applying for a visa to Latvia at a representation of another Schengen Member State**

When applying for a visa at the diplomatic or consular representation of another Schengen Member State in issuing Schengen visas on behalf of Latvia, a foreign national should be aware of the following:

- a translation into English or in the language of the representation in charge of issuing the visa must be attached to the documents produced in Latvian.
- An invitation approved by the Office of Migration and Citizenship Affairs of the Republic of Latvia should be submitted at the relevant representation in **paper-form**

### **Attention**

Consular officers decide upon the kind of supporting documents that have to be submitted by foreign nationals. This depends on the purpose of the visit, travelling experience, ties to the state of residence or situation of the state of residence. For more detailed information about supporting documents to be annexed to a visa application, please contact the respective representation where the foreign national intends to apply for a visa, and/or check the information on the homepage of the respective representation. As the requirements for obtaining visas are subject to change, please check the necessary requirements for your specific visa application with your embassy. The organizers are not liable in relation to visa procedures.

**Before applying for your visa, please verify all documents with your embassy or consulate!**

For further details on obtaining a visa you may also log on to the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia <http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/consular-information/entry-into-latvia> .