Digitalisation of visa procedures
Questionnaire for the public consultation

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

Have you obtained a short-stay 'Schengen' visa over the past 5 years or would you like to make your voice heard on how the visa process could be modernised?

The European Commission, in its 2020 New Pact on Migration and Asylum, set the objective of making the Schengen visa procedure fully digitalised by 2025, and would like to hear your views on the idea to digitalise the current visa process, which includes the possibility for visa applicants to apply for a visa online and replacing the current (paper) visa sticker by a digital document.

To apply for a Schengen visa, applicants today have to fill in an application form, gather the necessary supporting documents and then book an appointment at a consulate or – in most cases – a visa application centre managed by an external service provider, to submit the application, give their fingerprints, have a photo taken and pay the visa fee (in cash, by credit card or bank transfer).

The initiative would introduce a number of novelties for visa applicants and Member States. The online application process would enable a large number of applicants to submit their applications online, without having to show up in person at the consulate or visa application centre. In case of a positive decision, the visa would be issued in a digital format, accessible to the visa holders and the authorities that need to have access.

This consulation concerns the digitalisation of the EU's visa procedures. To travel to the EU, third country nationals may require a Schengen visa (Type C) or long-stay visa (Type D). This consultation focuses mainly on the Schengen Visa which entitles its holder to travel throughout the 26 Schengen States (Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland) for up to 90 days in any 180-day period.

***Individuals:** Tell us about your experience and views by replying to our questionnaire. You do not need to answer all of the questions. However, for your response to be taken into account, all questions under the 'About you' section need to be answered. If you have any concerns regarding data protection matters, please consult the Privacy Statement.*

***Organisations:** Send written contributions on any issue linked to the visa process digitalisation through the online questionnaire. Organisations are also invited to encourage individual members to reply to the questionnaire.*

***Disclaimer:** The possible changes to the visa procedures envisaged in this questionnaire do not prejudge*

the final options that will be proposed by the European Commission. The questions refer to specific options for digitalisation of the procedures currently being considered by the European Commission.

About you

* Language of my contribution

- ○ Bulgarian
- ○ Croatian
- ○ Czech
- ○ Danish
- ○ Dutch
- ○ English
- ○ Estonian
- ○ Finnish
- ○ French
- ○ German
- ○ Greek
- ○ Hungarian
- ○ Irish
- ○ Italian
- ○ Latvian
- ○ Lithuanian
- ○ Maltese
- ○ Polish
- ○ Portuguese
- ○ Romanian
- ○ Slovak
- ○ Slovenian
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Swedish

* I am giving my contribution as

- ○ Academic/research institution
- ○ Business association
- ○ Company/business organisation

- ○ Consumer organisation
- ○ EU citizen
- ○ Environmental organisation
- ○ Non-EU citizen
- ○ Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- ○ Public authority
- ○ Trade union
- ○ Other

*First name

[   ]

*Surname

[   ]

*Email (this won't be published)

[   ]

*Have you applied for a Schengen visa in the past five years?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

When you last applied for a Schengen visa, did you fill in the application form online:
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

*What was the (main) reason for travel?
- ○ Tourism
- ○ Business/professional training/conference
- ○ Visit to family/friends
- ○ Cultural/sports event
- ○ Medical treatment
- ○ Other

Please specify other reason:

150 character(s) maximum

[   ]

* I travel frequently to the Schengen area (more than twice a year – at least before Covid-19-related travel restrictions)

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

* I am a family member of a mobile EU citizen, travelling with or joining this EU citizen (i.e. I am covered by Directive 2004/38/EC)

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

* What is your age group:

- ○ 18 to 24
- ○ 25 to 39
- ○ 40 to 60
- ○ above 60

* Scope

- ○ International
- ○ Local
- ○ National
- ○ Regional

* Level of governance

- ○ Local Authority
- ○ Local Agency

* Level of governance

- ○ Parliament
- ○ Authority
- ○ Agency

* Organisation name

255 character(s) maximum

*Organisation size

- ○ Micro (1 to 9 employees)
- ○ Small (10 to 49 employees)
- ○ Medium (50 to 249 employees)
- ○ Large (250 or more)

Transparency register number

255 character(s) maximum

Check if your organisation is on the [transparency register](#). It's a voluntary database for organisations seeking to influence EU decision-making.

*Country of origin

Please add your country of origin, or that of your organisation.

○ Afghanistan	○ Djibouti	○ Libya	○ Saint Martin
○ Åland Islands	○ Dominica	○ Liechtenstein	○ Saint Pierre and Miquelon
○ Albania	○ Dominican Republic	○ Lithuania	○ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
○ Algeria	○ Ecuador	○ Luxembourg	○ Samoa
○ American Samoa	○ Egypt	○ Macau	○ San Marino
○ Andorra	○ El Salvador	○ Madagascar	○ São Tomé and Príncipe
○ Angola	○ Equatorial Guinea	○ Malawi	○ Saudi Arabia
○ Anguilla	○ Eritrea	○ Malaysia	○ Senegal
○ Antarctica	○ Estonia	○ Maldives	○ Serbia
○ Antigua and Barbuda	○ Eswatini	○ Mali	○ Seychelles
○ Argentina	○ Ethiopia	○ Malta	○ Sierra Leone

- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- Barbados
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Belize
- Benin
- Bermuda
- Bhutan
- Bolivia
- Bonaire Saint Eustatius and Saba
- Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Botswana
- Bouvet Island
- Brazil
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Falkland Islands
- Faroe Islands
- Fiji
- Finland
- France
- French Guiana
- French Polynesia
- French Southern and Antarctic Lands
- Gabon
- Georgia
- Germany
- Ghana
- Gibraltar
- Greece
- Greenland
- Grenada
- Guadeloupe
- Guam
- Guatemala
- Guernsey
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Guyana
- Marshall Islands
- Martinique
- Mauritania
- Mauritius
- Mayotte
- Mexico
- Micronesia
- Moldova
- Monaco
- Mongolia
- Montenegro
- Montserrat
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Myanmar /Burma
- Namibia
- Nauru
- Nepal
- Netherlands
- New Caledonia
- New Zealand
- Nicaragua
- Niger
- Singapore
- Sint Maarten
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Solomon Islands
- Somalia
- South Africa
- South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands
- South Korea
- South Sudan
- Spain
- Sri Lanka
- Sudan
- Suriname
- Svalbard and Jan Mayen
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Syria
- Taiwan
- Tajikistan
- Tanzania
- Thailand
- The Gambia

- Brunei
- Bulgaria
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cambodia
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Cape Verde
- Cayman Islands
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Chile
- China
- Christmas Island
- Clipperton
- Cocos (Keeling) Islands
- Colombia
- Comoros
- Congo
- Cook Islands
- Costa Rica
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Croatia

- Haiti
- Heard Island and McDonald Islands
- Honduras
- Hong Kong
- Hungary
- Iceland
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran
- Iraq
- Ireland
- Isle of Man
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Jersey
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Kenya
- Kiribati
- Kosovo
- Kuwait

- Nigeria
- Niue
- Norfolk Island
- Northern Mariana Islands
- North Korea
- North Macedonia
- Norway
- Oman
- Pakistan
- Palau
- Palestine
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay
- Peru
- Philippines
- Pitcairn Islands
- Poland
- Portugal
- Puerto Rico
- Qatar
- Réunion
- Romania

- Timor-Leste
- Togo
- Tokelau
- Tonga
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Tunisia
- Turkey
- Turkmenistan
- Turks and Caicos Islands
- Tuvalu
- Uganda
- Ukraine
- United Arab Emirates
- United Kingdom
- United States
- United States Minor Outlying Islands
- Uruguay
- US Virgin Islands
- Uzbekistan
- Vanuatu
- Vatican City
- Venezuela
- Vietnam

○ Cuba	○ Kyrgyzstan	○ Russia	○ Wallis and Futuna
○ Curaçao	○ Laos	○ Rwanda	○ Western Sahara
○ Cyprus	○ Latvia	○ Saint Barthélemy	○ Yemen
○ Czechia	○ Lebanon	○ Saint Helena Ascension and Tristan da Cunha	○ Zambia
○ Democratic Republic of the Congo	○ Lesotho	○ Saint Kitts and Nevis	○ Zimbabwe
○ Denmark	○ Liberia	○ Saint Lucia	

The Commission will publish all contributions to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would prefer to have your details published or to remain anonymous when your contribution is published. **For the purpose of transparency, the type of respondent (for example, 'business association, 'consumer association', 'EU citizen') country of origin, organisation name and size, and its transparency register number, are always published. Your e-mail address will never be published.** Opt in to select the privacy option that best suits you. Privacy options default based on the type of respondent selected

*Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

○ **Anonymous**

The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, your country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself.

○ **Public**

Your name, the type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, your country of origin and your contribution will be published.

*Contribution publication privacy settings

The Commission will publish the responses to this public consultation. You can choose whether you would like your details to be made public or to remain anonymous.

○ **Anonymous**

Only organisation details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published as received. Your name will not be published. Please do not include any personal data in the contribution itself if you want to remain anonymous.

○ **Public**

Organisation details and respondent details are published: The type of respondent that you responded to this consultation as, the name of the organisation on whose behalf you reply as well as its transparency number, its size, its country of origin and your contribution will be published. Your name will also be published.

☐ I agree with the [personal data protection provisions](#)

Cost and benefits for visa applicants

The following questions will help the European Commission to estimate the costs and benefits of visa digitalisation for visa applicants.

* **When you last applied for a Schengen visa, did you encounter any of the following difficulties?**

at most 3 choice(s)

☐ I had to travel long distance to the consulate / visa application centre.

☐ The application process was time consuming.

☐ The application process was complicated.

☐ My application was not admitted due to incomplete file or other mistakes.

☐ I could not travel during the application process because my passport was at the consulate.

☐ I did not know when to collect my passport from the consulate/visa application centre.

☐ Other

☐ No particular difficulty.

* **Please specify other difficulties:**

500 character(s) maximum

When you last applied for a Schengen visa,

	Value
*which distance did you have to cover to get to the next consulate or visa application centre (km):	
*how many hours did it take you to get there, to apply and to get back (total time spent) (hour):	
*how much did you pay for the transport to get there (return trip) (EUR):	
*how much did you pay for accommodation in that location (EUR):	

Apart from the visa and service fees, costs of providing supporting documents and travel medical insurance, were there any other costs? If yes, for what and how much:

500 character(s) maximum

How did you retrieve your passport at the end of the visa application and how much did you pay?

	Value
*By personal pick-up *(EUR in transportation costs)*:	
*By courier delivery *(EUR in delivery costs)*:	

* Do you expect any additional costs due to the online application and the digital visa?

- ◉ Yes
- ◉ No

* If yes, for what and how much:

500 character(s) maximum

[   ]

How easy or difficult would the following tasks be for you:

	Very difficult	Difficult	Neutral	Easy	Very easy
* accessing the internet to submit an application online, or to have access to the digital documents (e. g. digital visa, if/once your visa is issued)	�◦	◦	◦	◦	◦
* receiving and reading email messages	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦
* online / mobile payment	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦
* scanning and uploading documents to an online website/portal	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦
* scanning your travel document with your mobile device (through a dedicated app)	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦
* using support tools, such as online tutorials or chatbots	◦	◦	◦	◦	◦

* Which form of electronic payment tools would you be able to use?

at most 3 choice(s)

- ☐ credit cards
- ☐ debit cards
- ☐ Paypal
- ☐ mobile payment
- ☐ other

Please specify other:

200 character(s) maximum

[   ]

General views

What is your general view on making visa procedures less paper-based and more digital?

- ○ Very positive
- ○ Positive
- ○ Neutral
- ○ Negative
- ○ Very negative

Do you think that digital visa procedures would:

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
promote travel and tourism to the EU	○	○	○	○	○
promote family visits / business / cultural or scientific exchanges	○	○	○	○	○
contribute to a positive image of the EU or Schengen Area	○	○	○	○	○
lead to greater transparency in the Schengen visa process	○	○	○	○	○
promote the security of the Schengen Area	○	○	○	○	○

Online application

Instead of a paper-based application that exists today, the applicants would use an online portal to apply for a Schengen visa in the future. The visa portal would allow the applicants to:

- *fill out the digital application form online,*
- *upload the supporting documents and a copy of the passport,*
- *pay the visa fee online,*
- *book an appointment (where necessary – see below for further information),*
- *sign and submit the application electronically,*
- *track their application status online and*
- *receive a notification when a decision has been taken.*

Booking an appointment to visit the consulate or visa application centre might still be necessary for first-time applicants and then every 5 years to give fingerprints and have a photo taken, as well as each time the

visa applicant has a new passport. If they don't fall into any of these cases, repeat visa applicants would therefore be able to complete the entire application process online, without visiting the consulate or visa application centre.

Do you agree that such an online application process would facilitate the Schengen visa application procedure for visa applicants?

- ◉ Strongly agree
- ◉ Agree
- ◉ Neutral
- ◉ Do not agree
- ◉ Do not agree at all

If not agree, why?

What would be the main benefits of the online application? The application procedure would be :

at most 3 choice(s)

- ☐ quicker
- ☐ cheaper
- ☐ more transparent / predictible
- ☐ more user-friendly
- ☐ more modern and in line with an increasingly digital world
- ☐ other

If you see any other benefit, please specify:

500 character(s) maximum

How important do you consider the fact that (repeat) applicants would not have to visit the consulate or visa application centre?

- ◉ Very important
- ◉ Important
- ◉ Neutral
- ◉ Not very important
- ◉ Not important at all

Do you foresee any obstacles / drawbacks for visa applicants with the online application procedure?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

If yes, what would be the main obstacles / drawbacks?

at most 3 choice(s)

- ☐ no / bad access to the internet
- ☐ lack of necessary equipment (e.g. computer/mobile phone) to access the application portal
- ☐ applicants' lack of computer literacy
- ☐ online / mobile payment
- ☐ scanning and uploading documents
- ☐ no possibility to ask questions
- ☐ concerns about privacy / data security
- ☐ other

Please specify other obstacles:

500 character(s) maximum

What would help applicants to overcome these obstacles / drawbacks?

at most 3 choice(s)

- ☐ support from relatives or friends
- ☐ support from travel agencies or other intermediaries
- ☐ support from visa application centres or consulates
- ☐ support through online tutorials
- ☐ support through automated chatbots in the online portal
- ☐ maintaining the paper-based procedure in exceptional cases
- ☐ other

Please specify other:

500 character(s) maximum

It would be preferable to submit the Schengen visa application on:

- ○ a single EU digital visa portal, regardless of the main destination of the trip

○ national portals managed by each EU Member State, depending on the main destination of the trip

○ both solutions would be fine

Schengen visas (C type) are valid for short stays in the EU up to 3 months. For stays of more than 3 months (and up to one year), for example for studying or working in the EU, it is necessary to apply for long-stay visas (D type).

How important do you consider the possibility to apply online not only for Schengen visas (for stays up to 3 months), but also for long-stay visas (for stays between 3 months and 1 year)?

○ Very important

○ Important

○ Neutral

○ Not very important

○ Not important at all

Digital visa

Nowadays visas are issued in the form of a paper visa sticker affixed to the passport. In the future, visas could be issued in a secure digital format. Applicants would be notified on the decision taken by the consulate (if the visa is issued, refused etc.) by email or other electronic means. The notification would contain the data currently found on the visa sticker and (possibly) a barcode. A secure verification tool, which would be part of the digital visa portal, would enable applicants both to verify the status of their application and the validity of their visa after issuance.

By moving away from paper visa stickers, the visa procedure would change from the point of view of the applicants/visa holders: the applicants would no longer need to leave their passport with the consulate for the duration of the application procedure. The applicants would thus be able to travel abroad while the visa application is being processed. Collecting the passport at the end of the procedure, or receiving it via courier delivery, would also not be needed anymore. Digital visa validity would be independent of the validity of passports, meaning that a valid visa could be confirmed and linked to a new passport (also in cases of lost or stolen passports).

Do you agree that the digital visa (instead of the physical sticker) would facilitate the Schengen visa application procedure and travelling to the EU Schengen area for visa holders?

○ Strongly agree

○ Agree

○ Neutral

○ Do not agree

○ Do not agree at all

Which advantages of the digital visa do you consider as important?

	Not important at all	Not very important	Neutral	Important	Very important
Not having to leave a passport for a period of time at the consulate and thus the possibility to travel abroad during the visa application procedure.	○	○	○	○	○
Not having to retrieve the passport at the end of the visa application procedure	○	○	○	○	○
Having easy access to the visa status from a mobile device	○	○	○	○	○
The visa could remain valid even if the passport validity expires or if the passport is lost or stolen, and could be transferred to a new passport.	○	○	○	○	○
Smoother border control checks	○	○	○	○	○

Do you foresee any obstacles / drawbacks for holders of a digital visa ?

○ Yes

○ No

If yes, what would be the main obstacles / drawbacks?

at most 3 choice(s)

☐ no / bad access to the internet

☐ lack of necessary equipment to access the digital visa

☐ applicants' lack of computer literacy

☐ limited access to the visa by other parties (carriers, hotels etc.)

☐ concerns about personal data / privacy

☐ other

Please specify other:

500 character(s) maximum

What would be important features for visa applicants?

at most 3 choice(s)

☐ email notification on visa status (issued, refused, revoked, annuled, extended)

☐ the possibility to print out the digital visa

☐ permanent access to an EU online visa portal to check the visa status

☐ support tools, such as online tutorials or chatbots

☐ the possibility to contact the authorities

☐ other

Please specify other:

500 character(s) maximum

Conclusion

Are there other problems that should/could be addressed? If you wish to add information on other issues linked to the digitalisation of visa procedures, please feel free to do so here

1000 character(s) maximum

You can upload here a concise written contribution (such as a position paper) on any issue linked to the digitalisation of visa procedures. The maximal file size is 1MB.

Please note that your responses to the questionnaire as well as the uploaded document will be published.

Only files of the type pdf,txt,doc,docx,odt,rtf are allowed