

General information for visa applicants (short-term visas)

EU nationals do not require a visa to enter the Federal Republic of Germany.

Generally speaking, all other foreigners require a visa for stays in Germany. Nationals of countries for which the European Union has abolished the visa requirement do not require a visa for visits of up to 90 days within an 180-day period.

You will find an overview of visa requirements here:

http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/EinreiseUndAufenthalt/StaatenlisteVisumpflicht_node.html

Local responsibility for issuing the visa lies with the mission responsible for the area in which the applicant has his/her permanent residence or domicile.

Subject matter responsibility lies with the mission of the Schengen state in whose territory the sole or main destination is situated. If the main purpose of travel is to participate in a conference in Germany, a German mission is competent, even if you transit across another Schengen state.

Visa fees are waived for UN conference participants.

As a rule, missions require between two and ten working days to decide on an application for a short-stay visa.

In addition to this, many German missions have introduced an electronic appointment system to help manage the number of visitors to the mission and thus shorten waiting times. Please note that some Embassies are booked up several weeks in advance. Exceptional appointments are limited and cannot be guaranteed, even if the conference is supported by Department OR02 at the Federal Foreign Office. In urgent cases please contact the Head of the Visa Section of the German mission in charge directly and without delay (email: info@city.diplo.de, e.g. info@washington.diplo.de; website: www.city.diplo.de, e.g. www.washington.diplo.de).

During the peak travel season there may be a waiting period for submitting an application to a German mission. Persons requiring a visa to enter Germany should therefore submit their applications in good time.

As a rule, applicants must submit visa applications, together with all necessary documents, in person at the German mission responsible for their place of residence. In order to avoid time-

consuming requests for additional information or documentation, applicants should consult the website of the respective mission well in advance of their departure date to find out about the visa procedure and about the documentation which has to be submitted.

Visa application forms can be obtained from the mission free of charge (in the local language). Applicants may also download the forms here: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/480874/publicationFile/5164/VisumantragEngl.pdf>.

The forms submitted must be original versions in the appropriate language of the mission in question.

The online application system “Videx” enables applicants to complete their application form for a Schengen visa online. The application cannot, however, be submitted online. It has to be printed out and submitted in person to the responsible Embassy, Consulate or external service provider, where the data will be scanned. This eases the process and ensures the application is complete. Videx can be accessed at <https://videx.diplo.de>.

Multiple-entry visas allow qualified visitors to come and go to and from Germany for up to 90 days in a 180-day period for up to 5 years, without having to reapply each time. This option is of particular benefit to persons who have to travel frequently for professional or private reasons and have proven their reliability by using previous visas legally. Please make sure to mention in your visa application if you have to travel repeatedly to the Schengen states in the upcoming months. In these cases we strongly advise that you have health insurance for the whole period of the requested visa.

In future all missions will electronically scan applicants’ fingerprints when accepting visa applications. This biometric procedure will be introduced gradually region by region, probably by the end of 2014. Once a person’s fingerprints have been scanned, when submitting a visa application, an interview at the mission will only be necessary in exceptional cases. A renewed biometric procedure is envisaged after five years.

The Federal Foreign Office has collected a catalogue of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). Here you can find information on important matters concerning entry to Germany:

<http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/FAQ/VisumFuerD/Uebersicht.html?nn=480902>