
Political agreement on digitalisation of visa application

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The Commission welcomes today's political agreement between the European Parliament and the Council allowing for the digitalisation of the Schengen visa procedure. This is a key deliverable under the [Schengen Strategy](#), presented by the Commission in June 2021.

The agreed rules will modernise, simplify, and harmonise the visa procedures for non-EU country nationals applying for a visa and for the Member States who need to grant such visas through digitalisation.

Today, visa procedures for the Schengen area still heavily rely on paperwork, adding costs for both travellers and the Member States. Procedures to apply for a Schengen visa differ from one Member States to another and only very few have partial digitalised procedures. Physical visa stickers are also more prone to falsification, fraud, and theft, something which digital visas will significantly improve.

The Regulation will modernise two main aspects of the visa procedure: the **digitalisation of the visa sticker** and the **digitalisation of the visa application, by setting up an EU online Visa application platform**.

In particular, the new Regulation will provide for:

- A **single EU Online Visa application platform**, where visa applicants will be able to **apply for a Schengen visa online**, including the payment of the same visa fee, regardless of the Schengen country they want to visit.
 - **In particular, the Online Visa application platform will:**
 - Provide applicants with a **secure account** through which they can apply online and receive the decision on their application.
 - Provide the applicants with **up-to-date information on Schengen short-stay visas**, as well as all necessary information regarding the requirements and procedures (such as supporting documents, visa fee or the need for an appointment to collect biometric identifiers).
 - **Automatically determine which Schengen country is responsible** to examine an application when the intended visit includes several Member States.

- Include a **chatbot functionality** allowing applicants to get answers to their questions in a user-friendly way.
- Replacement of the Schengen visa sticker with a **digital Schengen visa** (encrypted 2D barcode) which will apply also for **long-stay visas**. It will also be issued by EU countries not yet fully applying the Schengen rules (Bulgaria, Romania, Cyprus).
- A transition period of 7 years for Member States to join the platform.

Next steps

The Regulation must now be formally adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.

(European Commission)