

Visa free entry

Citizens of the EU/EEA member states and of the following countries may travel to Hungary without a visa:

Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Guatemala, Holy See, Honduras, Hong Kong (the exemption applies only to holders of a “Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”), Iceland, Israel, Japan, Macao (the exemption applies only to holders of a “Regio Administrativa Especial de Macau” passport), Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Salvador, San Marino, Singapore, South Korea, Switzerland, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela.

Stateless persons and refugees having a travel document issued by one of the above mentioned states, can enter without a visa.

Stateless persons and refugees residing in a Member State, having a travel document issued by the Member State concerned are entitled for a visa free entry. Member State means: “old” and “new” Schengen Member States, Cyprus, Romania and Bulgaria.

In possession of a valid D+C visa issued by one of the Schengen states, within the first three month of the validity of the visa, the holder is entitled for a visa free entry. In possession of a D visa, the holder may only transit through Hungary to the issuing country without visa.

In possession of a valid residence permit and other documents listed in Annex 4 of the Common Consular Instructions, foreigners have the right for a visa free circulation within the Schengen Area not exceed 3 months in any 6 months.

Holders of United Nations *laissez passez* may enter without a visa.

According to bilateral visa agreements holders of diplomatic and service passports may be entitled for a visa free entry. Please check the website of the MFA (www.kulugyminiszterium.hu).

Visa free transit

Foreigners in possession of a valid residence permit issued by Switzerland or Liechtenstein may transit through Hungary without having a Hungarian transit visa or airport transit visa, even after 21 December 2007. The same rules apply to holders of a valid visa issued before 21 December 2007 by one of those countries that joined the Schengen Area as from 21 December 2007 (i.e. the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia). The validity of the visa or residence permit substituting the Hungarian transit visa shall cover the whole duration of the transit.

The duration of visa free transit cannot exceed 5 days.

Entry conditions for foreigners under visa obligation for up to 90 days

A visa is only a preliminary permission for entry, which does not authorize its bearer automatically to enter the country. The traveler may be requested to provide proof of the existence of the conditions of his entry and stay in Hungary and, if he is not able to fulfill this, he may be returned from the border.

Basic rules for the issuance of Schengen visas

Types of Schengen visas

- Airport transit visa (A): authorizes the bearer to enter the international zone of the airport and to remain there until the time of the departure of the flight to the destination country. Only nationals of the following states are obliged to apply for an airport transit visa: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Syria
- Transit visa (B): authorizes the bearer to a single, double or multiple transits, not exceeding 5 days at a time.
- Short stay visa (C): authorizes the bearer to a single, double or multiple entries and, in case of an uninterrupted stay, to a stay of maximum 90 days, while in case of an interrupted stay, to a stay of altogether maximum 90 days within the 6 months counted from the date of the first entry.

Attention! In case you have to transfer in Ferihegy 1 Airport or your flight arrives to Ferihegy 1 and your transfer flight departs from Ferihegy 2 (and *vice versa*), being in possession of a transit visa is necessary.

Where to submit a visa application?

Schengen visa applications have to be submitted at the representation of the country which is the main destination of the visit. (If visiting several states with stays of approximately the same duration the consulate responsible for issuing the visa is that of the country of the first entry into the Schengen area.)

Thus, according to the above described Schengen regulations applicants having Hungary as the main destination, or the country of first entry in case of a trip stretching through several Schengen Member States can submit their visa applications at the Hungarian representations.

Practical example: If you wish to travel around Europe for three weeks, spending two weeks in Austria and one in Hungary, you should apply for the schengen visa at the Austrian consulate.

It is sometimes difficult to determine the main destination, for example where the traveler intends to make several consecutive short stays of approximately the same length in various Schengen States. In this case, you should go to the consulate of the first country you intend to visit.

Practical example: A businessman plans a trip to Europe to meet business partners in various European capitals, in each of which he will stay for one or two days. He has booked a trip to Frankfurt, from which he will continue on his journey. In this case, the appropriate consulate is the German consulate.

According to the Schengen rules **border posts** do normally **not issue visas**, except for family members of EEA citizens and only under extraordinary circumstances for other third country nationals (e.g. entry with a purpose of attending the funeral service of a deceased family member, when it can be proved that there has not been any possibility to apply for a visa beforehand).

Which of the Hungarian consulates is responsible for issuing a visa?

Once it has been established that a Hungarian consulate is responsible for issuing a schengen visa, it has to be chosen which one of them. The general rule is that an application can be handed in to the consulate which is in the country

- Where the applicant has a habitual residence
- Whose citizen the applicant is

If there is no Hungarian consulate in the country where the applicant has his/her habitual residence the visa application can be handed in at any Hungarian consulate.

Who can submit a visa application?

- The applicant can submit personally his/her own or his/her family member's visa application
- In case of organized tourist trips, an accredited travel agency may submit the visa application
- In case of group travel – other than organized tourist trip - , the application may be submitted by a representative sufficiently authorized.

Attention!

- The above listed exceptions to the obligation to submit the application personally don't however exclude that the consul, if s/he deems it necessary, may call the applicant to a personal interview.
- The authorization is only valid for submitting the application and for collecting the issued visa, however the application form has to be signed by each applicant personally.
- In countries with a vast territory or where there is no Hungarian foreign representation competent to issue visas or where Hungary is not represented by another Schengen Member State, the honorary consuls are also entitled to receive visa applications with the purpose of transferring them to the competent Hungarian consulate.
- Consulates may receive visa applications at the earliest 3 months before the beginning of the visit.

The documents needed for visa applications

I. General requirements:

- a valid passport the validity of which has to exceed that of the requested visa by at least 3 months;
- 1 passport-size colour photo (not older than 6 months);
- a wholly and legibly completed, signed application form:
The application form may be acquired free of charge at the consulates or downloaded from the website of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.kulugyminiszterium.hu). Schengen application forms are uniform, therefore any application form used by any of the Schengen Member States can be used for applying at Hungarian consulates.
- a travel medical insurance (a travel insurance providing cover for at least 30.000 € for financing urgent health services and homeward transportation due to medical reasons, valid for the whole period of stay and for the territory of every Schengen State);
- a certificate proving lawful stay, if the applicant is not a citizen of the country where he hands in his application.

Besides meeting the above general requirements, the applicant shall also supply a certificate of the financial coverage of his/her expenses, and a certificate of the purpose of the visit.

The financial coverage of the expenses can be certified with one of the following documents:

- an original income certificate of the employer or
- a bank account statement on the account turnover during the last three months or
- a pension slip or
- a certificate of registration in the case of an individual entrepreneur or one-man firm or
- a valid ticket, a certificate of a reserved and prepaid journey, accommodation or
- in the case of minors, a declaration by the legal representative on the coverage of the costs and on the existence of the financial coverage or
- a letter of invitation issued and endorsed by the Office of Immigration and Nationality.

The purpose of the entry can be certified with the following documents:

When applying for a transit visa:

- a valid ticket certifying the purpose of the visit; or the document of a transport vehicle used and appropriately insured,
- a visa to the destination country, if necessary.

When applying for a short stay visa:

- In the case of a tourist visit: the certificate of the travel agency; or in the case of an individual visit: the prepaid reservation of accommodation.
- In the case of an entry with an educational or other scientific or professional training purpose: the certificate of the receiving institution, the certificate of the envisaged place of accommodation in Hungary
- In the case of visiting friends, acquaintances: a letter of invitation issued and endorsed by the Office of Immigration and Nationality or the letter of invitation in the form of a public notarial document and a photocopy of the personal identification document/passport of the inviting party in Hungary.
- For the purpose of cultivation of family relations: an invitation letter as described in the previous indent or a letter signed by the applicant in full awareness of his/her criminal liability describing the degree of the family relation, giving the name, address and phone number of the family member and the purpose of the entry and stay.
- In the case of an entry for business purposes: in case there already exists a business partner in Hungary: a letter of invitation from the business partner, proof of the existence of commercial business relations; or the certificate of the local chamber of commerce on the existence of business relations, and the certification of the address of the envisaged place of accommodation in Hungary.
- In the case of an entry with the purpose of medical treatment: the certificate of the receiving health institution, including reference to the fact that the expected coverage of the medical treatment is available, and other certification of the coverage of the medical treatment, as well as the certification of the address of the expected place of accommodation in Hungary.
- In the case of carriers: the certification or request of the carrier firm.
- For the purpose of visiting the grave of a deceased relative buried in Hungary: a document certifying the existence of the grave and the degree of relationship.
- For the purpose of cultural activities: accreditation proving the participation in the sports event or contract with the Hungarian sport club, or the certificate issued by the delegating sport club / Olympic committee / Ministry of Sport, etc.
- For the purpose of sport: agency contract with the Hungarian service provider, invitation letter issued by the host organization
- For the purpose of attending a conference: invitation letter issued by the host organization, confirmation on participation issued by the host organization, and/or a certification issued by the delegating organization; receipt on payment of the registration fee
- In the case of other purposes of entry (regular shopping, entertainment, etc.) not listed in any of the above categories: a declaration presenting the purpose of the entry and stay, made in full awareness of the person's criminal liability.

Visa fees

1. Application for an airport transit visa (A), transit visa (B) or short-term entry visa (C) 60 EUR
2. Application for a long stay visa for the purpose of seasonal work 40 EUR

General exemptions from the visa fees

- children under the age of 14 and registered in the passport of a parent: free of charge
- family members of EEA citizens: free of charge
- children under the age of 6, travelling with their own passports free of charge
- members of children's groups consisting of more than 5 children free of charge
- students and accompanying teachers travelling for educational purposes free of charge
- researchers free of charge

Further exceptions to paying the full visa fee

Further exceptions may be given on the basis of bilateral visa facilitation agreements concluded by the European Communities. For detailed information concerning these agreements please contact the competent Hungarian foreign representations in the respective countries. The affected countries are Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine.

Attention!

- The visa fee shall be paid when the application is submitted.
- The consulate does not charge any further fees other than the above for issuing a visa.
- If the application for a visa is refused, the fee will not be reimbursed.
- In general the fee shall be paid in euro (some Hungarian consulates accept the local currency).
- Payment can be made by bank transfer or in cash – please check the practice at the consulate where you wish to hand in your application.

Decision making upon visa applications

Decision upon visa applications falls within the competence of the consuls, neither Hungarian nor local administrators may take decisions on applications.

In order to check visa applications the consul

- consults in every case the entry ban list (SIS)
- inspects former visas issued to the applicant
- is liable to consult with competent authorities of other Member States in particular cases
- may consult with the Office of Immigration and Nationality and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- may consult with foreign representations of other Schengen States
- may request an interview with the applicant
- may request the presentation of further documents or certificates in addition to the ones already attached to the application.

According to law decision upon the visa application must not exceed 30 days. In case of countries with a visa facilitation agreement with the EU this time period is 10 days.

Rejection of the visa application

In case of entry ban or doubts concerning the application the consulate will refuse the visa application. Presentation of counterfeit documents is a reason for refusal in itself.

Notification on the reason for refusal can be obtained at the consulate only by the applicant in person. At the applicant's request the notification can be issued in written form as well.

In case of refusal the consulate will not reimburse the visa fee.

There is no legal remedy against the rejection of an application, however, a complaint concerning the procedure can be lodged. Complaints will be examined in the first instance by the head of the consulate, in the second instance by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In case of refusal a new application may be submitted at any time. In case of a new application the visa fee has to be paid again.

Crossing the external borders

The Community Code on the rules governing the movement of persons across borders (published in OJ L 105 of 13 April 2006) sets out the conditions for entry into the territory of the Member States. Holding a valid passport and visa (in the case of citizens of third countries where a visa is needed) are only two of the conditions of entry.

The conditions of entry are initially checked by the consulates which examine visa applications.

The conditions of entry are checked a second time when the person presents himself/herself at the external border (land, sea or airport) of the Member States. If the border police decide that a person holding a visa does not fulfill the conditions of entry (for example: the person does not have the necessary means of subsistence for the duration of his/her stay), he/she will be refused entry, even if there is a visa in his/her passport.

Attention! Visa holders should carry with them supporting documents to demonstrate that they fulfill the conditions of entry, so that they can present them if need be during the checks at the EU border.

Entry for long stay (exceeding 90 days)

Regulations on a stay exceeding 90 days fall within the competence of national authorities, therefore there is no uniform routine among the Schengen Member States. Foreign nationals requesting entry to Hungary with a purpose of a long stay may submit a residence permit application. In case of successful application, s/he will get a visa authorizing him/her to a single entry for receiving a residence permit and to stay for maximum 30 days in Hungary. The decision on the residence permit falls within the scope of the regional directorates of the Office for Immigration.

Attention! Family members of EU/EEA nationals with the right of free movement may enter Hungary with a short-stay (C) visa, even if they intend to stay in Hungary more than 90 days. In such cases, within 93 days from the entry, the family member shall apply for a residence card at a regional directorate of the Office for Immigration and Nationality.

A residence permit application can be submitted directly to a regional directorate of the OIN, if

- a) the applicant can prove the exceptional reasons of the request, among others, family reunification or medical treatment,
- b) the purpose of stay is research,
- c) the applicant concerned is a national of one of the countries listed on Annex II of Council Regulation EC no 539/2001 (visa free countries).

Supporting documents

- Valid passport (the validity of which has to exceed that of the requested visa by at least 3 months);
- 2 passport-size colour photos (not older than 6 months);
- a wholly and legibly completed, signed “residence permit” application form (can be downloaded from the website of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.kulugyminiszterium.hu));
- supporting documents of the purpose of stay;
- supporting documents of the accommodation;
- supporting documents of the subsistence;
- a health insurance.

Depending on the purpose of entry, the following documents are needed for the application for residence permit:

In the case of a residence permit for the purpose of paid activity:

- a work permit,
- a contract of employment,
- a document certifying occupancy in Hungary, and
- a certificate on how the person will make a living until he receives his first salary (bank account statement, employer’s certificate that he will pay an advance to the person, etc.)

or,

- a certificate on the character of the gainful activity (the articles of association),
- the resolution on the court registration of the enterprise,

- a document certifying occupancy in Hungary,
- a certificate on the acquisition of the qualification necessary for filling the position,
- a declaration, certificate on the (expected) yearly income,
- a certificate of the amount of money at the person's disposal in Hungary,
- the simplified balance sheet of the previous year (for a firm already operating),
- a certificate that the firm has no public debt (for a firm already operating),
- if the firm has Hungarian employees: their employment contracts,
- in case of a new enterprise: a brief business plan.

In the case of a residence permit for educational purposes:

- a certificate of school attendance,
- a document certifying occupancy in Hungary (the document certifying accommodation in a student hostel or the tenancy contract with a duplicate of the title deed), and
- the documents certifying subsistence in Hungary (bank account statement; or the declaration of the parents that they assume coverage of all costs of the stay in Hungary; or the document certifying the scholarship).
- Attestation of the school that the applicant is exempt from the payment of school fees or that he/she has already paid the tuition fees.

In the case of a residence permit for family reunification:

- a document certifying occupancy in Hungary,
- a document certifying subsistence in Hungary,
- a marriage certificate / birth certificate, and
- a copy of the passport of the Hungarian relative.

In the case of a residence permit for visit:

- an official letter of invitation countersigned by the OIN, or an invitation included in a notarial document,
- a certificate of the average income of the inviting party,
- a duplicate of the title deed, and
- a copy of the passport or the personal identification document of the inviting party.

In the case of a residence permit for medical treatment:

- the name and address of the health institution providing the treatment,
- a certificate of the character and the expected duration of the medical treatment,
- a certificate of the financial coverage for the medical treatment and the stay in Hungary,
- the certification of occupancy in Hungary provided that the applicant does not stay in the medical institution,
- in case of a minor child or a family member in need of help: the certification of the accommodation and the subsistence of the accompanying person.

In the case of a residence permit for research:

- contract with an accredited research institute

In the case of a residence permit for voluntary work:

- contract with a Hungarian receiving institution, organization (church, library, town hall, etc.)

Attention!

1. The consul may request the presentation of further documents in addition to the above ones.
2. Documents shall be annexed to the applications being submitted in the original, if possible. If the client needs the original document later on, then a photocopy shall also be annexed besides presenting the original document.
3. The consulate reserves the right to examine the authenticity of the communicated data and the submitted documents. The communication of false data will in itself lead to the refusal of the visa application.

The fee for the residence permit application is EUR 60. As a general rule, the regional directorate processes the application within 30 days. If the purpose of entry is study or research the directorates shall make a decision within 15 days.

In case of refusal, the client may lodge an appeal within 5 days from the notification. The appeal shall be submitted directly to that regional directorate of the OIN that processed the application.

Records of data, data protection

According to Article 95 of the Act on entry and stay of third country nationals (No. II. of 2007) the Office for Immigration and Naturalization (OIN) as well as the consulate authority shall manage the following data of foreign nationals, based on visa applications and on visas issued:

- natural particulars of identification;
- nationality (stateless status);
- photograph and passport data;
- the purpose of entry and the planned duration of stay;
- copies of documents verifying fulfillment of the requirements for entry and stay, or the data referring thereto;
- the rejection of visa and the reasons, if applicable;
- the number and series, and the period and territory of validity of the visa issued;
- the date and place of entry and exit;
- registered place of accommodation.

The consulate may disclose data from its register to law enforcement and criminal investigation agencies, the national security agencies and the refugee authority, to agencies specified by law or international agreement within the type of specific information defined therein, furthermore to Schengen / EU consulates in the jurisdiction.

If requested by the applicant, the OIN, and the consulate within its jurisdiction shall provide information regarding his data on record, unless the Aliens Act prohibits the disclosure of such data. If the consulate determines, whether by the initiative of the applicant or ex officio, that any particular data on record is incorrect or has changed, it takes prompt measures to have such incorrect data corrected or removed from the records, whichever is appropriate.

Photo requirements

Examples of acceptable photos



Examples of non-acceptable photos



disturbing background



shadow over the face



hair covers half the face