



# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

## Exemption of Georgian nationals from Schengen visa requirements

### 1. Which countries is the visa exemption valid for?

The exemption from visa requirements applies to short-time stays in the following States:

- The EU Member States which are part of the Schengen area:  
Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden;
- The EU Member States which do not yet fully apply the Schengen acquis (they are not yet part of the Schengen area):  
Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania.<sup>1</sup>
- Schengen associated states which are not part of the European Union:  
Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

### 2. How long can I stay without a visa in the Schengen area?

The maximum duration of stay in the Schengen area is 90 days in any 180-day period.

When applying this rule, you must pay attention to the following aspects:

- The date of entry is considered as the first day of stay in the Schengen area ;
- The day of exit is considered as the last day of stay in the Schengen area ;
- The 180-day reference period is not fixed. It is a moving window, based on the approach of **looking backwards** at each day of the stay (be it at the moment of entry or at the day of an actual check, such as inland police control or border check upon departure);
- Absence for an uninterrupted period of 90 days allows for a new stay for up to 90 days.

Previous stays authorised under a residence permit or a long-stay visa (national visa, visa D) are not taken into account in the calculation of the duration of the visa-waiver. Residence permits and long-stay visas are subject to specific rules and the above explanations and calculations do not apply to them.

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<sup>1</sup> Stays in these countries will not be included in the calculation of the period of stay. The 90-day limit will be calculated for these states separately. For example, a traveller may travel directly to Croatia after a 90-day stay in the Schengen area and stay there for up to 90 days.

### **3. Can I enter the Schengen area more than one time during this period?**

Yes, you can. However, you must carefully calculate the days of your previous stay to make sure you do not exceed the overall total of 90 days of stay within any 180 day period (see question 2).

The length of the stay allowed in the Schengen area can be calculated with the “short-stay visa calculator”. It is available in various languages, including English and Russian, on the following website: [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/visa-calculator\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/visa-calculator_en)

In addition, the Foreign Ministry of Georgia has developed a stay calculator app for Android and iOS-based mobile devices providing further information on visa-free travel. You can download the Schengen/EU app from the following app stores:

- [iOS App Store](#)
- [Google Play Store](#)

On its website, the Foreign Ministry of Georgia also provides information on visa-free travels (<http://www.mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/ConsularInformation/VisaInfoGeorgian.aspx>)<sup>2</sup>.

### **4. Which travel documents do I need to provide?**

You need to have a biometric passport, issued within the previous 10 years and valid for at least three months after the intended departure date from the Schengen area.

Note: If you do not have a biometric passport, you can still apply for a Schengen visa from a competent diplomatic mission abroad.

In addition, you may be asked to also show documents proving the purpose and arrangements for the intended stay (e. g. flight ticket for the rest of your trip or return; confirmation of your accommodation reservation; invitation for a visit, conference, fair, event or business trip; confirmation of registration for a training or language course; etc.)<sup>3</sup>, and/or proof of sufficient financial means to cover living expenses (see below).

### **5. Does the visa waiver give you the right to enter the territories of the Schengen States?**

The exemption from visa requirements does not give third-country nationals an unconditional right of entry and stay in the Schengen area. The Member States retain the right to refuse entry and stay in their territories if one or more of the following entry conditions for stays of up to 90 days in any 180-day period are not met:

- a) Third-country nationals must be in possession of a valid travel document (see question 4) or a document authorising them to cross the border;
- b) If they are in possession of a valid residence permit issued by a Schengen state or a valid national visa (visa D), the travel document must still be valid at the time of entry and for the duration of the intended stay in Switzerland or another Schengen State;

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<sup>2</sup> The website is available in Georgian and currently under construction in English.

<sup>3</sup> A non-exhaustive list of supporting documents which may be requested from the third-country national can be found in Annex I of the Schengen Borders Code (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32016R0399>).

- c) They must be able to present justification concerning the purpose of and arrangements for the planned stay, and have sufficient financial means for their intended stay and return to the country of origin;
- d) They must not be listed in the Schengen Information System (SIS) as being denied entry into the Schengen area;
- e) They must not be considered to be a threat to public policy, internal security, public health or the international relations of any of the Member States, in particular where no alert has been issued in Member States' national data bases for the purposes of refusing entry on the same grounds;
- f) They must not be subject to an expulsion order.

## **6. How much money do I need to carry in order to travel to the Schengen area?**

According to Article 6 (4) of the Schengen Borders Code, *“means of subsistence shall be assessed in accordance with the duration and the purpose of the stay and by reference to average prices in the Member State(s) concerned for board and lodging in budget accommodation, multiplied by the number of days stayed. (...) The assessment of sufficient means of subsistence may be based on the cash, travellers' cheques and credit cards in the third-country national's possession. Declarations of sponsorship, where such declarations are provided for by national law and letters of guarantee from hosts, as defined by national law, where the third-country national is staying with a host, may also constitute evidence of sufficient means of subsistence.”*

Some Schengen Member States provide reference amounts<sup>4</sup>.

The validity of a credit card can be verified by contacting the issuing institution or by other means available to the border authorities.

Sponsorship declarations or other invitations can be verified by contacting the host or by checking his/her creditworthiness through the national contact points of the host's member state of residence.

## **7. Is a travel medical insurance necessary in order to travel in the Schengen area?**

Travel medical insurance is *not* mandatory for third-country nationals who benefit from the visa exemption. Nonetheless, it is highly recommended to get one in case of travel to the Schengen countries.

## **8. For which purposes can I travel to the Schengen area without a visa?**

You can travel as a tourist, to visit friends or family, to attend cultural or sport events, for business meetings, journalistic purposes, medical treatments or other forms of therapies, short-term studies or training, and for any similar activities.

However, the visa exemption does not apply to persons travelling for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity (e. g. to work) (see question 9).

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<sup>4</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/docs/reference\\_amounts\\_table.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/documents/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/docs/reference_amounts_table.pdf)

**9. Do I need a visa if I intend to work in the Schengen area for less than 90 days?**

Yes, most of the Member States require a visa and a work permit, even if it is for less than 90 days. Please contact the Embassy or Consulate of the Member State where you intend to work to receive information on visa and work permit requirements.

**10. If I intend to visit friends or relatives living in the Schengen area will I need to provide any specific information on this person at the border?**

Information about the person you visit may be asked. It is recommended to have at least their address and contact details.

**11. Will I need to apply for a visa or a residence permit if I intend to travel to the Schengen area for short-term studies?**

No. You do not need a visa or residence permit if your course does not last for more than 90 days in a period of 180 days. For long-term studies, you must apply for a residence permit in the form of a visa before departure. Regulations vary between Member States. It is advisable to contact the Embassy or Consulate of the country where you intend to study.

**12. Can I travel from one Schengen State to another Schengen State?**

There are no border controls between the countries of the Schengen area. Only in exceptional situations, Member States can reintroduce border checks at their internal borders for a limited period of time. In such case, you might be submitted to border controls as any other persons (EU citizens included) and can be checked at the border. If you continue to fulfil all the necessary conditions, your right to travel freely within the Schengen area will not be restricted.

Note: There are border controls in the following States: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus and Romania (EU Member States which do not yet fully apply the Schengen acquis and which are not yet part of the Schengen Area). There are also border controls between the Schengen States and the United Kingdom and Ireland (which are not part of the Schengen area either).

Third-country nationals must fulfil all entry conditions (see question 5) if subject to an *ad-hoc* control in the Schengen area.

**13. What happens if I stay beyond 90 days (without a residence permit or a long-term visa) or if I work (without a working permit) in the Schengen area?**

A third-country national who stays for more than 90 days in the Schengen area (without a residence permit or a long-stay visa) is overstaying and is therefore in an irregular situation. This can lead to a criminal prosecution and a to an entry ban to the Schengen area. Persons residing in the Schengen area without permission must leave the country. If they do not voluntarily comply with this obligation to leave, they can be returned to their home country against their will and at their own expenses.

Working in the Schengen area without a work permit (even if less than 90 days) is illegal and can result in an entry ban to the Schengen area. Depending on the Member State in which the offence is discovered, a fine or even a custodial sentence may be imposed.

**14. Can I submit an asylum application to extend my stay in Switzerland?**

In principle, anyone has the right to apply for asylum. The asylum requests to Switzerland from Georgian nationals are processed quickly within a “48-hour procedure”. In recent years, the quota of persons from Georgia receiving protection in Switzerland has always been 0%. A Georgian asylum applicant should therefore expect a quick decision with a high probability of deportation.

In addition, Switzerland enforces strict entry bans for the entire Schengen area and asylum seekers will not receive any return assistance. If you do not leave voluntarily, you can expect to be taken into custody and to be forcibly deported. Asylum applicants must stay in collective accommodation during the entire procedure.

**15. I have medical problems and would like medical treatment after submitting an asylum application. Is this allowed?**

These cases are decided as a matter of priority. In cases of exclusively medical reasons, the asylum application will be in principle refused. At the same time, forced deportation and, if necessary, an entry ban for the Schengen area are usually ordered. The chances of gaining asylum in Switzerland for medical reasons are therefore extremely low.