

Attention! The information below serves only as a guidance until Hungary's full Schengen-membership.

Hungary's Schengen-membership is foreseen from 1 January 2008.

Visa free entry

Citizens of EU- and EEA-member states as well as citizens of the following states¹ may travel to Hungary without a visa. Family members of citizens of EEA Member States may also travel to Hungary without a visa if they possess a residence card issued for family members of EEA citizens or a residence permit issued by any Schengen Member State.

Entry conditions for foreigners under visa obligation

The Schengen visa and entry regulations are only applicable for a stay not exceeding 90 days. Rules for a long stay over 90 days may be laid down by the national law of the member states concerned. **The rules of issuing Schengen visas at the diplomatic posts of the various states are generally concurrent, visa fees are uniform.**

It is important to note that a visa is only a preliminary permission for entry, which does not authorise its bearer automatically to enter the country. The traveller **may be requested to provide proof of the existence of the conditions of his/her entry and stay** in Hungary and if (s)he is not able to fulfil this, (s)he may be returned from the border.

Exceptions from the general visa procedure may be given on the basis of visa facilitation agreements. The European Union has entered into such an agreement with Russia and as from 1 January 2008 similar agreements are expected to enter into force with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine.

Significant changes subsequent to Hungary's Schengen-membership are that

- **visas and residence permits issued by one of the Schengen States are valid also for Hungary,** and on the other hand
- **visas issued by Hungarian representations abroad and residence permits issued by Hungarian national authorities are also valid for the entire Schengen Area.**

From 1 January 2008 24 states, 22 of the 27 member states of the European Union (these are the following: Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) as well as Norway and Iceland are foreseen to be part of the Schengen Area. Whereas several members of the European Union, i.e. Bulgaria, Cyprus, Ireland, Romania and the United Kingdom still do not participate in the Schengen cooperation.

¹ 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.

Basic rules for the issuance of Schengen visas

Types of Schengen visas

- Airport transit visa (A): authorises 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 (see footnote²)
- Transit visa (B): authorises the bearer to a single, double or multiple transits, not exceeding 5 days at a time.
- Short stay visa (C): authorises 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. (In case of visiting several states with stays of approximately the same duration the consulate responsible for issuing the visa is that of the country of 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.

Border guards may refuse to let a foreign national having Hungary as a main destination to enter the country in case (s)he has a Schengen visa issued by another Schengen Member State and cannot justify why his/her visa was not issued by a Hungarian consulate. The same procedure applies to the entry into another Member State if the foreign national has a visa issued by any of the Hungarian consulates.

Hungary, following the practice of the Schengen Member States, will **enter into representation agreements with other Member States**. The **essential** element of these agreements is that a **Hungarian visa can be requested also in countries where Hungary does not have its own foreign representation**. The consulate of the country representing Hungary will issue visas for entering Hungary according to the common Schengen visa policy as if issuing visas for entering their own country.

(The process of concluding representation agreements is under way. Depending on the signing of these agreements the MFA will publish the representation list on this homepage.)

According to the Schengen rules **border posts will normally not issue visas in the future either**, except for family members of EEA citizens and under extraordinary circumstances for other third

² Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Zaire – Democratic Republic of the Congo

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).

Who can submit a visa application?

The general rule is that the foreign representation has the competence to process the applications of the following persons:

- Nationals of the country where the Hungarian consulate is located
- Persons staying legitimately and continuously in the country where the Hungarian consulate is located
- Persons with no Hungarian foreign representation in their country.

The persons listed above can submit a visa application in the following ways:

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

Attention!

1. **The authorisation is only valid for submitting the application and for collecting the visa issued, however the application form has to be signed by every traveller personally.**
2. 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.
3. Consulate may receive visa applications at the earliest 3 months before the beginning of the visit.

The documents needed for visa applications

1. 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:
 - o the application form may be acquired free of charge at the consular departments of the foreign representations or downloaded from the website of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.mfa.gov.hu). Schengen application forms are uniform therefore any application form used by any of the Schengen Member States can be used for applying for a Hungarian visa.
- a **health** insurance (a travel insurance providing cover for at least 30000 € 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 receiving country.

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**.

II. 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.

III. 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 case of a tourist visit: the certificate of the travel agency; or in case of an individual visit: the prepaid reservation of accommodation.
- In 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 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 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 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 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.

- In 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 from 1 January 2008

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

Main categories of persons eligible for a visa issued free of charge

- children under the age of 14 and entered into the passport of the parent
- family members of EEA citizens
- children under the age of 6, travelling on their own passports
- members of children's groups consisting of more than 5 children

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, Ukraine.

Attention!

1. The visa fee shall be paid when the application is submitted.
2. The consulate does not charge any further fees other than the above for issuing a visa.
3. **If the application for a visa is refused, the fee will not be reimbursed.**

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.

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.

Long stay

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

In case of a visa 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 (s)he receives his/her first salary (bank account statement, employer's certificate that an advance will be paid to the person, etc.)

or,

- a certificate on the character of the gainful activity (deed 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 case of a visa 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 (s)he has already paid the tuition fee.

In case of a visa for family reunification:

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

In case of a visa for visit:

- an official invitation letter,
- 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 case of a visa 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 accommodation in Hungary provided that the applicant does not stay in the medical institution,
- in case of a minor or a family member in need of help: the certification of the accommodation and the subsistence of the accompanying person.

In case of a visa for research:

- contract with an accredited research institute
- if the researcher does not dispose of sufficient financial means, a written commitment of the research organisation to refund expenses including the costs of the expulsion of the researcher in case of a stay exceeding the authorized period of stay.

In case of a visa for voluntary work:

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