

THE EU WANTS TO DIGITIZE ISSUING SCHENGEN VISAS



The goal is to fully digitize the visa-issuance process by 2025 for citizens of the 102 third countries subject to the short-stay visa requirement.

"The Commission is now proposing to digitize the Schengen visa issuance procedure, abolishing the visa sticker, and offering the possibility to submit visa applications online through the EU platform designed for this purpose," says a press release.

"Today, we are bringing the EU's visa policy into the digital age," says Margaritis Schinas, Vice President for the promotion of our European way of life. "Some Member States have already gone digital, but it is crucial that the Schengen countries move forward together. We propose to fully digitize visa applications to provide smoother and more secure application procedures for travelers and the Member States."

"It is essential that we have a modern visa procedure that will facilitate tourist and business travel to the EU," adds Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson. Half of the people who travel to the EU issuing Schengen visas find the application process cumbersome, and a third of them have to travel miles to apply for a visa. It is high time that the EU provides an online platform so that citizens of the 102 third countries that require a short-stay visa to travel to the EU can apply quickly and securely."

The digitization of the visa application process should also help reduce the risks posed by physical visa stickers, which are more easily subject to fraud, forgery and theft, the statement said.

The Commission's proposal must now be examined by the European Parliament and the Council. Member States will then have five years to [switch to the common platform for online visa applications](#). The development of the platform could start in 2024, with a view to going live in 2026. Taking into account the five-year transition period, all Member States could use the platform in 2031.

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