

Requirement to meet in person when applying for visa to Schengen countries

From 2 November 2015, Schengen member states introduced Visa Information System (VIS) in India. The consequence for visa applicants is that first-time applicants have to appear in person when lodging their application in order to provide their digital photograph and fingerprints – biometrics. This concerns the applications for the short-term Schengen visas (max. 90 days in 180 days). A person will not be issued a Schengen visa if she/he fails to provide biometric data. Applications for Residence permits will not be registered in VIS.

What is VIS?

The VIS is a system for the exchange of visa data among Schengen Member States. These states share a common area of free movement without internal border controls. They have a common visa policy which includes exchanging information on visa applicants.

For subsequent applications within next 5 years, the biometric data will be copied from the previous visa application included in the VIS in most cases, unless there is any technical requirement to obtain data again. Additionally, new data will need to be provided if there is "reasonable doubt regarding the identity of the applicant" and when "it cannot be immediately confirmed that the fingerprints were collected within the 59 months". After 5 years, the biometric data will be deleted and a new one will be required. Please be aware that VFS Global Services do not have access to VIS and therefore cannot check the quality of fingerprints collected. This means that if there are technical problems new biometrics will have to be collected.

Only Children under 12 years, persons of whom the collection of fingerprints is physically impossible, sovereigns and other senior members of a royal family, the President, the Prime Minister, Ministers, Ministers of State and members of their official delegations travelling for an official purpose are exempted from the obligation of giving fingerprints.

The purpose of introducing VIS globally is to better protect applicants against identity theft and to prevent document fraud and so-called "visa shopping".

The VIS is connected to the national visa system of all Schengen States. Each Schengen State is responsible for the development, management, and operation of its national system. Strict data protection rules are defined in the VIS-related rules and are subject to control of national and European data protection authorities.

Apart from the introduction of biometrics, there will be no changes in current procedures. There will be no additional charges for capturing biometric data if applying through Norway.

VFS Global Services will take the biometrics from applicants when they submit their applications. Access to VIS data is limited to authorized staff working for visa, border, immigration and asylum authorities for the performance of their tasks.

If you still have any questions or doubts, please email at info.norwayin@vfshelpline.com or visit <http://www.vfsglobal.com/Norway/India/>