Data protection

Access to VIS data is limited to authorised staff working for visa, border, immigration and asylum authorities for the performance of their tasks.

Data is kept in the VIS for 5 years.

Any person has the right to be informed about his/her data in the VIS. Any person may request that inaccurate data about him- or herself be corrected, and that unlawfully recorded data be deleted.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND FAQs

European Commission

http://ec.europa.eu/vis

VISA INFORMATION SYSTEM (VIS)

Improving Schengen visa procedures

EUROPEAN UNION

What is the 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.

The specific objectives of the VIS are to facilitate visa procedures, to enhance the security of the visa application process and to facilitate visa checks at the external borders of the Schengen Area.

* This document is meant purely as a documentation tool and the European Commission does not assume any liability for its content.

Advantages of the VIS

FACILITATING VISA PROCEDURES

The VIS allows Schengen Member States to determine a visa applicant's reliability more easily. The VIS helps Schengen Member States to verify whether an applicant has used previous visas lawfully. These checks facilitate the visa issuance process, particularly for frequent travellers.

PROTECTING YOUR IDENTITY

Thanks to the use of biometric data, a visa holder can easily be identified as the person who applied for the visa. Biometric technology facilitates the detection of travellers using another person's travel documents and protects travellers from identity theft.

STREAMLINING OF BORDER CHECKS

When arriving at an external border of the Schengen Area, the visa holder's biometric data is checked to confirm his/her identity. This leads to more accurate processing and greater security.

The VIS in practice

The visa applicant's biometric data (10-digit finger scans and digital photograph) is collected. It is a simple and discreet procedure that only takes a few minutes. Biometric data, along with the data provided in the visa application form, is recorded in a secure central database.

10-digit finger scans are neither required from children under the age of 12 nor from people who cannot physically provide finger scans.

Frequent travellers to the Schengen Area do not have to give new finger scans every time they apply for a new visa. Once finger scans are stored in the VIS, they can be re-used for further visa applications over a 5-year period.

The visa holder's finger scans may be compared against those in the database at the Schengen Area's external borders. A mismatch does not mean that entry will be automatically refused - it will just lead to further checks on the traveller's identity.