

Schengen Visa Scheme

July 31, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



Schengen Visa Latest News

Indian travellers with a clean visa history now have access to a fast-tracked, long-term Schengen visa under a new “cascade” system rolled out by the European Commission.

About Schengen Visa

- A Schengen visa is an **entry permit** that **allows non-EU nationals** to **temporarily visit or transit through** the **Schengen Area**, which comprises 29 European countries.
- **Within this area**, there are **no internal borders**, allowing for unrestricted movement between the countries.
- The visa is **valid for up to 90 days within a 180-day period**, which **begins the day you enter a Schengen country**.
- You **can enter and leave the area multiple times**, but the **total stay must not exceed 90 days within the 180-day period**.

- Schengen visas are issued for various **purposes**, such as **tourism, business, visiting family, medical treatment, and participation in cultural or sporting events.**
- The visas do **not give the right to work.**

Which Countries Issue Schengen Visas?

- There are currently **29 European countries** in the Schengen.
- Members of this area include **25 of the 27 EU member states (except for Cyprus and Ireland) and all members of the European Free Trade Association (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland).**
- Being part of this area means that countries:
 - **Do not carry out checks at their internal borders,** except in cases of specific threats;
 - Carry out **harmonized controls at their external borders,** based on clearly defined criteria.

The Cascade Visa Scheme

- The cascade visa scheme **rewards “trusted travellers”** with a documented travel record.
- **Indian citizens who have obtained two Schengen visas within the past three years** are now **eligible for a two-year multi-entry visa.**
- This can **later be upgraded to a five-year visa,** provided their passport is valid for the full term.
- During its validity, the visa allows holders to travel freely across the Schengen area, mirroring the travel rights of visa-free nationals.
- However, the visa does **not grant the right to work and still limits stays to 90 days within any 180-day period.**
- It applies a tiered structure for visa validity based on prior usage:
 - **1-year visa** if the **traveller used three Schengen visas in the previous two years.**
 - **2-year visa** if they **used a 1-year multiple-entry visa in the previous two years.**
 - **5-year visa** if they **used a 2-year multiple-entry visa in the previous three years.**

Source: **BT**

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/what-is-a-schengen-visa/>

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