



Frequently Asked Questions on the Schengen visa-free regime for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Schengen countries and EU countries where you as a BiH citizen can travel visa free are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Check Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Island, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

1. What documents are needed in order to enjoy visa-free travel to the Schengen area, Bulgaria and Romania¹?

A valid biometric passport is required, which shall be valid for at least three months after the scheduled return and your passport needs to have this logo:



2. When is Visa Liberalisation entering into force?

Visa Liberalisation entered into force on 15 December 2010.

3. Will the old BiH passports be valid after 15 December 2010?

Yes, but holders of non-biometric passports will still need a Schengen visa. The provisions of Visa Facilitation will apply.

4. Can I enter the Schengen area, Bulgaria and/or Romania more than one time during a six month period?

Yes, you can. However you must carefully calculate your days of stay as you must not exceed the overall total of 3 months (90 days) of stay within a six month period (180 days).

For example, if your first entrance into the Schengen zone was 1 February, then you can spend a total of three months in the Schengen countries, Bulgaria and Romania over the following six months, until 31 July. After this a new six months cycle starts.

¹ Bulgaria and Romania are not Schengen countries, but the visa free regime for BiH citizens is valid also in these two countries.

5. Are there any changes in the new visa-free regime related to travel of minors?

No.

6. What are the specific requirements and/or questions that the BiH citizens can be asked at the border before they can enter the Schengen area, Bulgaria and Romania?

The entry conditions as defined by the Schengen Borders Code for all third country nationals travelling to the Schengen area, Bulgaria and Romania apply. At the border, besides being in possession of a valid travel document, travelers may be asked to justify the purpose and the conditions of their stay and to demonstrate means of subsistence during their stay in the Schengen area, Bulgaria and Romania and for their return.

7. How much money do I need to have on me in order to travel as a tourist to the Schengen area, Bulgaria and Romania?

According to Article 5(3) of the Schengen Border Code; *"means of subsistence shall be assessed in accordance with the duration and the purpose of the stay and by reference to average prices in the Member State(s)² concerned for board and lodging in budget accommodation, multiplied by the number of days stayed.*

How can this be verified:

- The verification that a third-country national concerned has sufficient means of subsistence for the duration and purpose of the intended stay, for his/her return to the country of origin or transit to a third country or that he/she can obtain these means legally. In order to assess the means of subsistence, the reference amounts set by each Schengen State must be taken into account;
- The verification of sufficient means of subsistence may be based on the cash, travellers' cheques and credit cards in the third-country national's possession. Declarations of sponsorships, where such declarations are provided for by national legislation and letters of guarantee/invitation from hosts, as defined by national legislation, in case the third-country national is staying with a host, may also constitute evidence of sufficient means of subsistence;
- The validity of a credit card can be verified by contacting the issuing company or by using other facilities available at the border crossing point (e.g. exchange offices);
- Invitation from hosts can be verified by contacting the host directly or by verifying the host's good faith through the national contact points of the MS of residence of the host;

8. If I plan to visit a friend or a relative living in the Schengen area, Bulgaria or Romania will I need to provide any specific information on this person at the border?

You may be asked to provide detailed information on this person. It is recommended to have at least the address and a contact number in that specific country.

² * Some MS have set reference amounts - which are notified and published by DG Home/C1 (http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/doc_centre/borders/borders_rights_en.htm#notifications)

9. Is it always necessary to have a return ticket before leaving Bosnia and Herzegovina?

It is highly recommended when travelling by air/train/bus to have a return ticket. However, it is not an obligation.

10. I am a BiH citizen married to a foreign third country citizen (not an EU member state) who needs a visa in order to enter the Schengen area, Bulgaria or Romania will she/he be able to enter the Schengen area without a visa if she/he has a regular BiH residence permit?

No. The BiH residence permit does not give him/her the right to travel to the Schengen area, Bulgaria or Romania without a visa.

11. Will I need to apply for a visa if I plan to travel to the Schengen area, Bulgaria or Romania for short-term studies?

You will need to apply for a visa in case you intend to undertake studies exceeding three months of stay in the Schengen area, Bulgaria or Romania within a six months period. For longer studies you have to apply for a visa and the rules vary from country to country. Therefore it is recommended to consult the Embassy/Consulate of the country you intend to study in prior to your studies.

12. Will I be able to travel to the Schengen area, Bulgaria or Romania with my biometric passport if one of the EU Member States Embassies has refused to issue a visa to me in the past?

It depends on the reasons for the refusal.

If the visa application was not completed or the documents provided were not valid (lack of health insurance, fake travel agency arrangements etc.), the refusal does not automatically translate into a ban of entry under visa liberalisation.

If the visa was refused because the person has an entry ban from Schengen the entry will be refused.

13. Will a person with deportation papers from any the Schengen countries, Bulgaria or Romania be able to profit from the new visa free-regime?

No.

14. After the introduction of visa free travel are there any restrictions related to travel from one Schengen country, Bulgaria or Romania into another Schengen country, Bulgaria or Romania?

No restrictions apply as there is no border control between Schengen countries. However, border control is still carried out between Schengen countries and Bulgaria and Romania.

15. Do I need my passport when travelling from one Schengen country, Bulgaria or Romania to another Schengen country, Bulgaria or Romania?

As border control is still carried out between Schengen countries and Bulgaria and Romania, BiH citizens are obliged to always carry their passport with them at all time during their stay, as national legislations might foresee ad-hoc controls in the Schengen area, Bulgaria or Romania.

16. Is travel medical insurance always necessary in order to travel to the Schengen area, Bulgaria and Romania?

Travel medical insurance is not obligatory. Nonetheless, it is highly recommended to get one in case of travel to Schengen countries, Bulgaria or Romania.

17. If I have a BiH biometric passport and also a biometric passport of another country (for instance, Serbia or Croatia), can I stay in the Schengen area, Bulgaria or Romania for three months, within a six months period on my BiH passport and then for another three months, within a six months period on my second passport?

No, the limitation of three months within a period of six months stay is linked to a person and not to passports. Thus, a practice of third-country nationals with dual citizenship to use their different passports for subsequent travels to the Schengen countries, Bulgaria and Romania and thus exceed the maximum allowed period of stay (three months) is not allowed³.

18. If I stay beyond three months (without a residence permit or a long term visa) or work in Schengen countries, Bulgaria or Romania (without a working permit), what can happen?

A citizen of BiH who stays in Schengen countries, Bulgaria or Romania beyond three months (without a residence permit or long-stay visa) is illegally present, which can result in a ban of re-entry to the Schengen area, Bulgaria or Romania. Working in the Schengen area, Bulgaria and Romania without a work permit is also illegal (even if shorter than three months) and can likewise result in a ban of re-entry to the Schengen area⁴.

³ On the basis of the Schengen acquis (Article 20 (1) of the Schengen Convention, Article 5 of the Schengen Borders Code, Article 1-2 of the Visa Code), a third country national (= one person) can stay in the Schengen area for a maximum period of three months in a six month-period, irrespective of his/her nationality (proven by his/her passport).

⁴ Penalties for breach of immigration legislation are not harmonised among EU Member States. This means that an entry ban can be even longer than 5 years, in some countries its even permanent.