

SCHENGEN VISA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



THE SCHENGEN REGION

1.1 THE SCHENGEN AREA

Europe is a beautiful place, and you may want to travel there on leisure, work or study. To do so, you'll need a visa. You visit the visa application website and see that there is no single application for the continent of Europe in its entirety. Instead, you have a Schengen visa, a UK visa, and national visas. Why are there multiple visas for the same continent? No other continent in the world operates this way.

To understand this, you need to understand how international relations were built in Europe. More specifically, you need to understand how Europe currently is sub-divided on the grounds of trade and travel.

THE EU, EUROZONE, AND SCHENGEN

Trade within Europe started booming in the 1800s. By the early 1900s, individual countries found a need to set up trade agreements between each other to facilitate easier economic transactions. Over time, 28 different countries signed an agreement which dictated that they follow the same trade, legal and judicial systems. This group of 28 countries constitutes the European Union (EU).

In addition to sharing the trading and legal systems, some countries in the EU also decided to share a currency – the Euro (€). These countries, which are a part of the EU and which share the Euro as the currency, constitute the Eurozone. However, the countries of Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Sweden (which are part of the EU) don't use the Euro. Therefore, although they are a part of the EU, they are not a part of the Eurozone.

The Schengen area is a European passport-free zone, which is made up of 26 countries. Citizens and permanent residents of these Schengen countries are allowed to travel to other Schengen countries without a passport and a visa. The Schengen is the largest free-travel area in the world. To be a part of the Schengen area, countries had to sign the Schengen Agreement. According to this agreement, all citizens belonging to Schengen countries are exempted from internal border checks and can travel without problems between other Schengen countries.

So essentially, the EU is an economic and political union created to facilitate trade, the Eurozone is a subset of the EU which shares a currency, and the Schengen is a travel union created to facilitate easier travel. Some countries of the EU are also part of the Schengen and share the political and economic benefits they get from the EU and the travel benefits they get from Schengen.

1.2 WHAT IS SCHENGEN VISA?

The visa that you need to take in order to travel to & travel within the Schengen region is called “Schengen Visa.”

SOME SCHENGEN VISA STATISTICS

(For the year 2017-2018)

- **Total number of applicants for short stay visit:** 16.1 million
- **Total number of short stay visit visas issued:** 14.6 million
- **Countries that received the highest visa applications:** France (3.6m), Germany (2.1m), Italy (1.8m), Spain (1.6m), Greece (1m), Finland (827K)
- **Countries that have the highest visa rejection rate:** Malta (25.23%), Belgium (16.01%), Portugal (14.93%), France (13.64%), Netherlands (10.01%)
- **Countries that applied for Schengen visa the most:** Russian Federation (3.8m), China (2.5m), Turkey (971K), India (920K), Algeria (779K)

After the US, UK and Australian visas, the Schengen visa is the fourth most difficult visa to get.

WHY DO YOU NEED A SCHENGEN VISA?

There’s just one reason why you’d need a Schengen visa – to travel to Schengen countries. A non-Schengen traveller cannot visit or travel within the boundaries of the Schengen area without the Schengen visa.

TYPES OF SCHENGEN VISAS

Before you apply for the Schengen visa, you need to determine the type of visa you need to apply for. Schengen visas can be categorised under three types:

1. **Territory-based visas:** These visas allow holders to stay in particular territories of the Schengen region during the duration of the visa validity. There are three types of territory-based visa:
 - **Uniform Schengen visa:** This visa allows holders to visit and reside in any of the 26 Schengen countries for up to 90 days continuously, within a six-month period. Here you have two types of visas. The “Type A uniform Schengen visa” allows holders to move as transit passengers from one Schengen country airport to another and does not allow holders to travel outside the airport and into the country. The “Type C uniform Schengen visa,” on the other hand, allows holders to travel within any of the 26 Schengen countries.
 - **Limited territorial validity visa:** This visa is allocated only when applicants wish to visit particular countries or limited areas of the Schengen country. It is also given if the applicant has been directed to enter through or exit from authorised countries only. This visa is very rarely given and is provided only upon the direction of a consulate or embassy.
 - **National visa:** This visa is granted to individuals who are studying or working in a single Schengen country and need a visa for a long duration. When applying for a national visa, apply under “Category D” as that is the visa you need for study and work purposes.
2. **Entry-based visas:** These visas are uniform Schengen visas which restrict the holder on the number of times he can enter and exit the country. They are of 3 types:
 - **Single entry visa:** Holders of this visa can enter the Schengen area only once and exit it once. Once exited, they cannot re-enter the Schengen area again.
 - **Double entry visa:** Holders of this visa can enter and exit twice, at any time during the entire validity of the visa. But once they extinguish these two opportunities, they aren’t allowed to re-enter the Schengen region.
 - **Multiple entry visa:** This visa lets holders enter and exit as many times as they please during the validity period of the visa. Once the visa validity expires, the holders will be ineligible for re-entry the Schengen area.
3. **Purpose-based visas:** These visas are granted based on the reason for the visit. Some of the reasons why a traveller would be visiting the Schengen region are:
 - Tourism/Visit
 - Study
 - Training



Carry the application form, documents and photos with you for the appointment.

STEP 3: ATTEND THE SCHENGEN INTERVIEW

The visa interview process is the most challenging part of the interview. Here, embassy staff will ask you a series of questions which you need to answer truthfully. Be calm, clear and concise.

In the second chapter of this book, we will go through the most commonly-asked questions in the Schengen interview.

STEP 4: GIVE BIOMETRICS

Biometrics refers to your fingerprints and photos. The embassy will take your fingerprints and capture your photo during the visa application process. This is primarily for identification and security reasons.

STEP 5: COLLECT THE VISA

Finally, if your application has been accepted, you should receive the Schengen visa in 15-30 days' time. However, if your application has been rejected, be sure to contact the embassy to know why. You will be informed of the reason either via email or call. Start rectifying the issue immediately and re-apply for the visa.

Follow the same process as above during re-application.

SCHENGEN VISA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS



The Schengen visa interview is a mix of some easy, general questions and some tricky, “put the candidate on the spot” questions. Depending on what your occupation is and the purpose of your visit, there will also be some questions which will be unique to you. In this eBook, we will consider both types of questions – general & applicant-specific.

In this section, we’ll look at some of the common questions that every applicant is asked during the interview. Please note that you won’t be asked every single one of these questions during the visa interview. You may be asked just a handful of questions from this list. We have only consolidated the top common questions routinely asked during the Schengen visa interview. Additionally, the answers we have given aren’t definitive answers, but only a guide to what you can say during the interview.

41. Have you ever received any parking violations or any other warnings/penalties in any country? If yes, when and why?

No, I have not.

Or

Yes, I have. [Provide details of the violation and the penalties received].

42. How much are you willing to spend on your entire travel?

I have saved a considerable amount of finances for this travel. I am willing to spend up to [X currency] on this visit.

43. What will you do if your funds run out during your travel?

I plan on carrying an international SIM card with me to communicate with my family/friends during my travel. If my funds run low, I will ask my family/friends to transfer some money into my account.

44. Do you have travel insurance? How much have you insured for this trip?

Yes, I have taken travel insurance worth [€X].

(Note: It is mandatory to take travel insurance worth €30,000/\$50,000 to qualify for a Schengen visa.)

45. Have you ever been denied a visa to a country? When & why?

No, I have never been denied a visa before.

Or

Yes, I have been denied the visa before. [Provide details of the circumstance when the visa was denied, why, when and what you did to rectify the issue].

46. Are your itinerary and travel bookings finalised yet?

Yes, my itinerary is finalised, and I have already made the travel and accommodation bookings. I have attached a copy of the itinerary and the tickets/receipts in the documents provided.

(Note: It is mandatory to book the flight, accommodation at the Schengen country and finalise the travel plans to qualify for a Schengen visa. You will need to show proof of the same by submitting copies of all your tickets, travel passes and itineraries.)

47. We notice you haven't made any arrangements for intra-country travel. Why is that?

I have already purchased Eurail travel passes for my travel within [Schengen country]. It will allow me to use trains to travel intra-country. I also plan on walking during most of the tour, and I believe I won't need to use public transport that often.

(Note: Purchase the Swiss all-purpose travel pass which will allow you to use any form of public transport across Switzerland.)

48. Do you follow any particular religious practices that may be banned or prohibited in any European/Schengen country? How will you handle this issue once there?

No, I do not follow any religious practices which may be banned in [Schengen country].

Or

Yes, I do follow certain religious practices banned in Europe. However, I do not believe this will affect my visit since I will read through the regulations and behave in accordance with the rules of the country's government.

49. Will you be carrying anything with you or on your person to the Schengen country from your home country or the previous port of entry?

No, I do not intend to carry anything other than my personal luggage to [Schengen country].

Or

Yes, I do intend to carry [items/products to be carried] on my travel. I will be declaring these to customs in advance.

50. You get into a scuffle or fight with someone in a Schengen country. How will you handle it?

I do not believe in indulging in any type of altercation with locals or fellow-tourists. I will not take part in any fights when in [Schengen country]. I will follow the instructions of the local authorities should any situation arise.

51. Are you planning on taking up small jobs to support your travel during the trip?

No, I understand that my Schengen visa allows me only to travel and not work in the Schengen area. I will bring enough finances with me, to support me during the trip and I will not resort to temporary jobs to finance my travel.

52. Will you be travelling to a non-Schengen country on the Schengen visa during your trip?

No, I have applied for the visas for [Schengen/Non-Schengen country/s], and I will be getting the visas shortly. I will use my Schengen visa to travel within the Schengen borders only.