

## **Border controls in Europe**

New Zealanders should be aware that border controls have been eliminated among European countries that are full members of the Schengen area.

Once you enter one of these countries from outside the Schengen area, you can move to other countries inside the Schengen area without going through border controls.

These countries are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Note that the following European countries are **not** part of the Schengen area: *Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, United Kingdom.*

If you move between any of these countries, or from one of these countries into the Schengen area, you will therefore have to go through border controls.

*Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City* are not formally part of the Schengen area, but can be entered from the neighbouring Schengen area countries without going through border controls.

For nationals who require a visa for one or more Schengen countries a Schengen visa is required.

## **Visa-free access for New Zealand visitors to Europe**

New Zealand passport holders are able to spend up to three months visa-free in most European countries, and up to six months visa-free in the United Kingdom. The only European countries that require New Zealand passport holders to have a visa for a stay of less than three months are Belarus, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine.

## **Visa-free access for New Zealand passport holders intending to stay for more than 3 months in the Schengen area**

Schengen area countries permit most holders of passports from outside the Schengen area to stay visa-free in the **Schengen area as a whole**, regardless of the particular country or countries, **for no more than 3 months out of a 6-month period**.

**However**, New Zealand has **bilateral visa waiver agreements** with the below listed individual countries in the Schengen area. These visa waiver agreements allow New Zealanders to spend up to three months in the relevant country, without reference to time spent in other Schengen area countries. The European Commission has confirmed that these agreements continue to be valid. These agreements thus effectively override the Schengen area restriction (which would otherwise apply to New Zealand passport holders) of no more than 3 months out of a 6-month period in the Schengen area as a whole.

The countries with which New Zealand has bilateral visa waiver agreements are: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece,

Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

You can, therefore, move visa-free among the above countries for periods of up to 3 months in **each** country. If, however, you move to other countries in the Schengen area that do **not** have a bilateral visa waiver agreement with New Zealand, the restriction of no more than 3 months out of a 6-month period in the Schengen area as a whole applies. If you have already spent 3 months in one or more of the above countries, your presence in a Schengen area country with which New Zealand does not have a bilateral visa waiver agreement may be challenged by local police or other authorities. You may also be accused of being an overstayer when you leave the Schengen area, or when you enter another country outside the Schengen area.

Note: **Hungary** has special requirements. Even if New Zealanders have already spent up to 3 months in the Schengen area, they may enter Hungary and remain there for up to a further 90 days visa-free. But they must then leave the Schengen area from Hungary, and must not go to other Schengen countries during their stay in Hungary if they have already spent 3 months elsewhere in the Schengen area. Despite confirmation from the European Commission that the visa waiver agreements continue to be valid, border and immigration officials in Schengen area countries are occasionally unaware of this and question New Zealanders' rights to stay visa-free in the Schengen area for longer than 3 months. You are also advised to ensure that your passport is stamped on entry and exit at the external borders of the Schengen area.

Officers at ports of entry may wave travellers through without stamping passports, but it is important to have evidence of the date of first entry into the Schengen area for any subsequent dealings with local police or other authorities. It is also advisable to retain some informal evidence of time spent in particular Schengen countries (e.g. accommodation receipts, ATM slips).