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Government of the Netherlands

# Factsheet

## Information-supported decision-making *Short-stay Schengen visas*

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If you want to visit the Netherlands for a short stay and require a visa, or if you want to sponsor someone who is going to apply for a visa, this factsheet is for you. In it, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explains what information will be processed and how. This factsheet supplements the ministry's [general privacy statement](#). We recommend that you also read that statement, especially the [privacy statement regarding short-stay visa applications](#).



### How does information-supported decision-making work?

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for processing and assessing applications for short-stay Schengen visas. Before a short-stay visa can be issued, the ministry must assess whether an applicant has met all the requirements. To do this, a lot of information is needed. Due to the large number of applications it receives, and to ensure that it can carry out its work as objectively and thoroughly as possible, the ministry uses a method based on data analysis. This method involves analysing the available information and sharing the results with consular officers. This is called information-supported decision-making.

Information-supported decision-making works by comparing information provided in visa applications with information held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This means that the ministry compares the information that it has received from applicants and employers/sponsors with the information on previous visa applications that is already available in its systems. This

information is also compared with information that the ministry has received from third parties in the migration system. In brief, information-supported decision-making takes place in two ways:

**Comparison:** Checks are carried out to see whether information about you or your employer/sponsor is held in the ministry's systems. This could be information gathered by the ministry itself, or obtained from partners in the migration system.

**Profiling:** The ministry uses profiles to check applications against similar applications that have been submitted in the past.

Profiles are sets of characteristics that have been determined on the basis of an analysis of historical data held by the ministry. They are not personal 'profiles' linked to individuals. Instead, they refer to large groups of people whose applications share similar characteristics. Profiles are drawn up after careful analysis. They must meet various requirements before they are used. This helps ensure that applications are not assessed using the wrong profile. In addition, profiles are also continuously reviewed for relevance and monitored for risks such as the possible occurrence of bias.

For the ministry, it is vital that the information discussed in this factsheet, including the profiles, is used when processing and assessing short-stay visa applications. Such information gives the consular staff who decide on these applications a way to determine how closely they need to look at a particular

application. The information also provides extra insight into whether an application meets the statutory requirements and whether additional information needs to be requested or an interview scheduled. Profiles give the ministry insight into how similar applications have been dealt with in the past and what the outcome was. Steps are also taken to look at whether applicants and/or employers/sponsors meet the requirements for short-stay visas.

In some cases an additional interview may need to be scheduled if information-supported decision-making suggests that the applicant did not comply with visa conditions in relation to a previously held short-stay visa. It is also possible that information-supported decision-making does not lead to any relevant insights about the applicant and/or their sponsor. As a result, the staff member deciding on the visa may not find it necessary to request additional information or schedule an interview.

#### **Fictional example**

*Fred applies for a short-stay visa. This is not the first time he has applied for one. In the past, he has applied for a short-stay visa and been issued one.*

*The ministry receives Fred's application. Staff check the ministry's systems to see what they already know about Fred. This is done via information-supported decision-making. To do this, the ministry uses information that Fred himself provided as well as other information it has gathered. This includes Fred's application form and information about his previous short-stay visa. The ministry also looks at information from partners in the migration system, also obtained via information-supported decision-making. This shows that Fred overstayed his previous visa.*

*There is also a match between Fred and one of the profiles analysed on the basis of historical data from the ministry. This shows that many similar applications with the same purpose of travel, applicant nationality and age group have been submitted without problems in the past.*

*The consular officer who will decide on the application is presented with all this information in the system. The officer then uses this information to help them decide what to do next. As Fred did not comply with the conditions of his previous visa, the staff member decides to schedule an interview with Fred to ask him what went wrong. After the interview, the staff member is confident that Fred will comply with the visa conditions in future. Fred is issued a visa.*

#### **Fictional example**

*Paula is applying for a short-stay visa. This is not the first time she has applied for a Schengen visa. She has done this before and the visa has been issued.*

*The ministry receives Paula's application. Staff check -as with Fred- in the ministry's systems what they already knows about Paula. This is done via information-supported decision-making. It shows that Paula is a frequent traveller and has visited her family in the Netherlands several times in the past. She complied with the conditions of her visa on all trips to the Netherlands. On this basis, she was granted a multiple-entry visa at the time. After checking the application form and accompanying documents, everything appears to be in order. At her request, Paula receives a multiple-entry visa valid for up to five years.*

#### **Fictional example: Blue Carpet**

*Youri is a seafarer who needs to join a merchant ship docked in the Port of Rotterdam, Netherlands. To do so, he applies for a short-stay visa (Schengen visa).*

*The ministry offers an expedited process through the Blue Carpet procedure, provided there is an (economic) interest for the Netherlands. This procedure facilitates seafarers by issuing multiple-entry visas, often with an extended period of validity. This particularly applies to shipping companies affiliated with the Royal Association of Netherlands Shipping Companies (KNVR).*

*When the visa application is received by the ministry, the information-supported decision-making system checks whether the application qualifies for the Blue Carpet procedure and verifies whether the seafarer has been invited by a KNVR-affiliated shipping company. Youri has been invited by a KNVR-affiliated company, and after reviewing the application form and accompanying documents, everything is found to be in order. Following the guidelines of the Blue Carpet procedure, Youri is granted a multiple-entry visa with a validity of up to five years.*

**Fictional example: Orange Carpet**

*Lee works as a manager in his home country for a company whose headquarters are located in the Netherlands. For an important meeting, he needs to travel to the headquarters in the Netherlands and applies for a short-stay visa (Schengen visa).*

*The ministry offers an expedited process through the Orange Carpet procedure, provided it serves an (economic) interest for the Netherlands. This procedure enables important visa-required business relations and contacts of the Netherlands and its embassies to benefit from a faster and more straightforward visa application process. Applications from employees of companies affiliated with an embassy's Orange Carpet program are prioritized and processed more quickly. These employees are often granted multiple entry visas with an extended period of validity.*

*When Lee's application is received by the ministry, the information-supported decision-making is used to review the available information. It checks whether the application qualifies for the Orange Carpet procedure and whether Lee works for a company affiliated with an embassy's Orange Carpet program within the Dutch diplomatic network.*

*Lee meets these criteria, and after verifying the application form and accompanying documents, everything is found to be in order. Following the guidelines of the Orange Carpet procedure, Lee is granted a multiple-entry visa with a validity of up to five years.*

**What information is processed?**

**Contact information:** This is information that the ministry needs in order to contact you about your visa application, such as your name, telephone number, address and email address.



**Application information:** This is information that you filled in yourself on your application form or is information that the ministry already holds because you previously applied for a visa. Examples include: your date of birth, nationality, gender and information about any previous short-stay visa applications you have submitted.



**Sponsor information** This is information about your sponsor, such as: their name, company, address and any previous short-stay visa applications they have been involved with.



**Application documents:** These are documents needed in order for your application to be assessed.

Examples include: travel documents and documents showing your purpose of travel or financial situation.



**Information gathered from additional research:** This is information gathered by the ministry while processing your application, such as: information gathered during an interview, document examination and a sponsor check.



**Information from the migration system:** This is information about you or your sponsor that the ministry has received from partners in the migration system.

Examples include: any known forged/falsified/counterfeit documents, previous refusals of entry at the border, previous asylum applications or non-compliance with the conditions of a short-stay visa.



**Profiling information:** This is information based on the outcome of analyses of aggregated historical data held by the ministry that cannot be directly linked to you or your sponsor, but which does match information on your application form. Examples include: purpose of travel, nationality and age group.



## For which purpose is this information processed?

Activity	Categories of information	Legal basis
<p><b>Processing your visa application</b> When you submit a visa application, we process it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact details</li> <li>• Application information</li> <li>• Application documents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance of public tasks <a href="#">(Kingdom Visa Act)</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Processing and assessing your visa application</b> After a visa application has been submitted, we will process and assess it. This will be done via information-supported decision-making, using information relating to you or your sponsor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact details</li> <li>• Application information</li> <li>• Application documents</li> <li>• Sponsor information</li> <li>• Information gathered during additional research</li> <li>• Information from the migration system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance of public tasks <a href="#">(Community Code on Visas)</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Use of profiling during visa application processing *</b> When the visa application is being processed, the use of information-supported decision-making also involves the use of profiling. Profiles are information based on the outcome of analyses of aggregated historical data held by the ministry that cannot be directly linked to you or your sponsor. They give the ministry insight into how similar applications have been dealt with in the past and what the outcome was. A decision is never taken on the basis of profiles alone; they are just one part of the information given to the consular officer to help them decide on the application.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Profiling information</li> <li>• This is the following information:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Country of payment</li> <li>- Main purpose of travel</li> <li>- Age group</li> <li>- Nationality</li> <li>- Civil status</li> <li>- Gender</li> <li>- Job</li> <li>- Type of travel document</li> <li>- Migration system match/hit</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance of public tasks <a href="#">(Community Code on Visas)</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Deciding on the visa application *</b> With the help of information-supported decision-making, the consular officer is then presented with advice on what course of action to take. But, ultimately, the final decision is down to them. An application can only be rejected on the basis of one of the statutory grounds for refusal laid down in legislation governing the EU Visa Information System (VIS).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact details</li> <li>• Application information</li> <li>• Application documents</li> <li>• Sponsor information</li> <li>• Information gathered during additional research</li> <li>• Information from the migration system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance of public tasks <a href="#">(Community Code on Visas)</a></li> </ul>



### \* Profiling

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs uses profiles to carry out the activities **marked with \*** above. The ministry does not use automated decision-making for this.

The profiles are shaped using historical information held in the Visa Information System; notably all visa applications submitted in the past 5 years. This information is then supplemented with information from the migration system. For an applicant to be included in a profile, the applicant must be 18 or over and must have had to apply for a short-stay visa. The profiles are drawn up on the basis of at least 200 visa applications and several characteristics.

It is always possible to object to the use of profiling. If you wish to do this, please email [HDCV-BAO@minbuza.nl](mailto:HDCV-BAO@minbuza.nl)



### Will this affect my visa application?

The criteria for obtaining a short-stay visa are, and always will be, the same for everyone. Regardless of previous applications or applications for which you have been a sponsor. These criteria have been agreed on by Schengen countries and are laid down in the [Community Code on Visas](#).

The final decision on whether to issue or not issue a visa must be taken on the basis of the visa requirements and grounds for refusal set out in the Community Code on Visas. Information-supported decision-making (including the use of profiles) only assists with decisions on applications. An interview may be recommended on the basis of the results. But information-supported decision-making is never a reason for refusing a visa in itself. The information that the ministry uses ensures that a decision can be taken more quickly and more objectively. Ultimately, it is the consular officer who will decide whether or not to issue a visa.

There is no automated decision-making involved.



### Do you share information with other parties?

For the purposes of information-supported decision-making, the ministry receives information from the following parties in the migration system:

- Royal Military and Border Police (Koninklijke Marechaussee)
- Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND)
- Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V)

The ministry also receives information from:

- Netherlands Labour Authority

Use is made of the following lists:

- [EU Sanction list](#)
- [VN Sanction list](#)

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs only shares information with other government organisations and/or authorities when this is necessary to facilitate public tasks in the field of border control, supervision and enforcement and return. When your application is being assessed, data will be shared with the Ministry of Justice and Security (in particular the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND)) in order to gain insight into whether an asylum application was submitted after a short-stay visa was issued in the past. This is done under strict conditions, within the applicable laws and regulations.



### How long will information be kept?

All information relating to the visa process will be deleted from the ministry's system or anonymised after 5 years.



### Any questions?

If you have any questions about information-supported decision-making or would like to exercise your privacy rights, please email [HDCV-BAO@minbuza.nl](mailto:HDCV-BAO@minbuza.nl) or write to:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Consular and Visa Affairs Department (HDCV)  
Postbus 20061  
2500 EB Den Haag

See also the [Ministry of Foreign Affairs privacy statement](#) for more information about exercising your rights and contacting the ministry.

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