

Council Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 of 29 May
1995 laying down a uniform format for visas

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THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, in particular Article 100c (3) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,

Whereas Article 100c (3) of the Treaty requires the Council to adopt measures relating to a uniform format for visas before 1 January 1996;

Whereas the introduction of a uniform format for visas is an important step towards the harmonization of visa policy; whereas Article 7a of the Treaty stipulates that the internal market shall comprise an area without internal frontiers in which the free movement of persons is ensured in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty; whereas this step is also to be regarded as forming a coherent whole with measures falling within Title VI of the Treaty on European Union;

Whereas it is essential that the uniform format for visas should contain all the necessary information and meet very high technical standards, notably as regards safeguards against counterfeiting and falsification; whereas it must also be suited to use by all the Member States and bear universally recognizable security features which are clearly visible to the naked eye;

Whereas this Regulation only lays down such specifications as are not secret; whereas these specifications need to be supplemented by further specifications which must remain secret in order to prevent counterfeiting and falsification and which may not include personal data or references to such data; whereas powers to adopt further specifications should be conferred on the Commission;

Whereas, to ensure that the information referred to is not made available to more persons than necessary, it is also essential that each Member State should designate not more than one body having responsibility for printing the uniform format for visas, with Member States remaining free to change the body, if need be; whereas, for security reasons, each Member State must communicate the name of the competent body to the Commission and the other Member States;

Whereas, to be effective, this Regulation should apply to all visas covered by Article 5; whereas Member States should be free also to use the uniform visa format for visas which can be used for purposes other than those covered by Article 5 provided differences visible to the naked eye are incorporated to make confusion with the uniform visa impossible;

Status: Point in time view as at 22/09/2008.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Council Regulation (EC) No 1683/95. (See end of Document for details)

Whereas, with regard to the personal data to be entered on the uniform format for visas in accordance with the Annex hereto, compliance should be ensured with Member States' data-protection provisions as well as with the relevant Community legislation,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Visas issued by the Member States in conformity with Article 5 shall be produced in the form of a uniform format (sticker). They shall conform to the specifications set out in the Annex.

[^{F1}Article 2

1 Further technical specifications for the uniform format for visas relating to the following shall be established in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 6(2):

- a additional elements and security requirements including enhanced anti-forgery, counterfeiting and falsification standards;
- b technical standards and methods to be used for the filling in of the uniform visa.

2 The colours of the visa sticker may be changed in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 6(2).

[^{F23} In accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 6(2), it may be decided that the specifications referred to in Article 2 shall be secret and not be published. In that case they shall be made available only to the bodies designated by the Member States as responsible for the printing and to persons duly authorised by a Member State or the Commission.]]

Textual Amendments

F1 Substituted by [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 334/2002 of 18 February 2002 amending Regulation \(EC\) No 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas.](#)

F2 Inserted by [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 856/2008 of 24 July 2008 amending Regulation \(EC\) No 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas as regards the numbering of visas.](#)

Article 3

^{F31}

2 Each Member State shall designate one body having responsibility for printing visas. It shall communicate the name of that body to the Commission and the other Member States. The same body may be designated by two or more Member States for this purpose. Each Member State shall be entitled to change its designated body. It shall inform the Commission and the other Member States accordingly.

Textual Amendments

F3 Deleted by [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 856/2008 of 24 July 2008 amending Regulation \(EC\) No 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas as regards the numbering of visas.](#)

Article 4

1 Without prejudice to the relevant more extensive provisions concerning data protection, an individual to whom a visa is issued shall have the right to verify the personal

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particulars entered on the visa and, where appropriate, to ask for any corrections or deletions to be made.

2 No information in machine-readable form shall be given on the uniform format for visas unless it also appears in the boxes described in points 6 to 12 of the Annex, or unless it is mentioned in the relevant travel document.

Article 5

For the purposes of this Regulation a ‘visa’ shall mean an authorization given by or a decision taken by a Member State which is required for entry into its territory with a view to:

- an intended stay in that Member State or in several Member States of no more than three months in all,
- transit through the territory or airport transit zone of that Member State or several Member States.

[^{F1}Article 6

1 The Commission shall be assisted by a committee.

2 Where reference is made to this paragraph, Articles 5 and 7 of Decision 1999/468/EC⁽¹⁾ shall apply.

The period laid down in Article 5(6) of Decision 1999/468/EC shall be set at two months.

3 The Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure.]

Textual Amendments

F1 Substituted by [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 334/2002 of 18 February 2002 amending Regulation \(EC\) No 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas.](#)

Article 7

Where Member States use the uniform visa format for purposes other than those covered by Article 5, appropriate measures must be taken to ensure that confusion with the visa referred to in Article 5 is not possible.

Article 8

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

Article 1 shall become applicable six months after the adoption of the measures referred to in Article 2.

[^{F4}The integration of the photograph provided for in point 2a of the Annex shall be implemented at the latest five years after the adoption of the technical measures provided for the adoption of this measure in Article 2.]

Textual Amendments

F4 Inserted by [Council Regulation \(EC\) No 334/2002 of 18 February 2002 amending Regulation \(EC\) No 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas.](#)

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This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

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F⁵ ANNEX

Textual Amendments

- F5** Substituted by Council Regulation (EC) No 856/2008 of 24 July 2008 amending Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas as regards the numbering of visas.

The following model is to be inserted:



Security features

1. An integrated photograph produced to high security standards.
2. An optically variable mark ('kinogram' or equivalent) shall appear in this space. Depending on the angle of view, 12 stars, the letter 'E' and a globe become visible in various sizes and colors.
3. The logo consisting of a letter or letters indicating the issuing Member State (or 'BNL' in the case of the Benelux countries, namely Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands) with a latent image effect shall appear in this space. This logo shall appear light when held flat and dark when turned by 90°. The following logos shall be used: A for Austria, BG for Bulgaria, BNL for Benelux, CY for Cyprus, CZE for the Czech Republic, D for Germany, DK for Denmark, E for Spain, EST for Estonia, F for France, FIN for Finland, GR for Greece, H for Hungary, I for Italy, IRL for Ireland, LT for Lithuania, LVA for Latvia, M for Malta, P for Portugal, PL for Poland, ROU for Romania, S for Sweden, SK for Slovakia, SVN for Slovenia, UK for the United Kingdom.
4. The word 'visa' in capital letters shall appear in the middle of this space in optically variable coloring. Depending on the angle of view, it shall appear green or red.
5. This box shall contain the 9-digit national number of the visa sticker, which shall be pre-printed. A special type shall be used.
- 5a. This box shall contain the three-letter country code as set out in ICAO Document 9303 on machine-readable travel documents⁽²⁾, indicating the issuing Member State.

The 'number of the visa sticker' is the three-letter country code as set out in box 5a and the national number as referred to in box 5.

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Sections to be completed

6. This box shall begin with the words ‘valid for’. The issuing authority shall indicate the territory or territories for which the visa is valid.
7. This box shall begin with the word ‘from’ and the word ‘until’ shall appear further along the line. The issuing authority shall indicate here the period of validity of the visa.
8. This box shall begin with the words ‘type of visa’. The issuing authority shall indicate the category of visa in conformity with Articles 5 and 7 of this Regulation. Further along the line the words ‘number of entries’, ‘duration of stay’ (i.e. duration of applicant’s intended stay) and again ‘days’ shall appear.
9. This box shall begin with the words ‘issued in’ and shall be used to indicate the place of issue.
10. This box shall begin with the word ‘on’ (after which the date of issue shall be filled in by the issuing authority) and further along the line the words ‘number of passport’ shall appear (after which the holder’s passport number shall appear).
11. This box shall begin with the words ‘Surname, Name’.
12. This box shall begin with the word ‘remarks’. It shall be used by the issuing authority to indicate any further information which is considered necessary, provided that it complies with Article 4 of this Regulation. The following two and a half lines shall be left empty for such remarks.
13. This box shall contain the relevant machine-readable information to facilitate external border controls. The machine-readable area shall contain a printed text in the background printing, indicating the Member State issuing the document. This text shall not affect the technical features of the machine-readable area or its ability to be read.

The paper shall have a natural colouring with red and blue markings.

The words designating the boxes shall appear in English and French. The issuing State may add a third official Community language. However, the word ‘visa’ in the top line may appear in any one official language of the Community.]

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- (1) [^{F1}OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23.]
- (2) [^{F5}Exception for Germany: ICAO document 9303 on machine-readable travel documents provides for Germany the country code 'D'.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Substituted by Council Regulation (EC) No 334/2002 of 18 February 2002 amending Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas.
- F5** Substituted by Council Regulation (EC) No 856/2008 of 24 July 2008 amending Regulation (EC) No 1683/95 laying down a uniform format for visas as regards the numbering of visas.

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