



Press Information

With almost 65,000 applications processed by the end of 2016, the German Embassy in Kuwait has recorded an impressive increase of over 100 per cent in Schengen visas within the last four years.

The majority of applicants consist of Kuwaiti citizens and their families wishing to travel for holiday, leisure and medical visits. Expatriates in Kuwait also show growing interest in Germany for holiday, trade fair and business visits thanks to the continuously expanding business relationships between Kuwaiti and German companies.

Cities like Munich, Berlin, Aachen and Frankfurt number amongst the most popular destinations. Many travellers, however, also like discovering the different regions of the country by car or train, where they can enjoy scenic landscapes, unique shopping experiences and premium health care facilities at the same time.

Last summer, the Visa Section of the German Embassy processed almost 12,000 visas per month and waiting times occurred due to the high number of short notice applications.

Therefore, the German Embassy would like to call upon all travellers to start filing their Schengen visa applications for their annual vacation in Germany from now on and not just a few days before their planned trip in order to avoid any inconveniences. At the moment, appointments at the application Centre Al Qabas can be obtained within 1-2 days – during the summer travel season waiting times of one week or more for an appointment may occur due to high demand.

Did you know that....

- **... applications can be handed in as early as three months prior to the intended travel date?**

If you are a frequent traveller, please attach copies of your previous Schengen visas to your application file in order to enable the Visa Team to check whether you might be eligible for a multiple entry visa with a longer validity period.

... the processing time for a Schengen visa can be up to 2 weeks?

After an application for a Schengen visa has been submitted, processing normally takes between 3 and 5 working days if the applicant is Kuwaiti national or up to 12 days if the applicant has a different nationality. In individual cases, it can take up to two weeks after all the required papers have been submitted to receive the necessary clearances.

The visa clearance is a computerized process – the German Embassy has no influence on the processing time.

... the external service provider Al Qabas Assurex is operating a Visa Application Centre supporting the German Embassy in Kuwait for your convenience?



The support of Al Qabas enables the German Embassy to offer better customer service hours and to shorten waiting times for all customers in order to facilitate a smooth application process. All visa applications for journeys to Germany have to be submitted there. For the travellers' convenience, Al Qabas will ensure that applications include all relevant documents, assist with the application procedure if necessary and offer you additional services. Application forms and further information can be obtained at Al Qabas offices or online at <http://www.qavisa.com/>

... there are now online tools to assist you with calculating the 90 days period of stay?

A Schengen visa entitles the holder to a stay not exceeding 90 days per six-month period, even if the Schengen visa has been issued with a validity of one year or more.

This period of stay begins with the first day of entry into a Schengen state. Applications have to be filed with the Schengen Embassy of the travellers' main destination. Once a Schengen visa has been issued, the holder is eligible to travel within the entire Schengen zone for a maximum of 90 days within a period of six months, depending on the validity of the visa.

Customers sometimes find it difficult to calculate this period of stay. Therefore, you can find an online calculator on the homepage of the German Embassy under "All about visa" (www.kuwait.diplo.de) to assist you with your travel planning.

... your fingerprints will be stored in the Schengen Visa Information System (VIS) for 5 years so that you don't have to give them every time when applying?

When arriving at an external border of the Schengen Area, the visa holder's biometric data is checked to confirm their identity. Thanks to the use of biometric data such as fingerprints, a visa holder can easily be identified as the person who applied for the visa. Once finger scans are stored in the VIS, they can be re-used for further visa applications within the system over a 5-year period. Children under the age of 12 do not have to give their fingerprints when filing an application.

... you may cross any Schengen border with a visa issued by any Schengen country?

As a general rule you may cross any border of the 26 member states with a visa issued by any Schengen country. The Schengen visa has to be applied for through the Embassy of the country which is your main destination. Entry to and departure from the Schengen area can occur at any border crossing.

However, a short-stay visa does not automatically entitle you to enter the Schengen area.



At the border (or during other controls) you may have to show your visa but also provide additional documentation, for example information on your travel destination or that you have sufficient means to cover your stay and return trip.

It is therefore recommended that you carry copies of the documents which you presented when applying for your visa (e.g. letters of invitation, travel confirmation, other documents stating the purpose of your stay) with you, in order to speed up immigration control procedures, as you might have to present them upon arrival at the border of entry.

... the official visa fees for a Schengen visa are only 20,- KWD, even if it is a multiple entry visa?

Depending on the daily exchange rate, the processing fee for a Schengen visa is currently 20,- KWD for adults regardless of the validity of the visa (12,- KWD for children between 6 and 12 years and for children below 6 years the application procedure is for free). Al Qabas adds a standard service charge of 10,- KWD on top of the Embassy's processing fee. You may find all these amounts transparently documented on their homepage. Unfortunately, some private businesses or agencies claim to render visa or messenger services to German Schengen customers without being appointed by the German Embassy. The Embassy recommends being aware of the prices and service quality of such agencies since various complaints have been received about overpriced services and wrong visa information.

... you have to make a customs declaration if you enter Germany with a total amount of 10,000 € (ten thousand Euros) or more per person?

Anybody entering Germany from a non-European Union country carrying cash amounting 10,000 euros or more is obliged to declare this amount of money to the competent German customs office in writing without being explicitly requested to do so.

The purpose of this obligatory declaration is to prevent illegal movement of money across the external borders of the European Union in order to combat money laundering, financing of terrorist organizations and criminal activities.

The obligation to submit a declaration as well as customs inspections are not intended to restrict free movement of capital in any way.

You are still permitted to carry unlimited amounts of cash across borders.

Travellers who intend to bring an amount of 10,000 € or more per person to Germany can download the necessary cash declaration form at <http://www.zoll.de> prior to their trip and present the completed declaration form upon arrival to the German customs officers to facilitate entry procedures.