

Human Rights Defenders - Visa Survey (ANONYMOUS)

The purpose of this survey is to identify possible challenges posed to human rights defenders and civil society activities when applying for visas to come to EU/Schengen countries (for the purpose of this survey, we include the UK and Ireland as well as Switzerland and other non-EU Schengen states). Please limit your responses to experience with these countries only. Such challenges may include undue administrative burdens, high cost, time, burdensome travel for visa processing, unjust rejections, etc. Our goal will be to use the responses gathered from these surveys to inform policy recommendations for visa reform to EU structures, thereby strengthening the EU's contribution to defending human rights defenders. Your responses are anonymous and will be used only for statistical purposes.

We are also gathering case studies of the challenges in attaining visas for human rights defenders / journalists / lawyers. If you would like to share your story, please contact us on HRD-visa-reform@protonmail.com

* Required

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General questions

1. 1. Your gender *

Mark only one oval.

Female

Male

Other: _____

2. 2. Your age group *

Mark only one oval.

- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74

3. 3. Your approximate gross yearly income (please estimate in EUR)

Mark only one oval.

- < 5,000 EUR
- 5000 - 10000 EUR
- 10000 - 15000 EUR
- 15000 - 25000 EUR
- > 25000 EUR
- Decline to answer/No income

4. 4. In which country do you live? *

Mark only one oval.

- Russia
- Belarus
- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Tajikistan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Uzbekistan
- Turkey
- Other/I do not live in my home country

5. 5. Please describe your region *

Mark only one oval.

- A capital city
- A regional city
- Small town/village
- Rural

6. 6. The prevalent religion in my region is *

Mark only one oval.

- Islam
- Christianity
- Buddhism

7. 7. I would describe myself to be religiously/culturally (select all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

- Muslim
 Christian
 Buddhist
 Jewish
 Atheist/Agnostic
 Decline to answer

Other: _____

8. 8. Are there EU consulates in your region? (eg within 1/2 day of land travel) *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 I don't know

9. 9. Are there visa centres for EU countries in your region? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
 No
 I don't know

10. 10. What is the type of the organisation where you work? Please select the one area of work that best describes your organisation. *

Mark only one oval.

- Human Rights
- Social (shelters, harm reduction, psychological help hot line, etc)
- Political (a party, political foundation)
- Mass Media
- Legal/Independent Attorney
- I am not affiliated with an organisation/independent activist
- Other: _____

11. 11. Please specify your area of activism (check all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

- Legal Rights
- Gender Rights/Issues
- Human Rights
- Anti-Corruption
- Media Freedom
- Social Rights (education, medical, pension)

Other: _____

12. 12. What best describes the form of your organisation? *

Mark only one oval.

- Registered NGO
- Unregistered/liquidated NGO
- Informal grassroots initiative
- Unregistered social movement
- Foundation
- Business entity
- Law Firm
- Mass Media
- Option 9

13. 13. Has your organisation been labelled a 'foreign agent'? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable in my country
- I am not affiliated with an organisation

Visa Questions

14. 14. What is the average length of travel for work-related visits to EU/Schengen countries? (per trip) *

Mark only one oval.

- 2 - 3 days
- One week
- Two weeks
- More than two weeks

15. 15. Do you currently hold a visa (or resident permit) for an EU or Schengen member state?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes *Skip to question 16*
- No *Skip to question 18*

If yes

16. 15a. Is it a Schengen visa? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No (It is a visa for a non-Schengen EU state) *Skip to question 18*

17. 15b. What is the validity of your current visa? *

Mark only one oval.

- One short trip for an event (several days or weeks)
- One short trip for a fellowship or respite (several months)
- Multiple short trips within a period of no longer than 6 months
- Multiple short trips within a period of no longer than 1 year
- Multiple short trips within a period of no longer than 2-5 years
- I hold (applied for) a residence permit in an EU member state

Visa Questions Continued

18. 16. To the best of your recollection, how many EU/Schengen visas have you had in the past 5 years? *

Mark only one oval.

- 1
- 2 - 3
- 4 - 5
- 5+

19. 17. How many trips to the EU/Schengen states have you taken for work purposes in the past year?

Mark only one oval.

- 1 - 2
- 3 - 5
- 5 - 7
- 8+

20. 18. Have there been instances where you must pay for work-related visa costs on your own? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

21. 19. When applying for work related visas, who mainly pays for the costs? *

Mark only one oval.

- Self
- Work (local NGO)
- Inviting organization

22. 20. Have you ever paid expediting fees (to a visa service or consulate) to receive an EU/Schengen visa faster because of threats or pressure due to your activism?

*

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

23. 21. Has a consulate ever waived Schengen/EU visa processing fees because of your human rights defense work?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No *Skip to question 25*

If yes

24. 21a. Which country(ies) waived visa fees? (select all that apply)

Check all that apply.

- Austria
- Belgium
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Liechtenstein
- Luxembourg
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Slovakia
- Slovenia
- Switzerland
- UK
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Romania
- Lithuania

Visa Questions Continued

25. 22. Approximately how much time do you spend per visa application on processing - this includes travel to consulate and time for completing forms. (Please do NOT include visa waiting times after the application has been submitted)

Mark only one oval.

1 - 10 hours

1 - 4 days

26. 23. What is the most difficult part of the Schengen/EU visa application process for you? (Please select all that apply) *

Check all that apply.

Burdensome travel

Time

Cost

Humiliation

Other: _____

27. 24. Are there any questions in the visa application form that you have difficulty in answering? (e.g. you have had a criminal conviction or been imprisoned as a result of human rights/social activism). Please write your reply below:

28. 25. Did you have trouble collecting all the necessary documents for your visa application?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No *Skip to question 30*

If yes

29. 25a. Which documents were difficult to obtain? Please select all that apply

Check all that apply.

- Certificate from work/proof of work
- Personal financial documents
- Letters of invitation
- Hotel booking
- Flight tickets (other travel tickets)
- Marriage certificate
- Passport/Travel document

Other: _____

Visa Questions Continued

30. 26. Did consulates/visa service representatives ask to prove that you could financially sustain yourself while staying in the EU?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No *Skip to question 32*

If yes

31. 26a. Was it difficult to prove your financial sustainability? Please select one option that best describes your case

Mark only one oval.

- No, I have official salary that was good enough to prove it
- No, I have sufficient savings in the bank or own real estate
- No, my trip was fully covered by the inviting organization was stated in the invitation
- Yes, because I did not have regular official income
- Yes, because I did not have sufficient funds in my bank account/I do not have a bank account
- Other: _____

Visa Questions Continued

32. 27. Have you ever been declined a Schengen visa? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

33. 27a. If yes, please elaborate the reasons why

34. 28. Have you ever been granted a visa strictly on the terms of the invitation (e.g. invitation to a 3-day conference = approximately 5-day visa)

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

35. 29. Have you ever been in a situation where you needed to leave your home country urgently as a result of threats because of your work?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

36. 29a. If yes, did you hold a valid EU/Schengen visa?

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

37. 30. Have you ever started travel on a new Schengen visa via travel to a country that was not the issuing country? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No *Skip to question 41*

38. 31. Have you ever had to leave the Schengen Zone because you exhausted the 90-day limit on your stay in the region? *

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

if yes

39. 31a. If yes, did you return to your home country?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No

40. 31b. If no (31a) did you travel to another non-Schengen country because of risks/threats faced in your home country?

Mark only one oval.

- Yes *Skip to question 41*
- No *Skip to question 41*
- Other: _____

Thank you!

The purpose of this survey is to use this information to advocate for improved conditions for human rights defenders and civil society activists in Europe. If you have any further comments that will help us to achieve this goal, please share in the box below. Also, any comments related to the survey are very welcome!

41.

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