

## Travel rights for Third-Country Nationals

Third-country nationals may enter and travel within the European Union provided they fulfil the entry conditions, among others to be in possession of a valid travel document or a visa if required for a period of up to three months.

Special rules apply to non-EU national family members of EU citizens, with differing travel rights according to whether they are travelling with the EU citizen or travelling alone. In addition, a valid residence permit issued by an EU Member State applying the Schengen provisions can permit a non-EU national to travel to other Member States in the Schengen area without a visa.

Third-country nationals may enter and travel within the territory of the Member States applying the Schengen provisions for a period of up to three (3) months, provided they fulfil the entry conditions laid down in the **Schengen *acquis***, now integrated into the EU.

Admission to Malta, through the external borders of the Schengen area is, therefore, only permitted to third-country nationals who:

- are in possession of a valid **travel document** (passport) or recognised equivalent travel document permitting them to cross the border;
- are in possession of documents substantiating the purpose and the conditions of the planned visit to Malta and have sufficient means of support, both for the period of the planned visit and return to their country of origin (or to travel in transit to another Third State);
- are in possession of valid entry or transit visa if required;
- have not been prohibited to enter through an alert on the Schengen Information System; and
- are not considered to be a threat to public policy, national security or the international relations of any other Schengen State, under Maltese law or the law of another Schengen State.

If any one of the aforementioned conditions are not met, the third-country national may be denied entry by the border authorities even if in possession of a valid entry or transit visa.

The rights of non-EU nationals legally residing in the territory of a Member State to travel within the European Union are also outlined in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The charter asserts the right of every European citizen to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. It adds that these rights **may be granted to third-country nationals**.

Nationals of certain third countries may enter the Schengen area on presenting their passports, provided they fulfil the entry conditions specified above. Nationals of certain third-countries are required to have a visa.

As an EU Member State applying the Schengen Convention, Malta will issue uniform short-stay visas valid for travelling **in the whole Schengen area**.