

## **Visa Centers of Foreign States in the Kyrgyz Republic and Their Role in the Process of Obtaining Visas for Official Business Trips of Public Officials**

An analysis of the current network of visa centers of foreign states in the Kyrgyz Republic, their operational characteristics, application procedures, and the impact of these factors on the organization of official business trips of public officials highlights the following key points.

Official visa centers operate in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, providing acceptance of documents for short-term visas and certain categories of national visas. Their activities are aimed at facilitating access for citizens and public officials to consular services without the need to travel to third countries. The main service providers include VFS Global, TLScontact, and the UK Visa Application Centre, operating under the authority of the relevant diplomatic missions.

The key center is the VFS Global visa center in Bishkek, which accepts applications for visas to Switzerland, Hungary, Liechtenstein, and several European Union countries represented by the Swiss and Hungarian embassies through visa representation. The center also handles applications for visas to Finland, Lithuania, and the United Kingdom. VFS Global's functions are limited to administrative and technical support of applicants, including document and biometric data collection and forwarding materials to the relevant diplomatic missions, which make the final visa decisions.

Visa applications for travel to the Federal Republic of Germany are handled by TLScontact, the exclusive service partner of the German Embassy in Kyrgyzstan. This center processes all categories of Schengen visas for entry to several European Union countries, as well as certain national visa categories, including study and short-term professional programs. Long-term visa applications are submitted directly to the German Embassy according to established procedures.

The UK Visa Application Centre, operated under VFS Global, accepts applications for various categories of UK visas. The procedure involves electronic registration in the UK government system, followed by biometric data submission and document submission at the center.

In addition to official visa centers, commercial consultancy structures operate in the country. Their activities are not linked to the official acceptance of documents on behalf of foreign states and are limited to advisory support. In organizing official business trips, priority should be given to official channels of interaction with visa centers and diplomatic missions to avoid unnecessary costs and risks.

Given the high workload of visa centers, seasonal peaks in applications, and the need to comply with foreign state requirements, the planning of official business trips requires advance preparation of documents. The optimal period for submission is at least 1–1.5 months prior to the intended travel date. For official delegation trips, visas should be processed through diplomatic correspondence between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic and the respective embassies, ensuring correctness and timely processing.

Analysis of the current visa infrastructure demonstrates that the presence of official visa centers in the Kyrgyz Republic is a significant factor in ensuring timely preparation of official business trips. However, the effectiveness of this system depends on the readiness of public authorities to plan international travel in advance, strictly adhere to document requirements, and interact with official visa centers and diplomatic missions.

To enhance visa-related operations, it is advisable for public authorities to:

- Ensure advance planning of official business trips considering application submission and processing timelines;
- Rely exclusively on official visa centers and consular institutions;
- Regularly inform traveling staff of current requirements, deadlines, and application procedures;
- Submit advance requests to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic for official travel assistance.

Implementation of these recommendations will minimize the risk of delays, ensure compliance with corporate and international requirements, and increase the overall efficiency of public authorities' international activities.