



Customs and other rules applying to passengers

This booklet of the Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard provides useful information for tourists travelling within the European Union or travelling from a non-community country (third country) to any Member State of the European Union.

Rules applicable to travel documents

Documents necessary for travelling to foreign countries are defined in law in Hungary. Hungarian citizens may also use their valid personal ID for travelling to countries of the European Union or to other countries where international agreements provide for such an option.

The accession of Hungary to the Schengen Agreement does not mean that Hungarian citizens may cross the borders of any Schengen Member State without travel documents. You must have a passport or a personal ID (old-type or new-type; paperback, hardcover, card-format or even temporary ID will be acceptable) for doing so. Following from the above, **other documents**, such as a new-type driving licence, a student card, a birth certificate etc. **may not be used** for crossing the border. It is of key importance that before starting your journey you **make sure you have your travel documents on you** and also that **these documents are valid**, because in the lack of valid travel documents you are not allowed to go abroad.

You may travel anywhere with your passport; however, **if you need a visa** for a country, **you have to obtain it** beforehand. You may travel to Schengen states, to Member States of the European Union - and on the basis of international agreements - to Croatia by using your personal ID. For further information, please visit the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<http://www.kum.hu>).

Rules applicable to minor travellers and the persons accompanying them

When a minor is accompanied by adults Police must check if the persons accompanying the minor have a right of parental supervision, particularly if the minor is accompanied by one adult only, and there is a strong suspicion that the minor has been unlawfully removed from under the control of the person(s) lawfully exercising their right(s) of parental supervision. In this latter case, the Police must further investigate into the matter in order to reveal any contradiction between the existing information provided by the persons involved.

In the case of minors travelling unaccompanied Police must thoroughly check travel documents and other statements and certificates available in order to ensure that the minors are not leaving the territory of the Member States against the will of the person(s) exercising their parental supervision.

Pursuant to the Hungarian rules and regulations, children may cross the border by themselves if they have a passport or a personal ID. However, it is **advisable** for either the minor or the person travelling with the minor to take a **statement of the parents** (prepared in Hungarian and also written in or translated to the language(s) of the country of destination and/or the transit country, as applicable) **that they consent to the minor's travel abroad**.

Such a statement must include the following data: personal data of the minor, of the person accompanying the minor and those of the minor's parent(s); number of the minor's travel document, purpose of the stay abroad, place of stay, data and the whereabouts of the person or institution to be visited. The Police Forces of the foreign country may want to check the existence of such a statement in particular if there is a suspicion that the child has been taken abroad illegally, that there is a case of child trafficking, or that the minor's interests are endangered in any other manner.

These rules may be different in the various countries, therefore we recommend that you obtain preliminary information about them at the embassy of the relevant country.

Rules applicable to motor vehicles

There is a special law regulating the manner motor vehicles not owned by the traveller personally may be taken to foreign countries. Pursuant to the relevant provisions **motor vehicles not owned by the traveller personally may exit** to any third (non-community) country **only with the written permission of the vehicle's owner or operator**. This written permission must be issued either as a notarial document or as a private document providing full evidence (this latter one meaning that two witnesses verify the authenticity of the document by jointly signing it).

The written consent must include the following data:

- name of the person authorized to use the vehicle,
- number of his/her travel document,
- vehicle registration plate number,
- Vehicle Identification Number,
- name and signature of the owner of the vehicle registration card,
- due signature of the business entity, if applicable,
- period of time when the person is authorized to leave the territory of Hungary with the vehicle.



In the case of vehicles rented or leased in Hungary, this written consent shall be substituted by the rental or leasing contract on condition that it authorizes the operator to leave the territory of the country with the vehicle. The contract must be presented to the Police officer performing the control at the border without being asked to do so. If such an authorization cannot be established from the contract, the person or entity providing the lease must be contacted and requested to issue a relevant permission.

Some countries require that persons entering the country have an international driving licence. You may apply for an international driving licence at the competent Office of Government Issued Documents. A Hungarian driving licence is acceptable both within the territory of the European Union and in neighbour countries. There are countries (e.g. the Ukraine) where you may enter with an international third party liability insurance only. It is reasonable to enquire at the embassy of the particular country whether or not such insurance would be required.

Travelling border waters

If you wish to travel border waters (e.g. having a water tour) you have to submit a request to the regionally competent Police Headquarters not less than 30 days prior to starting the travel.

The request must include the following information:

- personal data of the person applying, or name, registered seat and place of business of the organization if the request is submitted by an organization;
- number of participants;
- starting date and expected date of finish of the travel;
- type and registration number of the vessel;
- travel route by border waters;
- a list of the planned mooring points.



Permissions of the customs authority and of the competent authorities of the neighbour state shall be obtained by the Police Headquarters.

For further information, please visit the websites of the Hungarian Police (<http://www.Police.hu/utravalo>) and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (<http://www.kum.hu>).

Rules applying to passengers travelling within the European Union



Community regulations ensure the free movement of goods between Member States. This means that no customs procedures are required for exporting goods from Hungary to another Member State and/or for importing goods from a Member State to Hungary.

The export and import of goods purchased for non-commercial purposes (for personal use or as gifts) while travelling is not restricted. However, the transport of certain goods (such as: pets, hunting weapons, alcohol and tobacco products, medicines containing drugs, etc.) within the

European Union is restricted or subject to special permissions. Such goods and rules shall be discussed in a separate section.

Rules on cigarette imports applying to passengers arriving from Romania or Bulgaria

Considering the fact that Romania and Bulgaria do not comply with the minimum tax levels established for tobacco products by the European

Union, Hungary applies certain restrictions as to the quantity of cigarettes that may be taken to Hungary from these countries.

A passenger may bring in up to **200 cigarettes** free from excise tax, provided that **the passenger is older than 17 years of age** (while individuals under 17 must declare any quantity under 200 cigarettes and must pay tax accordingly). Quantities above 200 cigarettes are free from customs duty but are subject to excise tax paid on the spot.

As a guarantee for the excise tax not paid on the spot, the customs authority shall retain the declared cigarettes until the payment of the tax due.



Rules applying to travellers arriving to Hungary from countries outside the European Union (from third countries)

The following goods may be imported to Hungary without incurring customs duty and taxes by passengers arriving from third countries in their personal luggage:

Tobacco products

(applicable to passengers over the age of 17 only):

Air travel

- 200 cigarettes, or
- 100 cigarillos, or
- 50 cigars, or
- 250g of tobacco for consumption

Road, rail, water travel

- **40 cigarettes**, or
- 20 cigarillos, or
- 10 cigars, or
- 50g of tobacco for consumption

Alcoholic beverages

(applicable to passengers over the age of 17 only):

- 1l of alcoholic beverages of more than 22 per cent by volume, or
- 2l of alcoholic beverages of not more than 22 per cent by volume, excluding grape wine and beer, as well as
- 4l of grape wine and
- 16l of beer



Petrol (applicable to passengers over the age of 17 only):

In addition to the volume of petrol in the *standard* petrol tank of the vehicle, a further volume of petrol not exceeding 10l may be imported in a portable petrol tank.

Other items

In addition to the above goods, passengers are exempt from customs duty and taxes for goods imported with a maximum value of EUR 300 or EUR 430 in case of air travel.

Persons under the age of 15 are exempt from customs duty and taxes for goods imported up to the value of EUR 150, irrespective of the method of transport.

Further conditions necessary for customs duty and tax exemption:

- the import must be occasional (must not be part of a series of imports within a reasonable period of time), and
- the import may include only goods acquired for the own use of the passenger and his/her family members, or intended as gifts, and
- the nature and quantity of goods imported may not imply an import of commercial nature.

If any of the pre-conditions of customs duty exemption is missing, the import shall be subject to the payment of customs duty and taxes (VAT, excise tax, etc.)!

The customs authorities **shall pay particular attention to controlling** the lawful use of the duty-free limit.

Should there be any doubt concerning the existence of the necessary pre-conditions of the customs duty exemption, the customs authority stipulates that a written customs declaration be filed.

Special rules applying to the export and import of certain goods to/from the European Union and to/from third countries, respectively

Food

When returning from a third country to Hungary, it is not advisable to take along raw meat, processed meat products, any food containing meat, milk and dairy products (perishable food products), as their import is allowed only on condition that the relevant rigorous rules and veterinary controls are complied with. When leaving Hungary, you are advised not to add the above products to your travel food parcel, as their import into third countries is either prohibited or subject to strict conditions (you may



obtain information on the relevant rules of the individual countries at their competent diplomatic services in Hungary).

In addition to these products, there may be, at any time, other goods included in the temporary export/import ban lists in order to prevent the proliferation of recently emerging specific diseases spread by animals. It is recommended that you ask for information about current rules before your trip.

A non-community citizen entering Hungary from a third country may also bring in the above-mentioned perishable food products only on condition that the relevant rigorous rules and veterinary controls are adhered to.



Medicines

While travelling within the European Union, individuals requiring continuous medication may carry the medicines prescribed by their physician in a quantity that may be needed during the journey. When travelling to a third country, the same rule would typically apply (you may obtain information on the relevant rules of the individual countries at their competent diplomatic services in Hungary).



Exporting drugs and psychotropic preparations (such as sedatives, stimulants, hallucinogenics) to the Member States of the European Union and/or to third countries is subject to a separate licensing procedure (for further information, please contract the Drug Directorate of the Office of Health Authorisation and Administrative Procedures of Hungary).

Non-community citizens entering Hungary from third countries may bring in the medicines necessary for their medication as confirmed by their physician, in quantities that may be justifiably needed during their stay.

Pets

While travelling within the European Union, you may take your pet(s) (dogs, cats, pet ferrets) with you by using a pet passport. Your local

veterinarian will issue such a pet passport, provided that the animal has received compulsory vaccination and has been identified by a tattoo or microchip implant. It is always advisable to visit your local veterinarian before travelling with your pet.

Before travelling to a third country with your pet, you may obtain information on the relevant rules of the particular country at its competent diplomatic service in Hungary.

Non-community citizens entering Hungary from third countries with their pets are required to have a unique identification (tattoo or microchip) in their pets, as well as a single-entry veterinary certificate and/or a pet passport.

Hunting and sports weapons

You may transport the above weapons within the European Union, as well as on entering/leaving the European Union only on condition that you have a European Firearms Pass. Relevant information on transporting such weapons to third countries is available at their competent diplomatic services in Hungary.

On entering Hungary from a third country, individuals having no residence in any Member State of the European Union shall be entitled to import, export or transit through the country their firearms and related ammunition for the purposes of hunting or sporting events on the basis of the accompanying certificate for firearms and ammunition (liable to an administration service fee pursuant to the provisions of Decree no. 50/2004. (VIII. 31.) of the Ministry of Interior) issued by the border customs office, provided that their expected period of stay within the territory of the Republic of Hungary does not exceed 90 days. Participation in the hunting event must be credibly confirmed by presenting the invitation letter of the entity organizing the hunting event, as well as a hunting permit.

The authorization to export the sport firearms and ammunition of a sport shooter of any sport club registered in the Republic of Hungary must be verified by the relevant national sport federation/association in an arms export licence and a competition licence.

Participation at the sport shooting event may be credibly confirmed by having the licence of the Hungarian Shooting Federation, as well as the invitation letter of the entity responsible for organizing the competition. The licence issued by the Hungarian Shooting Federation and the invitation letter must be checked both on entry to and exit from, as well as in the case of a transfer through the territory of the Republic of Hungary.

In the case of a purchase, only such weapons may be brought in the territory of the European Union, which were purchased in possession of a purchase licence issued by the Police.

The import of weapons carried for self-defence may be licensed by the county (Budapest) Police Headquarters competent for the expected place of entry and/or transit.

Excise goods

Excise goods which had been released for free circulation in another Member State, purchased, possessed there and brought to Hungary directly for personal use by private individuals not conducting any business activities shall be free from taxes in Hungary.



The customs authority shall check all of the following conditions in order to establish whether the excise goods brought by the passenger to Hungary or taken out of the country serve for a private or business purchase or use:

- whether the owner of the excise goods is a business operator dealing in the particular excise goods [pursuant to the provisions of paragraph c) of Article 685 of Act IV. of 1959 on the Civil Code, amended several times (hereinafter called: business operator)];
- what the justifications are for possessing the excise goods;
- what the method of transport is, what the place of possession and/or storing is;
- what documents exist for the excise goods;
- what the quantities of the excise goods are; with a special regard here to the commercial quantities defined by the Excise Act.

Applying the Excise Act, any quantities exceeding the following shall be considered commercial quantities:

- 800 cigarettes,
- 200 cigars and 400 cigarillos
- 1000 grams of smoking tobacco
- 110 litres of beer
- 20 litres of intermediary alcohol products
- 10 litres of alcohol products
- 90 litres of wine and sparkling wine together (out of which sparkling wine shall not exceed 60 litres).



Liquid fuel and combustibles, as well as petrol exceeding the volume of 10l, carried outside the petrol tank of the vehicle shall not be considered as a purchase for private use of a private individual not conducting any business activities.

You may obtain information on the relevant rules applicable to the export of the above excise goods to third countries at their competent diplomatic services in Hungary. Generally saying, you may take the volume of petrol in the standard petrol tank of a vehicle, as well as a few packets of cigarettes (a maximum of 1 carton) to third countries free from taxes. Passengers entering Hungary from a third country (irrespective of their citizenship) may bring in such quantities of excise goods free of customs duties and taxes, which are defined in section "Rules applying to travellers arriving to Hungary from countries outside the European Union (from third countries)" above.



Cultural goods

The export of cultural goods to third countries and/or to the Member States of the European Union requires a permit issued by the Hungarian National Office of Cultural Heritage. Please find detailed information about this subject on the website of the National Office of Cultural Heritage at www.koh.hu.

Obligation to report cash at the external borders of the European Union

Any passenger entering or leaving the European Union that holds

- EUR 10,000 or more in cash (even if in different currencies), or
- any cash equivalent instruments (such as securities, bonds, shares, traveller's cheques, etc.) of the same total value,

shall file a written declaration about this fact to the customs authority. You can download the declaration from the following website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eucashcontrols>.

Such declaration shall be made at or presented to the customs authority (or other competent authority) where the passenger enters or leaves the European Union.



In addition, certain Member States of the European Union apply further control and declaration rules on cash transactions within the Community. It is reasonable to obtain information about such rules of the countries visited during the journey at their competent diplomatic services in Hungary.

VAT-exempt sale of goods taken by foreign passengers out of the territory of the European Union

Goods purchased by foreign passengers shall be free from VAT if taken out of the territory of the Community as part of their personal luggage.

The following are the conditions of the tax-exempt sale:

- the passenger or his/her assignee shall take the goods to a third country without taking such goods into use, and the customs authority shall confirm this condition using the tax refund form issued by the seller to the passenger,
- the goods shall be taken out of the territory of the Community within 90 days from the date of purchase,
- the total value of the goods sold - including taxes - shall exceed EUR 175.

The term *foreign passenger* shall refer to any private individual who is not a citizen of any Member State of the Community and has no title for permanent stay in any member-state of the Community, or, being a citizen of a Member State of the Community, has got his/her residence outside the territory of the Community. Residence shall mean any abode serving as a permanent dwelling place and being in the closest personal and economic relation with that particular private individual. A passenger shall hold a valid travel document or any other valid public document suitable for identification and recognized by the Republic of Hungary.



When leaving, passengers are required to identify themselves and to present the purchased goods, as well as the tax refund form (two copies), and also the original copy of the invoice.

All data stated in the tax refund form and in the invoice shall correspond with the personal data stated in the travel document of the passenger. Each tax refund form shall include the sales data of one single invoice only, provided that such data shall correspond with the data stated in the invoice.

The customs authority shall certify the tax refund form upon the request of the passenger, when goods are taken to a third country.

The use of such tax refund forms is mandatory; the issuer of the invoice shall complete the form in three copies when the goods are purchased and shall provide two original copies to the buyer. Having confirmed the exit of the passenger, the customs authority retains one copy of the tax refund form and returns the other copy to the foreign passenger.

If the passenger leaves Hungary, but not for a third country (for example leaves for Vienna to return to his/her residence outside the Community by air), he/she should request confirmation of the export of the relevant goods from the territory of the Community when actually leaving the European Union (i.e., for the purposes of the above example, at the Vienna Airport).

For further information, please visit the website of the Hungarian Customs and Finance Guard at <http://vam.gov.hu> or call 06-40-FINÁNC (06-40/346-262) at local telephone rates within Hungary.

