

SERBIA

Business Guide

Embassy of Switzerland in Serbia

Belgrade, May, 2018

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

General travel information:

Information about most of the airports (e.g. transfer from/to the airport) is available on the website from the Airport Nikola Tesla Belgrade <http://www.beg.aero/en/strana/11/welcome> and Airport Nis Constantine the Great <http://nis-airport.com/en/>.

There are direct flights from Zürich and Geneva to Belgrade and also to Nis and vice versa:

SWISS (www.swiss.com): Zurich/Geneva – Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport / Nis Constantine the Great

AIR SERBIA (www.airserbia.com): Belgrade - Zürich

WIZZ AIR (www.wizzair.com): Basel-Mulhouse-Nis

EasyJet (www.easyjet.com): Geneva-Belgrade

General entry requirements for Serbia:

Citizens of European Union countries, the Swiss Confederation, Kingdom of Norway, Republic of Iceland, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro and FYR Macedonia may enter the Republic of Serbia using their identity cards and stay up to 90 days.

Serbian organisations and individuals providing accommodation to foreigners against payment, as well as locals hosting visiting foreigners, must register the foreigner's stay with the local police station within 24 hours of the commencement of the accommodation arrangement, or of the foreign visitor's arrival.

Foreigners using official accommodation or staying with a private individual must register his or her stay with the local police station within 24 hours of arriving at the place of residency.

More details on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Interior and the National Tourist Organisation:

<http://www.mfa.gov.rs/en/consular-affairs/entry-serbia/entering-serbia-requirements>

www.mup.gov.rs

<http://www.serbia.travel/useful-info/formalities/entry-and-stay-of-foreigners.593.html>

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

The official language is Serbian, using both Cyrillic and Latin alphabets.

In business, English is widely used and most Serbs have very good English language skills. Thanks to the huge diaspora in Switzerland, Germany and Austria, German language is also frequently spoken.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN 2018 /2019

Date	Day	Holiday
01.01.2018	Mon	New Year's Day
02.01.2018	Tue	New Year Holiday
07.01.2018	Sun	Orthodox Christmas Day
15.02.2018	Thu	National Day
16.02.2018	Fri	National Day Holiday
06.04.2018	Fri	Orthodox Good Friday
09.04.2018	Mon	Orthodox Easter Monday
01.05.2018	Tue	May Day / Labor Day
02.05.2018	Wed	May Day Holiday
11.11.2018	Sun	Armistice Day
12.11.2018	Mon	Armistice Day Holiday

Date	Day	Holiday
01.01.2019	Tue	New Year's Day
02.01.2019	Wed	New Year Holiday
07.01.2019	Mon	Orthodox Christmas Day
15.02.2019	Fri	National Day
16.02.2019	Sat	National Day Holiday
26.04.2019	Fri	Orthodox Good Friday
29.04.2019	Mon	Orthodox Easter Monday
01.05.2019	Wed	May Day / Labor Day
02.05.2019	Thu	May Day Holiday
11.11.2019	Mon	Armistice Day

Visit minrzs.gov.rs for the original [release](#).

HEALTH AND INOCULATIONS

No special health precautions are necessary. Outbreaks of measles were reported from the Balkan region including Serbia in 2018. Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that travelers to Serbia protect themselves by making sure they are vaccinated against measles.

Tap water in Belgrade and Novi Sad is fit for drinking. There might be water quality gaps in some rural areas in Serbia.

TIME ZONES

TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SWITZERLAND AND SERBIA

There is no time difference between Switzerland and Serbia (see above).

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

As in most cities of Continental Europe, the electricity voltage in Belgrade is 220V. Electrical outlets are standard European.

Swiss plugs (apart from the "Dreiphasenstecker") do not need an adapter in Serbia.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

The local currency is the Serbian Dinar (RSD): 1 CHF = 100,54 RSD (29.3.2018).

Standard international forms of payment are common in Serbia. The use of credit cards is widespread in bigger cities and all major credit cards are accepted, even for smaller amounts. The most common are Eurocard/Mastercard, Visa, American Express and Diners Club.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation in Serbia includes transport by road, rail, water and air. Road transport incorporates a comprehensive network of major (i.e. state) and minor (i.e. municipal) roads. Rail transport is fairly developed, although dual track and electrification are not very common. Water transport revolves

around river transport while air transport around the country's two main international airports Belgrade and Nis.

BY AIR

The national carrier of Serbia is Air Serbia. It is flying to 41 international destinations in 28 countries (including intercontinental flights to New York City). There are 39 airports and 2 heliports in Serbia whereas the only airports with regular passenger traffic include Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport which is a hub of flagship carrier Air Serbia, and Niš Constantine the Great Airport which mainly caters low-cost airlines.

WATER TRANSPORT

Serbia has a fairly developed inland water transport in spite of 1,716 km of navigable rivers and canals. The most important inland waterway is the Danube (part of Pan-European Corridor VII). Other navigable rivers include Sava, Tisza, Begej and Timiș River, all of which connect Serbia with Northern and Western Europe through the Rhine–Main–Danube Canal and North Sea route, to Eastern Europe via the Tisza, Begej and Danube Black Sea routes, and to Southern Europe via the Sava river.

The largest river port is Novi Sad while other river ports include Belgrade, Smederevo, Pančevo, Prahovo, Apatin, Bačka Palanka (all on Danube), Šabac (on Sava), and Senta (on Tisza).

BY ROAD

The Serbian road network carries the bulk of traffic in the country. It is of comparatively lower quality to the Western European standards.

Coach transport is very extensive: almost every place in the country is connected by bus, from largest cities to the villages. In addition, there are international routes to the neighbouring countries as well as to Western Europe (mainly to countries of Western Europe with large Serb diaspora such as Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, etc.). There are various bus companies which operate either the domestic or international routes or both.

BY RAIL

Railways remain a major mode of freight transportation while being a fairly minor mode for passenger transport. The Serbian railway system consists of 3,739 km of rails of which 295 km is double track (7.9% of the network). Long distances, however, can take a considerable amount of time and often are unreliable due to the aging rail infrastructure. The most convenient and efficient means of travel to Serbia are by air or road transport.

Serbian Railways: <http://serbianrailways.com/>

Srbija voz (Serbia Train) Time table: <http://w3.srbrail.rs/zsredvoznje/?lang=en>

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Belgrade has an extensive public transport system. The public city transport in Belgrade consists of buses, trams, and trolleybuses. They are operated by GSP Beograd and private transport companies. They all have unified ticket system (Bus Plus). Daily tickets for all types of transportation can be bought from kiosks (at newsstands) in the streets or from the drivers. There is also a network of express minibuses that are more expensive, but also more comfortable and quicker as they have less stops. Another type of transportation operating in Belgrade is Beovoz, suburban railway system. Currently it is under the supervision of Serbian Railways. It is used for connecting the suburban areas and towns in the vicinity of Belgrade, like Pančevo and Indija, to the central city zones.

Belgrade City Transport Company: www.gsp.co.rs

Beovoz : <https://beovoz.rs/?lng=en>

HOTELS

See official website for Tourism and Travel information:

National Tourism Organisation of Serbia: <http://www.serbia.travel>

COMMUNICATION

- Telephone: the international dialling code for Serbia is 381, and the dialling code for Belgrade for domestic calls is 011. To dial any city in Serbia from abroad you must dial the appropriate international code, e.g. 00, followed by the dialling code for Serbia 381 and then the dialling code for the city (without the leading 0).
- Phone numbers for any information or cases of emergency in Serbia:
Police – 192
Fire department – 193
Ambulance -194
For phone information dial - 988
- Phone book on the internet:
Directory of businesses: Searchable by name or category <https://www.yellowpages.rs/en>
Telephone directory (telefonski imenik) for residential customers in Serbia:
<http://www.11811.rs/BeleStrane/Index> (White pages)
- Internet/e-mail: Correspondence via e-mail is very common. Most hotels provide internet facilities for laptops. The national Internet domain of the Republic of Serbia is .rs.

- <https://www.011info.com/en/important-numbers>

CELL PHONES

It is highly recommended to carry a mobile phone with you. The mobile networks normally work without any problems in entire Serbia, with some exceptions where service availability may be affected by local factors in particular locations (mountainous regions).

There are three active mobile operators in Serbia (without Kosovo):

Mobile Telephony of Serbia: mts – subsidiary of Telekom Srbija: www.telekom.rs

Telenor Serbia: <http://www.telenor.rs>

Vip mobile: <https://www.vipmobile.rs/en>

BUSINESS HOURS

Usual business hours are from 08:00 to 16:00, Monday through Friday.

Opening times:

Banks: Weekdays, 9 am-5 pm (some until 19:00); Saturdays, 9 am-1 pm

Sundays, only designated branches

Post offices: Weekdays 8 am-7 pm; Saturdays 8 am-2 pm

Sundays, only designated branches in Belgrade and the main cities in Serbia.

Food stores: Shops may be found that are open, mainly for food, also on Sundays and as well some shops remain open around the clock during the rest of the week.

Opening times: Weekdays 6 am-8 pm (some until 10 pm); Saturdays 6 am-6 pm (some until 10 pm)

Sundays 6 am-2 pm: **There are also 24-hour food stores**

Green Markets: Open daily 6 am-5 pm

ADDRESSES AND OPENING HOURS OF THE EMBASSY OF THE COUNTRY IN SWITZERLAND

Embassy of the Republic of Serbia

Seminarstrasse 5

3006 Bern

Switzerland

Phone: + 4131 / 352-63-53, 352-63-55

Phone: + 4131 / 352-63-54

Fax: + 4131 / 351-44-74

E-mail: info@ambasadasrbije.ch (not for consular information!)

E-mail (consular information only): konzul@ambasadasrbije.ch

Web: <http://berne.mfa.gov.rs>

Working Hours

Monday - Friday:

08:30 - 16:30 hours

The Consular Section is open to public: 09:00 - 13:00 hours

Consulate General of the Republic of Serbia in Zurich

Alfred-Escher-Strasse 4

8002 Zürich

Switzerland

Phones:

+ 41 44 20 20 273, + 41 44 20 20 274

Fax: + 41 44 20 20 278

emergency calls only: + 41 44 20 20 289

E-mail: info@konzulat.ch

Working Hours with public:

Monday to Friday: 08:30 - 13:00 (except on holidays)

ADDRESSES OF THE SWISS EMBASSY AND CONSULATES IN SERBIA**Embassy of Switzerland**

Bulevar Oslobođenja 4

11001 Belgrade

Serbia

Phone Zentrale: +381 11 3065 820; +381 11 3065 825

Visa: +381 11 3065 815

Fax : +381 11 2657 253

E-mail: bel.vertretung@eda.admin.ch

Visa: bel.visa@eda.admin.ch

Website: www.eda.admin.ch/belgrade

Opening hours

Monday: appointment only

Tuesday- Thursday: 10.00–12.00h

Friday: appointment only

Saturday-Sunday: closed

TIPS FOR INITIATING BUSINESS CONTACTS

In general, the code of business conduct is similar in Serbia to that in the rest of Europe. Many Serbian businesses prefer introductions through a third party rather than being 'cold-called'.

The handshake is an acceptable form of greeting. The slight difference to remember is that in Serbia it is seen as good manners to shake the hands of women before that of men.

The accepted form of dress for a business meeting in Serbia and Montenegro is a formal suit for men. Women are recommended to dress fashionably but not loudly. It is very important at a business meeting to indicate your colleague's title first and then his surname. The use of first names is intended only for private meetings or after a personal relationship has been established.

Serbians place a high value on building a relationship and mutual trust. This is often prioritised over negotiations. During breaks, many will drink coffee and engage in light conversations. Serbians tend to be direct in conversations. They will freely express their opinion or disagreement.

Most business people in Serbia have a good command of English.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

The presence of many international agencies, foreign investors and technical assistance programs in the largest business and industrial centers, have introduced new management, language, and IT skills, as well as Western-style business practices. Most of today's managers in Serbia are able to communicate in English, and use IT equipment, email, and mobile phones. The exchange of business cards is a common practice. While most business meetings take place in a formal setting, it is not unusual to discuss business over coffee or lunch. Getting things done faster depends largely on personal connections one has since Serbia is significantly bureaucratic. Thus, it is a good idea to allow more time for deadlines.

Summer holidays stretch throughout July and August and it often is difficult to reach company management during this period. Likewise, it is difficult to conduct any business in Serbia during the first two to three weeks of January because of the Orthodox Christmas and New Year's holidays. Orthodox Easter also is a slow period for business (see the "Public holidays" section for a list at dates of all major holidays in Serbia).

Business dinners are a common practice. It is customary for the host to pay when dining out. You may offer to contribute, but avoid asking to split the bill. You can express gratitude by offering to take your host out for a meal at a later date. It is a common practice to toast with a shot of slivovitz (traditional Serbian plum brandy) or rakiya (fruit brandy) prior to the meal. A toast is accompanied by saying 'Zhiveli', which means 'good health' and is similar to saying 'Cheers'. It is customary to look your counterparts in the eye when saying 'Zhiveli.'

If you are invited to your colleague's home in Serbia, it is customary to bring a small gift, such as a selected wine, a box of chocolates, etc. When buying flowers remember to take an odd number of

flowers when visiting or to give to any living being, but an even number of flowers if going to a funeral or to the cemetery.

Slava (Saint's Day)

A Slava is the celebration of a saint's day and is one, if not the most important, festivity for every family. People are given a days holiday from work for their Slava. When going to a Slava one usually gives flowers to the hostess and a bottle of alcohol to the host. You will either be invited for a specific time (i.e. either lunch or dinner) or told to come whenever you would like. Scheduling business/mission dinners on such days should be avoided.

Eating/Drinking/Smoking Habits

Rather heavy meals featuring large amounts of meat with no distinction between supper and dinner. Coffee is taken anytime over tea. Many Serbians drink Turkish coffee at home, so when visiting a home, you can expect it to be served. Restaurants and cafes serve espresso drinks and Nescafe. Smoking is cheap and popular in Serbia. Smoking is now illegal in public places and is slowly becoming adhered to. However smaller restaurants seem to be exempt from the law. In bigger restaurants, there are separate smoking areas.

Date: May 2018

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www.eda.admin.ch/belgrade