PHOTO EXAMPLES

Biometric photo requirements for identification documents

Identification documents require photos of a certain quality which, among other things, can help to speed up border control checks. This overview illustrates the main requirements.

The photo should show the face from the tip of the chin to the top of the head. Both halves of the face should be clearly recognisable. The face should take up 70–80 % of the height of the photo.

Lighting

The face should be evenly lit without any reflections. Red eyes should be avoided.

Shadows | Too dark | Reflection in face

Head position

The head should be centred and positioned straight.

Tilted to one side | Tilted up or down | Not centred

Sharpness and contrast

All parts of the face should be shown in sharp focus with high contrast.

Insufficiently sharp focus | Lack of contrast (too dark) | Lack of contrast (too light)

Background

The background should be monochromatic and free of shadows. It should also form a clear contrast to the face and hair.

Background with pattern | Background without contrast | Background with shadow

Photo quality

The colours and especially the skin tone should be reproduced accurately on the photo. Digital photos should be provided in colour.

Retouched/with filter | Blurred | Resolution too low

Facial expression

The facial expression should be neutral. The person should be looking directly into the camera with their mouth closed.

Laughing, mouth open | Eyes closed, squinting | Making a face

Visibility of eyes

The eyes should be clearly visible. They should not be obscured.

Glasses obscuring eyes | Hair covering eyes; red-eye effect | Lenses too dark, reflecting light

Head coverings

Head coverings are only permitted for religious reasons. In such cases: the face should be visible from the tip of the chin to the forehead. There should be no shadows on the face.

Hat | Burka | Face not sufficiently visible

Children

The face should take up 50–80 % of the height of the photo. However, minor deviations are permitted for children aged 10 years and younger.

Head covering | Object in photo | Making a face

Children, toddlers and babies

A front shot is required. In the case of children aged 6 years and younger, other exceptions are permitted regarding the head position, facial expression and visibility of eyes.

Head too big | Second person, object in background | Not a front shot

Exceptions

Exceptions are only permitted for long-term medical reasons, e.g. paralysis of parts of the face, asymmetry, inability to keep the mouth closed in a rest position.

Federal Ministry of the Interior

bdr.