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Schengen Visa (C type, short stay of up to 90 days) for people travelling to Switzerland in an official capacity (multilateral framework)

This document only applies to official delegates invited to conferences/meetings in Switzerland by an international organisation having concluded a headquarters agreement or a permanent mission.

Who needs a visa?

Official delegates must check, well in advance, if they need a visa to enter Switzerland by consulting the *Annex CH-1, List 1*¹ on the *Secretariat of Migration SEM* website. They must fulfill all visa and travel document requirements before their planned entry date to Switzerland.

Where to apply for a visa?

Entry visas for Switzerland are primarily issued by the Swiss Embassy/Consulate responsible for the applicant's country of residence (check [here](#)²) and in some cases, external service providers register the visa application on behalf of Swiss authorities.

The Swiss government has agreements with certain Schengen States who issue visas on its behalf. The visa application process and documents required may differ. Official delegates must check with the responsible Swiss Embassy/Consulate if such agreements apply to their particular case. If a visa application which is lodged with another Schengen state is refused, the applicant can apply for a visa at the Swiss Embassy/Consulate responsible for her/his legal place of residence³. However, there is no guarantee a visa will ultimately be issued and that there is sufficient time to process the application.

Deadlines

The processing time for a visa application varies and depends on local circumstances. Official delegates requiring an entry visa to Switzerland are advised to book their appointment as soon as possible (minimum 20 days and maximum 6 months before departure). The processing of an application takes at least 15 days and can only begin once the complete file is registered. An incomplete file may cause delays and could be rejected.

Biometrics

Switzerland applies the EU Schengen regulations for the issuance of visas, with the mandatory registration of biometric data stored in the Visa Information System (VIS) for five years. Official delegates who submit their first application for a Schengen Visa must have their biometric data recorded in person, including fingerprints and a required passport-style photo. The Swiss embassy/consulate checks which official delegates might be exempted from providing biometric information (e.g., Heads of State, ministers in office and their accompanying delegations).

Documentation

The list of required documents for a visa application varies and depends on the applicant's legal place of residence. It is the applicant's responsibility to consult the Swiss Embassy/Consulate website for details regarding the application procedure and required documents. Information is available [here](#)⁴.

¹ Annex CH-1, List 1 URL: https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/publiservice/weisungen-kreisschreiben/visa/liste1_staatsangehoerigkeit.html

² Swiss Online visa system URL: <https://www.swiss-visa.ch/ivis2/#/i210-select-country>

³ Swiss Online visa system URL: <https://www.swiss-visa.ch/ivis2/#/i210-select-country>

⁴ Swiss Online visa system URL: <https://www.swiss-visa.ch/ivis2/#/i210-select-country>

In general, the following documents are required for a C type (short stay up to 90 days) visa application (official invitation):

- A Schengen visa application form⁵ for short stays up to 90 days, signed and completed by the applicant;
- A valid travel document and a copy thereof (must be valid for at least 3 months after the return date and issued within the last 10 years);
- If applicable, a valid residency permit or equivalent document (e.g., exit/return visa) to ensure the applicant is allowed to reside in, exit and travel back to his/her country of residence;
- A recent passport-sized photograph;
- A personal letter of invitation from the organisation based in Switzerland mentioning the applicant's first and last names (as in passport), purpose and duration of visit. The inviting party in Switzerland must also specify if it covers travel, accommodation and other costs associated with the stay;
- Note Verbale from the sending State (for government officials only);
- A proof of health insurance valid for the Schengen states and covering a minimum amount of 30'000 euros (for holders of ordinary passport only);
- **Additional documents may be required by the Swiss Embassy / Consulate. For example, a copy of the hotel reservation and a flight reservation / booking, including return flight is often required.**

COMING SOON:

The [Entry/Exit System \(EES\)](https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees_en)⁶ is an information system for managing the external Schengen-borders. The aim of the European Commission's EES project is to modernise border control, improve security within the Schengen area and increase the efficiency of border checks by automating numerous border control procedures, in order to cope with the continuously increasing number of travelers.

European Commission website: https://travel-europe.europa.eu/ees_en

The [European Travel Information and Authorisation System \(ETIAS\)](https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias_en)⁷ is the new European travel authorisation system similar to the US Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA).

European Commission website: https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias_en

More general information about visas can be found by consulting the following websites:

- The Swiss State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)⁸
- The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Offices and the other international organisations in Geneva⁹

⁵ URL : <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/visumantragsformular.html>

⁶ URL: <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/ees.html>

⁷ URL: <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/etias.html>

⁸ URL : <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise.html>

⁹ URL: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/missions/mission-onu-geneve/en/home/manual-regime-privileges-and-immunities/introduction/manual-visas.html>