



Reference: 842-06-01-00
Geneva, 16 November 2020

Schengen Visa (C type, short stay) for people travelling to Switzerland in an official capacity

This document applies only to persons expected in Switzerland in an official multilateral framework. These are mainly delegates participating in international conferences/meetings and persons invited by an [international organisation with which Switzerland has concluded a headquarters agreement](#)¹ or a permanent mission.

Who needs a visa

Based on their nationality, participants attending conferences in Switzerland may require a visa to enter Switzerland. Visa requirements must be met before arrival. The list of nationalities subject to visas can be found by consulting the [following link](#)².

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 and in some cases, external service providers register the visa application on behalf of the Swiss authorities. In addition, the Swiss government has agreements with certain Schengen States that allow them to issue visas on its behalf where Switzerland is not represented. If another State issues visas on behalf of Switzerland, the process and the documents required may differ. We advise participants to check with the responsible Swiss representation if such agreements apply to their case. In case of refusal by another Schengen State, the applicant has the possibility to apply for a visa with the responsible Swiss authority. However, there is no guarantee that a visa will ultimately be issued and applicants must ensure that sufficient time is given to the Swiss authority to process the application.

Information about the nearest Swiss Embassy or Consulate responsible for the participant's place of residence can be found by consulting the Swiss [Online visa system](#)³.

Deadlines

The processing time for visa applications varies and depends on local circumstances. Participants requiring an entry visa are advised to book their appointment as soon as possible (minimum 20 days but maximum 6 months before departure). All applicants need an appointment in order to submit their visa application. Please bear in mind when arranging your appointment that the visa procedure takes at least 15 days once the application has been registered. The examination of the visa application is only initiated once the complete application file is registered. An incomplete file may cause delays and in some cases, the application is rejected.

¹ URL: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/mission-onu-omc-aele-geneve/fr/documents/Tableau-des-OI_FR.pdf

² URL : https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/publiservice/weisungen-kreisschreiben/visa/liste1_staatsangehoerigkeit.html

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

Biometrics

Switzerland applies the EU Schengen regulations on the issuance of visas, which require, *inter alia*, the registration of biometric data in the Visa Information System (VIS). This implies registering fingerprints and a photograph. It is therefore necessary for the present him/herself in person to submit and register his/her biometric data, which remain valid in the VIS for 5 years.

In particular, the following are exempt from biometrics: Heads of State, ministers in office and their accompanying delegations.

Documentation

The list of required documents to be included in a visa application varies and depends on the applicant's country of residence. It is the applicant's responsibility to consult the responsible Swiss Embassy/Consulate website and if necessary enquire about specific requirements by contacting the responsible Embassy/Consulate to submit a complete application.

In general, the following documents must be included in a C type visa application (official invitation):

- A Schengen visa [application form for short stays](#)⁴ signed and completed by the applicant;
- A valid travel document and a copy of it (must be valid for at least 3 months after the return date and issued within the last 10 years) ;
- When needed, a valid residency permit or equivalent document (e.g. exit/return visa) to ensure that 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.**

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

- [The Swiss State Secretariat for Migration \(SEM\)](#)⁵, or
- [The Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Offices and the other international organizations in Geneva](#)⁶.

⁴ URL : <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/visumantragsformular.html>

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

⁶ URL : <https://www.eda.admin.ch/missions/mission-onu-geneve/en/home/manual-regime-privileges-and-immunities/introduction/manual-visas.html>