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Rules of entry into Switzerland and health measures for journalists wishing to cover the U.S. - Russia Summit scheduled in Geneva on June, 16th 2021

This document aims to assist journalists coming from abroad with their participation in the U.S. - Russia Summit scheduled on the 16th of June 2021 in Geneva, Switzerland.

This factsheet is valid for this event only and take precedence over the COVID-19 information sheets published on the Swiss Mission's website.¹

Media accreditation: media representatives wishing to access media facilities in order to cover this event from Geneva must be accredited using the accreditation form available on the following website: <https://www.dfae.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/fdfa/aktuell/geneva-summit.html>. The deadline to apply for media credentials is the 11th of June 2021 at 10:00am (CET).

Entry requirements

A. General rules (entry requirements):

At the present, third-country nationals coming from a high-risk country² according to the Ordinance 3 on measures to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19)³ are, in principle, not allowed to enter Switzerland.

The following persons are not affected by the entry ban to Switzerland (provided that other applicable entry requirements –visa, travel document, etc.– are met):

- Those entering Switzerland from a Schengen State⁴ and some third-countries⁵ (if applicable, it is the country of departure, and not the stopover country, that is taken into account);
- Those having Swiss citizenship;
- Those holding a Swiss residence permit (for example, a FDFA legitimization card);
- Those having rights of free movement (for example, nationals of the European Union).⁶

Third-country **journalists** who are subject to the principle of entry ban do benefit from the following exception⁷ : meetings that cannot be postponed and require a physical presence. The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP), is responsible for journalists' visas/laissez-passer applications.

¹ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/missions/mission-onu-geneve/en/home/manual-regime-privileges-and-immunities/introduction/manual-visas.html>

² <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/sem/aktuell/entry-restrictions-to-third-countries.html>

³ <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2020/438/en>

⁴ Schengen States (26): Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden (and Switzerland).

⁵ Andorra, Australia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Israel, Monaco, New Zealand, Rwanda, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, and Vatican/Holy See:

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/sem/aktuell/entry-restrictions-to-third-countries.html>

⁶ <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/sem/aktuell/faq-einreiseverweigerung.html> (see "Who has rights of free movement?").

⁷ See point 1.5 of the Directive implementing Ordinance 3 COVID-19 (in French):

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/sem/fr/data/aktuell/aktuell/einreisestopp/weisung-covid-19-f.pdf.download.pdf/weisung-covid-19-f.pdf>
geneve.visa@eda.admin.ch ; + 41 (0) 58 482 24 24

B. Visas:

Persons subject to visa requirements are invited to submit their application to the Swiss Embassy/Consulate responsible for their place of residence⁸ as soon as possible.

- ➔ Who needs a visa (depends on nationality and passport's type)?:
https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/publiservice/weisungen-kreisschreiben/visa/liste1_staatsangehoerigkeit.html
- ➔ Where to apply for a visa (depends on the place of residence)? :
<https://www.swiss-visa.ch/ivis2/#/i210-select-country>

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

- A Schengen visa application form for short stays⁹ 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);
- A recent passport-sized photograph;
- A confirmation from the employer the journey is intended for the exercise of journalistic activity/copy of press card;
- 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). It should not exclude any cost related to COVID-19;
- 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 are often required.

C. Laissez-passer:

Persons in possession of a valid visa as well as persons exempted from visa requirements must inquire about boarding requirements. If necessary, the Swiss Embassy/Consulate responsible for the person's place of residence may issue a laissez-passer free of charge. Journalists travelling together from a third-country might get a "collective laissez-passer". A laissez-passer confirms that the person fulfils the conditions for crossing the Swiss border in accordance with the conditions laid down in Ordinance 3 on measures to combat the coronavirus (COVID-19).¹⁰ Persons who are not subject to the principle of entry ban to Switzerland (see point A. *General rules (entry requirements)*) do not need a laissez-passer.

While requesting a laissez-passer with the responsible Swiss Embassy/Consulate, please do state in the email subject "*U.S. - Russia Summit, laissez-passer request*", specify the flight you intend to take, and attach a copy of your passport as well as a confirmation from your employer the journey is intended for the exercise of journalistic activity/copy of press card.

Note: for people residing in Russia, the responsible Swiss Embassy is Moscow. For people residing in the USA, the responsible Swiss Embassy/Consulate depends on your State of residence (see link above to know if you have to contact Atlanta, Chicago, New York, San Francisco or Washington D.C).

⁸ <https://www.swiss-visa.ch/ivis2/#/i210-select-country>

⁹ <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/visumantragsformular.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2020/438/en>

Health measures

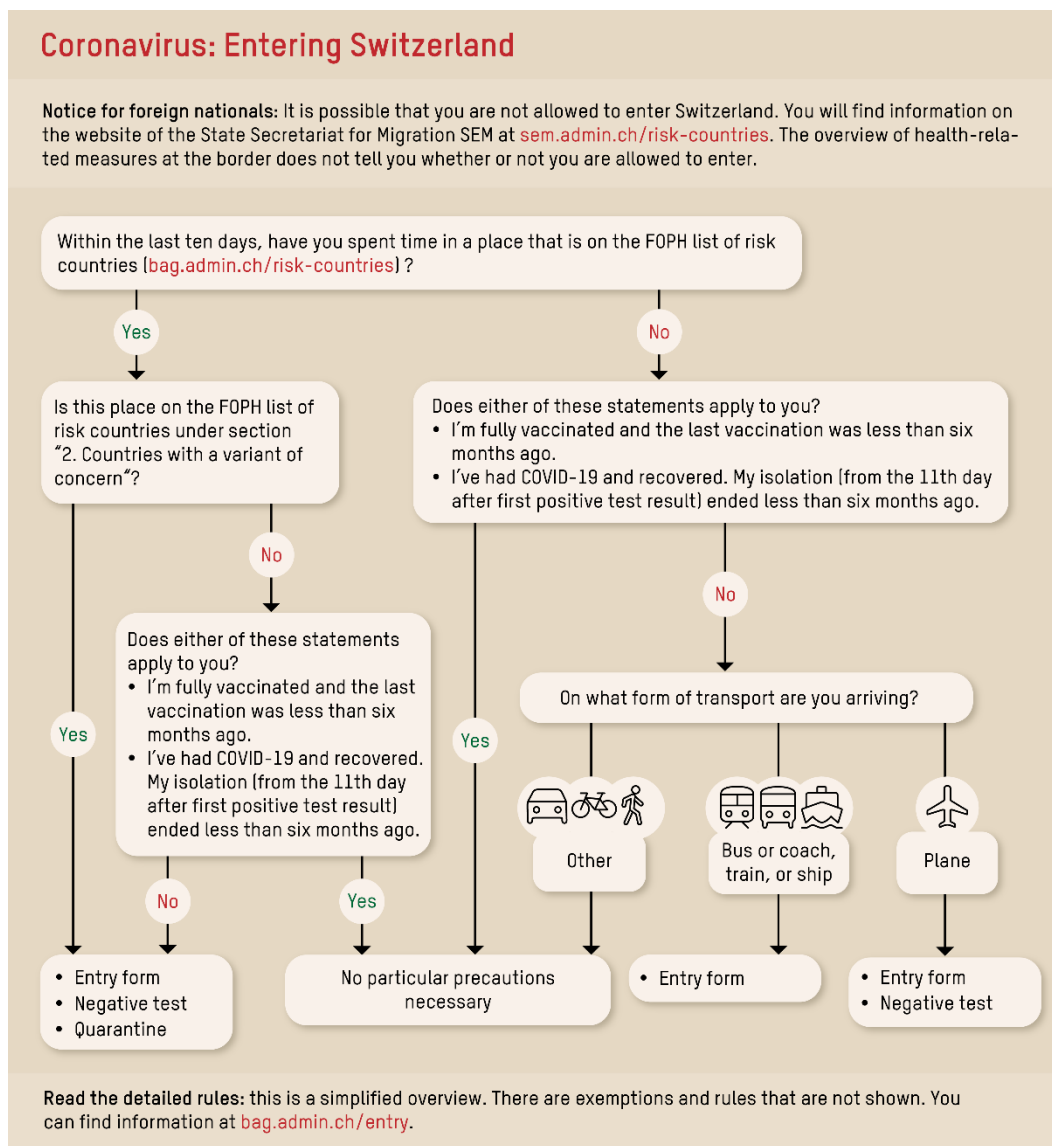
A. General rules (health measures):

As the list of states and areas with a high risk of infection is frequently updated, it is recommended to consult the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH)'s website for the latest changes:

<https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/empfehlungen-fuer-reisende/liste.html#858610174>

The following persons –**unless they enter Switzerland from a country where a variant of concern is circulating**¹¹– are exempt from data collection (entry form), testing, and quarantine measures for a period of six months:

- Those fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2;¹²
- Those who have recovered and can provide evidence they have contracted SARS-CoV-2.¹³



Graph: <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/empfehlungen-fuer-reisende/quarantaene-einreisende.html>

¹¹ Brazil, Canada, India, Nepal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom (see under "Countries with a worrying variant": <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/empfehlungen-fuer-reisende/liste.html>).

¹² This with a vaccine [approved in Switzerland, authorized by the European Medicines Agency for the European Union](#) or authorized according to the WHO emergency list, are considered cured.

¹³ These persons must provide a certificate confirming that they have been COVID-19 positive for less than 6 months as of the 11th day following confirmation of infection.

B. Data collection (entry form):

All travelers coming from a state or area with a high risk of infection, irrespective of the means of transport used, must enter their contact details when entering Switzerland. The contact details can be recorded electronically before starting a journey on the dedicated page of the FOPH¹⁴ or in writing on the entry form provided upon arrival in Switzerland.

This obligation also applies to persons entering Switzerland from any other state or area if entry is by train, bus, boat or plane.

Exception for vaccinated or cured persons: see point A. *General rules (health measures)*.

C. Negative test:

Arrival by plane: all air travelers flying to Switzerland, regardless of where they are travelling from, must present a negative molecular biology analysis test for SARS-CoV-2 (PCR test) carried out within 72 hours or a negative rapid immunological test carried out within 24 hours at the time of boarding. While a negative rapid immunological test carried out within 24 hours can be presented for boarding, it must then be confirmed by another test (either PCR or rapid) carried out upon arrival in Switzerland.

Travel by other means of transport: travelers coming from a state or area with a high risk of infection at any time during the 10 days prior to their entry into Switzerland must present upon request, on departure or arrival, a negative PCR test carried out within 72 hours prior to entry into Switzerland.

Exception for vaccinated or cured persons: see point A. *General rules (health measures)* and check your airline's requirements if applicable.

D. Quarantine measures:

In principle, persons who were in a state or area with a high risk of infection at any point in the 10 days before entry into Switzerland are legally obliged to go into quarantine. **Journalists wishing to cover the U.S. - Russia Summit and coming from a state or area with a high risk of infection are, nevertheless, exempted from quarantine requirements unless they are coming from a country where a variant of concern is circulating.**¹⁵

The exemption criteria "persons re-entering Switzerland after staying in a country or region with an increased risk of infection for compelling professional and whose visit could not have been postponed"¹⁶ is indeed applicable for all journalists unless they are coming from a country where a variant of concern is circulating. Journalists who are exempt from the quarantine do not need to request an exemption from the quarantine measure. The persons concerned must nevertheless be able to submit, in case of control by the responsible authority, a document from their employer certifying that their professional imperative in Switzerland cannot be postponed.

It is further specified that the exemption from quarantine only applies for compelling professional activities requiring physical presence, in application of all protective measures (distance, facial mask, hygiene rules) in force. It does not apply to other activities (e.g. leisure activities, sightseeing or festive outings). In addition to social distancing and hygiene measures, it is strongly recommended to wear a protective mask when in contact with others and to limit interactions and travel to official requirements.

Exception for vaccinated or cured persons: see point A. *General rules (health measures)*.

¹⁴ <https://swissplf.admin.ch/home>

¹⁵ Brazil, Canada, India, Nepal, South Africa, and the United Kingdom (see under "Countries with a worrying variant": <https://www.bag.admin.ch/bag/en/home/krankheiten/ausbrueche-epidemien-pandemien/aktuelle-ausbrueche-epidemien/novel-cov/empfehlungen-fuer-reisende/liste.html>). Journalists who have stayed in one of these countries at any time during the 10 days prior to their entry into Switzerland must undergo a 10-day quarantine period. Persons subject to the quarantine period must notify the responsible cantonal authorities of their entry into Switzerland within 2 days and follow their instructions (<https://www.ge.ch/en/covid-19-travelling-and-quarantine>). The person under quarantine may, at the earliest on the 7th day of quarantine, be re-tested by means of a rapid antigen test (free of charge) or a PCR test. In the event of a negative result, he/she may terminate the quarantine without prior authorization from the responsible cantonal authority. He/she is nevertheless required to inform the cantonal authority (derogation.covid@etat.ge.ch) by sending a copy of his/her negative test.

¹⁶ <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2021/61/en> (see article 8, paragraph 1, letter c).