



Global Immigration alert

November 2024

Switzerland

Schengen Visa applications to go fully online by 2028

Executive summary

Switzerland is set to digitize Schengen Visa applications by 2028, aligning with the EU's new regulation requiring electronic submissions for short-term stays (up to 90 days). The Swiss Federal Council has approved this transition, which will require updates to national laws, particularly the Foreign Nationals and Integration Act (AIG).

Background

The European Union has been planning to modernize the visa application process for short-term stays in the Schengen Area. On 13 November 2023, the EU adopted a regulation requiring that Schengen Visa applications be submitted electronically via a new EU platform. This regulation aims to replace traditional paper visa stickers with digital visas, with a view toward streamlining the process and enhancing efficiency.

Key developments

On 13 November 2024, the Swiss Federal Council approved the transition to digital Schengen Visa applications. This requires amendments to national laws, particularly the Foreign Nationals and Integration Act (AIG). These legal updates will facilitate the integration of the new electronic platform and ensure compatibility with European standards.

The digitalization of visa applications aims to standardize processes, simplify procedures for applicants, and enhance cooperation among Schengen Member State immigration authorities. Several exceptions to the use of the EU platform are anticipated and these will be defined by The Federal Council.

Switzerland plans to implement the digital platform in January 2028 at the earliest.

Impact on employers

The transition to digital visas will bring several changes for current and future Schengen Visa holders and the organizations that sponsor them. As paper visa stickers are replaced with digital visas, the process of obtaining and verifying visas will become more secure and streamlined. Digital visas will enhance security by minimizing the risk of fraud and forgery, with barcodes and electronic verification making it easier to authenticate visas. The standardization of visa application procedures across Schengen Member States will ensure a consistent experience for all applicants, regardless of their country of origin.

Future applicants will benefit from a simplified application process through the new electronic EU platform, reducing the need for physical paperwork and in-person visits to consulates or embassies. This will also reduce costs associated with obtaining Schengen Visas. There will be a transition period during which both paper and digital visas will be valid, allowing visa holders ample time to switch without disrupting their travel plans.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

EY | Shape the future with confidence

EY exists to build a better working world, helping create long-term value for clients, people and society and build trust in the capital markets.

Enabled by data and technology, diverse EY teams in over 150 countries provide trust through assurance and help clients grow, transform and operate.

Working across assurance, consulting, law, strategy, tax and transactions, EY teams ask better questions to find new answers for the complex issues facing our world today.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. EY member firms do not practice law where prohibited by local laws. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

Ernst & Young LLP is a client-serving member firm of Ernst & Young Global Limited operating in the US.

© 2024 Ernst & Young LLP.
All Rights Reserved.

EYG no. 009970-24Gbl

2101-3682263
ED None

ey.com

Jan Wong

Director - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +41 58 286 30 80
Email: jan.wong@ch.ey.com

Lea Iseli

Senior Manager - People Advisory Services, Global Immigration
Tel: +41 58 286 31 42
Email: lea.iseli@ch.ey.com

Ben Willis

Partner - People Advisory Services, EMEA Immigration Leader
Tel: +44 20 7951 9589
Email: ben.willis@uk.ey.com

Seema Farazi

Partner - People Advisory Services, EMEA Immigration Leader
Tel: +44 20 7951 7122
Email: seema.farazi@uk.ey.com