



# Visas for NGO delegates attending conferences in Geneva

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# Topics discussed

## 1. Introduction

- a. Context
- b. Legal basis
- c. Competent entities

## 2. Types of Schengen visas

- a. Short stay visas (C-type)
- b. Long stay visas (D-type)

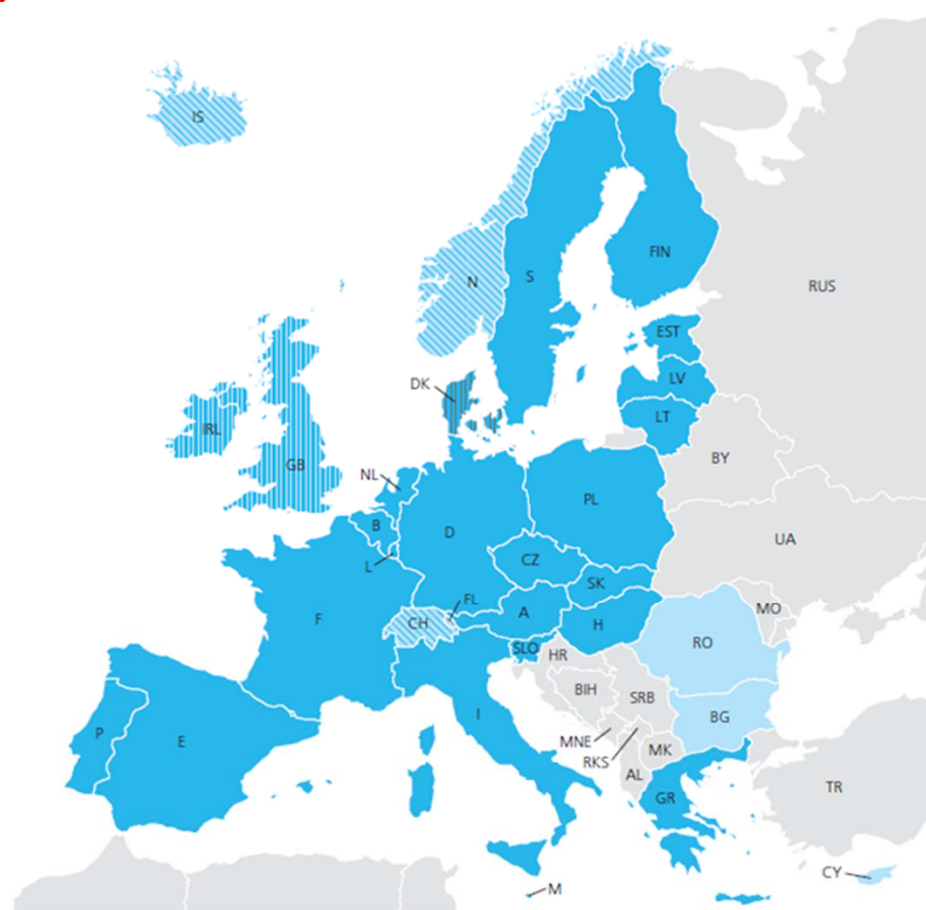
## 3. Visa application procedure

- a. Who?
- b. Where?
- c. How?

## 4. Conclusion



# 1a. Context



- Etats membres de Schengen
- ▨ Etats membres de Schengen ayant un statut spécial (opt-In)
- ▨ Etats membres de Schengen ayant un statut spécial (opt-Out)
- Futurs Etats membres de Schengen
- ▨ Etats associés de Schengen
- ▨ Futur Etat associé de Schengen



## 1a. Context

- ▶ **Free movement of persons within the Schengen area;**
- ▶ **Migration & Security**



## 1b. Legal basis

### ▶ **EU framework**

- Regulation (EC) n° 539/2001, listing the third-party States whose nationals must be in possession of a visa when crossing external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement;
- The Visa Code.

### ▶ **Swiss framework**

- Federal Act on Foreign Nationals (FNA);
- Ordinance on Entry and Visa Procedure (OEV);
- Visa handbook I and its annexes, from the State Secretariat for Migration
  - Annex I, List ID and visa provisions according to nationality;
  - Annex II, Recognized travel documents.



## 1c. Competent entites

### ► **The Department of Justice and Police (Secretariat for Migration)**

Visas for NGO delegates are handled by the Secretariat for Migration (SEM). This competence is delegated to Swiss representations abroad.

### ► **The Department of Foreign Affairs (Swiss Mission)**

Competent only for officials visits. Persons invited by organizations with which Switzerland has concluded a headquarters agreement and government representatives expected to travel to Switzerland in an official capacity.





## 2a. Types of Schengen visas

- ▶ **Short stay visas (C-type <90 days)**
  - A uniform Schengen visa;
  - Allows you to enter the Schengen area and to stay there up to a maximum of 90 days in a given period of 180 days;
  - Usually limited to the duration of the conference & granted for one single entry;
  - May be valid for up to five years.
  
- ▶ **Visas with limited territorial validity (LTV)**
  - Under very exceptional circumstances;
  - Does not apply to NGO delegates.



## 2b. Types of Schengen visas

- ▶ **Long stay visas (D-type >90 days)**
  - Issued only to people who stay in a Schengen member state for more than 90 days;
  - Generally **for employment** purposes or other reasons such as studies or family reunion;
  - A national visa issued under national law requirements (not Schengen rules);
  - Allows to travel freely up to 90 days in a 180-day period throughout the Schengen area.





## 3. Visa application procedure

### A. Who needs a visa

Depends on nationality (the list of nationalities requiring a visa is available on the website of the State Secretariat for Migration).

### B. Where to apply

- Through the competent Swiss representation (territorial responsibility: principle of residence) and in some cases through an outsourcing center;
- Through another Schengen member state representation in case of an agreement.

## 3. Visa application procedure

### C. How to apply

#### The applicant Should:

- Book an appointment with the competent embassy at least 2 months before departure and at the earliest 3 months before departure;
- attend the interview in person and register his/her biometric data;
- Make sure they have all the documents required by the responsible representation (see next slide).



## 3. Visa application procedure

- Documents generally required when applying for a visa:
  - An application form duly filled in and signed by the applicant;
  - A valid travel document and a copy of it;
  - A valid residency permit or equivalent document;
  - Two recent passport-sized photographs;
  - A letter of invitation from the NGO based in Switzerland;
  - Proof of applicant's financial resources;
  - A proof of health and repatriation insurance;
  - A hotel reservation;
  - A flight reservation/booking including return flight;
  - For employees: confirmation from employer;
  - For self-employed persons: copy of their company's registration documents.



## 3. Visa application procedure

### Difficulties that can arise

- Deadlines (at least 2 months in advance);
- Incomplete file;
- Unclear invitation letter. The letter must state:
  - Last name, first name (exactly the same as in passport);
  - Length of the stay;
  - The NGO's mission in relation to the planned visit of the applicant and the link between the NGO and Switzerland;
  - Why and how the applicant has been selected and in which capacity they will participate in the event;
  - Covering of costs.



## 4. Conclusion

- ▶ The visa application: a long and demanding process
- ▶ Get involved and coach your delegates!



**Thank you for your attention!**