Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations and other international organisations in Geneva

English translation of the original version in French

GUIDELINES

regarding the issuance of legitimation cards of the Federal Department of foreign affairs (FDFA) to staff members of permanent missions, permanent representations, special missions and permanent delegations

Entry into force on 15 January 2016

Amended on 1 October 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Entry into force ... **2**

2. Categories of individual beneficiaries of a legitimation card ... **2**

2.1. Career transferable staff members ... **3**

2.2. Locally recruited staff members ... **3**

2.3. Other persons ... **3**

2.4. Family members ... **3**

2.5. Adopted children ... **4**

2.6. Exception to rule requiring family members to live in the same household as the principal beneficiary ... **4**

2.6.1. *Children studying abroad* ... **4**

2.6.2. *Proceedings for separation/divorce or dissolution of registered partnership* ... **5**

2.7. Other family members ... **5**

2.8. Private household employees ... **6**

3. Entry into Switzerland for the career transferable staff members ... **7**

4. Recruitment of local staff members abroad or in Switzerland ... **7**

4.1. Local staff members recruited abroad ... **7**

4.2. Local staff recruited in Switzerland ... **8**

4.3. Persons with refugee status in a third country ... **9**

5. Foreign nationals holding a permit and Swiss nationals ... **9**

5.1. Foreign nationals with a cross-border commuter permit ... **9**

6. Interns ... **9**

6.1. Interns recruited abroad ... **9**

6.2. Interns recruited in Switzerland ... **10**

7. Seconded staff members ... **10**

8. Employment hours of foreign local staff members ... **11**

9. Registration process ... **11**

9.1. Renewal of legitimation cards **12**
9.2. Changes in the personal status of holders of a legitimation card **12**
9.3. Loss or theft of a legitimation card **13**
9.4. Registration with residents' registry in the place of residence **13**
9.5. Taking up residence in France **13**
10. End of the period of service **13**
11. Courtesy periods **13**
11.1. Courtesy period granted to retiring staff members **14**
11.2. Other courtesy periods granted to family members **14**
11.3. Status of persons with diplomatic status during the courtesy period **14**
11.4. Family members holding a Ci permit **15**

1. Entry into force

These guidelines enter into force on 15 January 2016. Effective that date, they supersede the *Recueil de directives concernant les missions permanentes de la Mission suisse du 1er avril 1987* ("Code of practice for permanent missions of the Swiss Mission, dated 1st April 1987").

These guidelines set out the conditions for entering Switzerland for the staff members, as well as for their family members, of permanent missions to the United Nations Office and to the other international organisations, permanent missions to the World Trade Organisation, permanent representations to the Conference on disarmament, special missions and permanent delegations of international organisations (observer's offices). They also set out the conditions for the issuance and withdrawal of FDFA legitimation cards to these persons.

In these guidelines, the term "permanent missions" means the permanent missions, permanent representations, special missions and permanent delegations.

In these guidelines, the term "staff member" means the career transferable staff members of the sending State or, for the permanent delegations of international organisations, career civil servants of the Organisation, as well as locally recruited staff members and interns.

2. Categories of individual beneficiaries of a legitimation card

The persons designated by the permanent missions as staff members and family members may be allowed to enter Switzerland and be issued an FDFA legitimation card.

A legitimation card serves as a residence permit, certifies the holder's possible privileges and immunities and exempts the holder from any visa requirements for entering Switzerland. A valid legitimation card together with a passport allows the holder to travel within the Schengen Area [1] for a period of up to three months (with no gainful activity).

Legitimation cards are issued on the basis of a person's duties in the permanent mission. Family members are generally issued the same type of legitimation card as the principal beneficiary (the person employed to perform official duties).

[1] Schengen Area Member States (29): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

2.1. Career transferable staff members

- Heads of mission: type “B” legitimation card,
- Diplomatic staff members: type “C” legitimation card,
- Administrative and technical staff members: type “D” legitimation card,
- Service staff members: type “E” legitimation card,
- Swiss diplomatic staff members: type “S” legitimation card,
- Diplomatic staff members with a B/C permit: type “T” legitimation card.

2.2. Locally recruited staff members

- Local staff members: type “E” legitimation card,
- Swiss local staff members: type “R” legitimation card.

2.3. Other persons

- Interns: type “H” legitimation card (see section 6).

2.4. Family members

The principal beneficiary’s family members may be allowed to enter Switzerland on the grounds of family reunification. They must live in the same household as the principal beneficiary (see section 2.6.).

Under the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (AFMP) [2] concluded between the European Union (EU), the EU member states and Switzerland, family members who are EU [3] or EFTA [4] nationals and who are allowed to enter Switzerland on the grounds of family reunification may ask the Population Office of their canton of residence to be issued with a residence permit (B permit) instead of a legitimation card [5] (see also section 5). Family members who hold a permit are subject to Swiss law and are not entitled to privileges or immunities.

In these guidelines, the term “spouse” means:
- the spouse who is married to the principal beneficiary,
- the opposite sex cohabitant who is not married to the principal beneficiary,
- the same-sex partner of the principal beneficiary.

The family members listed below are issued with the same type of legitimation card as the principal beneficiary:
- the spouse married to the principal beneficiary,
- the cohabitant (spouse) of the principal beneficiary who is recognised by the sending State as the official partner,
- the partner (spouse) who is in a partnership that was registered in Switzerland or under an equivalent foreign legislation with the principal beneficiary,
- the partner (spouse) who is not in a registered partnership with the principal beneficiary, but who is recognised by the sending State as the official partner,
- the unmarried children, under the age of 25, of the principal beneficiary or of their spouse. If a child is a minor (under the age of 18) and the principal beneficiary is not

---

2 Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (AFMP): https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2002/243/fr (in French, German and Italian)

3 EU Member States (27): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

4 EFTA Member States (4): Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

5 Instructions of the State Secretariat for Migration, “Domaine des étrangers”, Chapter 7 (available in French, German or Italian): https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/fr/home/publiservice/weisungen-kreisschreiben/auslaenderbereich.html

accompanied by the other parent, the permanent mission must provide the Swiss Mission with an official document stating that the child is in the custody of the principal beneficiary or, depending on the case, with the written consent of the other parent. The same rule applies to a minor who is the child of the spouse and if the principal beneficiary is not the father/mother.

Swiss or foreign family members of Swiss staff members are not issued a legitimation card. The same rule applies to other family members (see section 2.7).

Swiss family members of foreign staff members are not issued a legitimation card.

Family members of local staff members, who live in France at the time they are hired, are not issued a legitimation card.

Family members of interns are not issued a legitimation card. The same rule applies to other family members (see section 2.7).

2.5. Adopted children

Children adopted before the arrival in Switzerland of the principal beneficiary or of their spouse are allowed to enter Switzerland on the grounds of family reunification under the same conditions as biological children, provided that the adoption complies with the legislation of the State where the adoption was granted and that it is not contrary to Swiss public order.

If the adoptive parents reside in Switzerland and wish to adopt a child in Switzerland or abroad, they must first obtain an authorisation (suitability certificate) issued by the central cantonal authority responsible for adoptions. They must then contact this authority before taking administrative steps to adopt in the child's country of origin. This obligation also applies if the adoption has to be granted in the country where one or both of the future adoptive parents are citizens. This authorisation is issued by the competent authority of their place of residence pursuant to the regulations in force [6].

The adoption procedure differs depending on whether or not the child's country of origin is a State Party to the Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption. This procedure is described in the brochure “Adoption in Switzerland” published by the Federal Office of Justice [7].

2.6. Exception to rule requiring family members to live in the same household as the principal beneficiary

Family members must in principle live in the same household as the principal beneficiary to be issued with a legitimation card. An exception to this rule can however be made in the following two cases and in favour of family members of the principal beneficiary who lives in Switzerland:

2.6.1. *Children studying abroad*

Unmarried children under the age of 25 who are studying abroad may be issued a legitimation card. Children studying abroad are not required to live in the same

6 Hague Convention (in French, German or Italian): https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2003/99/fr
Swiss legislation on the application of the Hague Convention (in French, German or Italian): https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2002/639/fr
Adoption Ordinance (OAdo) (in French, German or Italian): https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2011/505/fr

7 Publication “Adoption in Switzerland”: https://www.bj.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/mMAycU7GZQwU/bro-adoption.pdf

household as the principal beneficiary in order to be issued or continue to hold a legitimation card.

When a permanent mission requests a legitimation card for such a child, it must inform in writing the Swiss Mission in what country and city the child is studying and how long their studies are likely to take. If the child subsequently moves in with the principal beneficiary, the permanent mission must inform in writing the Swiss Mission. The same rule applies to children who are living in the same household as the principal beneficiary and subsequently move abroad for purposes of study.

Exceptions to the rule requiring children to live in the same household must be requested using the form provided for this purpose [8].

2.6.2. *Proceedings for separation/divorce or dissolution of registered partnership*

In the case of divorce or separation proceedings, protection of marital union proceedings or proceedings for the judicial dissolution of a registered partnership, the spouse of the principal beneficiary may keep their legitimation card or Ci permit [9] until the end of the proceedings, respectively for a reasonable period of time. The provisions of Swiss tax law are reserved.

In this case, the permanent mission must immediately inform in writing the Swiss Mission that the principal beneficiary and their spouse have separated and judicial proceedings are under way. It must also indicate the spouse's private address or, if necessary, the private address of the principal beneficiary. The same rule applies to the children if they are living with the spouse during the proceedings.

Once the divorce or dissolution of the registered partnership is granted, the permanent mission must immediately inform in writing the Swiss Mission and return the legitimation cards of the spouse and of the children if the spouse has official custody of them or, in the case of adult children, if they are still living with the spouse so that the Swiss Mission can cancel the legitimation cards. . In the case of shared custody, the official domicile of the minor children is decisive.

Upon written request from the permanent mission, the spouse and their children may be granted a courtesy period of two months from the date of the divorce decree or the judgment dissolving the registered partnership (see section 11).

2.7. Other family members

In exceptional cases and depending on the circumstances, other family members of the principal beneficiary or of their spouse are allowed to enter Switzerland on the grounds of family reunification. They must live together with the principal beneficiary in the same household in Switzerland and be in the principal beneficiary's sole care.

Such requests must be justified and they must be submitted by the permanent mission to the Swiss Mission in the form of a verbal note before the person concerned arrives in Switzerland. For relatives in ascending line, the requests must be made using the form provided for this purpose [10].

---

8 Form "Children - Exception to live in the same household": https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/FKicSLufUBW0/Derogation-enfants-menage-commun-MP_EN%20(2).pdf

9 Information note on the Ci permit: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/manual-members-of-family

10 Form "Relatives in ascending line - Family reunification": https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/-bz9F3327qNZ/Regroupement-familial-ascendatns-MP_EN.pdf

On decision of the Swiss Mission, the persons listed below may be issued a type “H” legitimation card:

- the cohabitant (spouse) of the principal beneficiary if they are not recognised by the sending State as the official partners; the permanent mission must provide the Swiss Mission with proof that the couple is in a stable and long-term relationship,
- the partner (spouse) who is not in a registered partnership with the principal beneficiary if they are not recognised by the sending State as the official partners; the permanent mission must provide the Swiss Mission with proof that the couple is in a stable and long-term relationship,
- the unmarried children over the age of 25 of the principal beneficiary or of their spouse,
- the relatives in the ascending line of the principal beneficiary or of their spouse,
- other unmarried family members, generally minors, of the principal beneficiary or of their spouse, who cannot be entrusted to the care of a third party in the country of origin (for example, a brother, sister, grandchild, nephew, niece or a child under guardianship or wardship); the permanent mission must provide the Swiss Mission with proof that the principal beneficiary or their spouse is authorised to host the minor child (under the age of 18).

If the Swiss Mission accepts the request, the person concerned will be issued a type “H” legitimation card allowing them to reside permanently in Switzerland with the principal beneficiary for the duration of the employment of the latter. This card does not permit the holder to reside part of the time in their country of origin and part in Switzerland; in such a situation the person must apply for a short stay visa (visit) at the competent Swiss representation.

The holder of an "H" legitimation card is subject to ordinary Swiss law, in particular to social security and tax legislations [11]. The Swiss Mission will first issue a legitimation card for an initial period of three months from the date of entry into Switzerland. This period allows them to take the necessary steps to regularise their situation with regard to the above-mentioned legislations. It is the responsibility of the principal beneficiary to ensure this.

Before the end of the three-month period and upon presentation by the permanent mission of a Swiss health insurance certificate in the name of the person or of the exemption decision obtained by the competent cantonal authority, the Swiss Mission will issue a new legitimation card valid for one year, renewable if necessary (see section 9). Each year, the permanent mission must enclose a Swiss health insurance certificate or the exemption decision with the application for renewal of the legitimation card. The Swiss Mission also reserves the right to request confirmation that the person has registered, according to their age, with the AHV/AVS Cantonal Compensation Office and the Cantonal Tax Authority in accordance with their obligations.

2.8. Private household employees

The conditions for entering Switzerland and the terms of employment for private household employees, and their rights and obligations are laid down in the Ordinance on Private Household Employee [12], which should be referred to. Private household employees are issued a type “F” legitimation card.

11 Information note on social and taxation legislation: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/manual-other-family-members-iopm-tax-and-social-legislations

12 Ordinance on Private Household Employees and appendices: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/manual-private-employees-private-household-employees-ordinance-of-6-june-2011

3. Entry into Switzerland for the career transferable staff members

Depending on their nationality, the career transferable staff members are subject to the visa requirement to take up employment and their family members to the visa requirement for family reunification, even if they are exempted from the visa requirement for a short stay [13]. The visa must be requested from the Swiss representation.

The Swiss Mission can only issue legitimation cards to persons who are in possession of a visa when they enter Switzerland.

Nationals from the States listed below are not subject to the visa requirement to take up employment or for family reunification: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Principality of Andorra, Principality of Monaco, San Marino, Singapore, United Kingdom, Vatican, as well as Member States of the EFTA [14] and of the EU [15].

Nationals of third States, holders of a valid residence permit issued by a Schengen State [16] and a recognised and valid travel document, are not subject to the visa requirement to take up employment and for family reunification. The same rule applies to those who hold a valid D visa issued by a Schengen State and a recognised and valid travel document.

4. Recruitment of local staff members abroad or in Switzerland

For the purposes of these guidelines, “local staff members” is understood to mean persons hired by the sending State to perform official duties according to the Vienna Convention of 18 April 1961 on Diplomatic Relations, but who do not form part of the career transferable staff members of the sending State.

These persons may be nationals of the sending State or of another State. They generally perform the duties of service staff members according to the aforementioned Convention (domestic duties) but may also perform other duties referred to in the Convention (administrative duties for example).

4.1. Local staff members recruited abroad

An application for a Swiss entry permit to engage in gainful employment must be submitted in advance for local staff who are subject to a visa requirement to take up employment, even if they are exempt from a visa requirement for a short stay [17]. This application must be submitted by the permanent mission to the Swiss Mission with the form “Authorisation to enter Switzerland” [18] along with the form “Declaration of guarantee in favour of a locally recruited staff member” [19] and a copy of the individual's passport.

If the individual is accompanied by family members, the permanent mission must also attach the form “Declaration of guarantee in favour of the family of a locally recruited staff

13 Information note on visas: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/visas-and-procedures-for-entering-switzerland

14 EFTA Member States (4): Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

15 EU Member States (27): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

16 Schengen Area Member States (29): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

17 Information note on visas: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/visas-and-procedures-for-entering-switzerland

18 Form “Authorisation to enter Switzerland”: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/Qxa8NhdD4vr8/Local-staff-application-for-authorisation-to-enter-Switzerland-EN.pdf

19 Form “Declaration of guarantee in favour of a locally recruited staff member”: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/uAXHQ4657G4L/for-gepmlocal_EN.pdf

member” [20], a copy of every family member's passport, a copy of the marriage certificate or registered partnership certificate for the spouse and a copy of the birth certificate for the children.

The Swiss Mission will then authorise the competent Swiss representation to issue a visa to work or reunite with the family in Switzerland.

An application submitted in advance for a Swiss entry permit to engage in gainful employment is not required for local staff who are not subject to a visa requirement to take up employment [21]. The permanent mission must notify the Swiss mission as soon as the staff member takes up their duties (see section 9).

4.2. Local staff recruited in Switzerland

Foreign nationals who are in Switzerland on a temporary basis may in principle not be recruited locally by a permanent mission.

The following persons may be recruited locally by the permanent mission:
- Swiss nationals,
- foreign nationals who are not subject to the visa requirement to take up employment [22] and have been in Switzerland for less than 90 days,
- holders of a valid legitimation card,
- foreign nationals holding a valid residence permit or a permanent residence permit (B or C permit) (see section 5),
- foreign nationals, living in France, holding a cross-border commuter permit (G permit) (see section 5.1).

The permanent mission must notify the Swiss Mission by verbal note as soon as the staff member takes up their duties (see sections 5, 5.1. and 9).

The following persons may under no circumstances be recruited locally by the permanent mission:
- illegal immigrants,
- foreign nationals who entered Switzerland with a short stay visa (visit),
- foreign nationals who are not subject to the visa requirement for a short stay [23] and who are temporarily in Switzerland (tourists, visitors),
- foreign nationals holding a residence permit for their studies (B permit for studies) or a short-term residence permit (L permit),
- foreign nationals who have a pending application for a permit at the Cantonal Population Office,
- foreign nationals authorised by the Cantonal Population Office to live temporarily in Switzerland while waiting to get married,
- asylum seekers still in the process of the asylum procedure (holders of an N permit) or those who have been provisionally admitted (holders of an F permit), and those whose application has expired or was denied.

---

20 Form “Declaration of guarantee in favour of the family of a locally recruited staff member”: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/x4DeTrrNlCvw/GEpmlocfam_EN.pdf

21 Nationals of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Principality of Andorra, Principality of Monaco, San Marino, Singapore, United Kingdom, Vatican, Member States of the EFTA and of the EU, as well as nationals of third States, holders of a valid residence permit or valid D visa issued by a Schengen State and a recognised and valid travel document.

22 Nationals of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Principality of Andorra, Principality of Monaco, San Marino, Singapore, United Kingdom, Vatican, Member States of the EFTA and of the EU, as well as nationals of third States, holders of a valid residence permit or valid D visa issued by a Schengen State and a recognised and valid travel document.

23 Information note on visas: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/visas-and-procedures-for-entering-switzerland

It is the responsibility of the permanent mission to verify before signing a contract whether the person meets the conditions to work for it. If necessary, the Swiss Mission will be available to assist with this verification.

The same rule applies to family members.

4.3. Persons with refugee status in a third country

Persons with refugee status in a third country may, by way of exception, be allowed to enter Switzerland to work for a permanent mission, provided that the legislation of the State which admitted them as refugees permits such persons to freely leave and return to the territory of that State at any time, and that they are holders of a valid travel document. The validity of their legitimation card is limited to the duration of the residence permit issued by the State concerned.

The same rule applies to family members. However, those living in France with the principal beneficiary do not receive a legitimation card.

5. Swiss national and foreign nationals holding a permit

Career Swiss diplomatic staff members enjoy immunity from jurisdiction and inviolability only for official acts performed in the exercise of their functions, but do not enjoy any privileges. Their family members do not enjoy any status. The permanent mission must promptly notify the Swiss diplomatic staff members in accordance with the procedure set out in section 9 regarding the issuance of type “S” legitimation card.

Career diplomatic staff members who hold a residence or permanent residence permit (B or C permit) at the time of taking up their duties enjoy immunity from jurisdiction and inviolability only for official acts performed in the exercise of their functions, but do not enjoy any privileges. Their family members do not enjoy any status. The permanent mission must promptly contact the Swiss Mission to notify it career diplomatic staff member with a B/C permit so that a type “T” legitimation card can be issued in accordance with an ad hoc procedure.

Other staff members who are Swiss nationals or holders of a B/C permit do not enjoy any immunity or privileges. The same rules apply to family members. The permanent mission must promptly register the Swiss staff members according to the procedure described at section 9 (type “R” legitimation card). The permanent mission must promptly inform the Swiss Mission by verbal note when a staff member with a B/C permit takes up their duties, enclosing a copy of their permit, a copy of their passport and stating the functions they carry out (no legitimation card).

The issuance of type “R” “S” or “T” legitimation card does not constitute a residence permit in Switzerland.

5.1. Foreign nationals with a cross-border commuter permit

Foreign nationals who live in France and who hold a cross-border commuter permit (G permit) at the time they are hired, are required to exchange their permit for a legitimation card (see section 9).

6. Interns

6.1. Interns recruited abroad

An application for a Swiss entry permit to engage in gainful employment must be submitted in advance for foreign nationals who are recruited as a paid or unpaid intern by the

permanent mission and are subject to a visa requirement to take up employment, even if they are exempt from a visa requirement for a short stay [24]. This application must be submitted by the permanent mission to the Swiss Mission with the form “Application to enter Switzerland” [25] and must be accompanied by a copy of the individual's passport. The Swiss Mission then authorises the competent Swiss representation to issue a work visa.

An application submitted in advance for a Swiss entry permit to engage in gainful employment is not required for foreign nationals who are not subject to a visa requirement to take up employment [26]. The permanent mission must notify the Swiss Mission by verbal note as soon as these individuals take up their duties.

Interns receive a type "H" legitimation card if the duration of the internship exceeds 90 days [27].

The above are subject to Swiss law, in particular, legislation covering social security and taxation [28].

The type of legitimation card issued to interns who are citizens of the sending State and who have an official passport is determined on a case-by-case basis by the Swiss Mission upon prior request by the permanent mission.

6.2. Interns recruited in Switzerland

Foreign nationals already residing in Switzerland at the time they are hired as intern and who possess a residence permit or a permanent residence permit (B or C permit) are not issued a legitimation card, and the permanent mission does not need to register them at the Swiss Mission. The same applies to Swiss nationals.

Foreign students who hold a B permit for their studies must contact the Cantonal Population Office of their canton of residence to check whether and under what conditions they are permitted to do an internship in a permanent mission. They are not issued a legitimation card, and the permanent mission does not need to register them at the Swiss Mission.

The above are subject to Swiss law, in particular, legislation covering social security and taxation [29].

7. Seconded staff members

For the purposes of these guidelines, “seconded staff members” is understood to mean staff members who are seconded by a State to an international organisation based in Switzerland.

Seconded staff members remain employed and continue to be paid by their original employer (State). They remain insured under the social security scheme of their original employer. Regardless of the position they hold, seconded staff members are issued a type "G" legitimation

24 Information note on visas: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/visas-and-procedures-for-entering-switzerland

25 Form “Application to enter Switzerland”: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/BVkJ3YIDpQk5/Formulaire%20engagement%20stagiaire%20MP%20ENG%202025%20(003).pdf

26 Nationals of Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Principality of Andorra, Principality of Monaco, San Marino, Singapore, United Kingdom, Vatican, Member States of the EFTA and of the EU, as well as nationals of third States, holders of a valid residence permit or valid D visa issued by a Schengen State and a recognised and valid travel document.

27 The persons who are subject to the visa requirement to take up employment are authorised to live in Switzerland for maximum 90 days or for the duration of their visa. The persons who are not subject to the visa requirement to take up employment are authorised to live in Switzerland for 90 days.

28 Information note on social and taxation legislation: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/manual-non-staff-members-io-and-interns-pm-tax-and-social-legislations

29 Information note on social and taxation legislation: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/manual-non-staff-members-io-and-interns-pm-tax-and-social-legislations

card. The application for this legitimation card must be submitted by the international organisation to which the person is seconded. In principle, the period of secondment cannot exceed five years, and the number of seconded staff members within the international organisation must be reasonably proportionate.

The Swiss Mission agrees that a staff member seconded by a State to an international organisation is register by the permanent mission of the State who employs the person. In this case, they are treated as members of the permanent mission, which entitles them as well as their family members to a legitimation card. The Swiss Mission defines the type of legitimation card based on the person's official passport. The permanent mission must inform the Swiss Mission which international organisation the staff member has been sent to on secondment, specifying the period of secondment.

8. Employment hours of foreign local staff members

Local staff members, holding a legitimation card of type "E", are required to work full time for their permanent mission. The legitimation card they are issued as staff members does not permit them to work at the same time for another permanent mission or international organisation, nor on the Swiss labour market.

Local staff members living in Switzerland are nevertheless permitted under certain conditions to engage in a (non-commercial) gainful activity on the Swiss labour market.This type of activity is limited to ten hours per week and is subject to prior authorisation from the Cantonal Population Office of their place of residence [30], which consults the Swiss Mission before approving the application.

Upon a detailed written request by the permanent mission, foreign local staff members may be authorised by the Swiss Mission to work part time. The local staff member must, however, undertake in writing to not engage in any other type of gainful employment in Switzerland and must certify that they have adequate financial resources to meet their own needs and those of their family members. Family members of local staff members who are employed part time are not, in principle, issued a legitimation card.

9. Registration process

As soon as staff members take up their duties and as soon as their family members arrive in Switzerland, the permanent mission must register them with the Swiss Mission, provide by verbal note the Swiss Mission with all information and documents needed to issue a legitimation card and fill in the form "Application for an FDFA legitimation card" [31].

The address of the permanent mission, even on a provisional or temporary basis, is not accepted as the private residence of a member of staff. The permanent mission must inform the Swiss Mission of the exact (physical) address at which a member of staff is residing until permanent accommodation can be found. When the time comes, it must notify the Swiss Mission of the staff member's new address (see section 9.2).

For local staff and their family members, the permanent mission must also submit to the Swiss Mission the form "Declaration of guarantee in favour of a locally recruited staff member" [32] and the form "Declaration of guarantee in favour of the family of a locally recruited staff member" [33],

30 See Host State Ordinance, Article 21, paragraph 2 : https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2007/861/en

31 Application for an FDFA legitimation card: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/4o6shVQ8VTWM/Demande-carte-de-legitimation-MP_EN.2025.pdf

32 Form "Declaration of guarantee in favour of a locally recruited staff member": https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/uAXHQ4657G4L/for-gepmlocal_EN.pdf

33 Form "Declaration of guarantee in favour of the family of a locally recruited staff member": https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/dam/en/sd-web/x4DeTrrNlCvw/GEpmlocfam_EN.pdf

provided that these forms were not already submitted with a prior application for a Swiss entry permit to engage in gainful employment (see section 4.1).

The permanent missions must notify the Swiss Mission if a service staff member or local staff member works in the residence of the head of mission. The number of persons working in the residence of the head of mission must be reasonably proportionate.

The legitimation card is issued for the stated duration of the employment or in accordance with the validity of their passport, but in any case for a maximum duration of:

- five years for heads of mission (type “B” legitimation card), diplomatic staff members (type “C” legitimation card), administrative and technical staff members (type “D” legitimation card) and Swiss diplomatic staff members (type “S” legitimation card),
- two years for service staff members and local staff members (type “E” legitimation card),
- five years for Swiss local staff members ((type “R” legitimation card),
- five years for diplomatic agents with a B/C permit (type “T” legitimation card).

Family members are issued a legitimation card valid for the same period of time as the legitimation card issued to the principal beneficiary or according to the validity of their passport. Other family members will first receive a legitimation card valid for three months and then a legitimation card valid for one year and renewable (see section 2.7).

Persons who have not been duly registered by the permanent mission with the Swiss Mission are not permitted to work for the permanent mission and are not entitled to claim any privileges or immunities.

The Swiss Mission periodically requests the permanent mission to provide it with a complete list of their staff and their family members.

9.1. Renewal of legitimation cards

The permanent mission will return by verbal note any legitimation cards of staff members and their family members, which are about to expire, to the Swiss Mission for renewal. A recent photograph of each person, and, if necessary, a copy of any new passports issued to a person since the issuance of the previous legitimation card must be enclosed with the renewal application.

The Swiss Mission regularly deletes any legitimation cards in its database which have expired and which the permanent mission has not requested to renew.

9.2. Changes in the personal status of holders of a legitimation card

The permanent mission must inform by verbal note the Swiss Mission without delay of any changes in the personal status of staff members and their family members, namely:

- a change in marital status [34],
- marital separation involving spouses living apart,
- a change of address,
- a change of nationality,
- the acquisition of Swiss nationality.

When an administrative and technical staff member is promoted to diplomatic staff member, the permanent mission must request a change of legitimation card by means of a verbal note accompanied by the decree of appointment or the written decision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a copy of the new passport.

[34] As a result of marriage, the conclusion of a registered partnership, divorce, the dissolution of a registered partnership or the death of the spouse.

The same procedure applies when a spouse is appointed as a member of the diplomatic staff or a member of the administrative and technical staff.

9.3. Loss or theft of a legitimation card

In the event of the loss of a legitimation card, cardholders must immediately notify their permanent mission, indicating the circumstances surrounding the loss.

They are required to immediately report the theft of their legitimation card to the relevant police authorities (the theft can also be reported at the police station). If the card was stolen abroad, the theft must be reported to the relevant foreign police authorities.

The permanent mission must send by verbal note the report of loss or the theft report, along with an application for the renewal of a legitimation card, to the Swiss Mission.

9.4. Registration with residents' registry in the place of residence

Persons holding a legitimation card who are not Swiss nationals are exempted from the obligation to register with their residents' registry in their place of residence. They may however register voluntarily. If they wish to do so, they must provide the resident's registry with the necessary information [35].

9.5. Taking up residence in France

Staff members must first contact the French competent authorities to verify whether and under what conditions they are allowed to live in neighbouring France.

This rule does not apply to nationals of EU Members States [36] who have a right of establishment in an EU country.

10. End of the period of service

The permanent mission is required to notify by verbal note the Swiss Mission without delay of the end of the period of service of its staff members, indicating the exact date of the end of the period of service. The same procedure applies to family members who permanently leave Switzerland before the end of the principal beneficiary's period of service.

The permanent mission must return by verbal note the legitimation cards of the persons concerned to the Swiss Mission for cancellation on or before the expiry date of the courtesy period (see section 11).

11. Courtesy periods

Staff members are automatically granted a courtesy period of two months from the exact date of the end of their period of service. Family members are granted the same courtesy period. This period gives those concerned time to organise their final departure from Switzerland, to make arrangements if they decide to stay on in Switzerland [37], or to find a new job in an international organisation or a foreign representation.

---

35 The Population and Migration Office of the Canton of Geneva published online a registration form for persons holding a legitimation card ("formulaire OI") : https://www.ge.ch/en/announcing-my-arrival-ocpm/arrival-announcement-legitimation-card-holder

36 EU Member States (27): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

37 Information on staying in Switzerland beyond the end of the period of service: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/manual-stay-in-switzerland

The permanent mission is required to notify the Swiss Mission without delay of the end of the period of service of its staff members, in accordance with section 10. It may not wait until the courtesy period expires to do so.

During the courtesy period, those concerned may keep their legitimation card, which they will be required to return through the permanent mission to the Swiss Mission at the latest on expiry of the courtesy period. If the legitimation card of a person concerned expires before the end of the courtesy period, the Swiss Mission will renew the card for the necessary period upon prior request by the permanent mission.

Those who are not nationals of a Member State of the Schengen Area [38] must leave Switzerland while their legitimation card is still valid and before the courtesy period expires. They must show their legitimation card to the Swiss border police and to the foreign border police when travelling through a Schengen State to reach their destination country. They must return their legitimation card to the Swiss Mission through the permanent mission or the local Swiss representation upon arrival in their destination country.

Staff members who have a private household employee [39] working for them must terminate the employment contract of the employee on or before the date of end of their period of service. During the courtesy period granted to the employer, the private household employee is no longer permitted to work for them.

11.1. Courtesy period granted to retiring staff members

Retiring staff members may request a courtesy period of three months for themselves and their family members to organise their final departure from Switzerland or to make arrangements if they decide to stay on in Switzerland [40]. The detailed request must be submitted by the permanent mission to the Swiss Mission in the form of a verbal note and while the staff member is still employed.

11.2. Other courtesy periods granted to family members

Depending on the circumstances, a courtesy period exceeding two months may be granted to family members upon a detailed request by verbal note by the permanent mission to the Swiss Mission, for example, in the event of the principal beneficiary's death or if the latter is transferred abroad.

In the event that the principal beneficiary is transferred abroad, the Swiss Mission may grant a courtesy period of up to six months, allowing children to complete the current school year and the spouse to stay with them.

11.3. Status of persons with diplomatic status during the courtesy period

During the courtesy period, holders of a type "B" or "C" legitimation card no longer have customs privileges. This means they no longer have access to the duty-free shop, no longer have the right to import goods free of duty and must return their duty-free petrol card to the competent UNOG service.

---

38 Schengen Area Member States (29): Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

39 Ordinance on Private Household Employees and appendices: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/manual-private-employees-private-household-employees-ordinance-of-6-june-2011

40 Information note on staying in Switzerland beyond the end of the period of service: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/manual-stay-in-switzerland

They must return the “CD” diplomatic licence plates of their private vehicle/s to the Cantonal Department of Motor Vehicles of their place of residence by the expiry date of the courtesy period or at the latest by the date specified by said department.

11.4. Family members holding a Ci permit

During the courtesy period, holders of a Ci permit [41] no longer have access to the Swiss labour market under this simplified procedure. They must return their permit to the Cantonal Population Office of their place of residence. However, they may request authorisation from the Cantonal Population Office to end their gainful employment within a reasonable period.

* * * * *

41 Information note on the Ci permit: https://www.mission-geneve.dfae.admin.ch/en/manual-members-of-family