



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Justice and Police FDJP  
**State Secretariat for Migration SEM**

# Information for people from Ukraine seeking protection

To help you get your bearings, here is some useful information about protection status S and about life in Switzerland.

## Protection status S

Switzerland grants temporary protection to refugees from Ukraine as long as the serious threat in their home country persists. The persons concerned do not have to go through an asylum procedure, but are granted protection status S in a fast-track procedure.

### Protection status S applies to the following:

- a. Ukrainian citizens seeking protection and their family members (partners, minor children and other close relatives who were fully or partially supported at the time of the flight) who were resident in Ukraine before 24 February 2022.
- b. Persons seeking protection of other nationalities and stateless persons as well as their family members as defined in letter a, who had an international or national protection status in Ukraine before 24 February 2022.
- c. Persons seeking protection of other nationalities and stateless persons as well as their family members as defined in letter a, who can prove with a valid short-term residence or residence permit that they have a valid right of residence in Ukraine and cannot return to their home countries in safety and permanently.

Under protection status S, the persons concerned receive an S permit. This is limited to a maximum of one year, but can be extended. After five years, persons in need of protection may receive a B residence permit, which is valid until the temporary protection is lifted.



## Federalism

Switzerland is a federalist country comprising the federal government, the cantons and the communes. Each level of government has its own tasks. The federal authorities, i.e. the State Secretariat for Migration SEM, are responsible for the procedure to grant you protection status S. SEM will then allocate you to one of the 26 cantons. This is where you will live and the canton, together with the commune, is then responsible for many aspects of your stay in Switzerland.



## Procedure

The procedure to obtain protection status S is as follows:

- › You can submit your application for protection status S online via the RegisterMe web portal (<https://registerme.admin.ch>). You then book an appointment to register at a federal asylum centre. The requirement is that you were resident in Ukraine before 24.02.2022 and have already entered Switzerland
- › At the federal asylum centre you complete a written form and provide your fingerprints. You will be given free legal advice at the federal asylum centre where you are staying. The purpose is to establish your identity and to be able to decide whether you are eligible for protection status S.
- › In certain cases, a brief interview is conducted to clear up any questions. Here, too, legal advice is provided.
- › The form you have filled out will be checked within a few days and you will receive a decision regarding the granting of protection status S. If you are staying in cantonal or private accommodation, you will receive the decision by post. If you are staying at a federal asylum centre, you will be given the notification letter in person.
- › You will receive information on the issuing of your physical S permit directly from the canton in which you are staying. This is irrespective of whether you are staying in cantonal or private accommodation.



## Accommodation

As part of the protection status S procedure, SEM will assign you accommodation in one of Switzerland's 26 cantons. This is either official accommodation organised by the canton or private accommodation in someone's home. If you cannot go to this accommodation on the same day, you will temporarily stay at the federal asylum centre. If you already have independently organised accommodation in Switzerland and would like to continue staying there, you must bring the confirmation of private accommodation [www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/sem/aktuell/ukraine-krieg.html](http://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/sem/aktuell/ukraine-krieg.html) (see section on Cantonal allocation) with you to the registration appointment at the federal asylum centre. SEM will examine your request at the time of registration and inform you whether it can be granted.



## Change of address

› Before obtaining Protection status S

Please remain at the accommodation allocated to you until you receive the decision on protection status S. This is extremely important so that SEM can process your application for temporary protection and send you the decision by post. If you have to change address urgently, contact SEM immediately.

› After obtaining protection status S

Generally speaking, you must live in the canton to which you have been allocated. The cantonal authorities must be notified of any change of address within the canton. If you wish to change canton, you must submit an application to SEM (State Secretariat for Migration, Ukraine Change of Canton Taskforce, Quellenweg 6, 3003 Bern-Wabern).



## Employment

If you have protection status S, you can apply for work, but you must have a work permit. You may work in a different canton from where you live. If you are employed by a company, your employer must apply for a work permit from the canton of the place of work before you start. The canton will check whether the employer complies with the applicable salary and employment conditions customary in the region and sector. If you are self-employed, you must apply for the work permit yourself from the canton of the place you work. The canton will check whether you fulfil the financial

and operational requirements of the work you wish to perform. If you work from home for a foreign employer (e.g. for your previous employer from your home country) or you wish to pursue your previous self-employed activity in a field that has no connection to Switzerland, you do not require a work permit. If you have protection status S and are looking for work, you can register with the public employment service and receive help in finding work.



### **Social welfare assistance**

If you cannot support yourself, you will receive social welfare assistance from the canton where you live. This covers the basic needs of daily life in Switzerland and can take the form of non-cash benefits (accommodation, food, toiletries, etc.) and/or money. The canton where you live is responsible for these arrangements.

You can obtain further information at [www.sodk.ch/de/ukraine](http://www.sodk.ch/de/ukraine) and from your canton.



### **School / Education**

#### › Compulsory education

Children have the right to go to school. Please contact the commune where you live for information about your child's school education.

#### › Higher education

For admission to higher education, the admission regulations of the respective higher education institution apply. You can find further information at [www.swissuniversities.ch](http://www.swissuniversities.ch).

#### › Vocational Education and Training

To begin a vocational education and training course you need to have a work permit (see 'Employment'). This also applies for training courses that prepare you for a VET programme involving work placement, such as integration pre-apprenticeships ([www.sem.admin.ch/invol](http://www.sem.admin.ch/invol)).

For further information on VET programmes, higher education, the recognition of diplomas or other education-related topics, you can contact your local careers advice centre ([www.berufsberatung.ch](http://www.berufsberatung.ch)).



## Language courses and further support services

Persons with protection status S have access to various support services, including special language courses. The integration office of your canton can provide further information on what services are available. You will find further information here: [www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/sem/kontakt/kantonale\\_behoerden/kantonale\\_ansprechstellen.html](http://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/de/home/sem/kontakt/kantonale_behoerden/kantonale_ansprechstellen.html)



## Healthcare

In terms of your health, we recommend that you complete the online questionnaire MM-Mobile Health Check ([www.mm-mobile.ch](http://www.mm-mobile.ch)) upon arriving in Switzerland. By answering a few questions and give you an indication of whether you need to see a doctor. If you hold protection status S and are dependent on social assistance, you will be covered by health and accident insurance through your canton from the date when you applied for protection status S. If you are not dependent on social assistance, you will have to go about complying with the requirement to hold health insurance yourself by taking out health insurance within three months of submitting your application – with retroactive effect from the date of the application. You will have to pay the premiums and co-payments yourself. Your health insurance gives you access to doctors and hospitals in Switzerland. The cantonal authorities can tell you what doctors you may consult.

### In emergencies:

- › for life-threatening emergencies: the ambulance service (144) or the accident and emergency unit of the nearest hospital
- › for non-life-threatening emergencies: a medical practitioner (doctor)

Medication that has been prescribed by a doctor and for which you have a valid prescription is generally paid for by your health insurance. You can obtain your medication from a pharmacy.

Further information on healthcare in Switzerland is available at <https://www.migesplus.ch/en/topics/ukraine>.



### **Pets**

Are you travelling with dogs or cats? These animals can contract rabies, so special regulations apply when entering Switzerland. You must register your animals on arrival in Switzerland and state whether they have been vaccinated against rabies. You will find further information here: [www.blv.admin.ch/blv/de/home/tiere/reisen-mit-heimtieren.html](http://www.blv.admin.ch/blv/de/home/tiere/reisen-mit-heimtieren.html)



### **Family reunification**

If your family members are seeking protection and do not require a visa (e.g. Ukrainian nationals with a biometric passport), they are permitted to enter Switzerland and apply for protection status on their own. If your family members are seeking protection and require a visa, then they have to contact a Swiss diplomatic mission or consular post abroad. You also have the option of submitting a written application for family reunification for your family members (partner and minor children) to SEM (State Secretariat for Migration SEM, Quellenweg 6, 3003 Bern-Wabern), stating the N number.



### **Human trafficking or other forms of abuse**

- › Are you being forced to do things you do not want to do?
- › Are you being supervised and controlled?
- › Are you being threatened or subject to violence?
- › Is someone restricting your freedom of movement?

If so, contact the authorities immediately for help:

In the federal asylum centres (FAC): Contact the security staff or supervisors at the federal asylum centre where you are staying.

In the cantons: Victim Support Switzerland ([www.opferhilfe-schweiz.ch](http://www.opferhilfe-schweiz.ch))

Emergency services

Police: 117

Ambulance: 144

You can find further information and advice at <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/asyl/menschenhandel/kampagne.html>



## War crimes

Have you been a victim of, or witnessed, a war crime in Ukraine during the current conflict? Do you have any evidence of such events (e.g. documents, photos, videos or other evidence)? If so, you can contact the Federal Office of Police fedpol:

[www.fedpol.admin.ch/fedpol/de/home/kriminalitaet/meldeformular-ukr.html](http://www.fedpol.admin.ch/fedpol/de/home/kriminalitaet/meldeformular-ukr.html)



Helpline Ukraine:  
[ukraine@sem.admin.ch](mailto:ukraine@sem.admin.ch) oder  
+41 (0)58 465 99 11

Emergency numbers in Switzerland

Police: 117  
Ambulance: 144  
Fire services: 118  
Assistance in the event of  
poisoning: 145

Ukrainian Embassy in Switzerland  
Feldeggweg 5  
3005 Bern

Tel.: +41 (0)31 352 23 16

Web: <https://switzerland.mfa.gov.ua/>

## Important contacts and addresses

State Secretariat for Migration SEM

You can find information on the Ukraine crisis and answers to frequently asked questions at [www.sem.admin.ch](http://www.sem.admin.ch)

You will find information on protection status S, life at a federal asylum centre and on life in Switzerland in the Asyl-Info app ([www.asylum-info.ch](http://www.asylum-info.ch)).

## Cantonal authorities

You can find information from the individual cantonal authorities regarding Ukraine at: [www.asylum-info.ch/de/news#anlaufstellen-in-den-kantonen](http://www.asylum-info.ch/de/news#anlaufstellen-in-den-kantonen)

