

Global Immigration alert

June 2025

Switzerland

Proposal to introduce restrictions on Protection Status S for Ukrainian nationals

Executive summary

On 25 June 2025, the Swiss Federal Council launched a consultation on proposed reforms to the Protection Status S framework for persons fleeing Ukraine. The key measures include narrowing eligibility criteria based on geographic origin and tightening travel restrictions to Ukraine for current status holders. While no automatic withdrawal of existing permits is foreseen at this stage, stricter renewal conditions may be introduced in the future.

Background

Since March 2022, Switzerland has granted Protection Status S to individuals fleeing the conflict in Ukraine and offered these individuals temporary resident status in Switzerland without requiring them to apply for asylum. As the conflict continues to evolve, the Swiss Federal Council announced on 25 June 2025 the launch of a public consultation to revise and update the criteria for granting and maintaining this status. The review aims to refine eligibility criteria, reinforce the temporary nature of the status, and ensure alignment with Switzerland's broader migration and protection policies.

Key developments

The proposed reforms include a recommendation that going forward, only individuals originating from regions in Ukraine "where life or physical integrity is concretely at risk" would qualify for Protection Status S. According to the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), several regions in western Ukraine are currently not experiencing active hostilities and may soon be classified as "safe". Under the proposed reforms, individuals from such areas would no longer automatically benefit from Status S, and they would only qualify under exceptional circumstances. The SEM would be responsible for regularly reviewing and updating the list of safe and unsafe regions.

The proposed reforms also recommend implementing stricter rules governing return visits to Ukraine. The current limit of 15 days per quarter would be reduced to 15 days per six-month period. Repeated or prolonged stays in Ukraine would result in the forfeiture of Status S. The proposed reforms do not recommend retroactive cancellations of status.

The consultation on the proposed reforms involves coordination with cantonal authorities, NGOs, and the UNHCR. If adopted, it is expected that the proposed reforms would go into effect by the end of October 2025.

Impact on employers

With the (full or partial) implementation of the proposed reforms expected before the end of calendar year 2025, employers may remain abreast of the developments related to the proposed reforms, consider alternative immigration options and inform impacted employees to mitigate delays, loss of immigration status in Switzerland and business disruptions. Employers may expect changes in eligibility requirements for holders of Protection Status S, particularly individuals from regions likely to be classified as "safe". This may affect future assignments or planned hires under this status.

Key steps

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



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