



Media release

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Biometric data required of visa applicants to Switzerland

The Embassy of Switzerland in China and the Consulate General of Switzerland in Shanghai and Guangzhou would like to draw the attention of visa applicants to the introduction of the Visa Information System (VIS), a system for the exchange of visa data among Schengen Member States. According to the new system, as from 12 October 2015, all applicants applying for a visa to Switzerland and other Schengen Member States are required to provide their biometric data-10 fingerprints and a digital photograph.

The VIS is to facilitate visa application procedures and checks at external border of the European Union, as well as enhance security. The recourse to biometric technology will better protect visa applicants against identity theft and prevent false identifications, which in certain cases lead to a refusal of a visa or entry to a person who is entitled to enter. This also allows to establish more easily the lawful use of previous visas and applicants' travel history, for example, when applying for a multiple-entry visa.

Who is concerned: All applicants applying for a visa to Switzerland and other Schengen Member States.

The procedure: When applying for the first time, applicants are required to appear in person at the Embassy, a consulate or its external service provider TLScontact. 10 fingerprints will be scanned with fingerprint scanners at the visa providers and the simple and discreet procedure should take no more than 5 minutes.

The biometric data, along with the data provided in the Schengen visa application form, will be recorded in the VIS database and stored for five years. Frequent travellers only need to complete the procedure once within this period, as the fingerprints will be copied from the previous application file in the VIS.

Exemptions: 10-digit finger scans are neither required from children under the age of 12 nor from people who cannot physically provide finger scans.

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Where to apply:

Residents of Shanghai, Jiangsu, Anhui and Zhejiang shall apply at the Consulate General in Shanghai.

Residents of Guangdong, Fujian, Guangxi, Hainan, Jiangxi and Hunan shall apply at the Consulate General in Guangzhou.

All others residents of China shall apply at the Swiss Embassy in Beijing or its external service provider TLScontact. Residents of Mongolia and Democratic People's Republic of Korea shall apply at the Swiss Embassy in Beijing.

For more information:

Please visit: www.eda.admin.ch/beijing; or call (010) 8532 8888 or send emails to: bei.visa@eda.admin.ch.

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Embassy of Switzerland in China official website: www.eda.admin.ch/beijing

Official website of 65th anniversary of bilateral relations between Switzerland and China: www.Swtizerland65China.com

Embassy of Switzerland in China Weibo: @瑞士驻华大使馆

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