Swiss Federal Council decides that asylum seekers may travel abroad only in exceptional cases

The Swiss Federal Council has decided that asylum seekers, temporarily admitted persons and individuals under protection will, in principle, no longer be permitted to travel abroad, including to their country of origin or any other country. The State Secretariat for Migration will only be able to authorize such travel in exceptional cases, as mandated by Parliament. However, Ukrainian nationals with protection status S are exempt from this general travel ban. The Federal Council launched a consultation on 22 October 2025 regarding the necessary ordinance amendments and a special regulation.

Although the Federal Parliament adopted new travel restrictions on 17 December2021, for asylum seekers and temporarily admitted persons, these provisions have not yet entered into force. The delay stems from the activation of protection status S on 11 March 2022, which allowed Ukrainian refugees to travel freely. Following further review, on 1 May 2024, the Federal Council instructed the Federal Department of Justice and Police to prepare a special regulation for Ukrainians with protection status S.

To implement the new travel restrictions, several ordinances must be amended to define the exceptional personal reasons that could justify travel authorization by the SEM and to clarify under what conditions temporarily admitted persons or those under protection may return to their country of origin to prepare for a voluntary and permanent departure.

The special exemption for Ukrainians under protection status S will remain valid as long as this status is maintained but will not apply in future cases where the status might be reactivated in another context. Additionally, as of 8 October 2025, protection status S holders are allowed to stay in Ukraine for up to 15 days per half-year (instead of 15 days per quarter).

The consultation on these regulatory amendments and the special arrangement will run until 5 February 2026.

Source(s)

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- State Secretariat for Migration | Staatssekretariat für Migration | Secrétariat d'État aux migrations | Segreteria di Stato della migrazione (22 October, 2025), Les personnes qui relèvent du domaine de l'asile ne pourront plus voyager à l'étranger qu'à titre exceptionnel [Persons who fall within the scope of asylum will only be able to travel abroad on an exceptional basis], https://www.news.admin.ch/fr/newnsb/7PTbQjRrNVqL

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