

**CIRCULAR NOTE No. 5**

**ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS  
ACCREDITATION AND FOLLOWING OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
INFORMATION ON CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM**

The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of the Swiss Confederation has the pleasure to invite the representatives of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) to follow the 21<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Council Meeting of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) that will be held in Basel on 4 and 5 December 2014.

**1. Venue**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council will be held in Basel on 4 and 5 December 2014 at the Basel Exhibition Center, located at Messeplatz 1, 4005 Basel, Switzerland. The official website of the Basel Exhibition Center is [www.messe.ch/basel](http://www.messe.ch/basel).

NGO representatives will be able to follow the proceedings of the Ministerial Council meeting according to the provisions of the Rules of procedure of the OSCE (MC.DOC/1/06 of 1 November 2006) part IV., IV.2 (B) paragraph 6: "Only the opening and closing sessions shall be open to the press and the public, unless the meeting decides to make the other sessions open. Unless otherwise decided, all sessions, except for those taking up agenda items which are subject to discussion and possible decision shall be broadcast live in all working languages to the media and NGO by closed-circuit television."

Not more than 20 NGO representatives will be able to be present in the Main Plenary Hall during the opening and closing sessions.

The live broadcast through closed-circuit television will be provided at the media center of the Basel Exhibition Center.

**2. Facilities for NGOs**

NGO representatives will have full use of the media center. There will be dedicated IT facilities, including wireless internet connection. A room will also be made available for use by representatives of NGOs, including workplaces and PCs.

The media center will be open as follows:

- Wednesday, 3 December (the day prior to the arrival of the Heads of Delegations) 10:00 hrs – 18:00hrs
- Thursday, 4 December 06:00 hrs – 22:00 hrs
- Friday, 5 December 08:00 hrs – 22:00 hrs

The entire venue will be a secured area, with access possible only with a badge. Accreditation badges can be picked up at the accreditation desk at the entrance of the conference venue starting from Wednesday, 3 December 2014.

On Thursday, 4 December NGO representatives need to be inside the media center before 07:15 hrs if they wish to be present for the opening session of the Ministerial Council.

### 3. Registration and Accreditation

Registration for NGO representatives is mandatory. Accreditation on a self-registration basis will take place via a dedicated online registration platform which will be available from 6 October 2014 at [www.osceministerial2014.ch](http://www.osceministerial2014.ch). **The deadline for registration is Friday 14 November 2014.**

When visiting the platform for the first time, NGO representatives are kindly asked to create a personal profile. After having entered the details, a link will be sent to the NGO representative's email address in order to verify the account.

To complete the accreditation process with ease, NGO representatives are kindly requested to have their **passport details** ready in order to provide all the necessary information. Furthermore, they will be asked to upload a **colour photograph** which will be used for the badge onsite.

When starting the accreditation process, NGO representatives will need to select the category "NGO" to submit details. Only English language should be used to fill in the required fields.

All personal data sent to the organizer of the event will be treated in accordance with the highest security and national and international data protection standards.

After all the required fields have been filled in properly, the NGO representative will be notified via email that the accreditation application has been received.

Once the accreditation application has been processed and approved, a confirmation will be sent to the NGO representative's email address.

Any queries in relation to the online registration platform that are not answered on [www.osceministerial2014.ch](http://www.osceministerial2014.ch) may be addressed to the following email address: [osce.accreditation@congrex-switzerland.com](mailto:osce.accreditation@congrex-switzerland.com).

### 4. Accommodation

Arrangements have been made with a hotel agency (Congrex Switzerland Ltd) that will provide a choice of hotels for NGO representatives in the city of Basel and close surroundings. The bookings should be made through the hotel agency via the hotel booking platform on [www.osceministerial2014.ch](http://www.osceministerial2014.ch).

The Swiss Chairmanship strongly recommends that NGO representatives make their bookings through the official hotel agency. Hotel rooms will be allocated on a first come and first served basis. For planning and capacity reasons an early booking is much appreciated.

NGO representatives will be able to choose from different hotel price categories. The hotel allocation will then be done by the hotel agency. To secure the booking, the first night has to be paid in advance. Information regarding booking, payment, refund and modifications is available on the booking platform.

For questions not being answered on [www.osceministerial2014.ch](http://www.osceministerial2014.ch) the hotel agency can also be contacted through [osce.hotel@congrex-switzerland.com](mailto:osce.hotel@congrex-switzerland.com).

### 5. Transport

#### 5.1. Flight booking

There are daily regular flights to Basel from a large number of European capitals. NGO representatives are advised to arrange their arrivals at EuroAirport Basel ([www.euroairport.com/en/](http://www.euroairport.com/en/)) and Zurich Airport ([www.zurich-airport.com/](http://www.zurich-airport.com/)) on regular commercial flights.

- Arrival at EuroAirport Basel: free public shuttle services will be available between EuroAirport Basel and Central Basel.
- Arrival at Zurich Airport: direct train connections to Basel main train station (Basel SBB) are available every hour (1 hour journey time only). Train tickets can be bought at the station or on the Swiss Federal Railways website ([www.sbb.ch/en](http://www.sbb.ch/en)). A valid ticket is required before boarding a train.

There will be OSCE information desks at the EuroAirport Basel (Baggage Claim Area), Zurich Airport (Arrival 1) and in front of Basel main train station.

#### **5.4. Transport within the city of Basel**

The conference venue and the hotels in Basel are very well connected by public transportation. All NGO representatives will have free access to public transport within the city of Basel for the entire duration of their stay. Staff will be ready to assist NGO representatives with inquiries regarding public transport.

#### **6. Visa**

Visa requirements must be met before arrival in Switzerland.

Please refer to the annex for a detailed list of states, whose citizens require a visa for Switzerland. The annex contains information on the responsible embassy/consulate issuing the visa.

NGO representatives requiring an entry visa must submit their request to the competent authorities **at least 20 days before their expected travel date**. In general, the competent authority is the Swiss embassy or consulate in their country of residence. In addition, Switzerland has agreements with certain Schengen states that allow them to issue visas on its behalf where Switzerland is not represented. NGO representatives are advised to check with the competent representation if such agreements apply for their case.

The visa fee will be waived for all NGO representatives attending the 21<sup>st</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council.

Please note that Switzerland applies the European Schengen regulations concerning the issuance of visas. It is therefore necessary for the visa applicant to make an appointment with the Swiss embassy/consulate in their country of residence and present themselves in person to submit and register their biometric data.

#### **The following documents must be submitted when applying for a visa:**

- A completed application form for short stays (download at <https://www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise/visumantragsformular.html> )
- A valid travel document (must be valid for at least three months after the date on which the NGO representative plans to leave Switzerland and must have been issued within the last ten years) including a copy
- One 35-40 mm colour photograph, not older than six months
- Proof of health insurance (for holders of an ordinary passport only)
- E-Mail which confirms the accreditation to the OSCE Ministerial Council 2014

More general information about visas:

[www.bfm.admin.ch/content/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise.html](http://www.bfm.admin.ch/content/bfm/en/home/themen/einreise.html)

Overview of ID and visa provisions according to nationality:

<https://www.bfm.admin.ch/dam/data/bfm/rechtsgrundlagen/weisungen/visa/bfm/bfm-anh01-liste1-e.pdf>

Further information on the nearest embassy or consulate issuing Swiss visas:

<http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/rebs.html>

In case of visa problems, please contact the responsible embassy/consulate according to the list in the annex.

## **7. General Information**

### **7.1. Currency**

Switzerland's official currency is the Swiss Franc (CHF, sFr, Fr.). One franc = 100 Rappen [German] / centimes [French], the smallest coin in use is 5 Rp/cts. It is recommended to have a small amount of cash (CHF 50) on hand upon arrival in Switzerland or to change at the airport / railway station for immediate expenses.

### **7.2. Business hours**

Shops are open from Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 7:00 pm, on Saturdays 8:30 am to 6:00 pm. On Sundays most shops are closed.

### **7.3. Banks and credit cards**

Banks are open from Monday to Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm. Almost all banks have automated teller machines (ATMs) that accept foreign bank cards and are accessible from outside (look for "Bancomat"). Please check with your local bank before departure whether your bank card is valid in Switzerland.

Credit cards, such as American Express, Master Card and Visa are generally accepted in Switzerland.

### **7.4. Electricity supply**

The electric current used throughout Switzerland is 230 Volts AC, 50 cycles (continental European standard). Wall outlets are unique to Switzerland, however. Compatibility with other continental European plugs is limited: the standard continental type hexagonal plug with two round pins (Euroconnectors, pin distance 19 mm [3/4 inch], pin diameter 4.0 mm [1/6 inch]), used for many electric travel products, may be used without problem. Adaptors for other plugs are available in most hotels and in supermarkets. Please note that German / French / Austrian plugs with thick pins (diameter 4.8 mm [1/5 inch]) and Italian plugs with three thin pins in a row are not compatible with Swiss wall outlets, despite the equal distance of their two main pins.

### **7.5. Climate**

In December, the average minimum temperature in Basel is -1°C and the average maximum temperature is 4°C.

### **7.6. Time**

UTC/GMT +1 hour

**The Swiss Chairmanship would like to draw the attention of the representatives of NGOs to the Parallel Civil Society Conference that takes place at the margins of the Ministerial Council, from 1 to 3 December 2014 in Basel.**

Registration for this conference is open at <http://civicsolidarity.org/registration>. In case of any questions regarding this event, please consult the following website: <http://civicsolidarity.org/osce-parallel-civil-society-conference-2014> or contact the Organising Committee at [parallel.conference@gmail.com](mailto:parallel.conference@gmail.com).



## Visa requirement for NGO representatives for the 21<sup>st</sup> Ministerial Council

### OSCE Participating State

| Country                | Ordinary Passports            | Embassy responsible  |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Albania                | No visa required <sup>1</sup> | <a href="#">Swiss Regional Consular Center Western Balkans in Pristina</a> or <a href="#">Embassy of Austria in Tirana</a> |
| Andorra                | No visa required              |  |
| Armenia                | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Tbilisi</a> or <a href="#">Embassy of Poland in Yerevan</a>                          |
| Austria                | No visa required              |  |
| Azerbaijan             | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Baku</a>   |
| Belarus                | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Moscow</a> or <a href="#">Embassy of Hungary in Minsk</a>                            |
| Belgium                | No visa required              |  |
| Bosnia and Herzegovina | No visa required <sup>1</sup> | <a href="#">Swiss Regional Consular Center Vienna</a> or <a href="#">Embassy of Slovenia in Sarajevo</a>                   |
| Bulgaria               | No visa required              |  |
| Canada                 | No visa required              |  |
| Croatia                | No visa required              |  |
| Cyprus                 | No visa required              |  |
| Czech Republic         | No visa required              |  |
| Denmark                | No visa required              |  |
| Estonia                | No visa required              |  |
| Finland                | No visa required              |  |
| France                 | No visa required              |  |
| Georgia                | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Tbilisi</a>  |

<sup>1</sup> The visa requirement exemption applies only to holders of biometric passports.

<sup>2</sup> Third state members in possession of both a valid residence permit issued by a Schengen member state or a valid type D visa in conjunction with a recognized travel document are exempt from visa requirements.



| Country       | Ordinary Passports            | Embassy responsible  |
|---------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Germany       | No visa required              |  |
| Greece        | No visa required              |  |
| Holy See      | No visa required              |  |
| Hungary       | No visa required              |  |
| Iceland       | No visa required              |  |
| Ireland       | No visa required              |  |
| Italy         | No visa required              |  |
| Kazakhstan    | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Astana</a> or <a href="#">Embassy of France in Almaty</a>                                    |
| Kyrgyzstan    | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Bishkek</a>  |
| Latvia        | No visa required              |  |
| Liechtenstein | No visa required              |  |
| Lithuania     | No visa required              |  |
| Luxembourg    | No visa required              |  |
| Malta         | No visa required              |  |
| Moldova       | No visa required <sup>1</sup> | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Kiev</a> or <a href="#">Common Application Center of the Republic of Hungary in Chisinau</a> |
| Monaco        | No visa required              |  |
| Mongolia      | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Beijing</a>  |
| Montenegro    | No visa required <sup>1</sup> | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Belgrade</a>   |
| Netherlands   | No visa required              |  |
| Norway        | No visa required              |  |
| Poland        | No visa required              |  |
| Portugal      | No visa required              |  |



| Country                                   | Ordinary Passports            | Embassy responsible  |
|---|-------------------------------|--|
| Romania                                   | No visa required              |  |
| Russian Federation                        | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Swiss Embassy in Moscow</a>  |
| San Marino                                | No visa required              |  |
| Serbia                                    | No visa required <sup>1</sup> | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Belgrade</a>   |
| Slovakia                                  | No visa required              |  |
| Slovenia                                  | No visa required              |  |
| Spain                                     | No visa required              |  |
| Sweden                                    | No visa required              |  |
| Tajikistan                                | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Kazakhstan</a>   |
| the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia | No visa required <sup>1</sup> | <a href="#">Swiss Regional Consular Center Western Balkans in Pristina</a> or <a href="#">Embassy of Austria in Skopje</a> |
| Turkey                                    | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Swiss Consulate General in Istanbul</a>  |
| Turkmenistan                              | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Baku</a> or <a href="#">Embassy of France in Ashgabat</a>                            |
| Ukraine                                   | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Kiev</a>   |
| United Kingdom                            | No visa required              |  |
| USA                                       | No visa required              |  |
| Uzbekistan                                | Visa required <sup>2</sup>    | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Tashkent</a>   |



## OSCE Partners for Co-operation

| <b>Country</b>    | <b>Ordinary Passports</b>  | <b>Embassy responsible</b>                          |
|-------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Afghanistan       | Visa required <sup>2</sup> | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Islamabad</a> |
| Algeria           | Visa required <sup>2</sup> | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Algiers</a>   |
| Australia         | No visa required           |   |
| Egypt             | Visa required <sup>2</sup> | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Cairo</a>     |
| Israel            | No visa required           |   |
| Japan             | No visa required           |   |
| Jordan            | Visa required <sup>2</sup> | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Amman</a>     |
| Morocco           | Visa required <sup>2</sup> | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Rabat</a>     |
| Republic of Korea | No visa required           |   |
| Thailand          | Visa required <sup>2</sup> | <a href="#">Regional Consular Center Bangkok</a>    |
| Tunisia           | Visa required <sup>2</sup> | <a href="#">Embassy of Switzerland in Tunisia</a>   |