The EES system comes into force in Switzerland and the Schengen countries

The EES is a new system for controlling the borders of the Schengen area. Switzerland, which is part of Schengen, has started to use it at all its international airports.

What are the new changes?

• When a person enters or leaves the Schengen area, their information is recorded *electronically*, instead of stamping their passport manually;

• The system *automatically* calculates how long a person can stay in Switzerland. The authorities can see if someone has exceeded their length of stay or has not complied with the conditions of their visa;

• The border police and migration authorities can find out whether a person has already travelled within the Schengen area. This will help them decide whether to allow them to enter and grant them a visa again or not;

• In Switzerland, *a photo of the person's face and their fingerprints are also taken*. This will make it easier to identify people who are travelling without documents or who are travelling under a false identity.

This new system only applies to people coming from third-party countries – those that are not part of the Schengen area. It does *not* apply to Swiss nationals or citizens of EU or EFTA countries, nor does it apply to people who come from third-party countries but *already have a valid residence permit* (e.g. a Swiss B permit or a residence permit in a Schengen country).

In practical terms:

If you are travelling to Switzerland from a non-Schengen country, your photograph and fingerprints will be taken at the airport. Your date of entry will be recorded electronically in the system.

Normally, the entry requirements for Schengen countries allow you to stay for up to 90 days. When you leave Switzerland, your photograph and fingerprints will be taken again.

If you leave Switzerland after more than 90 days, the system will automatically calculate the length of your stay and determine whether you have exceeded the conditions of your visa or your visit.

This information will be shared across all Schengen countries and will be used by border police to determine whether or not to allow you to enter the Schengen area the next time you wish to do so.

In other words, if you spend more than 90 days in Switzerland without papers, you risk not being able to return if you leave the territory! And not only to Switzerland, but to all countries in the Schengen area.

At the SIT, we have noticed a hardening of conditions for undocumented workers: at the border, by the police and by the immigration authorities. ***Be mindful of care of yourself and don't forget to come to the SIT to stay informed about your rights!***

For more information on the ESS system:

https://www.vbs.admin.ch/fr/newnsb/fUgE_ISPa4Y42a9iBjqct

https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/fr/home/themen/einreise/fachinfo-einreise/informationssysteme-schengen/ees.html

https://www.gva.ch/fr/Site/Passagers/Preparation-voyage/Demarches-administratives/Visas-Papiers-identite/Nouveau-systeme-europeen-de-passage-aux-frontieres

https://travel-europe.europa.eu/fr/ees