

LIVING AND WORKING IN SWITZERLAND

Important addresses

**State Secretariat for Economic
Affairs (SECO)**
Labour Directorate / EURES
Effingerstrasse 31
3003 Berne/Switzerland
info@eures.ch
www.eures.ch
www.job-area.ch
Hotline: +41 31 323 25 25

Federal Office for Migration (FOM)
EURES
Quellenweg 6
3003 Berne-Wabern/Switzerland
euresinfo@bfm.admin.ch
www.bfm.admin.ch



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra



«Switzerland's cultural
diversity reflects its position
in the heart of Europe.»

Dr. Peter Elford, biologist, United Kingdom



+ COUNTRY + HISTORY + POLITICAL SYSTEM +
+ POPULATION + STAY + RIGHTS + PERMITS +

+ SWITZERLAND +

THE COUNTRY

The official name of Switzerland, Swiss Confederation, is derived from Latin (Confoederatio Helvetica), whence the country abbreviation CH. Switzerland lies in the centre of Europe, adjoining five countries: Italy to the south, Austria and the Principality of Liechtenstein to the east, Germany to the north and France to the west. A landlocked country, Switzerland has no direct access to the sea. Total area: approx. 41,300 km².

From an economic point of view, the country is highly competitive. Switzerland owes its prosperity to the industrial sector with its top-level technology, the chemical-pharmaceutical industry as well as to the service sector, which is characterised by a highly-developed banking and insurance sector.



THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Switzerland is a federal state composed of sovereign member states, or cantons. The «Everlasting Confederation» was entered into by the three ancient cantons of Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden in 1291, which is considered as the birth of Switzerland. Berne is the administrative capital of the Swiss Confederation.

According to the Federal Constitution, sovereignty and thus the highest political authority lies with the electorate in Switzerland. The people elect parliament, which in its turn elects the seven members of the government, the Federal Council. The legislative organ is the Federal Assembly, composed of two chambers vested with the same powers: the Council of States (46 representatives of the cantons) and the National Council (200 members allocated according to the strength of the parties).

Each 26 canton has its own constitution, parliament, government and courts. The division of competence be-

tween the Federal Government and the cantons is regulated by the Federal Constitution. Switzerland does not belong to the European Union (EU), but is a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). In 1992 the Swiss electorate rejected accession to the European Economic Area (EEA). Switzerland has, however, negotiated agreements with the EU, which came into force in mid-2002 / 2009.

POPULATION

Switzerland is not only a multi-cultural country because several languages are spoken here but also owing to the long-established traditions and special characteristics of the local population in the numerous Alpine valleys.

At the end of 2012 Switzerland's resident population amounted to over 8 million persons, more than 22% of whom were foreign nationals. In addition, some 260,000 border-crossing commuters work in Switzerland; they mainly live in the Swiss border regions. There is a high proportion of foreign residents in the large cities. In Geneva,

Zurich and Berne there are nationals from over a hundred different countries.

There are four official languages: German, French, Italian and Romansh. Around 70% of the population speak one of the many Swiss-German dialects (above all in northern, central and eastern Switzerland). 20% speak French. This part of the population lives in Western Switzerland, called the «Romandie». The population in Ticino on the southern side of the Alps speaks Italian. A part of the population there also speaks Italian dialects. Romansh is only spoken in some valleys of Canton Graubünden.

In Switzerland social integration mostly takes place at work. The Swiss have a reputation for being hard-working, conscientious and punctual.

CURRENCY

Switzerland does not belong to the Eurozone. Its currency is the Swiss franc (CHF).

Bank notes:

CHF 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 1000

Coins:

5, 10, 20 and 50 centimes as well as CHF 1, 2, 5

In addition to Swiss francs, the euro is gaining more and more acceptance in the shops. Many shops even mark the prices in Swiss francs and euros.



«Switzerland is an open country, that's why I feel at home here.»

Ruzena Vojacek-Dermek, hairdresser, Czech Republic

+ STAYING IN SWITZERLAND +

WHAT PERMITS DO EU/EFTA NATIONALS NEED TO BE ABLE TO WORK AND STAY IN SWITZERLAND?

EU-17¹, EU-8² AND EFTA³ NATIONALS

Employees from the EU-17, the EU-8 and the EFTA countries benefit from full freedom of movement.

They are allowed to stay and pursue gainful employment in Switzerland for three months without a permit.

They merely have to report to the competent authorities. If their gainful employment lasts more than three months, they have to report to the local authorities and apply for a residence permit.⁴



Registration procedure:

www.bfm.admin.ch

> Topics > Free movement of persons: Switzerland – EU/EFTA

¹ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Spain, United Kingdom, Cyprus and Malta

² Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Hungary

³ Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway

⁴ In order to obtain a residence permit, the following documents must be presented to the competent authorities: a valid identity card, the employment contract, a copy of the rental contract, a photograph in passport format.

+ ATTENTION: CITIZENS FROM EU-17 AND EU-8 +

+ Federal Council invokes safeguard clause for EU-17 and EU-8 states +

The Federal Council decided to invoke the safeguard clause contained in the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons. After 1 May 2013, the quota for B-permits (5-year residence permits) will be kept in place for nationals of the Eastern European EU-8 states and as of 1 June 2013, quotas will be applied to B-permits for workers from EU-17 states as well. Quotas will apply for one year.

Affected by the quotas are persons with an employ-

ment contract valid for one or more than one year or indefinitely wishing to take up employment in Switzerland and therefore applying for a type B residence permit for gainfully employed persons. The same applies to the self-employed persons.



More information about the safeguard clause:

www.bfm.admin.ch

> Topics > Free Movement of Persons Switzerland – EU/EFTA



«I came to Switzerland as an archaeology student in 1995. I met my future husband at the university. We now have three children – four good reasons never to leave this country again.»

Carmen Defferrard-Buda, archaeologist, Romania

NATIONALS FROM BULGARIA AND ROMANIA (EU-2)

For nationals from Bulgaria and Romania, the exercise of a salaried occupation in Switzerland is authorised under the following interim provisions:

- Priority of national manpower (national priority)
- Control of wage and working conditions
- Quotas for permanent and short-term residence permits

These admission restrictions may be upheld until 2016.



www.bfm.admin.ch

> Topics > Free Movement of Persons
> EU/EFTA citizens
> Bulgaria/Romania

RESIDENCE PERMITS SHORT-TERM RESIDENCE PERMITS

(EU/EFTA Permit L): The term of validity of this permit is determined by the length of the employment contract. It may be issued for a total duration of 12 months and is granted to persons whose limited employment relationship lasts less than one year. Jobseekers also receive an EU/EFTA Permit L after three months. The place of residence and work may be changed freely.

INITIAL RESIDENCE PERMIT

(EU/EFTA Permit B): This initial residence permit is granted to persons submitting an employment declaration issued by the employer or a confirmation of employment for an unlimited employment relationship or one lasting at least 12 months. The initial residence permit has a term of validity of five years. It is extended by five years without any further formalities.

PERMANENT RESIDENCE PERMIT

(EU/EFTA Permit C): Nationals from EU-15 and EFTA countries receive this unlimited residence permit after a regular and uninterrupted stay of five years in Switzerland. Nationals from the other EU countries may, as a rule, only be granted a permanent residence permit after a regular and uninterrupted stay of ten years. The cantons have the authority to issue permits.



Stay in Switzerland:
www.bfm.admin.ch
> Topics



Cantonal migration authorities:
www.bfm.admin.ch
> The FOM > Contact
> Cantonal authorities



Registration procedure:
www.bfm.admin.ch
> Topics > Free movement of persons: Switzerland – EU/EFTA

BORDER-CROSSING COMMUTERS FROM EU-17/EU-8 AND EFTA COUNTRIES

Border zones have been abolished for nationals from the old EU-17/EU-8 and EFTA countries. These nationals may take up a salaried or self-employed occupation anywhere in Switzerland (full geographical and professional mobility) while retaining their main domicile in any EU/EFTA country. The possibility of residing in Switzerland during the week remains. The person concerned must, however, report to the local authorities. Employment relationships lasting under three months are permit-free and merely have to be reported to the competent authorities.

Gainful employment exceeding 3 months is still subject to a permit for border-crossing commuters (EU/EFTA Permit G). These persons must accordingly apply for a permit at the migration authorities in their place of work. They will need a valid identity card or a valid passport for the submission of their application.

BORDER-CROSSING COMMUTERS FROM BULGARIA AND ROMANIA

Nationals from Bulgaria and Romania whose domicile is in a foreign border zone and who work in a neighbouring Swiss border zone may file an application for a border-crossing commuter's EU/EFTA Permit G. The permit they receive is, however, only valid for Switzerland's border zone.

The following interim provisions apply for border-crossing commuters:

- priority of national manpower (national priority)
- control of wage and working conditions
- quotas for permanent and short-term residence permits

These admission restrictions may be upheld until 2016.

SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM EU-17, EU-8 AND EFTA COUNTRIES

Nationals from EU-17, EU-8 and EFTA countries are entitled to provide permit-free services for up to 90 working days per service provider/sending company and calendar year. There is,

however, an obligation to report to the authorities. As a rule, this may be done online.

SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM BULGARIA AND ROMANIA

Nationals from Bulgaria and Romania are entitled to provide permit-free services for up to 90 working days per person/sending company and calendar year. There is, however, an obligation to report to the authorities, which may be done online.

Note: Nationals from Bulgaria and Romania who would like to work in one of the four following branches require a short-term residence permit from the first working day. This must be requested from the competent migration authorities:

- Main and subsidiary construction sectors
- Plants and horticulture
- Industrial and company cleaning
- Surveillance and security services

These admission restrictions may be upheld until 2016.



«I've met very many believers in Switzerland. Something I'd never have expected.»

Jean-Pierre Réchal, clergyman, France



Registration procedure:

www.bfm.admin.ch

> Topics > Free movement of persons: Switzerland – EU/EFTA

SELF-EMPLOYMENT

EU-17/EU-8/EU-2 and EFTA nationals are entitled to exercise a self-employed occupation in Switzerland. In order to do so, they must report to the local authorities and apply for a residence permit for self-employed persons. If they can prove that they actually intend to exercise a self-employed occupation which enables them to cover their own needs, they will be granted a residence permit for five years.

Note: Self-employed persons who are no longer able to cover their own needs and apply for welfare assistance lose their entitlement to residence. Thus applies to all self-employed persons from EU/EFTA countries.



Cantonal migration authorities:

www.bfm.admin.ch

> The FOM > Contact
> Cantonal authorities



The cantons online:

www.ch.ch

> Directory of authorities



«I love working with the Swiss in Switzerland: the working conditions are excellent and I appreciate the importance they attach to work, the constructive atmosphere and the team spirit.»

Magdalena Zajac, communications specialist, Poland



«I met the love of my life in Switzerland.»

Giovanni Ascione, chef de rang, Italy

Fotos & Design: eisbrecher.expedition.ch



SME Portal:

www.kmu.admin.ch

- > KMU-Themen > Firmengründung
- > Unternehmensgründung durch ausländische Staatsangehörige



Illegal employment:

www.seco.admin.ch

- > Themen > Arbeit > Schwarzarbeit (only available in german)

WORKING WITHOUT A PERMIT

You are forbidden to exercise gainful employment in Switzerland without a permit. Do not therefore accept a job before you are sure of receiving a work permit. You may be fined if you work without a permit. And don't forget that you will not receive any welfare benefits without a permit!

Your employer must also comply with the regulations of the Federal Act on Measures to Combat Illegal Employment – he may also be punished.

FAMILY REUNION

EU/EFTA nationals who have been granted the right to stay in Switzerland are allowed to send for the members of their family in a direct line and for whom they provide maintenance.



Family reunion

www.bfm.admin.ch

- > Topics > Free movement of persons > EU/EFTA citizens in Switzerland > Fact sheets
- > Familiennachzug (only available in german, french or italian)