

03

Work and income

363-1600

SLFS 2016 in brief

The Swiss Labour Force Survey



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
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1 About the Survey

Since 1991, the Federal Statistical Office has conducted the SLFS on an annual basis at the behest of the Federal Council. This telephone survey of individuals provides representative data on the socio-economic structure of Switzerland's permanent resident population and on participation in the labour force. The SLFS is carried out on a representative sample based on around 125 000 annual interviews.

A survey that meets international requirements

Thanks to strict adherence to international definitions, the SLFS can be used to position Switzerland's unemployment and employment figures in the European and global context.

Questions addressed

The questions focus mainly on the situation on the labour market (present or past professional activity, unemployment, retirement, working conditions, occupation, household income and income from employment, job hunting, professional and geographical mobility), training/education (including continuing education), household composition and demographic characteristics (nationality, civil status, etc.).

Thematic modules

In addition to the basic questionnaire, the SLFS is supplemented each year by thematic modules. Topics covered include unpaid work, migration, social security, balancing work life and family life, young people's entry into the labour market, employment of persons with disabilities and the transition from working life to retirement.

Using data from the SLFS

The data collected through the SLFS are of great interest from the standpoint of social policy and labour market policies. The survey provides information on difficulties in finding employment, the professional reintegration of women, childcare, wage inequality, retirement behaviour and the integration of the foreign population. The SLFS is an essential survey for the Swiss statistical system. It is the main source for employment statistics and the work volume statistics used to calculate labour productivity, labour market accounts and labour force projections in the context of demographic scenarios.

When is the survey conducted?

Since 2010, the SLFS has been conducted continuously with the interviews distributed over the 52 weeks of the year (from 1991 to 2009, the SLFS was conducted during the 2nd quarter of each year). Persons participating in the survey are interviewed four times over a period of a year and a half.

How have you been chosen?

You have been randomly selected in the FSO's sample register. The FSO's sample register is primarily based on the official communal and cantonal population registers.

To facilitate initial contact, the sample is completed wherever possible by telephone numbers that telephone operators have to make available to the FSO in compliance with the Federal Statistics Act. This list also includes private landline numbers that are not found in the public telephone directory.

Who conducts the interviews?

The data are collected by call centres of the institute which is commissioned by the Federal Statistical Office to conduct the survey. Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) are conducted by professional survey takers who are monitored by supervisors. The interviews are conducted in German, French, Italian and English.

How is the interview conducted?

The Federal Statistical Office informs the randomly selected individuals in writing about the aims of the SLFS and how it is carried out. The institute commissioned by the FSO then contacts the households by telephone to conduct the interview straight away or to make an appointment to do so. Only persons aged 15 or older are eligible to be selected for the survey.

What is the data protection situation?

- Data protection is guaranteed by the Federal Statistics Act (RS 431.01), the Ordinance on the Conduct of Statistical Surveys (RS 431.012.1) and the Data Protection Act (RS 235.1).
- FSO employees and the institute commissioned to conduct the survey are strictly bound to observe professional secrecy and are subject to the relevant secrecy laws.
- Telephone numbers are treated as confidential. Commercial or administrative use of them is absolutely excluded.
- The data collected during the survey are processed anonymously, i. e. they are aggregated and extrapolated and finally expressed in a general form that does not make it possible to identify the persons who participated in the survey.

Why is your participation important?

Participation in this survey is voluntary but your cooperation is essential for a survey that is relevant and of good quality. To achieve this objective we need to have a representative sample of the resident population in Switzerland. Your answers are therefore important to us regardless of your age, nationality or your employment situation (employed, unemployed, retired, at home, in education or training or otherwise economically inactive).

2 Key findings

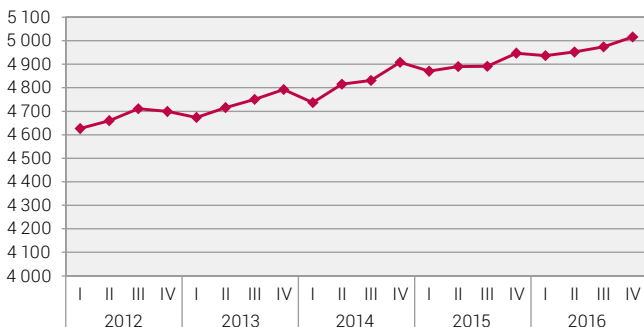
Employed population

In the 4th quarter 2016, there were 5.016 million persons in employment in Switzerland, i. e. 1.4% more than in the 4th quarter 2015. Among these, the number of men rose by 1.2% and the number of women by 1.6%. In terms of full-time equivalent jobs (FTE), year-on-year growth reached 1.0% (men: +1.4%; women: +0.4%).

The European Union (EU-28) and the euro zone (EZ-19) saw their employed population increase in year-on-year comparison (+1.0% and 1.1% respectively).

Employed persons working in Switzerland

Domestic concept, in thousands, 2012–2016

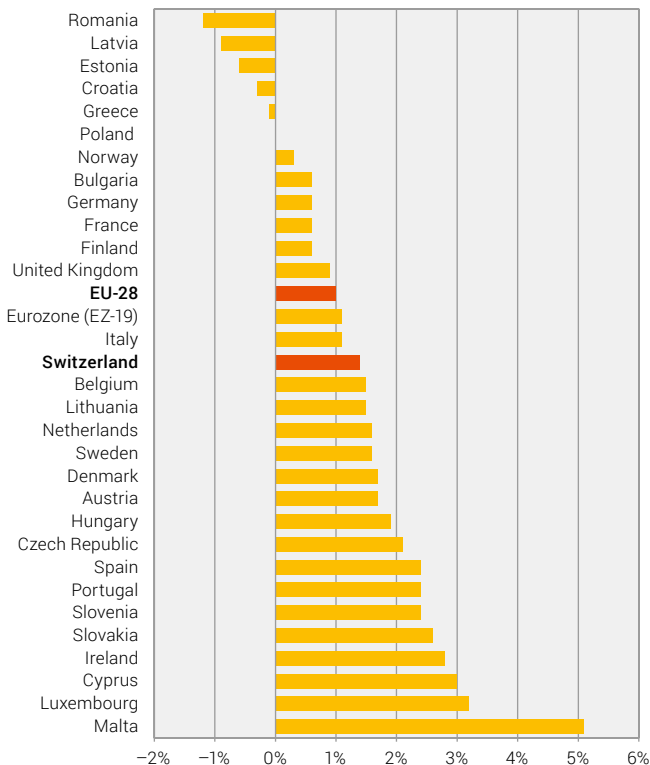


Source: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES)

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Employed persons in international comparison

Domestic concept, change from 4th quarter 2015 – 4th quarter 2016



Sources: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES); Eurostat

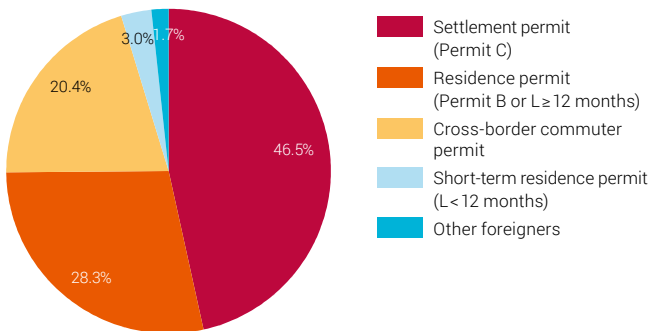
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Swiss and foreign labour force

Between the 4th quarter 2015 and the 4th quarter 2016, the number of foreign nationals in employment rose by 1.9% and that of Swiss nationals in employment by 1.2%. Among foreign nationals, cross-border commuters had the largest workforce increase (Permit G: +3.6%), followed by residence permit holders (Permit B or L, in Switzerland for at least 12 months: +3.4%), and settlement permit holders (Permit C: +0.6%). In contrast, the number of employed persons holding a short-term residence permit fell (Permit L, in Switzerland for less than 12 months: -5.6%).

Employed persons of foreign nationality by residence permit

Domestic concept, in %, 4th quarter 2016



Source: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES)

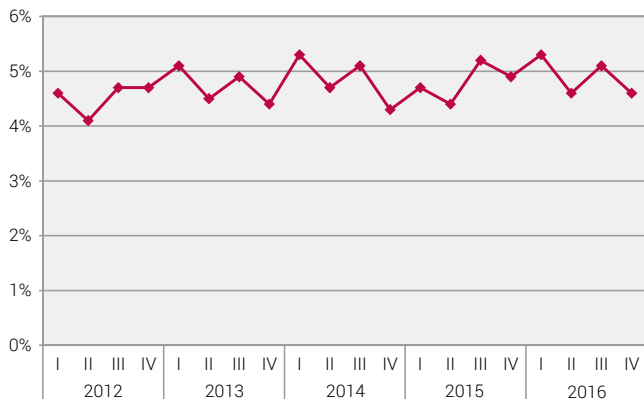
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Unemployment as defined by ILO

In the 4th quarter 2016, 224 000 persons were unemployed in Switzerland as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), i. e. 11 000 fewer than one year previously. These unemployed persons represented 4.6% of the economically active population, compared with 4.9% in the 4th quarter 2015. The unemployment rate declined in both the European Union (EU-28: from 9.1% to 8.2%) and the euro zone (EZ-19: from 10.6% to 9.7%).

Unemployment rate as defined by ILO

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2012–2016

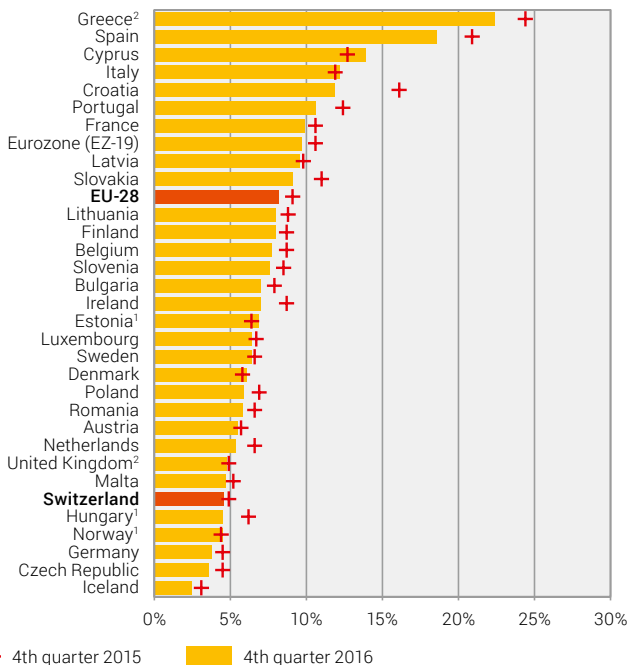


Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

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Unemployment rate as defined by ILO in international comparison

Permanent resident population concept, in %, at 4th quarters 2015 and 2016



¹ Average October/November 2016

² Values for October 2016

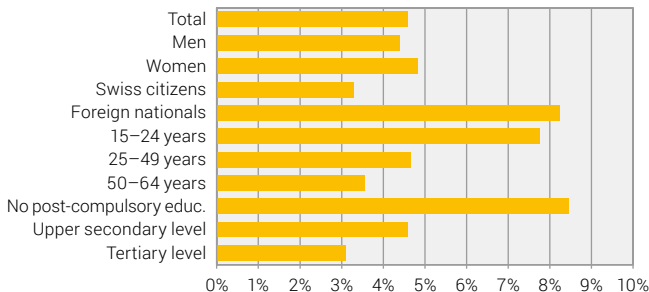
Unemployment as defined by the ILO by various characteristics

Between the 4th quarter 2015 and the 4th quarter 2016, the youth unemployment rate (15–24 year-olds) as defined by the ILO fell from 10.0% to 7.8% in Switzerland. There was an increase among 25 to 49 year-olds (from 4.2% to 4.7%) and a decrease among 50 to 64 year-olds (from 4.1% to 3.6%). It fell more sharply among women (from 5.2% to 4.8%) than among men (from 4.6% to 4.4%).

There was a sharper decrease in the unemployment rate among foreign nationals (from 9.1% to 8.3%) than among Swiss nationals (from 3.4% to 3.3%). In the 4th quarter 2016, the rate was 6.2% among EU-28/EFTA nationals and 13.1% among third country citizens.

Unemployment rate as defined by the ILO by various characteristics

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 4th quarter 2016



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

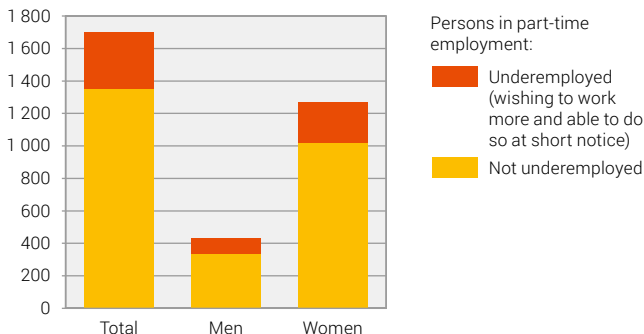
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Underemployed persons

In the 4th quarter 2016 the number of persons working part time was 1.696 million (+57 000 in year-on-year comparison). Among these, 344 000 were underemployed, that is they would have liked to work more and were available to do so in the near future. The underemployment rate stood at 7.1% in the 4th quarter 2016, similar to that of the 4th quarter 2015.

Underemployed persons

Permanent resident population concept, in thousands, 4th quarter 2016



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

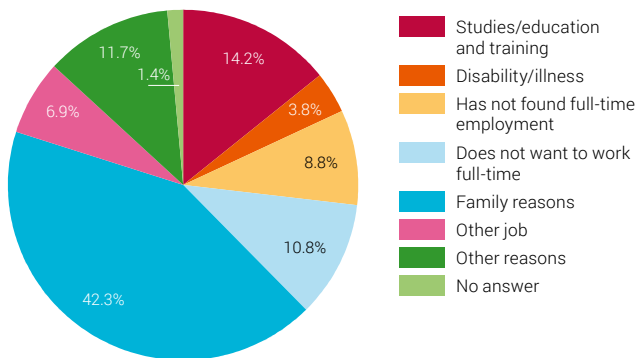
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Reasons for part-time work

Among 15–54 year-olds, the main reasons for carrying out part-time work are family reasons (42.3% of reasons given; 15.9% for men and 49.5% for women), participation in training/education (14.2%), inability to find full-time work (10.8%), working in other employment (6.9%) and health reasons (3.8%). Lastly, 10.8% indicated they did not wish to work full-time and 13.2% gave other reasons with no further details.

Employed persons (excluding apprentices) aged 15–54 working part-time by reason for part-time employment

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2016



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

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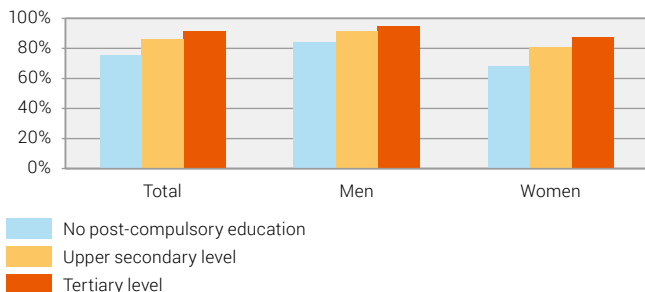
Professional activity and educational level

Labour market participation varied greatly depending on the level of education. Among 25–64 year-olds, in 2016 only 75.4% of persons with no post-compulsory education or training were in employment, compared with 86.0% of persons having completed upper secondary level education (Matura, apprenticeship) and 91.7% of persons having completed education and training at tertiary level (university, university of applied sciences or equivalent).

The differences in this respect were more marked for women (without post-compulsory education or training: 68.6%; upper secondary level: 81.1%; tertiary: 87.3%) than for men (without post-compulsory education or training: 84.0%; upper secondary level: 91.5%; tertiary: 95.0%).

Share of employed persons aged 25–64 years by education level and sex

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2016



Multiple employment

In 2016, 344 000 employed persons (excluding apprentices) in Switzerland said that they exercised more than one professional activity, i. e. 7.8% of the employed population.

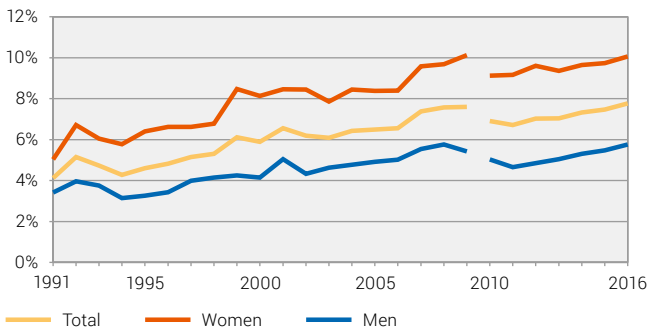
A higher proportion of women than men split their professional activity in this way (10.3% of employed women compared with 5.7% of employed men).

Over the past three decades, the share of persons in multiple employment has risen markedly, from 4.1% of the total number of employed persons in 1991 to 7.8% twenty-five years later.

Employed persons with more than one job

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 1991–2016

Excluding apprentices



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

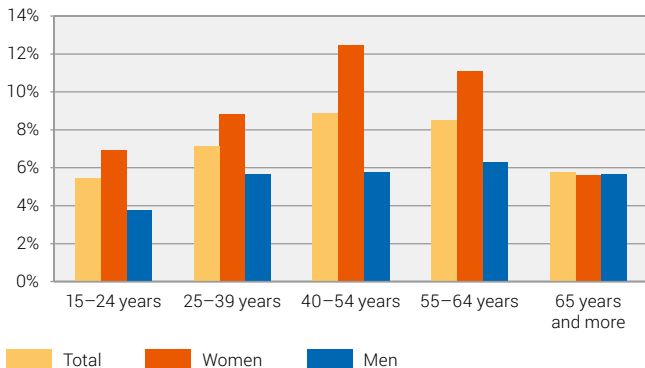
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Multiple employment concentrated among 40–54 year-olds

The group of 40–54 year-olds has the greatest share of persons with multiple jobs (8.9%). Young people, among which many already combine training and education with employment, as well as workers beyond the legal retirement age are less likely to carry out more than one job. This predominance among the central age groups is marked among women, with a peak of 12.5% reached among employed women aged 40 to 54 years-old (men aged 40 to 54: 5.8%).

Share of persons in multiple employment by sex and age group

Permanent resident population concept, as a % of the employed population (excluding apprentices), 2016



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

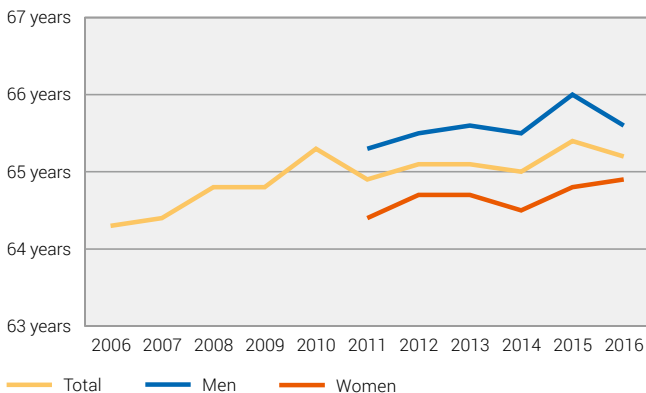
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Average age on leaving the labour market

In 2016, among persons aged 58 to 75, the average age on leaving the labour force was estimated to be 65.2. The age for leaving the labour market was 64.3 in 2006. In 2016 it was 65.6 years for men and 64.9 for women.

The average age on leaving the labour market (persons leaving aged 58–75 years)

Permanent resident population concept, 2006–2016



Note: the distinction between men and women has been available since 2011.

Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

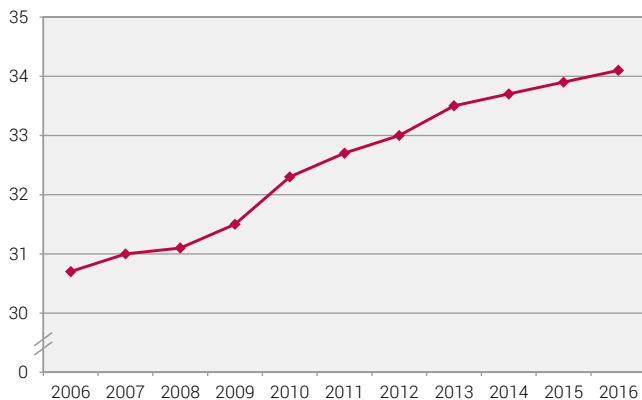
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Number of older persons per 100 economically active persons

Between 2015 and 2016, the number of persons aged 65 or more per 100 economically active persons aged 20 to 64 rose from 33.9 to 34.1. Over the past 10 years, demographic ageing has led to a rapid increase in this ratio in spite of the growing participation in the labour force: in 2006 there were only 30.7 persons aged 65 or older per 100 economically active persons aged 20 to 64.

Number of persons aged 65 and older per 100 economically active persons aged 20–64

Permanent resident population concept, 2006–2016



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

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3 Key definitions

Employed persons

The term “employed persons” refers to all persons aged 15 and over who, during the reference week:

- worked at least one hour for payment
- or who, although temporarily absent from their work (due to illness, holidays, maternity leave, military service, etc.) had a job either in an employed or self-employed capacity
- or who worked in the family business without payment.

ILO Unemployed

(ILO = International Labour Organization)

The term “ILO unemployed” refers to people aged 15–74 who:

- were not employed during the reference week and
- were actively looking for work during the previous four weeks and
- were available for work.

Economically active persons

The term “economically active persons” refers to employed and ILO unemployed. This concept is also expressed in economic terms as “labour supply”.

Underemployed persons

The term “underemployed persons” refers to employed persons who:

- usually work less than 90% of the normal full-time workweek in companies and
- wish to work more and
- are available to take on a job with a higher occupancy rate within the next three months.

Full-time/part-time

The term “full-time” refers to employed persons with a worktime percentage of 90% or more.

Average age on leaving the labour force

This indicator is calculated on the basis of a weighted average of the age on leaving the labour force. All persons changing from economically active to economically inactive between 2 SLFS interviews (interviews separated by one year) are considered as having left the labour force. Only persons leaving the labour force between the ages of 58 and 75 are taken into account.

Permanent resident population

The term “permanent resident population” refers to all persons who reside in Switzerland for at least one year (Swiss citizens whose main residence is in Switzerland and foreign citizens residing in Switzerland for at least 12 months).

Domestic concept

Productive activity according to the domestic concept refers to activity carried out within the Swiss economic territory, both by residents or non-residents. Therefore, cross-border commuters and holders of a short-term resident permit who exercise gainful employment in Switzerland are two groups that are not part of the permanent resident population but which are included in the domestic concept.

Definitions of rates

Activity rate =	$\frac{\text{economically active persons}}{\text{reference population}}$	X 100
Unemployment rate according to ILO definition =	$\frac{\text{number of unemployed persons based on ILO definition}}{\text{economically active persons}}$	X 100
Underemployment rate =	$\frac{\text{number of underemployed persons}}{\text{economically active persons}}$	X 100

4 Further Information

Hotline for persons interviewed as part of the SLFS

If you wish to notify us of a change of address, make an appointment for the interview or if you have questions regarding the conduct of the survey, please call us free of charge Monday to Friday from 10.00–11.30 and from 14.00–16.00 at **0800 00 25 26**.

Any more questions?

For additional information on the publications and results of the SLFS, please visit our website: **www.slfs.bfs.admin.ch**



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