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21 Regional and international disparities

Neuchâtel, 9.2010

The Urban Audit

Switzerland's ten largest cities in European comparison

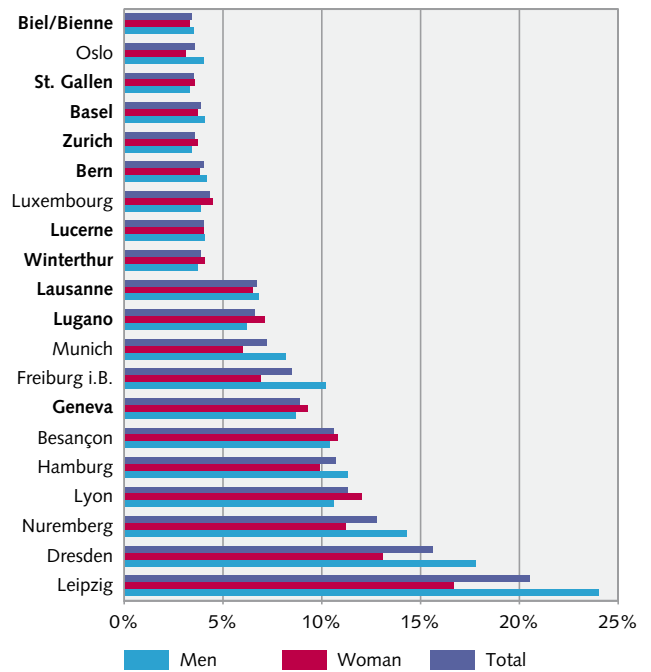
For the first time since its introduction in Switzerland, the country's ten largest cities are taking part in the European Urban Audit project, designed to measure the quality of urban life and to serve as a tool for political decision-making. Here is an overview of the first results of the 2009 Urban Audit...

...first from a European perspective

The Swiss cities, in particular in German-speaking Switzerland, are among the least affected by unemployment in Europe

Among the cities taken into consideration, the majority of Swiss cities as well as Oslo and Luxembourg recorded the lowest unemployment rates (between 3.4% and 4.0%). These are followed by cities in French and Italian-speaking Switzerland: Geneva (8.9%), Lugano (6.6%) and Lausanne (6.7%) together with Munich and Freiburg-im-Breisgau with rates below 10%. Above this mark are the French cities and the remainder of the German cities that are included in the audit. These not only have the highest overall unemployment rates (namely Leipzig and Dresden with 21% and 16% respectively) but are also systematically characterised by a difference in the unemployment rates of men/women: In Leipzig, for example, 24% of unemployed are male compared with 17% female.

Unemployment rate by sex, 2006



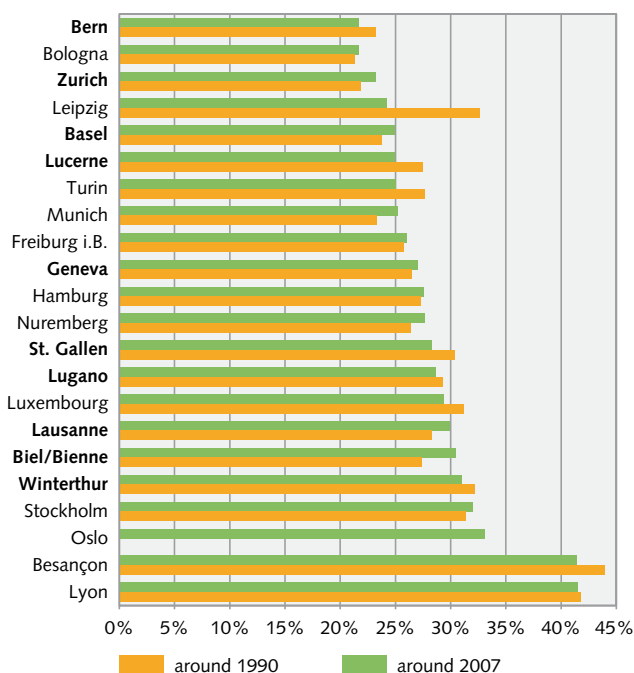
Sources: seco, FSO, Eurostat Urban Audit

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The French cities have the highest percentage of young people

With a young age dependency rate¹ of more than 40%, Besançon and Lyon are clearly the «youngest» cities; this means that they are the cities with the greatest burden on the economically active population with regard to the younger part of the economically inactive population. The other cities included in the Audit do not show great disparities: the Italian cities as well as several cities in German-speaking Switzerland (Bern, Zurich, Basel and Lucerne) show the lowest rates (around 24%). The cities of the North of Europe together with Winterthur, Biel/Bienne and then two of our cities in French and Italian-speaking Switzerland, Lausanne and Lugano, have slightly higher rates. The evolution between 1990 and 2007 does not show any clear trend: similar numbers of cities show either an increase or a decrease in the dependency rate for young people.

Young age dependency rate¹, around 1990 and 2007



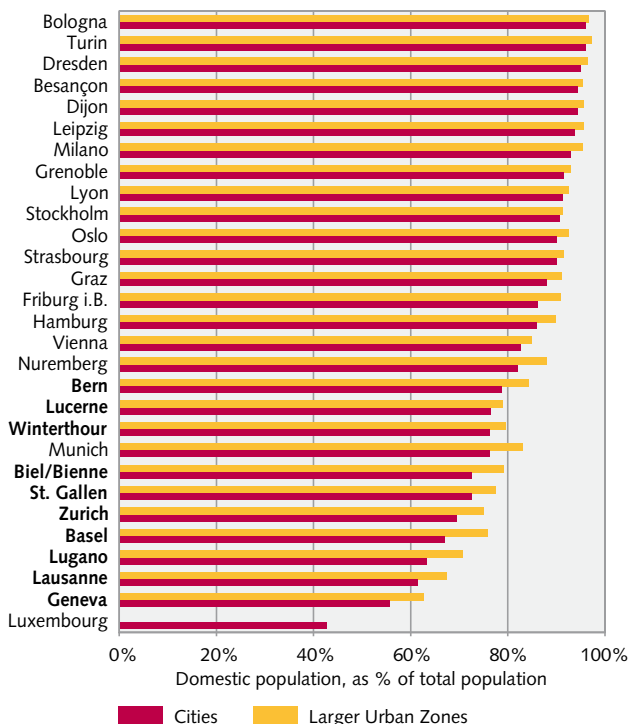
¹ ratio between population aged <20 and population aged 20–64 (here as percentage)

Sources: FSO, cities' and cantons' statistics offices, Eurostat Urban Audit © FSO

Cosmopolitan Urban Switzerland

In European comparison, Switzerland presents itself as a cosmopolitan urban country. The 10 Swiss cities reviewed are all characterised by a relatively small share of domestic population. Although the relevant figures have to be considered against the background of the particular naturalisation provisions of the various countries, the following trends can be gleaned from them: the list is topped by the French and Italian-speaking cities of Geneva, Lausanne and Lugano, with 56%, 62% and 63%, respectively, followed by the two metropolitan cities of Basel and Zurich (67% and 69%). In comparison, the Italian cities of Bologna and Turin (96% each), the French cities of Besançon and Dijon (94% each) and the East German cities of Dresden and Leipzig (95% and 94%) have a relatively large share of domestic population. While the above figures refer to the core cities, in the larger urban zones they point systematically to a higher share of domestic population.

Domestic population, around 2007



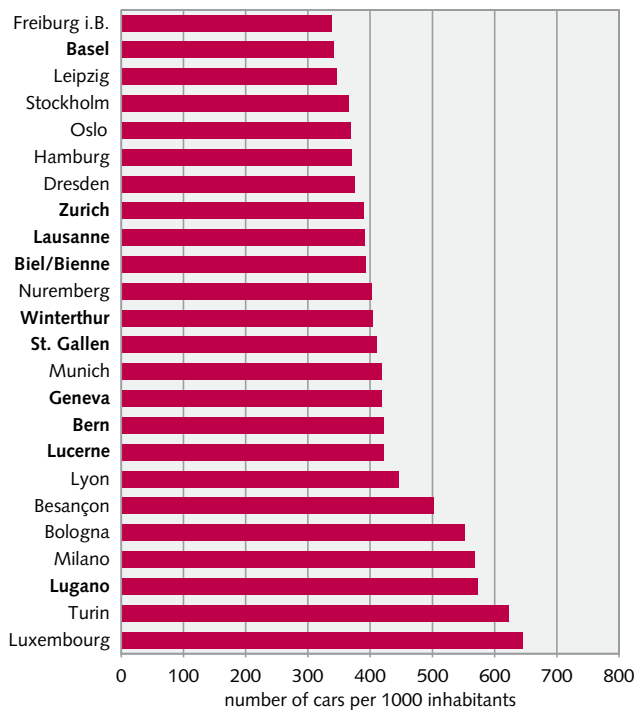
Sources: FSO, cities' and cantons' statistics offices, Eurostat Urban Audit © FSO

¹ The young age dependency rate measures the ratio between the number of persons aged under 20 and that of persons aged 20 to 64.

The mobility rate is highest in the French and Italian-speaking cities

The number of private cars per 1000 inhabitants varies slightly within the cities in northern Europe: the rate for most of them, and in particular 8 out of the 10 Swiss cities, is around 400. Freiburg-im-Breisgau and Basel show the lowest levels which presumably means that these cities have an attractive public transport system. At the opposite end of the scale are French and Italian-speaking cities such as Lugano, as well as Luxembourg which comes out on top with almost 650 private cars per 1000 inhabitants, i.e. almost twice as much as Basel.

Private cars registered, around 2007



Sources: FSO, Eurostat Urban Audit

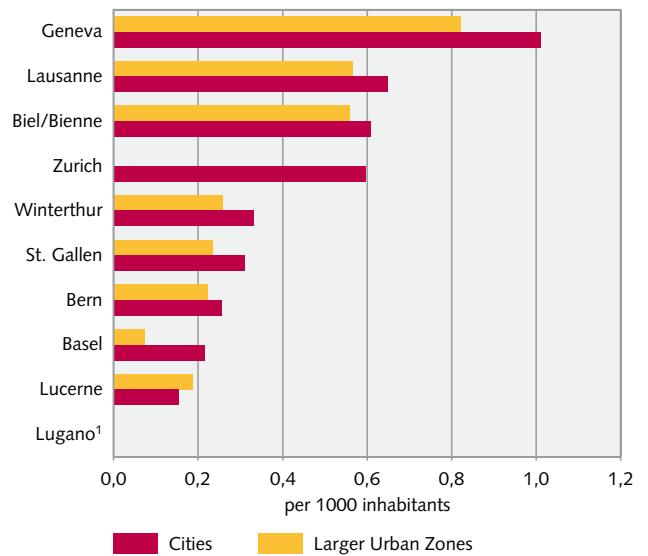
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...and from a national perspective

Car thefts are more common in city centres

With the exception of Lucerne, there are more car thefts in city centres than in larger urban zones, regardless of the linguistic region, the canton or the size of Swiss cities included in the Urban Audit. Geneva registers by far the highest values both for its centre and for its urban periphery: the well-known wealth of this cross-border city makes it a favourite target for this type of crime.

Car thefts, 2008



¹ no data

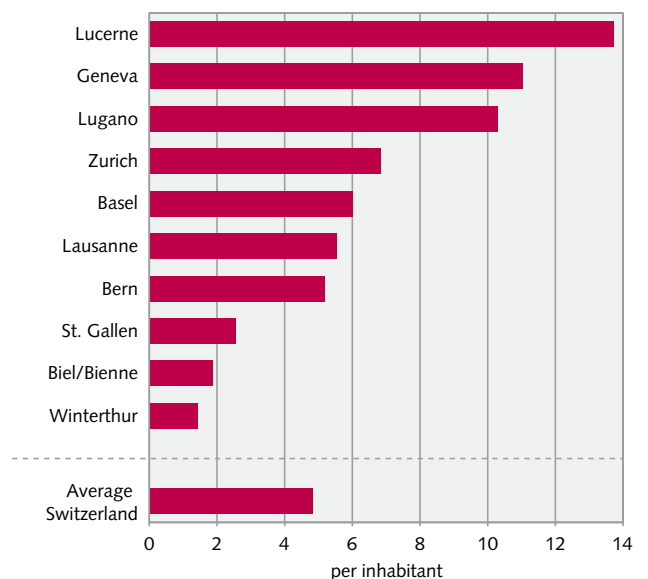
Sources: FSO, cities' and cantons' statistics offices

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Lucerne, Geneva and Lugano come out as top tourist destinations

The cities of Lucerne, Geneva and Lugano are far ahead of the other Swiss cities in the Audit, standing out – with 14, 11 and 10 overnight stays per inhabitant – as top tourist destinations among Swiss cities. Zurich, Basel, Lausanne, and to a lesser extent Bern, are also above the national average (4.8 overnight stays per inhabitant): whereas Winterthur, Biel/Bienne and St. Gallen show clearly lower values.

Overnight stays in hotels and similar establishments, 2008



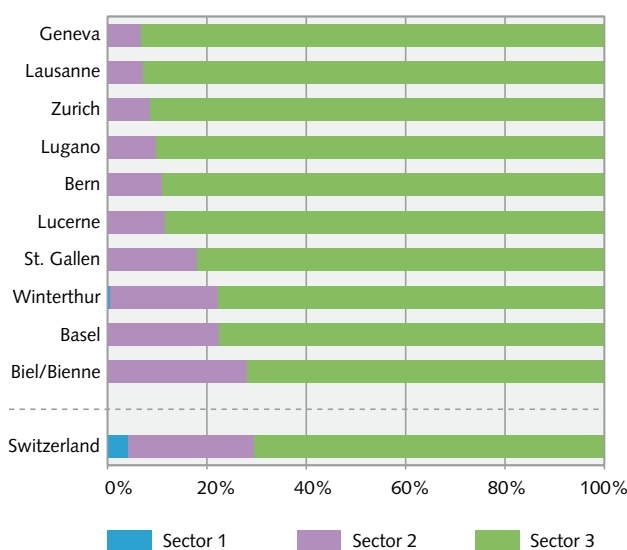
Sources: FSO

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Economic structure: tertiary sector dominant in the French and Italian-speaking towns and Zurich

Although the 10 Swiss cities included in the Urban Audit are predominantly characterised by the tertiary sector, in particular Geneva, Lausanne, Zurich and Lugano, the percentage of jobs in the secondary sector is not inconsiderable. In the cities of Biel/Bienne (27.9% of jobs in the secondary sector, only city above the national average – 25.3%), Basel and Winterthur, the historical presence of an economy based on industry can be felt. The share of the primary sector is – not surprisingly – almost non-existent in the 10 cities of the Urban Audit. The share of jobs in the tertiary sector is systematically higher in the city centres than in the larger urban zones, the share of secondary sector jobs is slightly better in the peripheral municipalities.

Employment by economic sector, 2008



Sources: FSO

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Urban Audit in brief

The Urban Audit (UA), launched in June 1998 by the European Commission, is part of regional and urban policy as well as the European Union's cohesion policy. With this in mind, the UA collects approximately 350 variables and 300 indicators covering a wide range of topics, according to three additional urban levels (larger urban zones, city centres and sub-city districts). Since 2005 it has been one of Eurostat's key activities, carried out annually since 2009. Switzerland – under the auspices of the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) and the Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE) – has integrated the Urban Audit during its third series (UA2006/07) into a pilot phase joining together the cities of Zurich, Bern, Geneva and Lausanne. Since 2009, the other six largest Swiss cities, Basel, Winterthur, St. Gallen, Lucerne, Lugano and Biel/Bienne, have been integrated into the Urban Audit, for an initial period from 2009 to 2011.

European comparison – selection of cities

The selection of European cities included in the Audit was made on the basis of two factors: first, their importance for Switzerland, second the availability of identical data for several cities. These are mainly cities in neighbouring countries. Chosen cities for which no data were available for the period concerned are not represented in order to keep the graphs easy to read.

Data Period

Except for the graphic 1 concerning the unemployment rate by sex the data for the Swiss cities refer to 2008. The data for the European cities – the most recent from the Urban Audit database – refer to the period 2004–2007; therefore the graphics within this paper are titled «around 2007».

Additional information:

The data related to this publication and to the Urban Audit 2009 as well as additional analyses and information on the Urban Audit in Switzerland and Europe are available at the following address:

<http://www.bfs.admin.ch> -> Le Monde ->

Disparités internationales -> Audit urbain

At European level, the data can be obtained here:

– Eurostat: <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu> ->

Statistics -> General and Regional Statistics ->

Regions and cities -> City statistics – Urban Audit

– Directorate General for Regional Policy:

<http://www.urbanaudit.org>

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