



FSO News

3 Employment and income

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Labour market indicators for 2016

Comments on findings for the period 2010–2016

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Summary

2010–2015: Major developments in the Swiss labour market	4
2010–2015: The situation of men and women in the labour market	6
2010–2015: Swiss and foreign labour force	8
2010–2015: The situation in Switzerland’s seven major regions	10
Labour market in the first quarter of 2016 and short-term prospects	12
The Swiss labour market in international comparison	14

“Labour market indicators 2016”

This document is an extract from the publication “Labour market indicators 2016”, which (available in German and French) presents the main highlights among the vast range of employment data. The information is arranged to provide an overview of the Swiss labour market, along with the relevant statistics. Some of the areas dealt with include employment, working hours, unemployment, vacancies, dynamic aspects of the labour market, as well as salary structure and trends.

The first part of this publication is devoted to comments on the findings for the period 2010–2016. It then looks at the definitions of the main labour market indicators. There is then a specific chapter describing the methodological aspects of the various statistical sources. The final part of this publication includes almost forty tables presenting in detail the results of the various labour market statistics.

The complete publication will be available on 11th August 2016.

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2010–2015: Major developments in the Swiss labour market

The renewed economic growth that followed the financial crisis slowed slightly in 2015. Over the five-year period (Q4 2010 to Q4 2015), the number of employed persons in Switzerland rose considerably. During the same period, the unemployment rate based on the ILO definition increased, while the registered unemployment rate (the number of people registered as unemployed at regional employment centres (RAV)) remained stable. Furthermore, there were fewer job vacancies which were sometimes easier to fill. However, Switzerland's labour market is doing well in international comparison.

Slowdown in economic growth at the end of the observation period

After negative growth due to the financial crisis, in the first quarter 2010 Switzerland was once again on its way to economic growth (changes in GDP in comparison with the same quarter a year earlier). Four quarters of strong growth of well over 2.0% were followed from the first quarter 2011 up to the fourth quarter 2014 by a period with average growth of 1.7%. From the first quarter 2015, weaker economic growth has been observed. In the fourth quarter 2015, the growth rate compared with the same quarter a year earlier was 0.3%, the lowest value during the period observed.

Rise in number of unemployed based on ILO definition

According to the Employment Statistics (ES), which are based on personal interviews (SLFS), between the fourth quarters of 2010 and 2015, the number of employed persons increased by 9.0% to 5.0 m. The Job Statistics (JOBSTAT), which are based on a survey of secondary and tertiary sector enterprises, showed a 6.9% rise in the number of jobs (to 4.9 m).

During the same period, the number of unemployed persons based on the ILO definition also increased markedly by 42,000 (+22.6%) and the number of people registered as unemployed at regional unemployment offices (RAV) increased by 6000 (+4.3%).

These developments led the unemployment rate based on the ILO definition to rise between 2010 and 2015 by +0.6 percentage points to 4.7% whereas the registered unemployment rate remained unchanged (3.3%, +0.0 percentage points).

Decrease in the number of job vacancies and fewer problems in the recruitment of personnel

In the fourth quarter 2015, there were fewer job vacancies (48,000) than five years previously (55,000). This corresponds to an 11.7% decrease. At the same time, enterprises had less difficulty recruiting personnel with higher vocational training or a completed apprenticeship. In contrast, difficulties in recruiting personnel with a university degree or personnel without vocational educational or training were just as great as five years earlier. The unemployment rate based on the ILO definition for groups of persons across all levels of education and training increased over the same period.

Unemployment rate based on ILO definition of men increased

Structurally speaking, the period 2010 to 2015 was characterised particularly by male unemployment rate based on ILO definition aligning itself with that of women. In the fourth quarter 2015, 4.6% of men and 4.8% of women were unemployed; five years earlier the difference was larger (3.8% compared with 4.6%). In 2015, women continued to work

part-time much more often (57.3%) than men (16.8%). The number of men working part-time has increased considerably over the past five years (+27.2%, women +7.9%).

High level of immigration of foreign labour

The number of economically active foreigners (employed persons plus unemployed based on the ILO definition) increased between the fourth quarter 2010 and the fourth quarter 2015 by 21.7%, reaching 1.6 m. The number of economically active Swiss nationals grew by 4.7% to 3.6 m. Thereby the net migration of economically active persons was subject to relatively strong fluctuations (between 42,000 in 2010 and 78,000 in 2011). The foreign residential population is affected by unemployment to a much greater extent than the Swiss resident population (8.8% and 3.2% respectively in fourth quarter 2015). In five-year comparison the unemployment rate of Swiss nationals has increased less considerably (+0.2 percentage points) than that of foreign nationals (+1.2 percentage points).

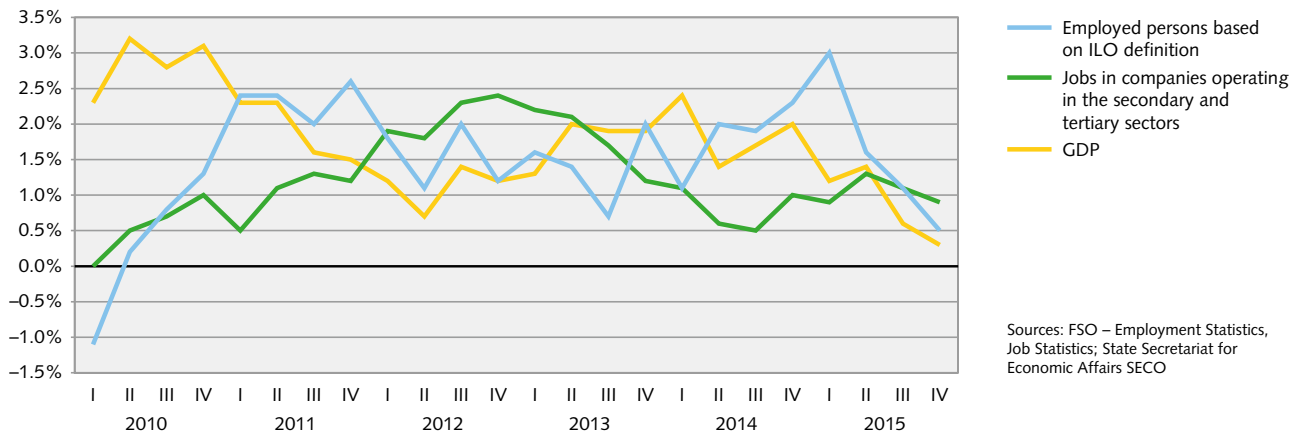
The Swiss labour market robust in international comparison

Switzerland's unemployment rate based on the ILO definition is around half (4.7% in the fourth quarter of 2015) the average rate in the European Union EU-28 (9.1%). The Czech Republic (4.5%), Germany (4.5%), Norway (4.2%) and Iceland (3.1%) register a lower unemployment rate. Women's participation in the labour market as well as the proportion of employed persons working part-time are markedly higher in Switzerland than in most European countries.

Nominal and real wage increase

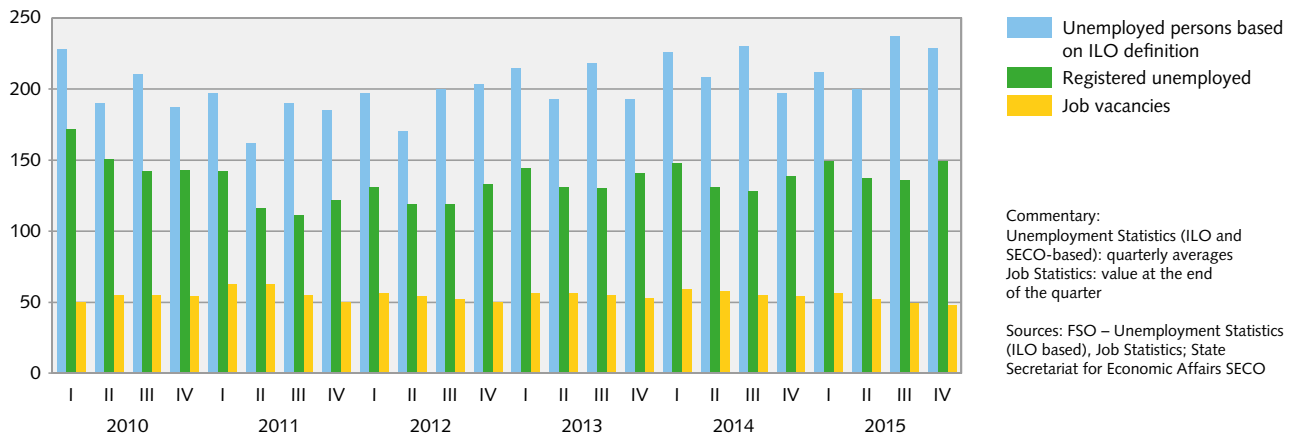
In 2015, nominal wages increased by +0.4% compared with 2014, the lowest rate since 1999. For the fourth consecutive year, nominal wage growth was below the +1% mark. At the end of 2014 when decisions on wage increases for 2015 were being made and six years after the 2008 financial crisis, the world economy remained fragile. Nominal wage growth most closely reflects the inflation estimated in September 2014 at +0.4% for 2015. Inflation reached a negative rate of -1.1% and purchasing power of wages increased by +1.5% in 2015. Over the past five years (from 2011 to 2015), the average annual real wage increase for all employees was +1.1% (men: +1.1%, women: +1.2%).

Variation in the gross domestic product (GDP real), the number of employed persons and the number of jobs, in relation to the corresponding quarter in the previous year, as a percentage, 2010–2015



Sources: FSO – Employment Statistics, Job Statistics; State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

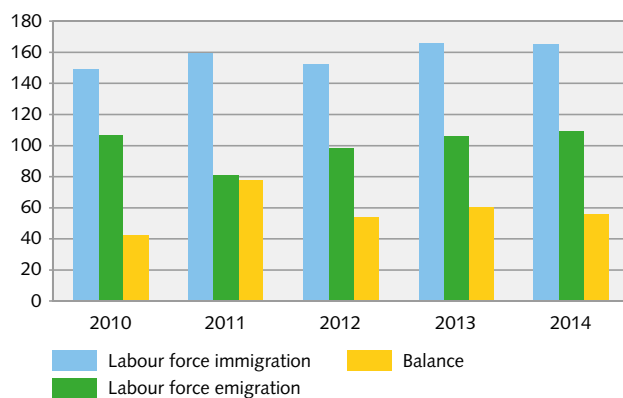
Unemployed persons based on ILO definition, registered unemployed and job vacancies, in thousands, 2010–2015



Commentary: Unemployment Statistics (ILO and SECO-based): quarterly averages
Job Statistics: value at the end of the quarter

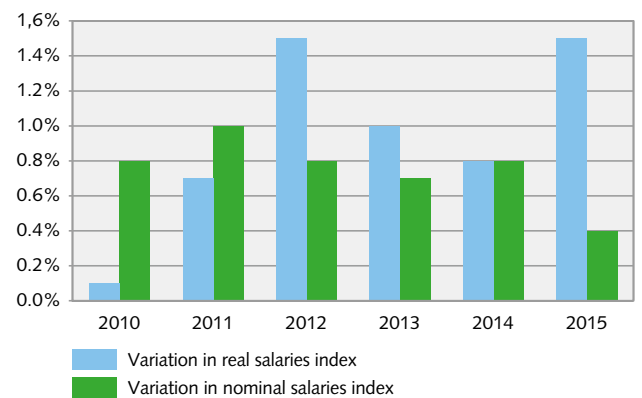
Sources: FSO – Unemployment Statistics (ILO based), Job Statistics; State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO

Workforce migration, in thousands, 2010–2014



Source: FSO – Labour Market Accounts

Variation in nominal and real wage index, in relation to the previous year, as a percentage, 2010–2015



Source: FSO – Swiss Wage Index

2010–2015: The situation of men and women in the labour market

Between 2010 and 2015, the share of women participating in the labour market has increased. More and more men as well as women work part-time. The share of women (57.3%) working part-time continues to be considerably greater than that of men (16.8%). The unemployment rate based on ILO of men (4.6%) has risen over the years and is now at a comparable level to the unemployment rate of women (4.8%). Women earn on average 12.5% less than men. This gap is only partly explained by objective characteristics.

Share of economically active women has increased

The number of economically active men (employed and ILO unemployed persons) rose between the fourth quarter 2010 and the fourth quarter 2015 by 7.8% (to 2.8 m) while the female economically active population rose by 11.6% during the same period (to 2.4 m). Thus, the share of women in the economically active population increased within five years by 0.9 percentage points to 45.9%. The number of employed women (+11.3%) rose more markedly than that of men (+7.1%), while the number of unemployed women based on the ILO definition increased by 17.3% and that of men by 28.0%. This led to a decline in the share of women among the unemployed from 50.3% in 2010 to 48.1% in 2015 (fourth quarter for each year).

Part-time work is still increasing

Women are more likely to work part-time than men: in the fourth quarter of 2015, 57.3% of all women in employment worked part-time (level of employment less than 90%), whereas the corresponding share of men was 16.8%. The number of persons employed part-time increased both among women (+7.9%) and among men (+27.2%) between the fourth quarter 2010 and the fourth quarter 2015.

The unequal distribution of part-time work is also the reason why women account for only 38.4% of the total hours worked in 2015.

Women more likely than men to be employed in the services sector

Between the fourth quarter 2010 and the fourth quarter 2015, the trends of employed persons of both sexes were comparable in the different economic sectors. Whereas in the second sector the number of employed men and women saw below-average growth (+2.1% and +5.2% respectively), in the tertiary sector the number of both sexes saw an above-average increase (+10.7% and 11.8% for women).

Proportionally, women work considerably more frequently in the service sector than men do (fourth quarter 2015: 86.4% vs. 66.1%). Only 10.9% of women are employed in industry and 2.7% in agriculture. The share of employed men working in industry is 30.1% and in agriculture 3.8%.

High unemployment rate based on ILO definition despite recent economic growth

The economic decline that started in the fourth quarter 2008 (GDP in comparison with the same quarter in previous year) led to growing unemployment rates in the following quarters. Among men the rate rose until the first quarter 2010 to 5.0% and among women to 5.3%. In 2010 the economic recovery began. Unemployment rates based on the ILO definition fell correspondingly until second quarter 2011 among men to 3.5% and to 3.7% among women. Economic activity slowed in 2011 and 2012: unemployment rates in 2013 tended to increase and the rate for men was close to that of women, until in the third quarter 2013, the rate for both men and women was 4.7%. In the following quarters, the unemployment rate fell again for both sexes, before rising again from the second quarter 2015.

In five-year comparison, between the fourth quarter of 2010 and the fourth quarter of 2015, the unemployment rate based on the ILO definition of men can be seen to match that of women: while there was still a considerable gap between the genders in 2010 (men 3.8%, women 4.6%), there was barely any difference in 2015 (men: 4.6%, women 4.8%).

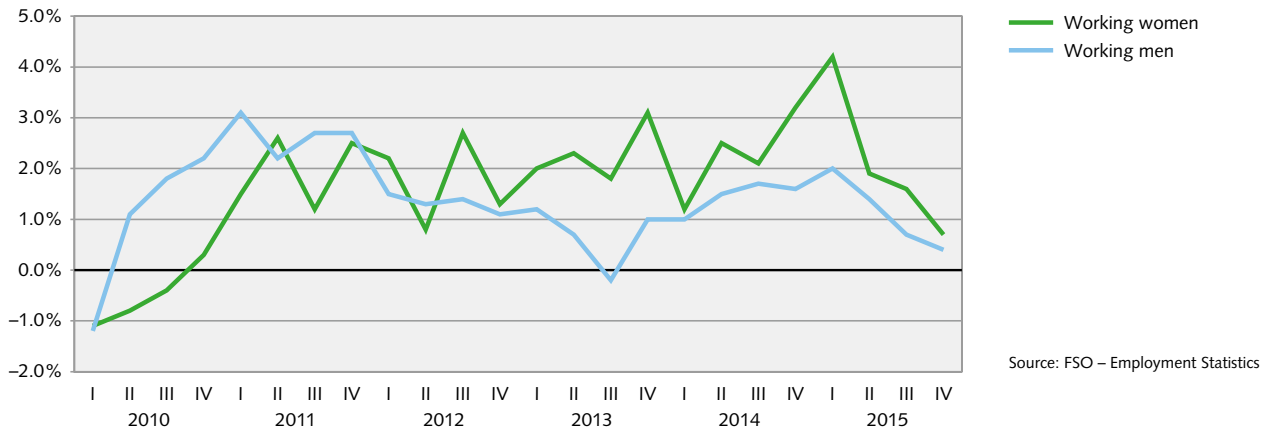
Women earn less than men

In 2014 the gross monthly wage of women in the overall economy was CHF 5907 and that of men CHF 6751. The wage gap fell from 15.6% in 2010 to 15.1% in 2012 and to 12.5% in 2014. The wage gap in private industry in 2014 was 15.1% compared with 18.9% in 2012 and 18.5% in 2010. The wage gap in the public sector was 12.3% in 2014.

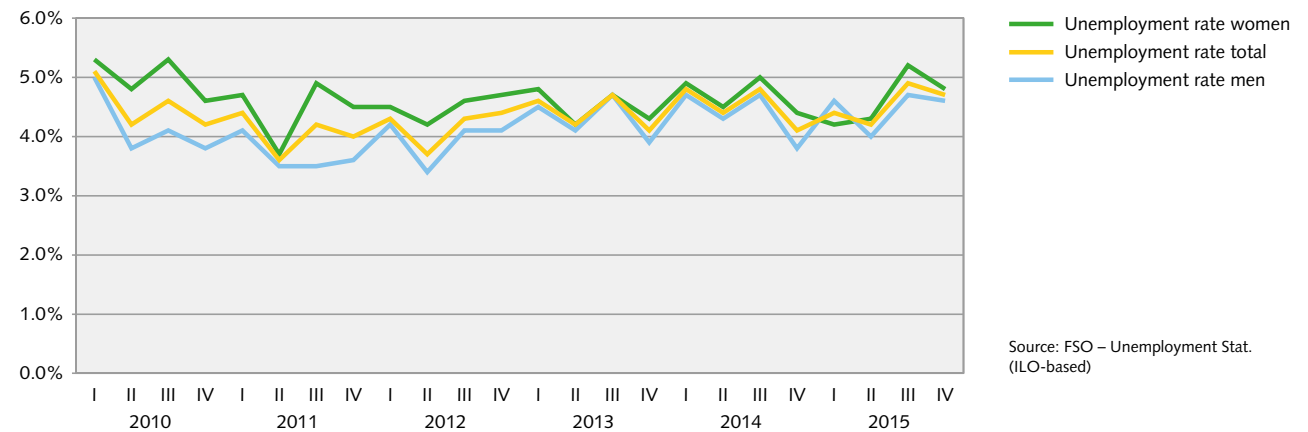
According to an analysis commissioned by the Federal Statistical Office, 59.1% of the wage gap in 2012 (private sector) could be explained by various objective structures such as place in the hierarchy, number of years' service or education. 40.9% of the wage gap is based on unexplained factors¹.

¹ www.statistics.admin.ch → Topics → 03 – Work and income → Wages, income from employment → Indicators → Wage level → by sex

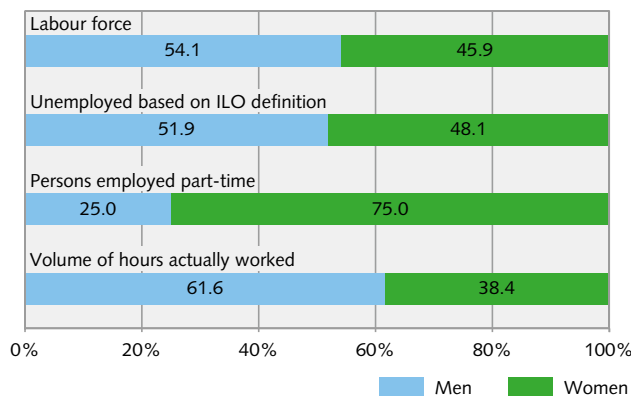
Variation in the number of employed persons according to gender, compared with the corresponding quarter in the previous year, as a percentage, 2010–2015



Unemployment rate based on ILO definition, by gender, as a percentage, 2010–2015

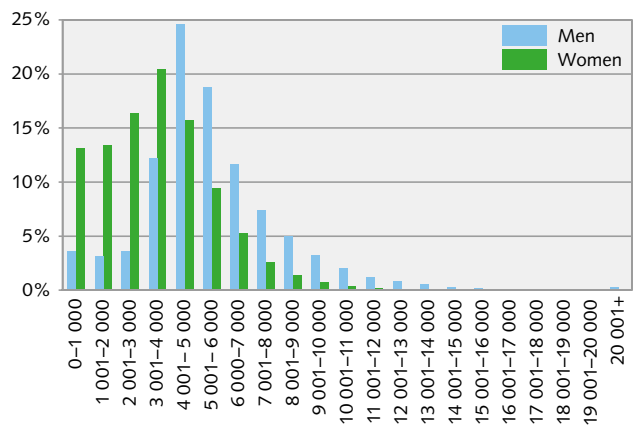


Breakdown of men/women in the labour force, of unemployed based on ILO definition, of persons employed part-time (4th q. 2015 for each case) and of the volume of hours actually worked (2015), as a percentage



Sources: FSO – Employment Statistics, Unemployment Statistics (ILO-based), Swiss Labour Force Survey, Work Volume Statistics

Frequency distribution by wage-level class (net monthly wage in CHF) and gender, private and public sector combined, as a percentage, 2014



2010–2015: Swiss and foreign labour force

Since 2001, Switzerland has experienced a high level of foreign worker immigration. Between 2010 and 2015, the increase in the number of foreigners in the labour force was nearly five times higher than the increase in the number of Swiss workers. Without naturalisations, the difference would have been markedly greater. Over the entire period under review, the unemployment rate based on the ILO definition was two to three times higher among foreigners than among Swiss nationals. Swiss workers earn generally more than their foreign counterparts.

High level of immigration of foreign labour

Between the fourth quarter of 2010 and the fourth quarter of 2015, the number of economically active foreign nationals (employed foreigners and foreigners who were unemployed based on the ILO definition) grew nearly five times faster than the number of economically active Swiss nationals (+21.7% to 1.6m compared with +4.7% to 3.6 m). Compared with the same quarter of the previous year, there was sharp growth in the foreign labour force in the years 2011 to 2014 (between 3 and 5%). In the second and third quarter 2015, this growth underwent a slight decline and the foreign labour force only increased by 2.4% per quarter. The strong rise in the number of foreign workers is the result of heavy immigration: during the period 2010 to 2014, immigration of foreign workers exceeded the number of emigrations by 301,000 persons. In contrast, the migration of economically active Swiss citizens resulted in a negative balance of 10,000 persons over the five-year period. Naturalisations play a role in the structure of the economically active population: from 2010 to 2014, approximately 109,000 economically active foreigners obtained Swiss nationality. Were it not for these naturalisations, the number of foreign workers would have increased by 29.8% from 2010 to 2015, whereas the number of economically active Swiss citizens would have increased only very slightly (1.5%). During the fourth quarter 2015, the share of foreign nationals in the economically active population was 31.5%, compared with 28.3% five years earlier.

Foreign nationals more often affected by unemployment based on ILO definition

In the fourth quarter of 2015, 3.5 m economically active Swiss nationals were employed in the labour market and 116,000 were unemployed based on the ILO definition. Thus, the unemployment rate of the Swiss population was 3.2%. Whereas the rate for Swiss nationals during the period under observation fluctuated between 2.6% (2011) and 3.9% (2014), the situation was less favourable for foreigners: in the fourth quarter 2015, 1.6 m foreigners were employed and 113,000 were unemployed. The unemployment rate of the foreign population was 8.8%. Foreigners are at greater risk of unemployment, partly due to the comparatively high number of foreign workers who have no qualification beyond compulsory schooling (25.8% compared with 10.6% of Swiss nationals).

Less part-time work among foreign nationals

Between the fourth quarter 2010 and the fourth quarter 2015, the number of people working part-time rose slightly among both Swiss and foreign workers (+2.0 percentage points to 39.1% and +0.8 percentage points to 25.4%). This type of work is common among women, albeit more common among Swiss women than foreign women: in the fourth quarter 2015, 60.5% of Swiss women were employed on a part-time basis, compared with 45.8% of foreign women. Among men, the corresponding shares were 19.1% and 10.6%. Foreign workers are mainly salaried employees (96.4%; Swiss nationals: 89.0%). Only 3.6% are self-employed or work on a family-run enterprise or farm. This difference is attributable to several factors: these include integration issues and the impossibility of foreign persons of the first generation taking over a family-owned business. Moreover, the share of persons under age 40 is larger in the foreign population than in the Swiss population (the 40–64-year-old age group has a much higher proportion of self-employed persons than other age groups).

Increasing share of foreign workers with a cross-border commuter permit

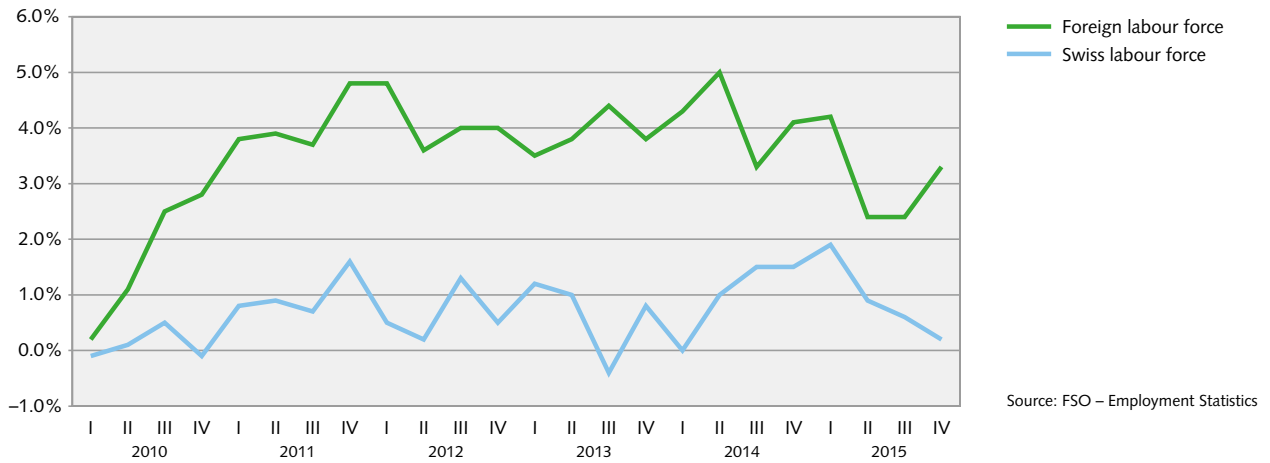
The structure of the employed foreign population by permit status has changed only slightly in the past five years. While the share of cross-border commuters holding a G permit increased by +1.4 percentage points to 19.7%, there was a decline in the other groups of foreign nationals: the share of settlement permits (C permit) fell by –0.9 percentage points to 48.7%, workers with a residence permit (B permit) fell by –0.2 percentage points to 26.8% and the share of short-term permits fell by –0.4 percentage points to 3.2%.

Better wage conditions for Swiss nationals

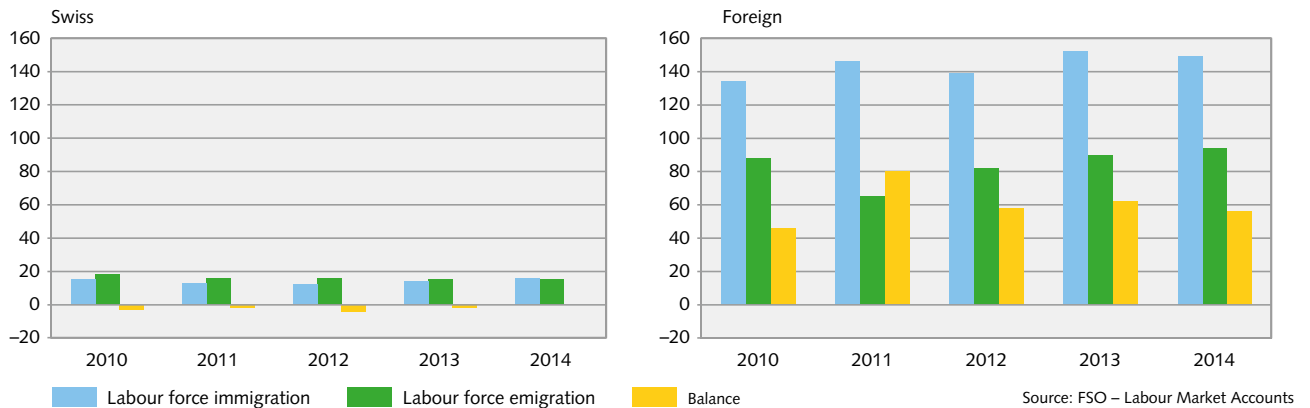
In 2014 the overall wage level of foreign workers was lower than that of their Swiss counterparts (CHF 5833 and CHF 6713 respectively). This is equal to a wage gap of 13.1% in favour of Swiss employees. These figures are not, however, an indication of discrimination: on the one hand foreign employees are on average younger and on the other hand there are still large differences between Swiss and foreign employed persons with regard to educational level and distribution by economic branch.

The median wage level of foreign employees (all resident permit categories together) rose between 2010 and 2014 by 4.0%, whereas that of Swiss employees increased by only 3.5%.

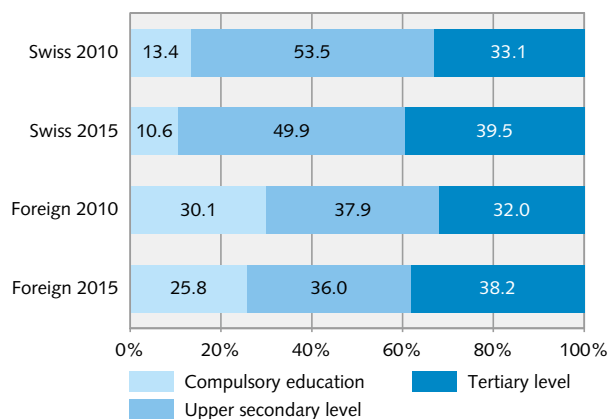
Variation in the labour force according to nationality, compared with the corresponding quarter in the previous year, as a percentage, 2010–2015



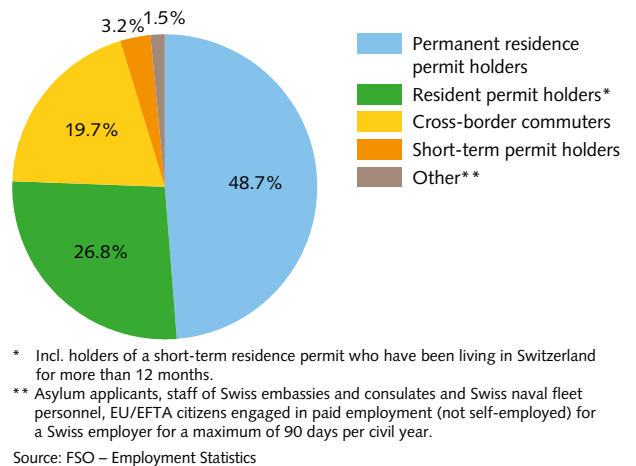
Labour force migration, by nationality, in thousands, 2010–2014



Levels of qualifications in the labour force according to nationality, as a percentage, 4th quarter 2010 and 4th quarter 2015



Foreign employed persons by type of residence permit, as a percentage, 4th quarter 2015



2010–2015: The situation in Switzerland's seven major regions

Between 2010 and 2015, the number of employed persons in the major regions of Central Switzerland, Espace Mittelland and Zurich saw an above-average increase. More than a third of all cross-border commuters working in Switzerland work in the Lake Geneva region. In Switzerland as a whole, the unemployment rate based on the ILO definition rose by 0.5 percentage points in the past five years. There were differences between the major regions: whereas the unemployment rate increased considerably in the Lake Geneva region, Central Switzerland and Northwest Switzerland, it fell in Zurich. During the entire period, the unemployment rate in the Lake Geneva region and Ticino remained un-diminished at approx. 2 percentage points above the Swiss average.

Strong increase in the number of employed persons in Central Switzerland

In Switzerland as a whole, the number of employed persons increased by 9.0% between the fourth quarters of 2010 and 2015. The greatest increase was seen in Central Switzerland (+13.5%), Espace Mittelland (+11.4%) and Zurich (+9.9%). In the fourth quarter 2015, the greatest number of employed persons were active in Espace Mittelland (1.1 m), closely followed by Zurich (993,000) and the Lake Geneva region (944,000).

One third of all cross-border commuters works in the Lake Geneva region

In the fourth quarter 2015, 304,100 cross-border commuters were active in Switzerland. More than one third of these (37.0%) worked in the Lake Geneva region, a quarter in Northwest Switzerland (22.6%) and one fifth in Ticino (20.5%). This means that around four fifths of all cross-border commuters are active in one of these three major regions.

Between 2010 and 2015 (fourth quarter of each year), the greatest increase in the proportion of cross-border commuters in all employed persons was seen in Ticino (+4.3 percentage points to 26.9%) and in the Lake Geneva region (+2.5 percentage points to 11.8%). A considerably smaller increase was seen in Northwestern Switzerland (+0.7 percentage points to 10.4%). In Switzerland as a whole the proportion of cross-border commuters in all employed persons rose by 1.0 percentage point (to 6.0%).

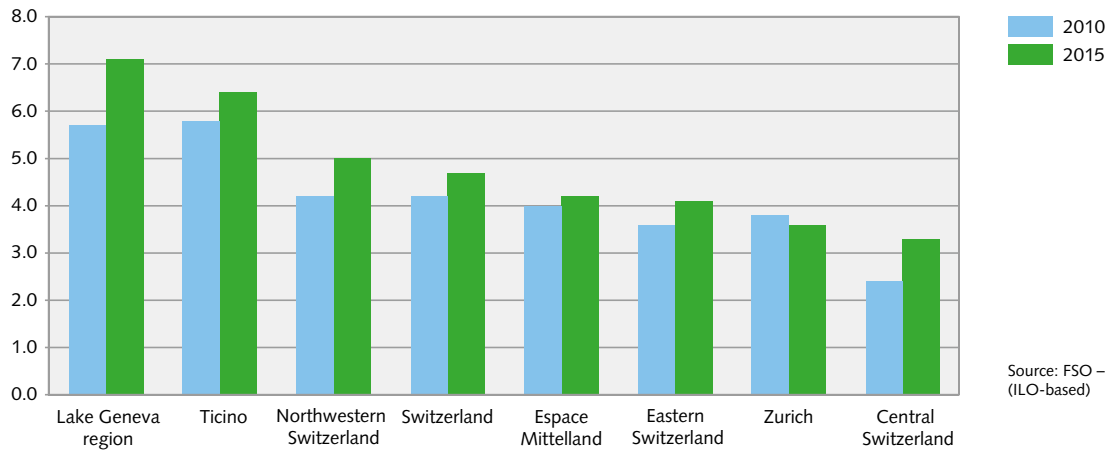
Increase in unemployment rate based on ILO definition in all major regions except Zurich

Over the entire five-year period (from fourth quarter 2010 to fourth quarter 2015), the unemployment rate based on ILO definition increased from 4.2% to 4.7% throughout Switzerland. However, differences can be observed between the major regions: sharp increases were registered in the unemployment rate in the Lake Geneva region (from 5.7% to 7.1%), in Central Switzerland (from 2.4% to 3.3%) and in Northwest Switzerland (from 4.2% to 5.0%). The increase was less marked in Ticino (from 5.8% to 6.4%), in Eastern Switzerland (from 3.6% to 4.1%) and in Espace Mittelland (from 4.0% to 4.2%). Only Zurich registered a decrease in the unemployment rate (by 0.2 percentage points to 3.6%).

Highest wages in the Zurich region

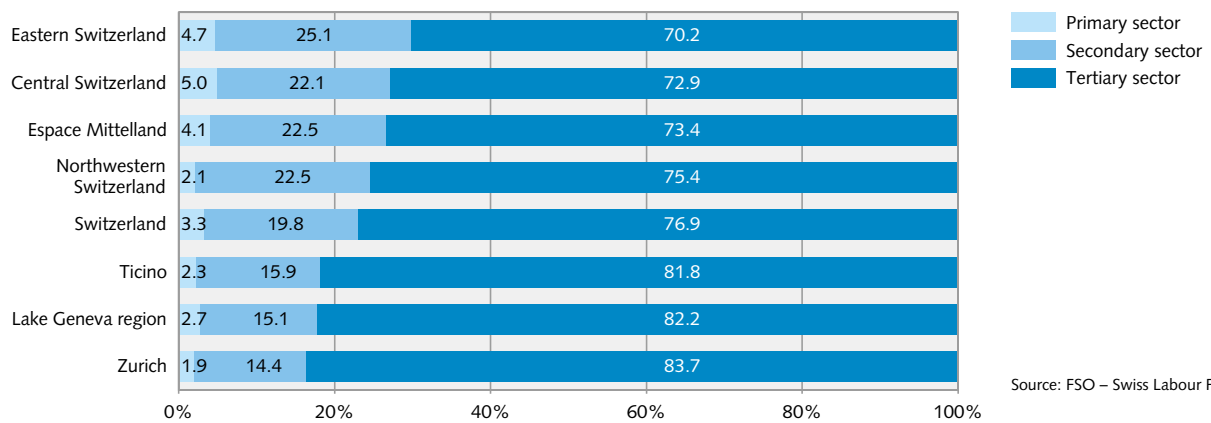
The wage situation in 2014 depended on the major region concerned: with a standardised gross median salary of CHF 5485 per month, employees in Ticino earned the lowest wages in Switzerland. They earned 19.5% less than employees in the Zurich region (CHF 6810), who had the highest wages in Switzerland (without taking account of the different costs of living). The wage gap between these two major regions increased by 1.5 percentage points in comparison with 2010 (18.0%). In 2014, the wage level in the other five major regions diverged less and lay between these two extremes: CHF 6578 in Northwest Switzerland, CHF 6497 in the Lake Geneva region, CHF 6358 in Espace Mittelland, CHF 6352 in Central Switzerland, and CHF 6027 in Eastern Switzerland.

Unemployment rate based on ILO definition by major region, as a percentage, 4th quarter 2010 and 2015



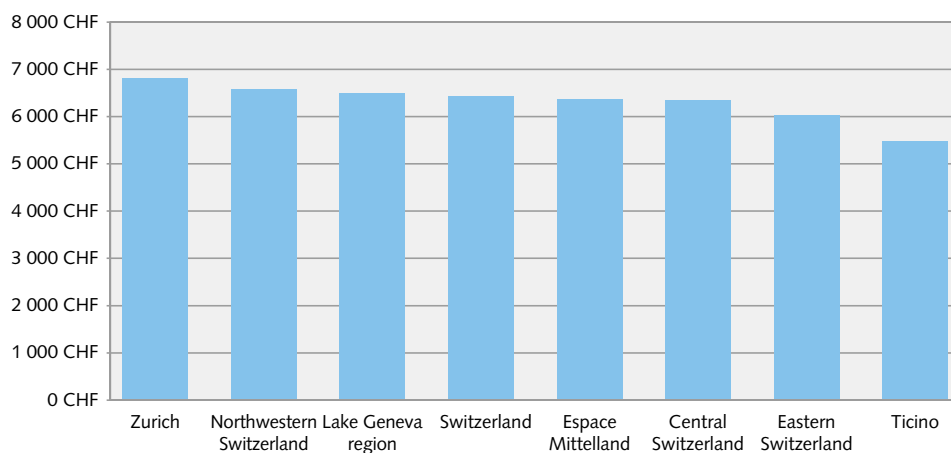
Source: FSO – Unemployment Statistics (ILO-based)

Breakdown of persons employed in the various economic sectors, by major region, as a percentage, annual average 2015



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey

(Median) standardised gross monthly wage by major region, in CHF, 2014, private and public sectors combined



Source: FSO – Swiss Earnings Structure Survey

Labour market in the first quarter of 2016 and short-term prospects

In the first quarter 2016 the number of jobs and employed persons rose compared with the same quarter a year earlier. The unemployment rate based on the ILO definition and the registered unemployment rate both increased. There were fewer job vacancies and businesses had less difficulty in the recruitment of qualified personnel than a year previously. The employment prospect indicator is indicating an increase in the number of jobs for the second quarter 2016.

Increase in employed persons and jobs

In the first quarter 2016, the number of employed persons grew by 65,000 compared with the same quarter a year earlier, representing an increase of 1.3%. Growth was greater for women (+1.8%) than for men (+0.9%), and lower for employed persons of Swiss nationality (+0.8%) than for those of foreign nationality (+2.4%). The number of foreigners with a residence permit (B permit; generally valid for 5 years and renewable) or with a cross-border commuter permit G increased considerably in annual comparison (+7.4% and +3.7% respectively). Holders of short-term residence permits (L permit) (-5.0%) and settlement permits (C permit) (-0.2%) on the other hand, declined. Whereas an increase in employed persons was observed in the tertiary sector (+2.0%), in the secondary sector the number of employed persons fell (-0.4%).

In comparison with the same quarter of the previous year, the number of employed persons (+1.3%) rose more than the number of jobs (+0.6%). The number of employed persons (Employment Statistics ES) and the number of jobs (Job Statistics JOBSTAT) may evolve differently, due, amongst other factors, to the different populations (households vs. businesses), to the different statistical units (individuals vs. jobs) or to the different time that measurements are made (quarterly average vs. end of quarter). The ES has a tendency to show a more positive picture than JOBSTAT at times of economic decline.

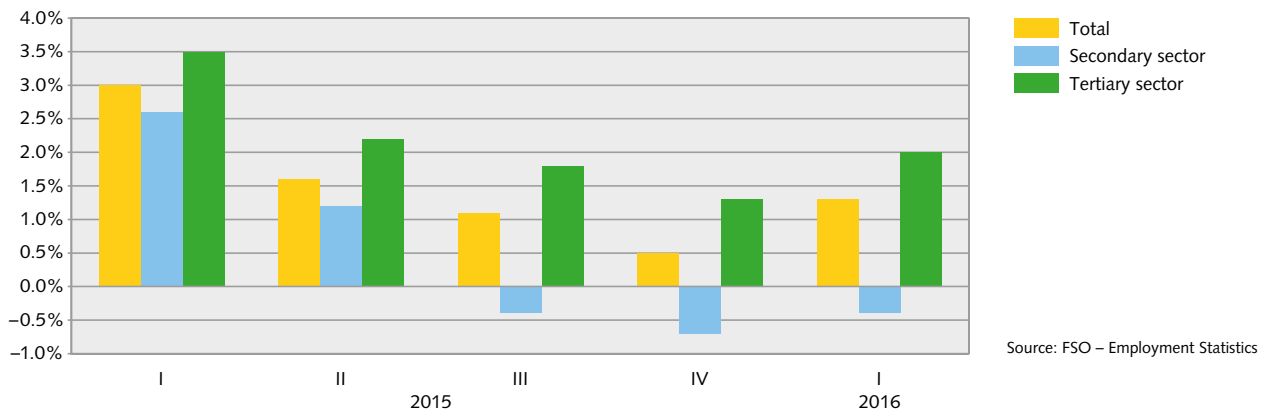
Increase in unemployment rate based on ILO definition

In the first quarter 2016, 248,000 people were unemployed in Switzerland based on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition. This was 37,000 more than one year earlier. The proportion of unemployed based on the ILO definition was 5.1% of the economically active population, compared with 4.4% in the first quarter 2015. The registered unemployment rate as defined by SECO was 3.6% in the first quarter 2016, representing an increase of 0.3 percentage points compared with the same quarter a year earlier. In absolute figures, this corresponds to approximately 160,000 persons who were registered as unemployed at a regional employment centre in the first quarter 2016 and an increase of 11,000 persons year-on-year. The number of job seekers who were not registered as unemployed (mainly persons with a temporary job and participants in temporary employment, retraining or continuing education programmes) grew between the first quarter 2015 (57,000) and the first quarter 2016 (61,000), by some 4000 persons according to SECO.

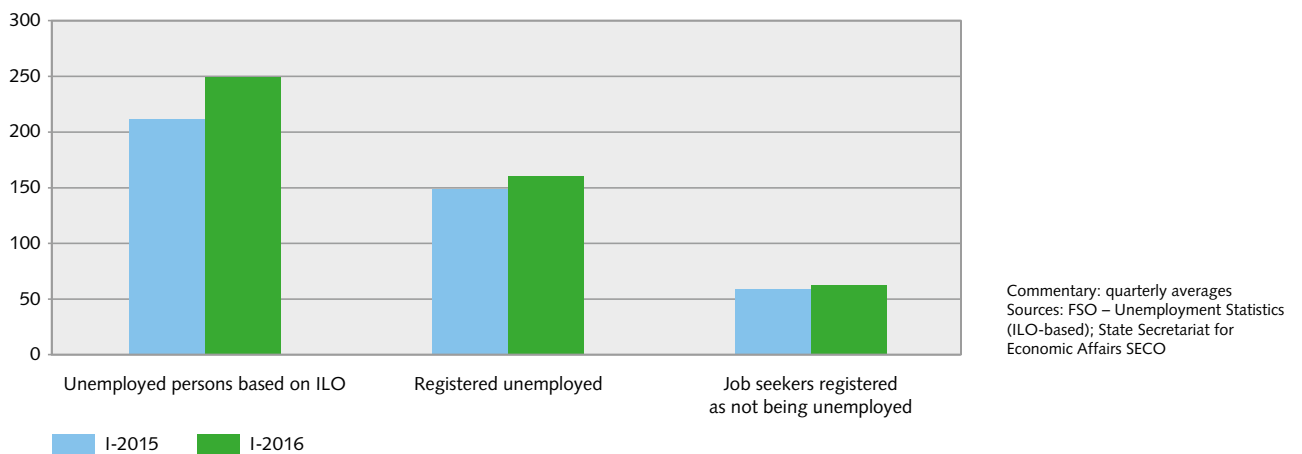
Employment prospect

The short-term indicators from the Job Statistics suggest that the number of employees will rise overall in the next quarter or at least remain stable: The employment outlook indicator, which represents businesses' expectations with regard to employment trends for the next three months, was in the first quarter 2016 identical to the same quarter of the previous year (1.02), and was therefore still above the value of 1.00 in both the secondary (1.02: +0.0%) and the tertiary sector (1.02: +0.0%). 51,000 job vacancies were counted in the whole economy. This was 4,700 fewer vacancies than in the same quarter a year earlier (-8.5%). In the secondary sector, with 2500 units (-18.9%) the decrease was considerably larger than the decline in the tertiary sector (-2200 units; -5.2%). Accordingly, the percentage of businesses that had difficulty recruiting qualified staff fell to a greater extent in the secondary sector (by 4.9 percentage points to 33.9%) than in the tertiary sector (-0.7 percentage points to 26.8%).

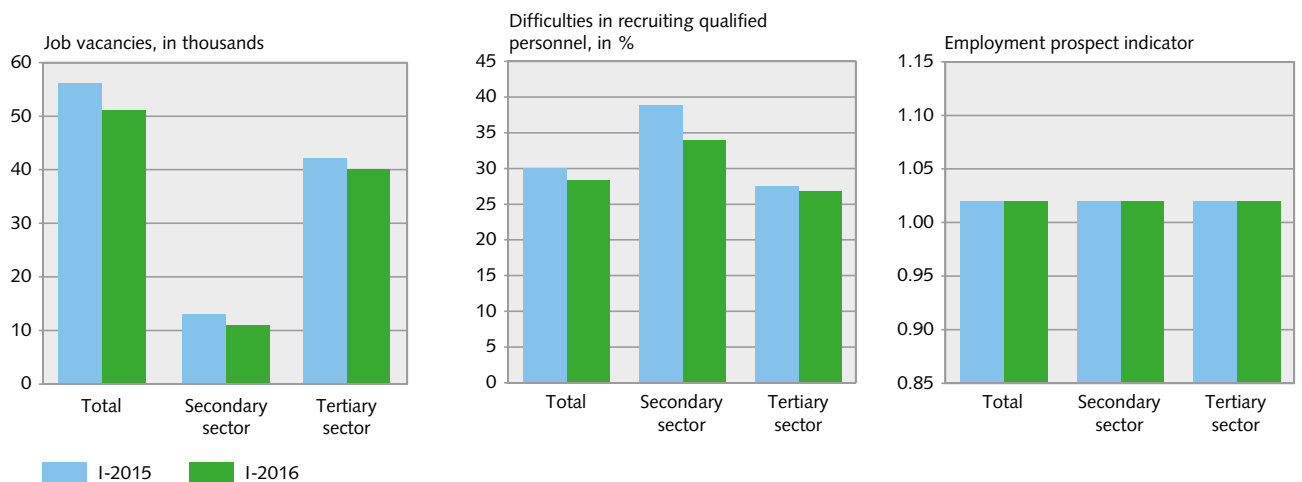
Variation in the number of employed persons by economic sector, compared to the corresponding quarter in the previous year, as a percentage, 1st quarter 2015 and 1st quarter 2016



Unemployed persons based on ILO definition, registered unemployed and job seekers registered as not being unemployed, in thousands, 1st quarter 2015 and 1st quarter 2016



Job vacancies, difficulties in recruiting qualified personnel in establishments operating in the secondary and tertiary sectors and employment prospect indicator*, 1st quarter 2015 and 1st quarter 2016



* The scale ranges from 0.50 (decrease) to 1.0 (no change) to 1.5 (increase).

Source: FSD – Job Statistics

The Swiss labour market in international comparison

The Swiss labour market performs well in international comparison. Switzerland has one of the highest economic activity rates in Europe. Both women's participation in the labour market and the proportion of employed persons working part-time are markedly higher in Switzerland than in most European countries. Switzerland's unemployment rate based on the ILO definition is around half the average ILO unemployment rate in Europe. Wages in Switzerland converted into Euros are higher than in other European countries. If the wages are converted into purchasing power standards to take into consideration the different price level index, the differences are less substantial, however.

Greater economic activity rate in Switzerland

In the fourth quarter of 2015, the economic activity rate of the Swiss population aged 15 or over was 69.3%. In European comparison, this places Switzerland in a leading position. The percentage of economically active persons was only higher in Iceland (81.9%), whereas Switzerland's neighbouring countries showed a much lower economic activity rate (Austria: 60.9%; Germany: 60.6%; France: 56.1%; Italy: 49.2%). Next to Italy, Croatia (52.5%) and Greece (52.2%) showed the lowest employment rates in Europe. The EU28 average was 57.6%.

Strong participation by women in the labour force in the Nordic countries

Women's labour force participation rates differ greatly from one country to another. In Italy (40.0%) and Malta (41.7%), approximately two in five women participated in the workforce, whereas the economic activity rates of women in the Scandinavian countries were among the highest (Iceland: 79.2%; Norway: 61.8%; Sweden: 60.7%). In the EU, one in two women was an economically active person (51.4%). With 63.8% Switzerland has one of the highest rates. Women's labour participation undoubtedly benefits from the large number of part-time jobs in Switzerland. 35.6% of employed persons in Switzerland worked part-time (women: 57.2%). Only in the Netherlands was this percentage higher (50.6%; women: 77.0%). The percentage of employed persons working part-time was particularly low in Bulgaria (2.3%; women: 2.5%) and in Hungary (5.6%; women: 7.5%).

Low unemployment rate based on ILO definition in Switzerland

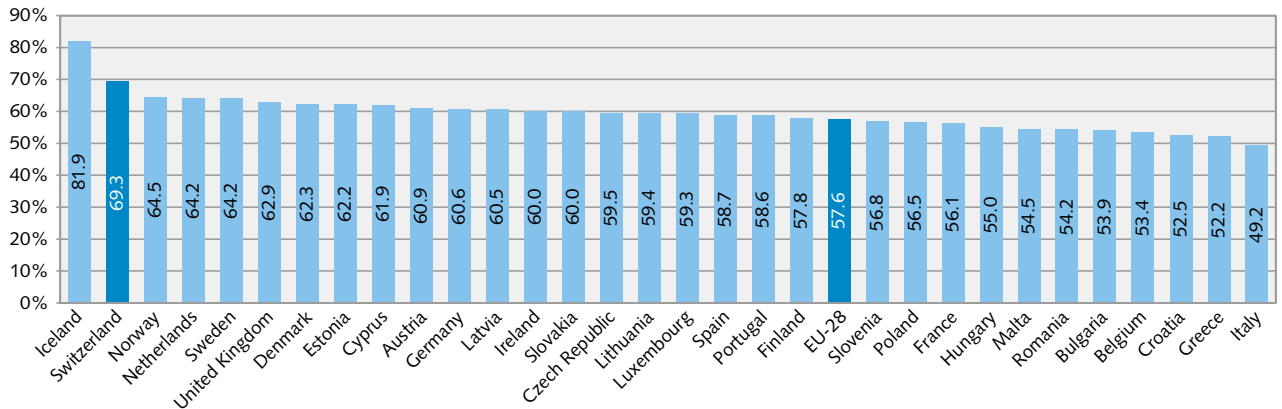
Across the EU, the unemployment rate based on ILO definition increased slightly between the fourth quarter of 2014 and the fourth quarter of 2015 (+0.6 percentage points) to settle at 4.7%. During the same period, a decline in unemployment based on the ILO definition was seen in the EU-28 (from 10.0% to 9.1%). Compared with the EU members states, Switzerland continues to have one of the lowest rates. Lower values are observed in the Czech Republic (4.5%; -1.2 percentage points), Germany (4.5%; -0.3 percentage points), Norway (4.2%; +0.8 percentage points) and Iceland (3.1%; -1.0 percentage points). Greece and Spain showed the highest unemployment rates based on the ILO definition in the whole of Europe; compared with the same quarter in the previous year, however, the unemployment rates fell in both countries (Greece: -1.7 percentage points to 24.4%; Spain: -2.8 percentage points to 20.9%).

Wages in international comparison

The comparison of average gross annual wages for full-time employees working in industry (enterprises with 10 or more employees), shows the great wage divide which exists between the EU countries. Marked differences do not only exist between the member states of the EU15 and the new member states, who have joined the EU since 2004, but also within the two groups of countries. In the EU15 states a north-south divide can still be observed. In 2010 the highest average gross annual wages were recorded in Denmark (EUR 54,807), Luxembourg (EUR 51,008) and in Belgium (EUR 44,366). The lowest values were registered in Spain (EUR 26,621), Greece (EUR 25,696) and Portugal (EUR 17,193). The wage gap is even greater when the new member states are also included: In 2010 only Cyprus (EUR 25,417) and Slovenia (EUR 20,495) achieved wages over EUR 20,000. In comparison, Romania and Bulgaria, who became EU members in 2007, came last with gross annual wages of EUR 6048 and EUR 4618. With an annual gross income of EUR 63,549, partly influenced by the strong franc, Switzerland occupies first place in front of Norway (EUR 55,370) another EFTA member state, and Denmark.

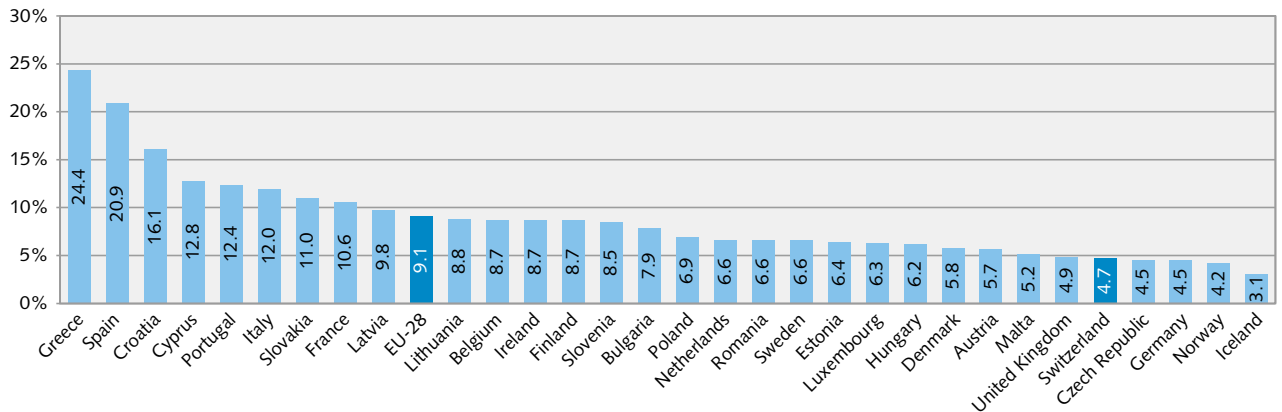
In order to depict the actual purchasing power of wages, they must be converted from their national currency to a collective, fictional currency, the purchasing power standard (PPS). If the different price levels of each country are taken into account, the extent of the wage divide between countries is altered. Expressed in euros, wages in Switzerland (the highest) are 13.8 times higher than those in Bulgaria (the lowest). But when expressed in PPS, the highest wages (Switzerland) are only 4.3 times higher than the lowest (Bulgaria). When looking at Switzerland's neighbouring countries, Swiss annual wages expressed in euros are 1.6 times higher than the wages in Germany and Austria, 1.8 times higher than in France and twice as high as wages in Italy. This difference is reduced when the comparison of average gross wages is made in PPS. The wages paid in Switzerland are only 1.2 times higher than wages in Germany, 1.3 times higher than in Austria, 1.4 times higher than in France and 1.5 times higher than in Italy.

Standardised employment rate (15+ years) in Switzerland and in the EU and EFTA states, as a percentage, 4th quarter 2015



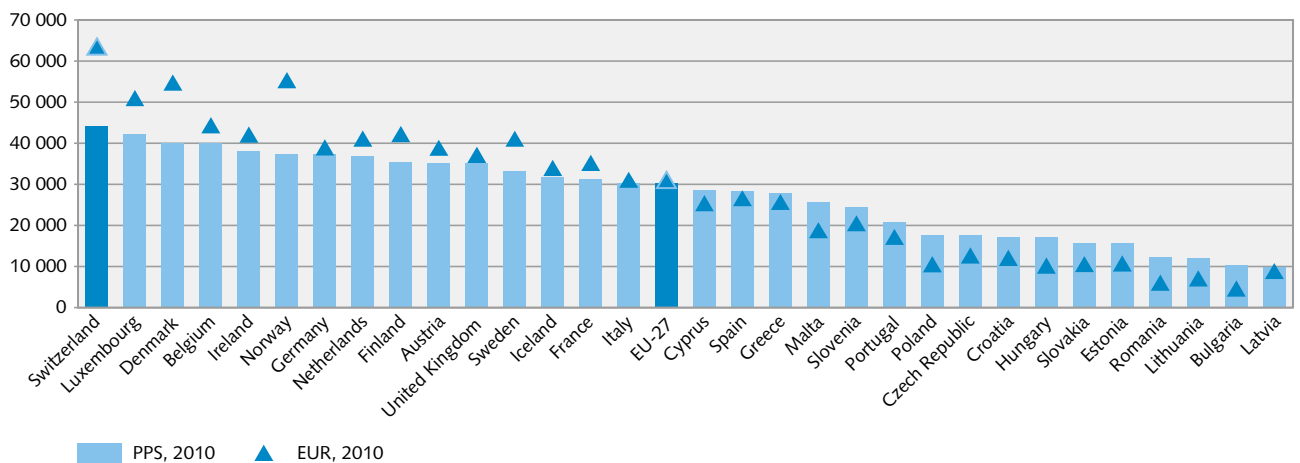
Sources: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey; EUROSTAT (status: February 2016)

Unemployment rate based on ILO (15–74 years) definition in Switzerland and in the EU and EFTA states, as a percentage, 4th quarter 2015



Sources: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey; EUROSTAT (status: February 2016)

Gross annual average earnings of full time employees¹. Enterprises with 10 employees or more, industrial and market services² – Switzerland, EU and EFTA countries, in PPS³ and EUR, 2010



¹ The amounts are calculated on the basis of wages of full-time employees and part-time employees (recalculated on the basis of a full-time work-time percentage of 100%)

² Sections B to N of the NACE Rev.2 classification

³ Calculation of the wages in PPS (purchasing power standards) eliminates the impact of differing national price levels

Sources: FSO – Swiss Earnings Structure Survey; EUROSTAT (status: April 2016)

