

2017

03

Work and income

Neuchâtel 2018

SLFS 2017 in brief

The Swiss Labour Force Survey



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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 120 000 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

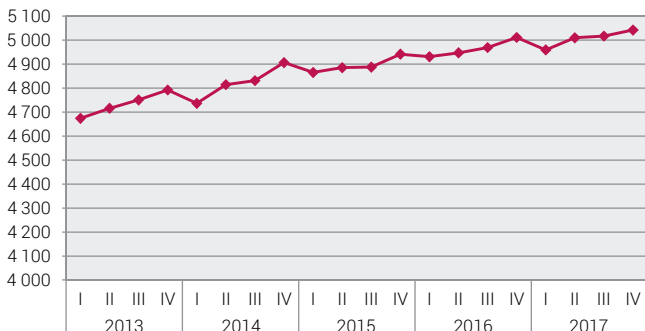
Employed population

In the 4th quarter 2017, there were 5.042 million persons in employment in Switzerland, i.e. 0.6% more than one year previously. Among these, the number of men rose by 1.1% and the number of women by 0.1%. In terms of full-time equivalent jobs (FTE), the increase between the 4th quarters 2016 and 2017 was also 0.6% (men: +0.3%; women: +1.0%).

The European Union (EU28) and the euro zone (EZ19) saw their employed population increase in year-on-year comparison (1.5% and 1.6% respectively).

Employed persons working in Switzerland

Domestic concept, in thousands, 2013–2017

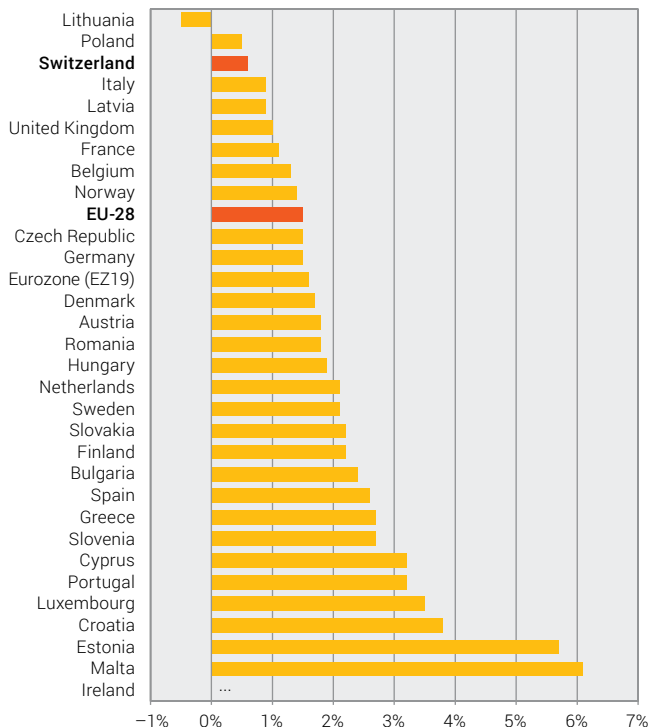


Source: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES)

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Employed persons in international comparison

Domestic concept, change from 4th quarter 2016 – 4th quarter 2017



... not available

Sources: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES); Eurostat

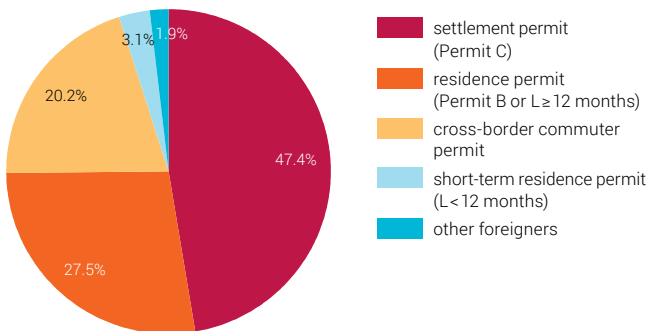
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Swiss and foreign labour force

Between the 4th quarter 2016 and the 4th quarter 2017, the number of foreign nationals in employment rose by 1.8% and that of Swiss nationals in employment by 0.1%. Foreign labour has shown the greatest increase among short-term residence permit holders (Permit L, in Switzerland for less than 12 months: +3.3%), followed by settlement permit holders (Permit C: +3.2%) and cross-border commuters (Permit G: +2.2%). In contrast, the number of employed residence permit holders (Permit B or L, in Switzerland for at least 12 months) declined (−1.5%).

Employed persons of foreign nationality by residence permit

Domestic concept, in %, 4th quarter 2017



Source: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES)

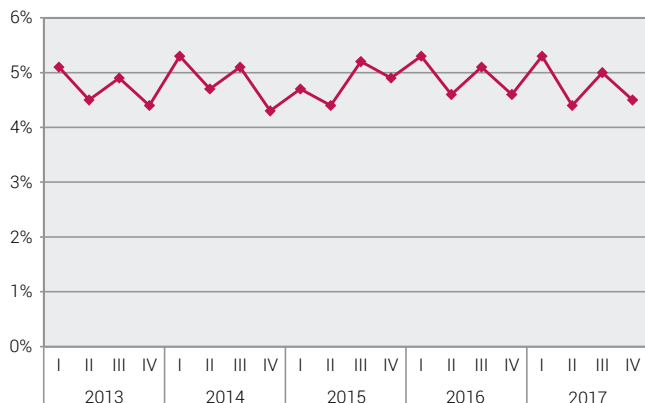
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Unemployment as defined by ILO

In the 4th quarter 2017, 222 000 persons were unemployed in Switzerland as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), i.e. 2 000 fewer than one year previously. These unemployed persons represented 4.5% of the economically active population, compared with 4.6% in the 4th quarter 2016. The unemployment rate declined in both the European Union (EU-28: from 8.3% to 7.4%) and the euro zone (EZ19: from 9.8% to 8.8%).

Unemployment rate as defined by ILO

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2013–2017

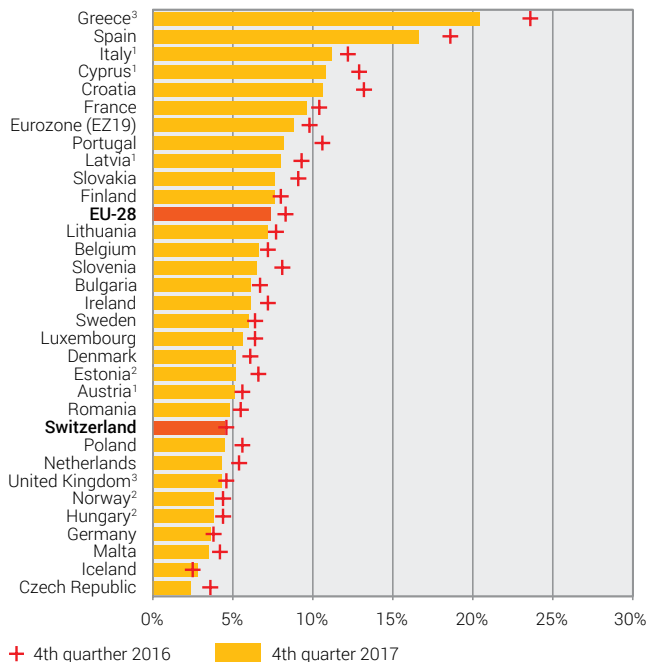


Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

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Unemployment rate as defined by ILO in international comparison

Permanent resident population concept, in %, at 4th quarters 2016 and 2017



¹ average October/November/December 2017 ³ values for October 2017

² average October/November 2017

Sources: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS);
Eurostat (Situation on 31.01.2018)

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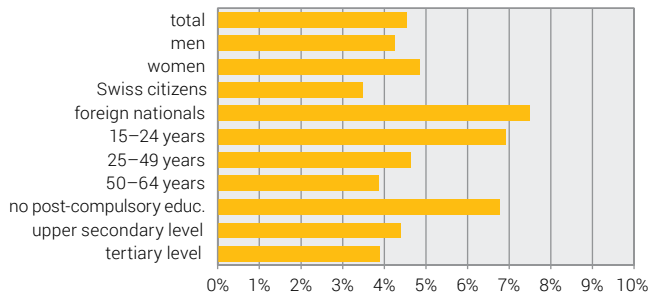
Unemployment as defined by the ILO by various characteristics

Between the 4th quarters 2016 and 2017, the youth unemployment rate (15–24 year olds) as defined by the ILO fell from 7.8% to 6.9% in Switzerland. There was a slight drop among 25–49 year olds (from 4.7% to 4.6%) and an increase among 50–64 year olds (from 3.6% to 3.9%). There was little change in unemployment for both men (from 4.4% to 4.3%) and women (from 4.8% to 4.9%).

Although it rose among Swiss nationals (from 3.3% to 3.5%), the rate fell among foreign nationals (from 8.3% to 7.5%). This decline was due to a drop from 13.1% to 10.4% in the unemployment rate based on the ILO definition among non-EU citizens. There was a slight increase from 6.2% to 6.4% among EU-28/EFTA nationals.

Unemployment rate as defined by the ILO by various characteristics

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 4th quarter 2017



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

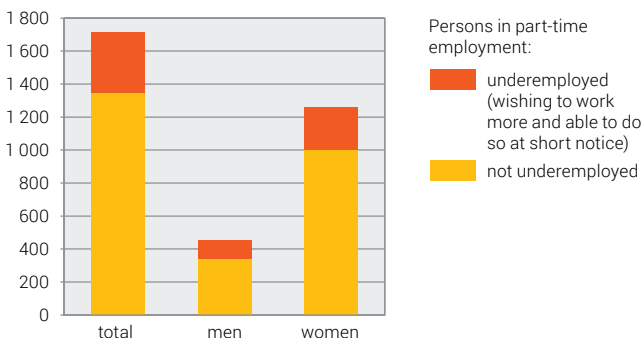
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Underemployed persons

In the 4th quarter 2017 the number of persons working part time was 1.712 million (+15 000 compared with the 4th quarter 2016). Among these, 367 000 were underemployed, i.e. they would have liked to work more and were available to do so in the near future. The underemployment rate was 7.5% compared with 7.1% a year previously.

Underemployed persons

Permanent resident population concept, in thousands, 4th quarter 2017



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

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Employment contracts and working time models

Flexitime

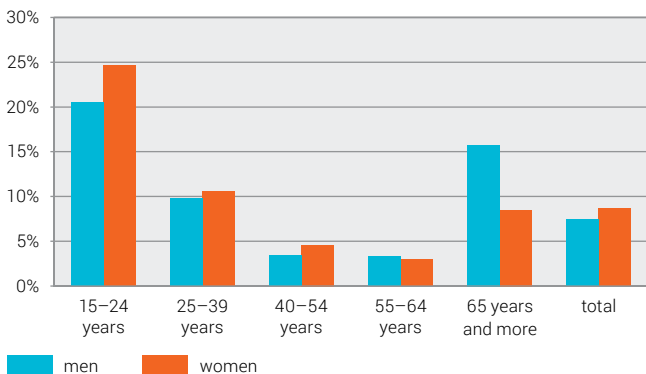
In 2017, 44.2% of employees worked flexitime compared with 40.9% in 2010. The rate has increased among both men and women. This type of model is more common among men (49.5%) than among women (38.4%). The lowest rate of flexitime is found among young employees aged 15 to 24 (29.1%). This percentage increases sharply with age.

Fixed-term contract

In 2017, 8.0% of salaried employees had a fixed-term contract compared with 6.7% in 2010. Since 2010 there has been a marked increase in fixed-term contracts (FTC) in all age groups with the exception of 55–64 year-olds who have seen a slight decrease. This type of contract is most common among salaried employees aged 15 to 24 (excluding apprentices), representing almost a quarter (22.7%) of employment relationships, of which 40.9% are internships. The FTC rate for young people was 18.4% in 2010, of which 36.2% were internships.

Percentage of employees (excl. apprentices) with a fixed-term contract by sex and age

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2017



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

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Employees paid by a temporary employment agency

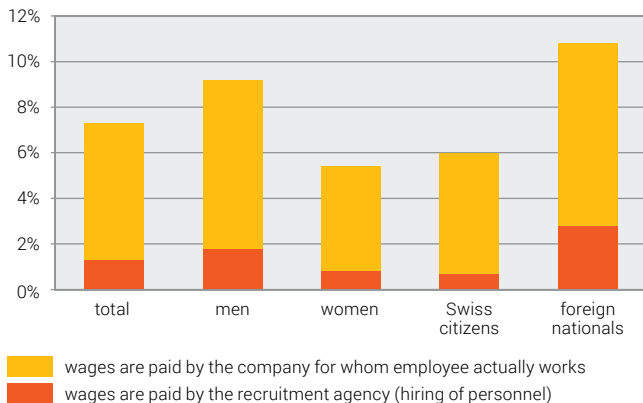
According to the SLFS, 1.3% of employees received their wages from a private temporary employment agency in 2017 (1.1% in 2010). This type of model is more common among men (1.8%) than among women (0.8%), and more likely to be found among employees of foreign nationality (2.8%)

Employees who found employment through a private employment agency

6% of employees found employment through a private employment agency and were paid by the business for which they were working. This rate has remained stable since 2010 (6.0%). Men (7.4%) are more likely than women (4.6%) to be in this situation.

Percentage of employees (excl. apprentices) that found their job through a private recruitment agency by sex and nationality

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2017



Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

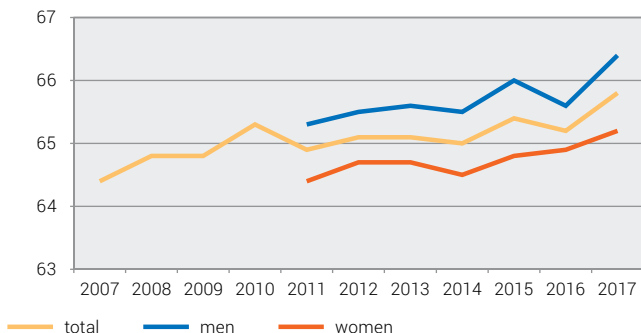
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Average age on leaving the labour market

In 2017, among persons aged 58 to 75, the average age on leaving the labour market was estimated to be 65.8. The average age on leaving the labour market was 64.4 in 2007. In 2017 it was 66.4 years for men and 65.2 for women.

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

Permanent resident population concept, 2007–2017



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

Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

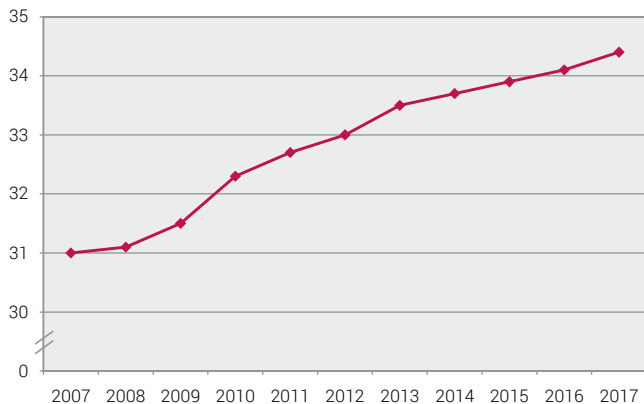
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Number of older persons per 100 economically active persons

Between 2016 and 2017, the number of persons aged 65 or more per 100 economically active persons aged 20 to 64 rose from 34.1 to 34.4. 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 2007 there were only 31 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 years

Permanent resident population concept, 2007–2017



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 market

This indicator is calculated on the basis of a weighted average of the age on leaving the labour market. 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 market. Only persons leaving the labour market 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 10am to 11.30am and from 2pm to 4pm 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**



Our information service is at your disposal for further information:

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