



# Press release

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Basic statistical data and overviews

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Federal Statistical Office (FSO)

## The FSO is celebrating its 20th anniversary in Neuchâtel

**Neuchâtel, 29.10.2018 (FSO) – The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) inaugurated its main building in Neuchâtel 20 years ago. The Office moved to Neuchâtel as part of the federal administration’s decentralisation programme. The relocation has proved successful, strengthening the presence of French speakers working for the Confederation and intensifying cooperation with the University of Neuchâtel.**

The move to Neuchâtel allowed the various units that had hitherto been scattered across the city of Bern to be brought together under one roof. This step created synergies to improve the production of official statistics, of which the FSO is the centre of excellence. According to its designers, the tower, inaugurated in a second phase in 2004, symbolises the institution’s function as a beacon for democracy, producing essential data.

The role of the FSO is essential, supplying impartial and high quality data for politics, the economy and public opinion. Georges-Simon Ulrich, Director General, who can attest to the success of the move to Neuchâtel, stresses that “The FSO focuses on the description of what is and on the analysis of what was”.

### French speakers and local residents

Over the past twenty years, the make-up of staff at the FSO, which in 2017 employed 856 people (of whom 66% part-time) including trainees, has changed considerably. The proportion of French speakers and local residents from the Neuchâtel region rose greatly between 1998 and 2017 when it stood at around 53% French speakers. Furthermore, over a third of staff lived in the canton of Neuchâtel.

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The FSO has an annual budget of CHF 170 million, employing men and women in equal numbers. Around 69% of staff hold a university degree. The FSO also trains 42 people in various professions, especially in the MINT fields (mathematics, information technology, natural sciences and technology).

The FSO and the University of Neuchâtel have been working together closely since 2001 when they signed an official agreement on their cooperation. Under this agreement, the FSO has received the support of the University of Neuchâtel in many areas, including deseasonalising job statistics, estimating the accuracy of trends in value added, estimating confidence intervals for median wages and other complex statistics.

For Jean-Nat Karakash, Cantonal Councillor and head of the canton of Neuchâtel's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, high quality statistical indicators are essential to policy makers in enunciating, guiding and elucidating their decisions. The FSO is also an employment hub, offering high value-added jobs in the canton of Neuchâtel. The FSO's presence in the canton facilitates contact and cooperation with the cantonal administration and in particular with its statistical agency. The Cantonal Government is very pleased with the synergies between the FSO, the university's statistical institute and the canton's statistical agency: their complementarity has positioned Neuchâtel as the national centre for statistics.

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### **Microsite and augmented reality**

The FSO has published a microsite in honour of its 20th anniversary to remember the key moments of this move. It includes a timeline that allows users to relive the milestones in the recent history of the FSO, founded in 1860.

A photo gallery shows the huge industrial wasteland upon which the main building was erected right at the start of the regeneration of the area surrounding the railway station. A groundbreaker in sustainable construction in terms of energy consumption and especially in the choice of materials used, the building won several prizes at home and abroad.

Microsite: [www.stat20ne.bfs.admin.ch](http://www.stat20ne.bfs.admin.ch)



A virtual visit of the FSO premises will be available on YouTube thanks to 360-degree video sequences. Filmed using drones and special cameras, this video allows viewers to take a playful look at the FSO premises and at the same time showcases the interior and exterior of the national statistics centre's two buildings.

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