

Handbook for Investors

SWITZERLAND AS A BUSINESS LOCATION



Welcome



Guy Parmelin

Swiss Federal Council
Director, Swiss Federal Department of Economic
Affairs, Education, and Research (EAER)

Dear reader,

Switzerland is one of the world's leading locations; regular top positions in international rankings testify to this. Its innovative and competitive companies, excellent universities, first-class experts and excellent infrastructure form a strong foundation.

But we do not want to rest on our laurels with these achievements. As Director of the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), I am committed to maintaining and further consolidating these excellent conditions. We are thus cultivating and strengthening Switzerland to be a location that is attractive both now and in the future. We want it to enable local and international companies as well as research institutes from all sectors to keep performing at their best. These companies must remain consistently on the right path so they can assert themselves in global competition. If these conditions are met, our country can continue to score points with its performance, quality and innovation in the future.

The Swiss economy has mastered the international challenges of recent years very well, thanks not least to the good conditions, but above all thanks to the productivity and innovativeness of local companies.

We want your company to become part of this success story. An initial guide for the choice of location can be found in this manual. To help you learn more about the specific advantages and the circumstances of individual location factors, the settlement specialists from Switzerland Global Enterprise and the cantons here in Switzerland, and also those in the Swiss Business Hubs abroad, are on hand to advise you. They are very familiar with the concerns and needs of international companies as well as Switzerland's economic fabric and can actively support you.

We look forward to seeing you!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Guy Parmelin
Swiss Federal Council

Investment Promotion

As part of its remit from the Swiss Confederation (State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO) and the cantons, S-GE provides potential foreign investors with information about the particular strengths and operating conditions of Switzerland as a business location. Its services for foreign companies include assessing the potential of their projects before they are presented to the cantons. S-GE assists the cantons by presenting Switzerland as a business location abroad and by coordinating the activities of all the bodies involved.



Table of Contents

SWITZERLAND – YOUR BUSINESS LOCATION	8		
INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY	10		
Research and Development Hub	11	2.3.4	Cleantech
Leading Industry Clusters	12	2.3.5	Company Headquarters
Strong Education System	13	2.3.6	Financial Services
		2.3.7	Trading and Resources
SECURITY AND TRUST	14	3	ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK
Reliable Governance	15	3.1	International Exchange of Goods and Services
Liberal Labor Market	16	3.1.1	Free Trade Agreements, WTO, and Elimination of Trade Restrictions
Sound Financial and Capital Market	17	3.1.2	Customs and Excise
Attractive Taxes	18	3.1.3	Rules of Origin
Easy Start-Up Process	19	3.2	Protection of Free Competition
		3.3	Protection of Intellectual Property
		3.3.1	Patents
ENVIRONMENT AND LIFE	20	3.3.2	Trademarks
Unique Quality of Life	21	3.3.3	Design
International Environment	22	3.3.4	Copyright
Reliable Infrastructure	23	3.4	Product Regulations and Product Liability
		3.4.1	Foodstuffs
1 SWITZERLAND – FACTS AND FIGURES	24	3.4.2	Pharmaceutical Products
1.1 Geography	25	3.4.3	Medical Devices
1.2 Climate	25	3.5	Land Use Planning and Environmental Protection
1.3 Political System	26	3.5.1	Building and Zoning
1.3.1 Federal Structure	26	3.5.2	Environment
1.3.2 Separation of Powers at Federal Level	26		
1.3.3 Direct Democracy and the Concordance System	27	4	SWITZERLAND AND EUROPE
1.3.4 Political Stability and Social Harmony	27	4.1	Trade and Direct Investments
1.4 Public Finance	28	4.2	Political and Economic Cooperation
1.5 Neutrality	28	4.2.1	Free Movement of Persons
1.6 Population	28	4.2.2	Schengen Agreement
1.7 Cosmopolitanism and International Outlook	29	4.2.3	Elimination of Technical Barriers to Trade
1.7.1 Languages and Origins	29	4.2.4	Research
1.7.2 International Organizations	29	4.2.5	Rail, Road, and Air Transport
1.8 Switzerland in Figures	31	4.2.6	Public Procurement in Switzerland
		4.2.7	Trade in Agricultural Products
2 ECONOMIC STRUCTURE	32	4.2.8	Taxation of Savings Income
2.1 Gross Domestic Product and Industry Structure	33	4.3	The Euro
2.2 International Integration	36		
2.2.1 Goods and Services Trade	36	5	ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING A COMPANY
2.2.2 Direct Investments	37	5.1	Corporate Structures
2.3 Key Industry Clusters	38	5.1.1	Stock Corporation (AG)
2.3.1 Life Sciences: Chemicals/Pharmaceuticals, Biotech, Medtech	38	5.1.2	Limited Liability Company (GmbH)
2.3.2 Machinery, Electrical Engineering, and Metals Industry	39	5.1.3	Branch Office
2.3.3 Information and Communication Technology	39	5.1.4	Limited Partnership for Collective Investment
		5.1.5	Sole Proprietorship

5.1.6	General Partnership	63	8.4.5	Leave and Public Holidays	90
5.1.7	Joint Venture	63	8.5	Termination and Short-Time Work	90
5.1.8	Ordinary Partnership	63	8.5.1	Notice Periods and Termination Protection	90
5.2	Accounting	63	8.5.2	Short-Time Work and Mass Layoffs	91
5.3	Auditing	63	8.6	Social Insurance	91
5.4	Establishing a Company	64	8.6.1	Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance	93
5.4.1	Process	64	8.6.2	Disability Insurance	93
5.4.2	Entry in the Commercial Register	65	8.6.3	Accident Insurance	93
5.4.3	Costs of Forming a Company	65	8.6.4	Health Insurance and Daily Sickness Insurance	93
			8.6.5	Compensation for Loss of Income and Maternity Benefits	93
6	VISAS, RESIDENCE PERMITS, AND WORK PERMITS	66	8.6.6	Unemployment Insurance	94
6.1	Entering the Country and Visas	67	8.6.7	Occupational Pension Funds	94
6.1.1	Visa Requirements	67	8.6.8	Family Allowances	94
6.1.2	Visa Procedure	68	8.7	Recruitment	95
6.2	Temporary and Permanent Residence	68	8.7.1	Public Employment Service	95
6.2.1	Family Reunification	69	8.7.2	Private Employment Agencies	95
6.3	Residing in Switzerland without Gainful Employment	69	8.7.3	Headhunters	95
6.3.1	Stays of up to 3 Months	69	8.7.4	Staffing/Temporary Employment Agencies	95
6.3.2	Longer Stays	69			
6.3.3	Special Case: Students	70	9	FINANCIAL CENTER AND CAPITAL MARKET	96
6.4	Residing in Switzerland with Gainful Employment	70	9.1	Banks	97
6.4.1	Recognition of Foreign Qualifications	70	9.1.1	Structure and General Conditions	97
6.4.2	Residence and Employment for EU/EFTA Citizens	72	9.1.2	Supervision	98
6.4.3	Residence and Employment for Non-EU/EFTA Citizens	72	9.1.3	Services	98
6.4.4	Trainees/Interns	73	9.1.4	Protection of Deposits	99
6.5	Naturalization	73	9.2	Swiss Stock Market: SIX Swiss Exchange	99
			9.3	Business Lending and Real Estate Financing	100
7	REAL ESTATE	74	9.3.1	Financing of Current Business Activity	100
7.1	Looking for the Right Property	75	9.3.2	Mortgages	101
7.1.1	Residential and Commercial Real Estate	75	9.4	Risk Capital	101
7.1.2	Temporary Accommodation / Furnished Apartments	75	9.4.1	Venture Capital	101
7.2	Commercial Real Estate	76	9.4.2	Business Angels	102
7.2.1	Renting	76	9.4.3	State Support	102
7.2.2	Buying	77	9.5	Interest and Capital Costs	103
7.3	Residential Real Estate	79	9.6	Inflation	103
7.3.1	Renting	79			
7.3.2	Buying	80	10	OVERVIEW OF THE SWISS TAX SYSTEM	104
7.4	Legal Aspects: Building Permits	81	10.1	Taxation of Corporate Taxpayers	105
7.5	Legal Aspects: Purchase of Real Estate by Persons Abroad	82	10.1.1	Corporate Income Tax – Federal Level	105
7.5.1	No Permit Required	82	10.1.2	Corporate income tax – Cantonal and Municipal Level	106
7.5.2	Permit Required	82	10.1.3	Capital Tax	107
7.5.3	Reasons for Permit	83	10.1.4	Tax Relief	107
7.5.4	Enforcement	83	10.2	Tax Charge Rate in International Comparison	108
			10.3	Taxation of Individual Taxpayers	109
8	LABOR MARKET AND LABOR LAW	84	10.3.1	Personal Income Tax	109
8.1	Employment and Unemployment	85	10.3.2	Wealth Tax	110
8.2	Cost of Labor	86	10.3.3	Expatriates	110
8.2.1	Wages	86	10.3.4	Cross-Border Commuters	110
8.2.2	Non-Wage Labor Costs	86	10.3.5	Lump-Sum Taxation	111
8.2.3	Productivity	86	10.3.6	Inheritance and Gift Tax	111
8.3	Employment Contracts and Employee Representation	87	10.4	Withholding Tax	112
8.3.1	Individual Employment Contract	87	10.4.1	Domestic Rates	112
8.3.2	Collective Bargaining Agreements	88	10.4.2	Treaty Rates	112
8.3.3	Co-Determination and Employee Representation	88	10.4.3	Bilateral Agreements with the EU	113
8.4	Working Hours and Holidays	89	10.5	Value Added Tax	113
8.4.1	Normal Working Hours, Maximum Working Hours, and Working Time Models	89	10.5.1	Taxable Persons	113
8.4.2	Overtime and Excess Hours	89	10.5.2	Taxable Supplies	114
8.4.3	Daytime and Evening Work	89	10.5.3	Taxable Amount	114
8.4.4	Night Work, Working on Sundays and Holidays	90	10.5.4	Tax Rates	114
			10.5.5	Exemptions	114
			10.5.6	Deduction of Input Taxes	115

10.5.7	Exports	115	14	INVESTMENT PROMOTION	148
10.5.8	International Business Activity	115	14.1	Responsibilities and Services	149
10.5.9	Non-Resident Enterprises	116	14.2	Promotional Policy and Instruments	150
10.6	Other Taxes	116	14.2.1	Cantonal Promotion	150
10.6.1	Stamp Taxes	116	14.2.2	Tax Relief as Part of Regional Policy	150
10.6.2	Real Estate Taxes	116	14.2.3	Switzerland Innovation	151
10.7	Double Tax Treaties	117	14.2.4	Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI)	151
10.8	Tax Proposal 17	117	14.2.5	Technology Parks and Business Incubators	151
10.9	Transfer Pricing Rules	117	15	APPENDIX	154
11	INFRASTRUCTURE	118	15.1	International Network	155
11.1	Transportation	119	15.1.1	Swiss Business Hubs Investment Promotion (target markets)	155
11.1.1	Road Traffic	120	15.1.2	Additional Switzerland Global Enterprise Swiss Business Hubs	155
11.1.2	Rail	120	15.2	National Network	156
11.1.3	Shipping and Navigation	121	15.2.1	Cantonal Business Promotion Agencies	156
11.1.4	Air Travel	121	15.2.2	Intercantonal Location Marketing Organization	157
11.2	Communication	124	15.3	List of Figures	158
11.3	Energy	125			
11.4	Water	125			
11.4.1	Drinking Water	125			
11.4.2	Waste Water Disposal and Water Pollution Control	126			
11.5	Post	126			
11.6	Healthcare	126			
11.6.1	Medical Care	126			
11.6.2	Health Insurance	126			
12	EDUCATION AND RESEARCH	128			
12.1	Schooling and Vocational Training	129			
12.1.1	Basic and Further Education	129			
12.1.2	Vocational Training	132			
12.2	Further Education	132			
12.3	Universities and Colleges	132			
12.3.1	Universities and Institutes of Technology	132			
12.3.2	Universities of Applied Sciences	134			
12.3.3	Executive MBA (EMBA) Programs	134			
12.4	International Private Schools and Boarding Schools	135			
12.5	Research and Development	135			
12.5.1	Conducting Research in Switzerland	135			
12.5.2	International Collaborative Research	136			
12.6	Switzerland Innovation – The Swiss Innovation Park	138			
12.6.1	Innovation Focus Areas	138			
12.6.2	Switzerland Innovation Parks	138			
12.6.3	Target Audience	139			
12.6.4	Services	139			
13	LIVING IN SWITZERLAND	140			
13.1	Safety and Quality of Life	141			
13.2	Relocation and Integration	143			
13.2.1	Moving	143			
13.2.2	Language Courses	143			
13.3	Renting an Apartment	143			
13.3.1	Deposits and Rental Agreements	143			
13.3.2	House Rules and Maintenance	144			
13.4	Telephone, Internet, and TV	144			
13.5	Insurance	145			
13.6	Public Transport	145			
13.7	Leisure Activities	145			
13.7.1	Recreational and Cultural Offers	145			
13.7.2	Associations and Volunteer Work	146			
13.8	Income and Cost of Living	146			

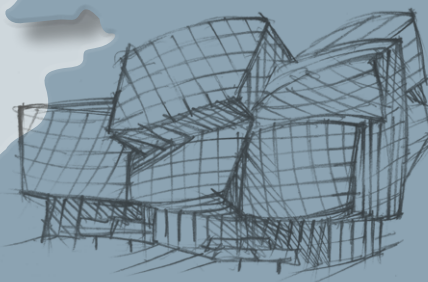
SWITZERLAND – YOUR BUSINESS LOCATION

Switzerland is the most competitive business center in the world. There are numerous good reasons to locate a business in Switzerland: innovation and technology, a liberal economic system, political stability, close links with foreign markets, excellent education and healthcare systems, an outstanding infrastructure, a high standard of living, and a competitive tax system.



Leading Industry Clusters:

- Life Sciences
- ICT
- MEM



Strong dual training system

INNOVATION + TECHNOLOGY



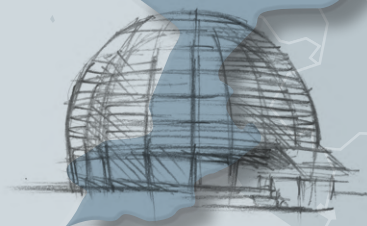
World's most innovative country



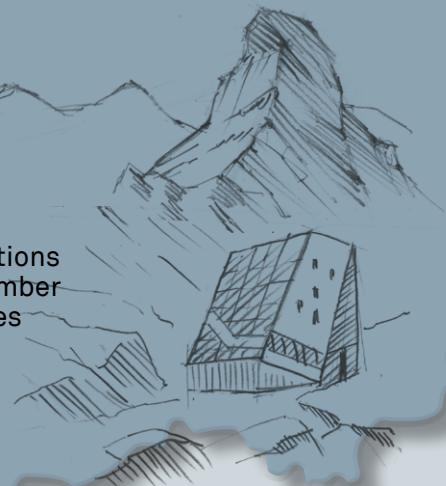
3 Swiss firms are among the 40 most valuable companies in the world



One of the happiest nations in the world



Among the top 2 nations with the highest number of Nobel laureates per capita





Most attractive country
for highly qualified foreign
workers

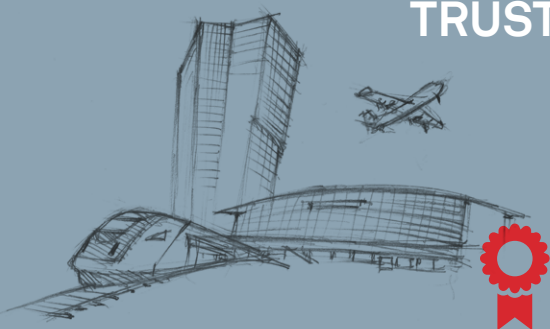


Motivated workforce:
No general strikes for 100
years

SECURITY + TRUST



Employees with significant
international experience



World's best working
conditions



World's highest
purchasing power

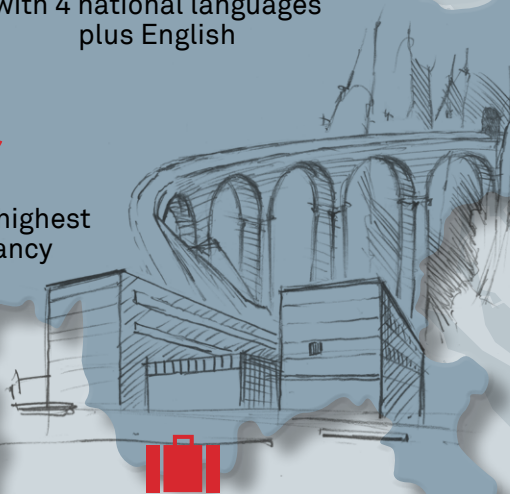


Multilingual employees
with 4 national languages
plus English

ENVIRONMENT + LIFE

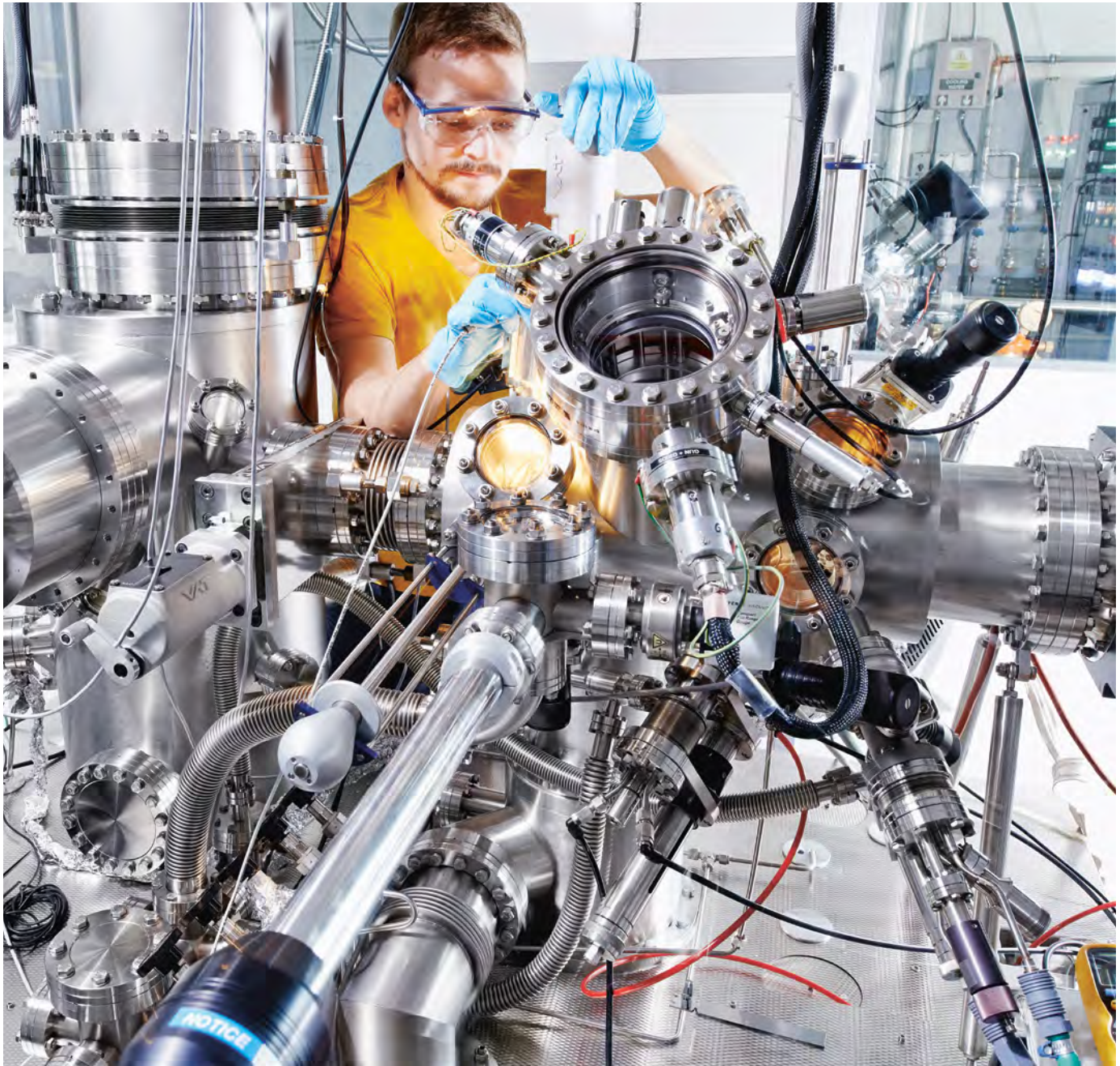


World's third-highest
life expectancy



Among the top 10 most
popular countries for
expatriates

3 in the top 15:
Swiss cities offer a very
high standard of living



INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Three of Switzerland's strengths are especially prominent: high degree of innovation, supremely educated workforce and first-class scientific research organizations. Cutting-edge technologies and a business-friendly climate also contribute to our country's productivity.

Image
Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials
Science and Technology (EMPA),
Dübendorf



Research and Development Hub

Image
UCB Farchim, Bulle

WORLD-CLASS UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH

Switzerland invests nearly 3% of its GDP in research and development, one of the highest percentages in the world. More than 60 universities help to ensure the highest level of professional work. They work closely with the international research community and take part in scientific partnerships. They connect with industry through the exchange of knowledge and technology, support innovative start-ups, and establish strong spin-offs. Organizations and companies from Switzerland and abroad value the country's excellent research platform and its role as an international innovation hub. No wonder so many major companies are based here, from pharmaceutical giants Roche and Novartis to the research centers of Disney and Google.

Almost half of Swiss workers are employed in knowledge-intensive industries. High-tech products form an important pillar of the country's economic success and excellent reputation. Around one quarter of all high-tech products are exported. This underlines the innovation potential of the Swiss economy, which holds a leading position in international rankings. Intellectual property is effectively protected through patent, trademark, design, and copyright law. In 2016, more than 7,000 patent applications were filed in Switzerland. This is the fifth highest figure in the world, the third highest in Europe – and it is the highest figure worldwide per capita. Switzerland's international leadership in research is also apparent in the number of Nobel Prize laureates per capita: Switzerland has the highest figure worldwide in this area as well.

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

As an important center of research, Switzerland attracts highly qualified foreign researchers. Several internationally important institutions are based here. For example, the European Organization for Nuclear Research CERN and the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI). CERN is considered to be one of the most important centers in the world for basic research in physics. It was here, in the late 1980s, that the World Wide Web was developed.

The Swiss research community actively participates in the cross-border exchange of knowledge. It is well integrated in the cooperation networks of major European nations and covers a wide spectrum of research fields. Albert Einstein once studied and taught at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETHZ). And he's far from being the only one: ETHZ has always welcomed foreign researchers and lecturers; indeed half of its professors are non-Swiss.



Leading Industry Clusters

Image
Kistler Group, Winterthur

- Life sciences (chemicals, pharma, medtech, biotech)
- ICT (information and communications technology)
- MEM (machinery, electrical engineering, metals industry)

A STRONG LOCATION FOR STRONG BUSINESSES

Important industry clusters choose to locate their headquarters in Switzerland. Here, they find a solid foundation: an excellent environment for research and development, an efficient registration and certification system, and a highly educated workforce. Three Swiss companies, Roche, Nestle, and Novartis, are among the 40 most valuable companies in the world. Switzerland is also a popular, neutral location for European headquarters: over 1,000 multinational firms have their regional or global headquarters here, including major names such as eBay, Google, and Unilever.

A UNIQUE COMBINATION OF INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

Northwest Switzerland is home to a unique life sciences cluster. In addition to chemical and pharmaceutical firms like Novartis, Roche, and Syngenta, it encompasses a dense network of medtech, biotech, and nanotech companies.

In the industrial sector, key roles are played by the machinery, electrical engineering, and metals industry. Major international companies such as ABB, Alstom, Bombardier, Saurer, and Schindler all have a presence in Switzerland. In the region between Geneva and Schaffhausen, a “precision cluster” has developed on the basis of the traditional watchmaking industry. Apart from its watches and clocks, Switzerland is also world-renowned for its financial services industry: Zurich and Geneva are among the world’s top 15 financial centers.

Switzerland is also growing in importance as a center of the information and communications industry. International corporations such as IBM, Google, Microsoft, Siemens, Disney, and HP have set up home near Swiss universities and research institutes. The initiative “digitalswitzerland” positions Switzerland as the center for digital innovation in Europe. In the cross-sectoral field of cleantech, Switzerland stands out for its achievements in reducing carbon dioxide emissions and in recycling. The country has few natural resources. However, it has become one of the most important commodities trading platforms in the world. Geneva, Lugano, and Zug are the key trading hubs for grain, crude oil products, and mining products. Switzerland’s three largest companies – Vitol, Glencore, and Cargill – are commodities trading firms.



Strong Education System

Image
University of St. Gallen (HSG), St. Gallen

HIGHLY SKILLED WORKFORCE

Excellent, practice-oriented basic education, renowned private and boarding schools, and world-class universities and technical colleges – these are the ingredients for the success of Switzerland’s top-level educational landscape. These factors provide businesses in Switzerland with substantial, lasting benefits. In Switzerland, investors have no difficulty in finding well-educated, multilingual, motivated, and loyal employees. It is hardly surprising that Google and Novartis, two of the world’s most attractive employers, have chosen to be located in Switzerland. Major international companies work in close partnership with regional universities and recruit large numbers of highly educated employees from this high-quality pool.

The Swiss education system combines practice-oriented vocational training with outstanding university education. This dual system fuels the economy’s capacity for innovation and creativity. Low unemployment rates, even among young people, testify to the strength of the Swiss education system.

WORLD-CLASS STATE AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Public schools in Switzerland enjoy an excellent reputation – and with good reason. Students regularly achieve very good results in international PISA assessments. In mathematics, they outperform their peers in all EU countries. Swiss universities regularly occupy top places in international university rankings. Four Swiss universities rank among the world’s top 100: the Zurich and Lausanne Federal Institutes of Technology and the Universities of Geneva and Zurich. In fact, the first two are classed among the 20 best universities in the world.

The state school system is complemented by around 260 private and boarding schools. Internationally oriented families will find a tailor-made education system for them. Some staff members of foreign companies often stay in Switzerland only temporarily. Their children receive education in their native language or take part in international education at numerous international schools. They are well prepared for school-leaving exams in their home country, be it the Abitur, the Baccalaureate, or the admission requirements for a U.S.-American university.



SECURITY AND TRUST

The Swiss economy is one of the most liberal and competitive economies in the world. Low capital costs, a stable currency, strong purchasing power, moderate taxation, a federal state system, and economic and political stability guarantee a high level of security for investments in Switzerland.



Reliable Governance

Image
Bundesplatz, Berne

POLITICAL STABILITY: FERTILE GROUND FOR BUSINESS

Switzerland's federal structures create strong links between government, business, and civil society. The government is lean, consisting of the seven-member Federal Council. Each member is appointed Federal President for one year on a rotating basis. The constituent states of the Swiss Confederation, the 26 cantons, enjoy a large degree of autonomy, particularly in healthcare, education, and culture. Municipalities enjoy autonomy as well: each municipality – around 2,300 in all – decides its tax rate independently. Swiss citizens can participate directly in the political process through referendums, initiatives, and plebiscites. The stable political situation guarantees a high degree of dependability for business and practical decisions that are well supported by the population.

INDEPENDENCE IN THE HEART OF EUROPE

One to two hours by plane. That's how little time it takes to travel from Switzerland to Europe's other major economic centers. A multilingual country, Switzerland is situated in the heart of Europe, and not just geographically speaking – located at the intersection point of several cultures, Switzerland is an important transport hub connecting north and south, east and west. Switzerland shares a border with three of the four largest European markets: Germany, France, and Italy. Their languages are also national languages of Switzerland, spoken by many Swiss in addition to English.

There are close economic relations between Switzerland and Europe. The European Union is Switzerland's most important trade partner: almost half of all Swiss exports go to EU countries and two thirds of all imports come from the EU. A comprehensive free trade agreement and bilateral agreements enable the free movement of goods and services even without EU membership. Through this agreement, Switzerland is fully integrated in the EU market, with its 500 million consumers, while remaining politically independent. More than 30 free trade agreements with 40 partners compliment the EFTA Convention and the Free Trade Agreement with the EU. Swiss free trade policy creates ideal conditions for trading goods and services with important partners. Agreements with all important industrial nations ensure that companies are only taxed in one country.



Liberal Labor Market

Image
Application situation, studio shot

EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES: A SOLID PARTNERSHIP

Swiss labor law is very liberal and the labor market is subject to very few regulations. This is one of the factors that has made the Swiss economy one of the most productive in the world. Unemployment has remained below 4% for the past 10 years - extremely low in comparison with other countries. There is an active social partnership between employers and trade unions: conflicts are resolved around the negotiating table. Strikes are very rare in Switzerland; the last general strike occurred 100 years ago.

Swiss workers are generally well-educated and multilingual with above-average international experience. They are motivated, reliable, and dedicated employees. Switzerland is an attractive place to work for many foreign workers. A dual system applies to the employment market: most EU citizens and all EFTA citizens enjoy the same rights as Swiss workers. Work permits for citizens of other countries are allocated by quota.

A MODEL SOCIAL INSURANCE SYSTEM

Switzerland has a large network of social insurance providers that offer extensive protection against risks with financial consequences to people who live and work in the country, as well as their families. Provision for retirement is based on three pillars: state, employer, and individual contributions. The individual shoulders a high degree of personal responsibility. This means that contributions for companies and insured parties are correspondingly moderate.



Sound Financial and Capital Market

Image
Paradeplatz, Zurich

EXCELLENT STABILITY AND PURCHASING POWER

Switzerland is among the countries with the highest purchasing power in the world. The stable Swiss franc forms a pillar of national economic policy. In Zurich, consumers can buy more for their pay than anywhere else in the world. Switzerland is a byword for economic and monetary stability. Prices change so moderately that the Swiss franc has become one of the most sought-after currencies for reserve and diversification purposes.

SIX Swiss Exchange gives companies access to an international circle of investors. Those seeking capital will find committed long-term backers offering fair conditions. The state also plays a role in promoting an investment-friendly climate, for example through tax relief for venture capital financing. Healthy competition in the banking sector testifies to the functioning Swiss money market, which also greatly benefits business.

THE SECURITY AND KNOW-HOW OF A LEADING FINANCIAL CENTER

Geneva and Zurich are among the most important financial locations in the world. This success is rooted in the stable basic conditions. Swiss companies like UBS, Credit Suisse, Swiss Re, and Zurich Financial Services enjoy an excellent reputation around the globe in their core competencies of private banking, asset management, and insurance. Private and business customers benefit in equal measure from the wide range of financial and insurance products and services. The Swiss stock exchange draws many domestic and foreign companies: the SIX Swiss Exchange has the highest proportion of international firms in Europe. Globally in-demand blue chips in corporations such as ABB, CS Group, Nestle, Novartis, and UBS are traded here.



Attractive Taxes

Image
Online tax declaration, studio shot

AN INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE TAX SITUATION

Switzerland's federal tax system is a successful model: taxes are determined and levied at the federal, cantonal, and municipal levels. Domestic tax competition plays a significant role in the very low rates of taxation. A debt brake introduced in 2003 obliges the government to maintain a balance between revenue and expenditure. The most attractive cantons in tax terms are international leaders with regard to both corporate taxes and the tax imposed on highly skilled workers.

MODERATE TAXES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES

At federal level businesses pay corporate income tax of just 8.5%. This is in addition to cantonal and municipal profit taxes. If a company creates jobs in certain regions in Switzerland with an investment project, it may even be granted a full or partial tax exemption. Double taxation in Switzerland and another country only occurs in rare cases. This very attractive location factor is due to agreements with all key trading partners including the USA, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, China, and many other countries.

The relationship between taxpayers and tax authorities is distinguished by its constructive, pragmatic thinking. Notable companies for tax consultancy and auditing also value this form of trusting cooperation.



Easy Start-Up Process

Image
Business plan, studio shot

SET UP YOUR BUSINESS WITHOUT THE RED TAPE

Companies and individuals can set up a new business quickly and easily. In most cases it only takes two to four weeks to legally establish a company and the cost is usually between 2,000 and 8,000 Swiss francs.

International founders are very welcome and enjoy wide-ranging support; in 2016 around 1 in 3 founders of new companies were non-Swiss. Under the principle of freedom of trade, any person in Switzerland can run a business, set up a company, or own a share in a company. The only requirement is that the authorized signatory be domiciled in Switzerland.

EASY TO MOVE IN

Switzerland Global Enterprise offers valuable support, providing potential foreign investors with information about the general framework, what Switzerland has to offer as a business location and the procedures for setting up a company in the country. If a company has clear criteria for its new location, the economic development agencies of the respective canton will help to coordinate the project locally. Banks, consultants, trust companies, and specialized lawyers can all provide assistance on specific issues. Extensive support is also available online, from tips on writing a business plan to registering a company in the commercial register.

Companies that relocate to Switzerland usually choose the legal form of an incorporated company, either an Aktiengesellschaft (stock corporation) or a Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung (limited liability company). It is possible to set up a Swiss subsidiary as a sole proprietorship, general partnership, or limited partnership online.



ENVIRONMENT AND LIFE

Switzerland inspires talented individuals to create and achieve. It's a country where work, innovation, creativity, leisure time, family, and recreation are optimally balanced. With a vibrant cultural life, beautiful scenery, and high-quality real estate, Switzerland offers a high standard of living.



Unique Quality of Life

Image
Swimming in the Rhine, Basel

SPORT, LEISURE, RECREATION, AND CULTURE

From the High Alps to the fertile central plateau and the Mediterranean ambiance of Ticino, Switzerland has a richly diverse landscape that inspires both residents and visitors, all packed into a small area – 220 kilometers from north to south and 348 kilometers from west to east. In the summer you can swim in crystal-clear lakes and rivers and enjoy the fresh air. Yet the nearest town is never far away, because with the short distances you can reach any destination quickly and comfortably, whether by rail, bus, car, or boat. Switzerland's major cities, including Zurich, Geneva, Basel, and Bern, are ranked as some of the most attractive cities in the world in the Mercer quality of living survey. No wonder Switzerland has been found to be one of the world's happiest nations.

It's the perfect place for people who love sports and the outdoors. Summer or winter, the legendary Swiss mountains invite you to enjoy the stunning surroundings. The cultural life is characterized by diversity in a multilingual, cosmopolitan environment. Museums, foundations, galleries, festivals, and independent bodies promote both Swiss and international art and artists. Switzerland hosts numerous cultural events with international appeal: the Montreux Jazz Festival, Art Basel, Festival del film in Locarno, and the Zurich Film Festival, to name just a few.

FIRST-CLASS VENUES FOR SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

First-class hotels with excellent facilities attract people seeking relaxation and well-being as well as seminar and conference participants. There are good reasons why the World Economic Forum (WEF) draws leading business and political figures to the paradise resort of Davos every year. By choosing to hold a business event in Switzerland, organizers are opting for variety and authenticity. And thanks to the short distances, there is never far to travel for things to see and do.



International Environment

Image
United Nations (UN), Geneva

COSMOPOLITANISM AND TOLERANCE

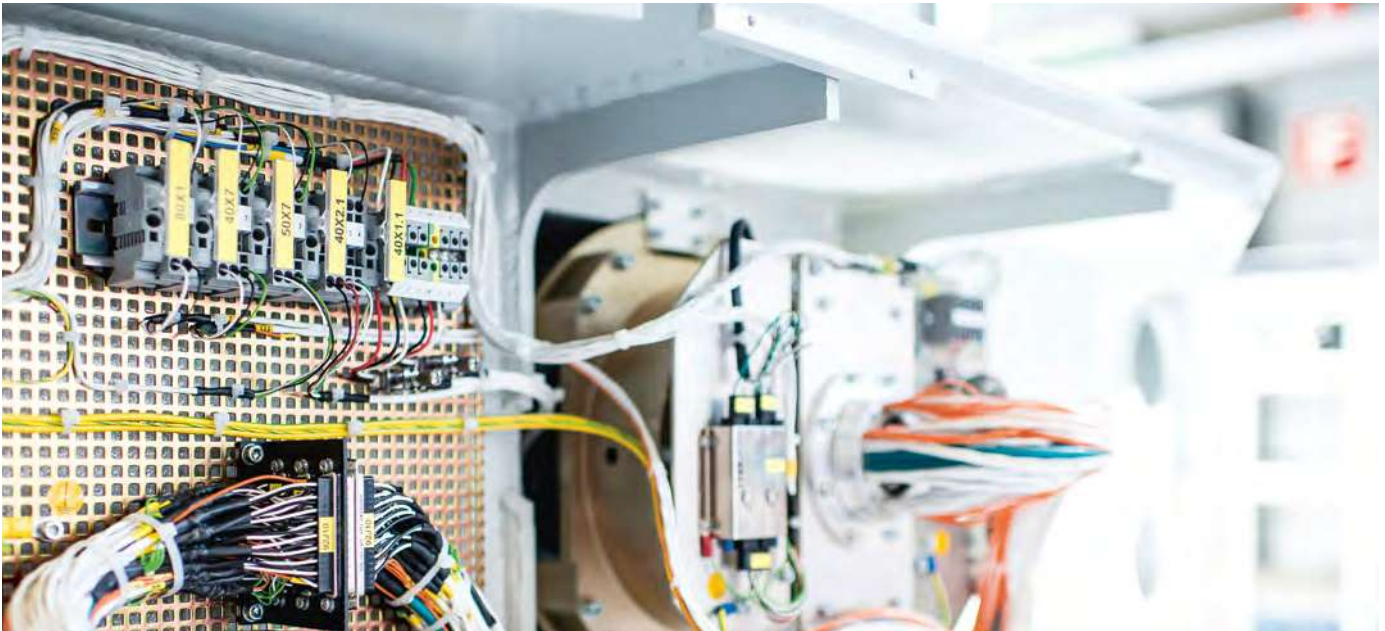
Foreign workers and companies value the international outlook of the Swiss, who are characterized by their tolerance and linguistic and cultural diversity. Switzerland is one of the most popular destinations for expats. Conversely, foreign workers and companies make an important contribution to Switzerland's prosperity.

Switzerland is an open country. For visits of up to three months a valid travel document is usually sufficient. Citizens of some countries require a visa, which can be obtained from the Swiss representation in their country. Residence and permanent residence permits are issued by the cantonal migration offices. A permit is required to work in Switzerland for more than three months. The Swiss employer will usually take care of the necessary formalities.

NEUTRALITY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Diplomacy, humanitarian engagement, and international networking are at the heart of Switzerland's policy of neutrality. Switzerland has been a member of the United Nations since 2002 and has been actively involved in UN specialized agencies for much longer. The country also participates in economic organizations such as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). In addition, it represents the interests of countries that do not maintain diplomatic relations with certain third countries.

As neutral territory, Switzerland is the ideal location for politically sensitive meetings and conferences. It is for this reason that so many international organizations, like the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations, have their headquarters in Switzerland. Geneva is one of the most important centers of international cooperation in the world. It is also the headquarters of the World Trade Organization (WTO) - the legal and institutional foundation of the multilateral trading system and the only organization to regulate trade relations between states at global level. Switzerland is also home to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), UEFA, FIFA, and more than 60 other international sports organizations, in most cases the global or European headquarters.



Reliable Infrastructure

Image
Acutronic, Olten

MOBILITY AND SECURITY IN THE HEART OF EUROPE

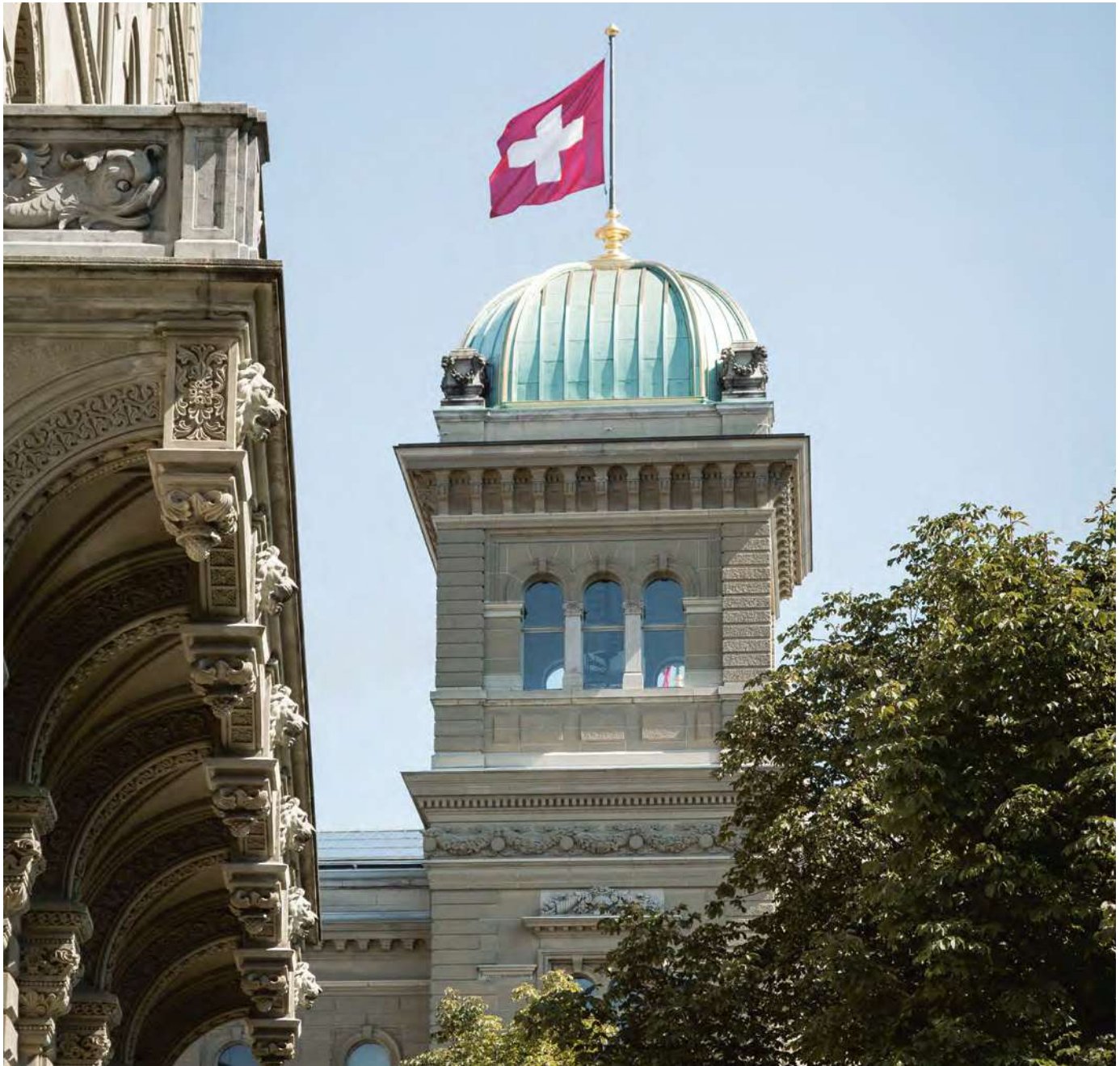
Three international airports in Zurich, Geneva, and Basel provide direct flights to all major destinations in Europe and overseas. Switzerland's excellent road network is one of the most dense in the world and is seamlessly linked to Europe's major routes. Urban and rural areas are connected by reliable rail and bus services. The famous yellow post buses travel to the remotest Alpine valleys. The rail network operated by Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) and the various regional transport companies covers more than 5,000 kilometers. Every day around 1 million passengers travel for work or leisure on over 10,000 trains. The Swiss are world experts in railroad operation. Freight transport also functions very efficiently, with some 210,000 tons of freight being transported across Switzerland to Europe every day by Swiss and foreign companies. As of 2016, Switzerland also features the longest railway tunnel in the world, the Gotthard Base Tunnel.

Whether you are looking for a private building for your business, a technology park or serviced offices, there is an enormous choice of high-quality, attractive commercial real estate. The regulations governing the purchase of real estate by foreigners have been much relaxed in recent years.

RELIABILITY AND COMPLETE COVERAGE

A well developed infrastructure meets the requirements of even the most demanding users in the information age. Leading IT companies such as IBM, Google, and Disney have chosen to locate in Switzerland and depend on the security and reliability of Swiss infrastructure and data technology. Switzerland also boasts a stable energy and water supply network that covers the entire country. As the "reservoir of Europe" the country makes significant use of renewable hydropower.

The Swiss healthcare system is among the best in the world. Complete medical care of the highest standard is provided by highly trained staff in medical practices, state-funded hospitals, and numerous private and specialist clinics. The Swiss have one of the longest life expectancies on the planet at an average of 83 years.



SWITZERLAND – FACTS AND FIGURES



1.1	Geography.....	25
1.2	Climate.....	25
1.3	Political System.....	26
1.4	Public Finance	28
1.5	Neutrality.....	28
1.6	Population.....	28
1.7	Cosmopolitanism and International Outlook.....	29
1.8	Switzerland in Figures	31

Nestled between the Alps and the Jura mountains, Switzerland is a communications and transport center between northern and southern Europe – a place where European cultures and languages meet. No other country offers such great variety in so small an area. The Swiss economy's high degree of development exists thanks to a liberal economic system, political stability, and close integration with the economies of other countries. The state creates the necessary framework and only intervenes when this serves the interests of society at large. The high-quality education system and outstanding infrastructure form the basis for the competitiveness of the Swiss economy.

1.1 GEOGRAPHY

The total area of Switzerland is 41,285 square kilometers. Characterized by its mountain ranges and hills, rivers, and lakes, Switzerland offers a wide variety of landscapes in a small area: just 220 kilometers from North to South, and 348 from West to East. The Swiss Alps, the hilly Mittelland region that stretches from Lake Constance to Lake Geneva, and the Swiss Jura, a long range of fold mountains, form the three main geographical areas of the country. Due to its central location, Switzerland is a place where different cultures intersect and, at the same time, a communication and transportation hub between northern and southern Europe.

Six percent of Europe's fresh water is stored in the Swiss Alps, which is why Switzerland is also known as the "reservoir of Europe." Switzerland has numerous rivers and around 1,500 lakes, the two largest of which it shares with its neighbors: Lake Geneva (Lac Léman) is shared with France in the southwest and Lake Constance is shared with Germany and Austria in the northeast.

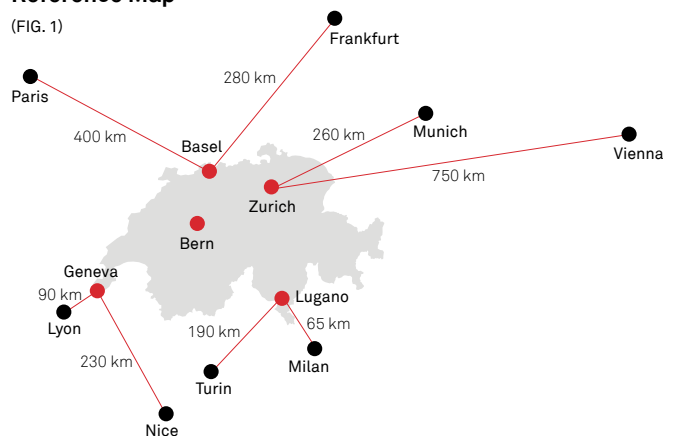
www.swissworld.org

Switzerland – Facts and Figures

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

Reference Map

(FIG. 1)



Source: compiled by the author

1.2 CLIMATE

Switzerland's climate is strongly influenced by the nearby Atlantic Ocean. The prevailing westerly winds bring moist, mild sea air. Cooling in the summer and warming in the winter, they also bring regular precipitation all year round in most areas. The Alps act as a clear climatic divider between northern and southern Switzerland. As its weather comes primarily from the direction of the Mediterranean, the South enjoys much milder winters than the North. Temperatures in Switzerland depend primarily on the height above sea level. In the northern lowlands, the average temperature in January is around 1 °C, and in July around 17 °C, whereas on the southern plateau the corresponding average temperatures are 2 ° – 3 °C higher.

www.meteoschweiz.ch

Weather and Climate

Languages: German, English, French, Italian

1.3 POLITICAL SYSTEM

1.3.1 Federal Structure

Switzerland is a nation created of its own will and formed from several ethnic groups with different languages and religions. The modern Swiss state was founded in 1848. Before this time, Switzerland consisted of a loose association of independent cantons. The abbreviation CH for Switzerland, as found in Internet addresses, for example, dates back to the official Latin name “Confoederatio Helvetica”.

The state has a federal structure and is divided into three political levels: municipal, cantonal, and federal. The federal government is responsible for everything assigned to it under the constitution, such as foreign and security policy, customs and excise, the monetary system, national legislation, and defense. By global comparison, the 26 cantons have a high degree of control. Health-care, education, and culture are among the political areas in which they have a great deal of influence. As small and flexible political entities, the cantons also compete with each other in various areas. The proximity of politics to the business community and citizens is achieved through the federal structure, in which many public functions are executed at cantonal or municipal level. These in turn have a certain amount of autonomy and can thus implement solutions which are designed to meet local requirements.

www.ch.ch
Online information from the federal, cantonal, and municipal administrations
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

1.3.2 Separation of Powers at Federal Level

In accordance with the federal constitution, the Swiss people are the “sovereign” of the country – in other words, the highest political body, responsible for electing parliament. Every citizen with voting rights also has the right to participate in shaping the constitution and the law by means of referendum or initiative.

The legislative body at the federal level is the parliament, which consists of two chambers: the National Council, representing the people with 200 members, and the Council of States, representing the 26 cantons with a total of 46 members. The National Council is elected directly by the people every four years; each canton forms one constituency. Cantonal representation is based on population, although each canton is entitled to at least one representative.

The federal government is known as the Federal Council, and it operates as a collegial body. Each of its seven members, who are elected by the Federal Assembly comprising the members of both chambers, heads one of the seven departments (ministries). The presidency of the government rotates between the Federal Councilors on an annual basis.

The highest jurisdiction in Switzerland is enforced by the Federal Supreme Court in Lausanne. There is also the Federal Insurance Court in Lucerne, the Federal Criminal Court in Bellinzona, and the Federal Administrative Court in St. Gallen.

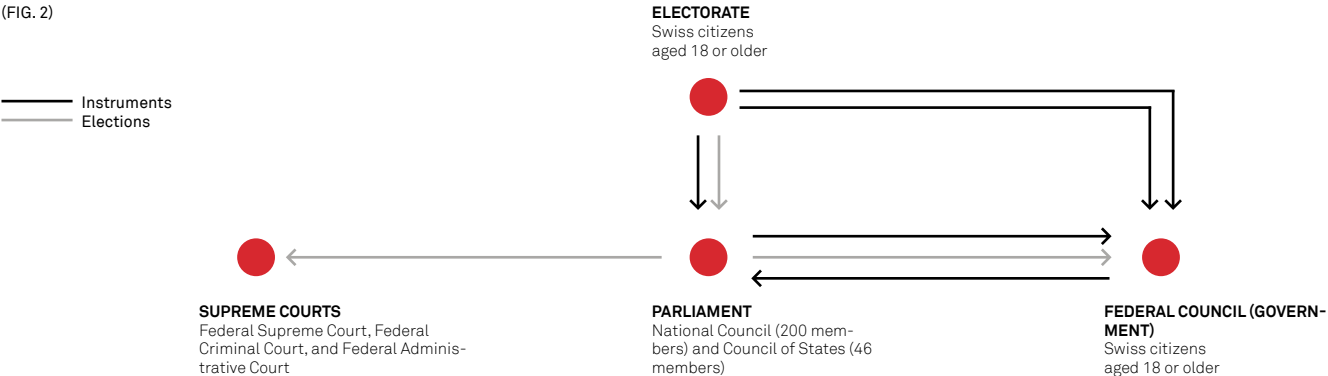
www.bger.ch
Federal Supreme Court/Insurance Court
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.bstger.ch
Federal Criminal Court
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.bvger.ch
Administrative Court
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

The Swiss Political System

(FIG. 2)



1.3.3 Direct Democracy and the Concordance System

There is hardly any other country where the electorate has such wide-ranging rights as it does in Switzerland. Citizens can request that a change or addition be made to the constitution by means of a popular initiative, or they may decide on parliamentary resolutions after the event by means of a referendum. Switzerland's long tradition of democracy, its relatively small size and population, high level of literacy, and a wide variety of media are all factors which are key to the functioning of this special form of government. As a rule, the electorate is called upon to vote on federal bills four times a year.

A unique feature of Swiss politics is the concordance system. For decades, the most important political parties have put forward the seven Federal Councilors in a kind of coalition. Equally, not only those who win the elections have a seat in parliament; all parties are represented proportionally by number of votes. Resolutions are reached with varying majorities, depending on respective interests. Thus, as many groups as possible have the opportunity to express their opinions on a topic and contribute to achieving a broad-based compromise. This striving for consensus on the basis of the principles of collegiality and concordance contributes significantly to Switzerland's political stability.

1.3.4 Political Stability and Social Harmony

Studies on personal security and prosperity, social coherence, and political stability have shown that Switzerland regularly leads all international comparisons in this regard (Fig. 3). The Swiss attach great importance to their independence. Despite the close proximity of different cultures and language groups, domestic stability is considerable. There is a high degree of tolerance and personal freedom. The relationship between employers and employees or their representatives is generally cooperative. Both sides are committed to resolving issues by negotiation. Thanks to this social harmony, the general level of prosperity in Switzerland has been rising for decades.

www.admin.ch
Swiss Federal Authorities
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

“In Switzerland there is a high degree of tolerance and personal freedom.”

Political Stability, 2017

Political direction: stable = 10, unstable = 0

(FIG. 3)

1	Norway	9.47
2	Denmark	9.30
3	Switzerland	9.22
4	New Zealand	9.10
5	Canada	8.93
6	Singapore	8.75
7	Luxembourg	8.64
11	Germany	7.87
12	The Netherlands	7.86
13	China	7.79
14	Japan	7.70
15	Austria	7.40
17	India	7.24
18	Ireland	7.23
24	Hong Kong	6.26
25	France	6.24
28	United Kingdom	6.02
30	USA	5.81
37	Russia	5.36
49	Italy	3.94

Source: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

1.4 PUBLIC FINANCE

Switzerland lives up to its reputation as a stable country. The rate of inflation lies well below that in the EU and the most important industrialized nations. This is also true for unemployment, which is regularly below 4%. Interest rates in Switzerland are also traditionally low, while the savings rate is high (national saving as a percentage of GDP in 2015: 23.2%).

The public spending ratio measures expenditure by public administrations as a percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP). It includes spending by public authorities and the mandatory social insurances. In Switzerland, this ratio is at 33.8% (2016). Most European countries have a ratio of well above 50%.

The country is in a healthy financial situation. This applies to the financial budget of the central state, the federal government, and the cantons and municipalities. The surplus ratio was 0.6% of the nominal gross domestic product at the end of 2015.

“Switzerland’s national debt is far below that of most countries in Europe.”

National debt is also below that of most countries in Europe. Total public sector debt amounts to 33.3% of GDP (2016). Compared to the average national debt ratio of EU countries (92.4%), Switzerland’s ratio is extremely low. Most European countries have much higher levels (2016: Italy: 132.8%; France: 96.9%; Germany: 67.7%).

www.efv.admin.ch
Federal Finance Administration (EFV)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

1.5 NEUTRALITY

In terms of foreign policy, Switzerland acts in accordance with the principle of neutrality. However, this does not in any way mean that it is an outsider on the world stage: Switzerland has been a member of the UN since 2002 and also plays an important role in the UN’s specialized agencies. Furthermore, Switzerland has always played and still plays an active part in important economic organizations, such as the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

Switzerland has been neutral since 1515, which was also acknowledged by the great European powers after the Napoleonic Wars in 1815. No other country in Europe can look back on such a long tradition of neutrality. Since the end of the Cold War, Switzerland has relaxed its definition of neutrality. As the role of NATO changed and it started to perform more peacekeeping missions, Switzerland signed up to the NATO Partnership for Peace in 1996. Thanks to its neutrality, Switzerland often acts as a mediator. In some cases, Swiss diplomats also represent the interests of countries which have no official contact with each other. Switzerland offers its neutral territory as a location for meetings and conferences of particular political delicacy.

www.eda.admin.ch
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (EDA)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

1.6 POPULATION

The permanent resident population of Switzerland is around 8.4 million. The proportion of those aged between 20 and 39 is 26.7%, with 18.1% aged 65 and over, and 20.1% aged under 20. Life expectancy is one of the highest in the world: 81.5 years for men and 85.3 years for women. The settlement structure is relatively decentralized and therefore not overly crowded: more than two thirds of the population lives in the five largest cities (Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Bern, and Lausanne) and their greater metropolitan areas.

There are four official national languages: German, French, Italian, and Romansh. In northern, eastern, and central Switzerland, the prevailing language is German, with the Swiss German dialect being used in everyday conversation. French is spoken in the western part of the country, as well as some parts of the Mittelland; Italian is spoken in the south (Ticino), and Romansh in certain parts of the canton of Grisons.

25% of the population is of foreign nationality (as of 2016). Although in the past most people who migrated to Switzerland were more socially disadvantaged, today the country increasingly attracts better educated foreign nationals, particularly highly skilled workers from Germany.

www.statistik.admin.ch
Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

1.7 COSMOPOLITANISM AND INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

1.7.1 Languages and Origins

Most Swiss nationals speak at least one foreign language, which they learn in elementary school. English is also increasingly included in the curriculum at an early stage. Due to the country's openness – including in terms of immigration – the range of languages actually spoken and used for communication is wide. In international business, English is very much in evidence alongside the national languages, and is used by many managers.

The co-existence of various language groups and different religions, and the large proportion of foreign residents result in a high degree of openness and tolerance. The KOF Globalization Index of ETH Zurich places Switzerland as the second most cosmopolitan economy (see Fig. 4). This makes it easier for foreign companies to conduct business from Switzerland. Although Europe is Switzerland's most important business partner, it also has very close relationships with other markets, particularly the U.S. and Asia. The financial centers of Zurich and Geneva in particular are melting pots of diverse cultures. In terms of culture, too, Switzerland has a tradition of tolerance and openness. Its neutrality means it has access to all countries, and it also welcomes reciprocal contact. This diversity has made it easy for both global companies and numerous international organizations to settle in Switzerland.

1.7.2 International Organizations

Because of its political independence and conscious commitment, also to international understanding, Switzerland serves as a platform for many international organizations including the UN with its headquarters in Geneva. Around 250 NGOs in consultative status with the UN also have their headquarters in Switzerland.

Most Cosmopolitan Economies, 2015

(FIG. 4)

Overall Rank		Economic	Social	Political
1	The Netherlands	3	19	5
2	Switzerland	9	3	8
3	Sweden	15	13	6
4	Austria	14	8	9
5	Belgium	4	10	7
6	Denmark	12	4	17
7	France	24	17	2
8	Germany	26	15	3
9	Finland	19	11	18
10	Norway	29	1	26
14	Ireland	6	5	67
15	Canada	43	9	14
19	Italy	44	39	1
23	USA	63	29	10
26	Luxembourg	7	2	82
32	Singapore	1	28	104
36	Japan	62	42	24
55	Russia	108	93	27
88	China	148	137	13
95	Brazil	152	114	52

Source: KOF Globalization Index 2018

International Organizations and Major Non-Governmental Organizations
Based in Switzerland
(FIG. 5)

TRADE AND COMMERCE			
AITIC	Agency For International Trade, Information, and Cooperation	Geneva	www.aitic.org
BIS	Bank for International Settlements	Basel	www.biz.org
EFTA	European Free Trade Association	Geneva	www.efta.int
WEF	World Economic Forum	Geneva	www.weforum.org
WTO	World Trade Organization	Geneva	www.wto.org
LAW			
ACWL	Advisory Centre on WTO Law	Geneva	www.acwl.ch
Court OSCE	OSCE Court of Conciliation and Arbitration	Geneva	www.osce.org/cca
ISO	International Organization for Standardization	Geneva	www.iso.org
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization	Geneva	www.wipo.int
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH			
CERN	European Organization for Nuclear Research	Geneva	www.cern.ch
ISSI	International Space Science Institute	Bern	www.issibern.ch
WMO	World Meteorological Organization	Geneva	www.wmo.int
SOCIETY AND CULTURE			
IBE/UNESCO	International Bureau of Education/United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization	Geneva	www.ibe.unesco.org
EBU	European Broadcasting Union	Geneva	www.ebu.ch
GFATM	The Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria	Geneva	www.theglobalfund.org
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies	Geneva	www.ifrc.org
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross	Geneva	www.icrc.org
ILO	International Labour Organization	Geneva	www.ilo.org
IOM	International Organization for Migration	Geneva	www.iom.int
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union	Geneva	www.ipu.org
IRU	International Road Transport Union	Geneva	www.iru.org
ITU	International Telecommunication Union	Geneva	www.itu.int
OTIF	Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail	Bern	www.otif.org
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Geneva	www.unhcr.org
UNOG	The United Nations Office at Geneva	Geneva	www.unog.ch
UPOV	International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants	Geneva	www.upov.int
UPU	Universal Postal Union	Bern	www.upu.int
WHO	World Health Organization	Geneva	www.who.int
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature	Gland	www.wwf.org
SPORTS			
FIFA	International Federation of Football Association	Zurich	www.fifa.com
FIS	International Ski Federation	Thun	www.fis-ski.com
IIHF	International Ice Hockey Federation	Zurich	www.iihf.com
IOC	International Olympic Committee	Lausanne	www.olympic.org
UCI	Union Cycliste Internationale	Aigle	www.uci.ch
FIBA	International Basketball Federation	Mies	www.fiba.com
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations	Nyon	www.uefa.com
WADA	World Anti-Doping Agency	Lausanne	www.wada-ama.org

Source: Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (EDA), own research

1.8 SWITZERLAND IN FIGURES

Switzerland in Figures, 2017

(FIG. 6)

GENERAL	
Currency	Swiss franc
Time zone	CET = UTC + 1
International country code	+41
National Day	August 1st
ECONOMY	
Gross domestic product (nominal) in billions of CHF	650.1
Per-capita national income (in CHF)	59,708
GDP growth (real)	1.3%
Inflation rate	0.5%
Unemployment rate	3.4%
Imports (goods and services, in billion CHF)	173.2
Exports (goods and services, in billion CHF)	210.7
Deficit/surplus rate (in % of GDP)	0.6
National debt ratio (in % of GDP)	33.3
Fiscal quota (in % of GDP)	27.8
Direct investments (millions CHF)	
Direct investment abroad	1,120,843
Direct investment in Switzerland	833,193
Capital exports to other countries	100,100
Capital imports into Switzerland	67,750
POPULATION	
Permanent population (in thousands)	8,419.6
Population density (per km ²)	204
Age groups (in %)	
0 – 19 years old	20.1
20 – 39 years old	26.7
40 – 64 years old	35.1
65 – 79 years old	13.0
80 and older	5.1
Proportion of foreign nationals	25.0
Average number of children per woman	1.5

Life expectancy at birth (years)	
Men	81.5
Women	85.3
Religion	
Roman Catholic	37.3%
Protestant	24.9%
Other	13.9%
Languages	
German	64.1%
French	22.7%
Italian	8.4%
Romansh	0.6%
GEOGRAPHY	
Surface area in km ²	41,285
Border (km)	1,881
Number of lakes	1,484
Highest mountain (m): Dufourspitze, Valais	4,634
Largest glacier: Aletsch, Wallis	117 km ² /24 km
Largest lake (in km ²): Lake Geneva	582
Second largest lake (in km ²): Lake Constance	539
Capital	Bern
Largest metropolitan areas (inhabitants in thousands)	
Zurich	1,334.3
Geneva	579.2
Basel	541.0
Bern	410.9
Lausanne	409.3
POLITICS	
Form of government	Parliamentary federal state since 1848, direct democracy
Cantons	26 (20 full cantons, 6 half-cantons)
Municipalities	2,222

Sources: Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO); Swiss National Bank (SNB); Federal Finance Administration (EFV); State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)



ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

2

2.1	Gross Domestic Product and Industry Structure	33
2.2	International Integration.....	36
2.3	Key Industry Clusters.....	38

One of the most liberal and competitive economies in the world, Switzerland has always maintained close economic ties with other countries. A secure legal system, long-term stable fundamentals for investors, relatively little regulation, and the proximity to research institutions make it the location of choice in Europe for businesses offering high-quality products and services.

2.1 GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND INDUSTRY STRUCTURE

Switzerland's per capita gross domestic product is the second largest in the world (see Fig. 7). The per capita GDP was far above the EU average in 2017. The service sector generates some 70% of the gross domestic product. Comprising 25% of GDP, the industrial sector is also an important mainstay of the economy, the key sectors being chemicals, capital goods, and banking. The Swiss economy is strongly export-oriented; the ratio of export trade to the gross domestic product is one of the highest in the world. The EU plays a key role here, accounting for 53.8% of exports and 71.8% of imports. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) dominate the Swiss economic landscape. More than 99% of companies have fewer than 250 full-time employees. However, Switzerland is also home to multinational companies that account for around one third of the country's value creation. They employ 1.3 million people, with the result that one in three jobs is at a multinational concern. Employees are highly motivated, possess a keen sense of responsibility, and are very loyal to their company. These typical Swiss characteristics are responsible for the quality and service ethos in both the industrial and service sectors.

Gross Domestic Product per Capita (Nominal), 2017

in thousands of US dollars

(FIG. 7)

1	Luxembourg	108
2	Switzerland	81
3	Macau SAR	80
4	Norway	74
5	Iceland	73
6	Ireland	69
7	Qatar	61
8	USA	60
9	Denmark	56
11	Singapore	54
13	The Netherlands	48
17	Hong Kong	45
18	Canada	45
19	Germany	44
23	France	40
24	United Kingdom	39
25	Japan	39
27	Italy	32
68	Russia	10
69	Brazil	10
76	China	9

Source: IMF Online, 2017

More than 75% of people employed in Switzerland work in the service sector. The industrial sector accounts for nearly 22% (see Fig. 8). Although the industrial sector is increasingly diminishing in importance in advanced industrialized countries, in Switzerland the absolute number of people working in the secondary sector has remained stable for nearly 20 years.

Industry Structure and Shares of Workforce, 2017

(FIG. 8)

INDUSTRY	WORKFORCE (3 RD QUARTER 2017)	
	in 1,000	in %
Total (not including agriculture and forestry)	4,917.00	100%
Sector II Total	1,077.1	21.91%
Mining and mineral extraction	4.9	0.10%
Processing and manufacturing	678.4	13.80%
Energy	29.3	0.60%
Water supply and purification	18.8	0.38%
Construction	343.4	6.98%
Sector III Total	3,839.9	78.09%
Vehicle trading, maintenance, and repair	649.8	13.22%
Transport and warehousing	240.5	4.89%
Hospitality	250.6	5.10%
Information and communication	160.4	3.26%
Financial and insurance services	242.3	4.93%
Real estate and housing	60.6	1.23%
Professional, scientific, and technical occupations	408.9	8.32%
Other economic services	332.3	6.76%
Public administration	201.1	4.09%
Education	342.7	6.97%
Healthcare and social services	702.1	14.28%
Arts, entertainment and leisure	97.5	1.98%
Other services	152.0	3.09%

Source: Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO), employment statistics (BESTA)

In international competitiveness indexes, Switzerland has occupied one of the top spots for many years. In 2017, it took first place in the World Economic Forum (WEF) ranking for the ninth consecutive year (see Fig. 9). Switzerland scored highest for innovativeness, a strong education system, and a flexible labor market.

International Competitiveness Ranking, 2017

Overall score from 1 to 7

(FIG. 9)

1	Switzerland	5.86
2	USA	5.85
3	Singapore	5.71
4	The Netherlands	5.66
5	Germany	5.65
6	Hong Kong	5.53
7	Sweden	5.52
8	United Kingdom	5.51
9	Japan	5.49
10	Finland	5.49
18	Austria	5.25
19	Luxembourg	5.23
20	Belgium	5.23
22	France	5.18
24	Ireland	5.16
27	China	5.00
38	Russia	4.64
40	India	4.59
43	Italy	4.54

Source: WEF, The Global Competitiveness Report 2017 – 2018

Switzerland is also one of the world's leading innovators. In 2017, it was ranked as the world's most innovative country for the seventh consecutive year, leading the Global Innovation Index (see Fig. 10).

Global Innovation Index, 2017

Overall score from 0 to 100

(FIG. 10)

1	Switzerland	67.7
2	Sweden	63.8
3	The Netherlands	63.4
4	USA	61.4
5	United Kingdom	60.9
6	Denmark	58.7
7	Singapore	58.7
8	Finland	58.5
9	Germany	58.4
10	Ireland	58.1
12	Luxembourg	56.4
14	Japan	54.7
15	France	54.2
16	Hong Kong	53.9
18	Canada	53.7
22	China	52.5
29	Italy	47.0
45	Russia	38.8
60	India	35.5
69	Brazil	33.1

Source: INSEAD, The Global Innovation Index 2017

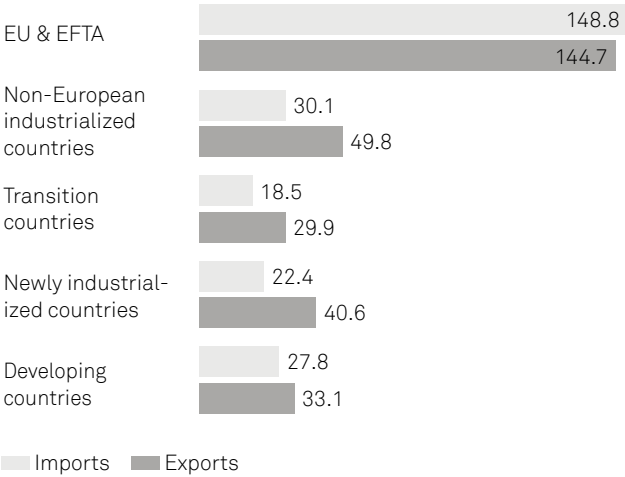
“Switzerland is the world’s most innovative country. It stands out primarily because of its innovation output, offering an ideal environment for innovation and proving its strength through the high maturity of the market and the economy.”

2.2 INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION

As the Swiss domestic market is small and the country lacks natural resources (apart from water), Swiss companies have been forced to seek and cultivate abroad what have often been their key markets since the advent of industrial production. Due to this necessity to open the country to the outside, Switzerland is an important player in world trade. Exports make up around 33% of the gross domestic product. As a result, Switzerland has taken a leading role among the important exporters in world trade, with regard to both goods and services.

Foreign Trade by Economic Area, 2016

Imports and exports (billions CHF)
(FIG. 11)



Source: Swiss Customs Administration (EZV) 2017

2.2.1 Goods and Services Trade

Europe is by far Switzerland’s most important trade partner (2016). Around 70% of all imports and over 50% of exports are traded with the EU. Germany has traditionally been Switzerland’s most important buyer and also supplier, while Italy and France are its second and third most important suppliers. The USA is Switzerland’s second largest trading partner, followed by China.

The classic example of a successful export-oriented branch of industry is what is known as Switzerland’s “secret automobile and aviation industry” – a little-known network of highly specialized manufacturing companies and problem-solvers providing components for a range of areas, from precision and micromechanics to materials technology, plastics, and textiles. As technology and innovation leaders, these Swiss companies have been able to position themselves as reliable suppliers of quality and precision products.

Switzerland is a co-signatory of the WTO Agreement, and has continually championed market liberalization through free trade agreements, as a member of EFTA, and through bilateral agreements with the EU. As a result of its consistent market liberalization policy, Switzerland has become an efficient trading center and a market of economic significance – not only relative to its market size.

“Switzerland is an attractive location for foreign investors. At the end of 2015, foreign direct investments amounted to 833 billion Swiss francs.”

2.2.2 Direct Investments

Switzerland's exposure to global markets is among the strongest of any country. At the end of 2015, direct investments abroad totaled 1,121 billion Swiss francs. Swiss companies with direct investments abroad employ around 3 million people in their foreign subsidiaries and operating units, and they are also important employers in Switzerland. Switzerland is among the top ten largest direct investors in the world. Switzerland is an important direct investor in the USA as well; in 2015, 18.3% of all Swiss direct investments were made in the USA, a total of 205,117 million Swiss francs.

Switzerland is also an attractive location for foreign investors, in particular from the EU (79.3% or 660,502 million Swiss francs) and the USA. The capital stock of U.S.-American investors in Switzerland is 11.7% or 97,814 million Swiss francs.

Direct Investments Capital Stock, 2015

(FIG. 12)

CAPITAL STOCK AT YEAR END, 2015	SWISS DIRECT INVESTMENTS ABROAD		FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENTS IN SWITZERLAND	
	CHF (millions)	in %	CHF (millions)	in %
Total	1,120,843	100.0%	833,193	100.0%
EU	544,939	48.6%	660,502	79.3%
United Kingdom	50,930	4.5%	38,137	4.6%
Germany	38,192	3.4%	25,011	3.0%
The Netherlands	121,944	10.9%	196,988	23.6%
Luxembourg	137,772	12.3%	202,112	24.3%
France	47,144	4.2%	40,301	4.8%
Italy	15,558	1.4%	4,342	0.5%
Spain	8,469	0.8%	10,246	1.2%
Austria	6,787	0.6%	62,597	7.5%
Rest of Europe	33,589	3.0%	10,736	1.3%
Offshore financial centers	19,196	1.7%	N/A	N/A
Russian Federation	9,328	0.8%	N/A	N/A
North America	246,629	22.0%	97,505	11.7%
USA	205,117	18.3%	97,814	11.7%
Canada	41,512	3.7%	-309	0.0%
Central and South America	150,246	13.4%	65,474	7.9%
Brazil	9,265	0.8%	N/A	N/A
Offshore financial centers	123,593	11.0%	67,359	8.1%
Asia, Africa + Oceania	145,440	13.0%	9,711	1.2%
Japan	9,379	0.8%	5,649	0.7 %
Singapore	17,627	1.6 %	N/A	N/A
China	20,020	1.8%	N/A	N/A
Hong Kong	6,894	0.6%	N/A	N/A
Taiwan	1,802	0.2%	N/A	N/A
India	4,779	0.4%	N/A	N/A
Australia	17,173	1.5%	N/A	N/A

Source: Swiss National Bank (SNB), 2017

2.3 KEY INDUSTRY CLUSTERS

From an economic perspective, clusters can be defined as networks of manufacturers, suppliers, research facilities (e.g. universities), service providers (e.g. designers and engineers), and related institutions (e.g. chambers of commerce) that have a certain regional proximity to one another and which are formed via a common relationship based on trade along a value chain (e.g. automotive manufacturing). The members of these clusters are connected by supply, competition, or common interests. These networks are referred to as clusters only if there is a large group of companies near to one another whose activities complement or are related to another along one or more value chains. Only then can a growth pool be formed that also attracts suppliers and specialized service providers, while generating competitive advantages for all companies involved.

Switzerland has several of these industry clusters, which are also important on an international scale. The key industry clusters in Switzerland will be briefly described over the next few pages. The figures provided are for reference purposes only, as the clusters sometimes overlap.

2.3.1 Life Sciences: Chemicals/Pharmaceuticals, Biotech, Medtech

Extremely successful global conglomerates such as Novartis, Roche, Syngenta, and smaller companies form a unique industrial cluster in north-western Switzerland, making the city of Basel and the surrounding region the national and international location of choice for pharmaceutical and chemical companies. The Swiss chemical-pharmaceutical industry is virtually exclusively active in specialty chemicals and is very internationally orientated. Approximately three-quarters of the product portfolio covers so-called “life science” products, i.e. products that intervene in the metabolic processes of living organisms, and 98% of sales are generated abroad. Chemical-pharmaceutical products are Switzerland’s most important export goods, accounting for around 40% of goods exports. Companies in the Swiss chemical-pharmaceutical industry have a leading worldwide position in many market sectors and employ around 44,200 people. The industry represents 4% of the gross domestic product. Only the metal and mechanical engineering industry is larger in Switzerland.

Owing to the ripple effect of pharmaceutical giants Novartis and Roche, as well as recent investments by international businesses such as CSL Behring, UCB Farchim, Glenmark, and Biogen Idec, unique biotech clusters have formed in the regions of Basel, Bern-Freiburg-Neuenburg, and around Lake Geneva. In 2017, the sector had a staff of over 15,300. Such a concentration of biotechnology companies is not to be found anywhere else in the world. Over half of Swiss biotech firms are small companies with less than 20 employees. They profit from the geographical proximity to large companies both in Switzerland and in its neighboring countries. Some well-known global players headquartered in Switzerland and which are industry leaders in Europe include Actelion, Amgen, Biogen Idec, Crucell, and Merck Serono.

The concentration of medical technology companies in Switzerland is also unusually high. The medtech sector consists of 1,350 companies, including approximately 300 manufacturers, 480 suppliers, over 220 distribution and sales companies, and 350 specialized service providers, which are mainly located in the Lake Geneva area, the Bern-Biel area, the Basel area, and the Zurich metropolitan area. 75% of all products manufactured in Switzerland are then exported, which makes up 5.2% of all Swiss exports. Sales in 2016 amounted to around 14.1 billion Swiss francs. Investment in research and development, growth rates, and profitability are all above average. In total, around 54,500 people are employed in medical technology. This corresponds to 1% of the working population – more than any other country (Germany: 0.4%, UK/EU/USA: 0.2%). The largest employer is Synthes, with the diagnostics division of Roche and Johnson & Johnson Medical following just behind it. Other global Swiss companies are Ypsomed, Sonova (hearing aids), and Straumann (dental implants). Some major foreign corporations worth mentioning are Zimmer Biomet, Medtronic, B. Braun, and Stryker.

www.s-ge.com/invest-lifesciences

Facts and figures on Switzerland as a life sciences location

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.s-ge.com/invest-pharma

Facts and figures on Switzerland as a pharma location

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.s-ge.com/biotech

Facts and figures on Switzerland as a biotech location

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.s-ge.com/medtech

Facts and figures on Switzerland as a medical technology location

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.scienceindustries.ch

Swiss industry association for chemicals, pharma, biotech

Languages: German, English, French

www.swiss-medtech.ch

Swiss medical technology association

Languages: German, English, French

2.3.2 Machinery, Electrical Engineering, and Metals Industry

The machinery, electrical engineering, and metals industry (MEM) sector is the largest industrial sector and holds a key position in the Swiss economy with 320,000 employees. In 2016, the MEM industry's share of value creation amounted to about 7.4%.

Countless companies of the Swiss MEM industry have a leading international role in their sub-sectors. Around 80% of products from the MEM industry are exported and the industry contributes 35% to total Swiss exports.

Large companies in the metal and mechanical engineering industry well-known names such as OC Oerlikon, Rieter, Schindler, and ABB are present in almost every canton. Particularly in the cantons of Zurich, Aargovia, Ticino, and Valais, in the Rhine Valley, as well as in central Switzerland, growth is among the strongest in the world. Most companies focus on innovation and quality in order to compete with cheaper locations and maintain and expand their global market position. Today, this branch of industry is able to compete on the international stage, thanks to well-advanced restructuring and to the use of new technologies.

The Swiss watch industry is primarily located in the Jura region stretching from Geneva to Schaffhausen (called the "watchmaker belt"). There are also individual sites in Mittelland, Ticino, and Valais; Geneva, Biel, and La Chaux-de-Fonds are three watchmaking centers. Companies such as the Swatch Group, IWC Schaffhausen, Rolex SA, Richemont SA, and the LVMH Group are headquartered here. The Swiss watch industry makes products whose high degree of mechanization makes a strongly demarcated division of labor possible. As a result, the sector generally comprises small and medium-sized enterprises, averaging just under 70 employees per company. Around 700 companies employ 59,000 people (as of 2017). 95% of all employees and businesses are located in the nine cantons of the Jura region, resulting in a watch industry cluster. Particularly in the luxury segment, the world market position of Swiss watchmakers is excellent. 95% of all watches are exported. The total value of Swiss watch exports was 19.4 billion Swiss francs in 2016.

The availability of highly qualified staff with professional know-how has resulted in the relocation to this area of more and more companies outside the watchmaking industry which require similar technology for their production. In particular, this "precision cluster" includes medical technology, which has significantly expanded its presence in the region in recent years. A cluster strongly orientated to micromechanics and optics has also formed in eastern Switzerland and the Bern region.

www.s-ge.com/invest-mem

Facts and figures on Switzerland as an MEM location
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.swissmem.ch

Association of the Swiss mechanical, electrical engineering and metal industry (MEM)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.fhs.swiss

Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry (FH)
Languages: English, French, Chinese, Japanese

2.3.3 Information and Communication Technology

Switzerland occupies a leading position with regard to the development of infrastructure for the information society. According to the OECD, Switzerland is in first place worldwide, ahead of the Netherlands and Denmark, with over 50% of inhabitants having a fixed-line high-speed Internet connection (see Fig. 47, Section 11.2). More than 85% of over-14s use the Internet. The World Economic Forum "Networked Readiness Index 2016" placed Switzerland in seventh place behind Singapore, Finland, Sweden, Norway, the USA, and the Netherlands. With 210,800 working in the field of information and communication technology (ICT), the ICT field is the sixth largest area in Switzerland (2015).

Several distinguished companies from the IT sector have established locations in the Zurich-Lake Constance area, in the vicinity of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, its research facilities, and the University of Zurich, such as IBM, Google, and Microsoft. Proximity to these universities was a key factor in their choice of location. Other IT centers have emerged in Bern and Lucerne. Swiss IT companies such as Noser Engineering and Coresystems AG are leaders in their markets. Some of the largest employers in the sector are foreign companies such as Siemens, Dell, HP, and Reuters. One important criterion encouraging foreign IT firms to settle in Switzerland is the extremely well educated, technically experienced, and often multilingual workforce.

www.s-ge.com/invest-ict

Facts and figures on Switzerland as an ICT location
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.s-ge.com/data-centers

Facts and figures on data centers in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.bakom.admin.ch

Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.ictswitzerland.ch

Umbrella association of the Swiss ICT industry
Languages: German, English

www.digitalswitzerland.com

National initiative for making Switzerland a leading digital innovation hub
Language: English

2.3.4 Cleantech

Cleantech comprises technologies, processes, and goods and services that have the aim of reducing environmental pollution and allowing the sustainable use of natural resources and systems. Cleantech is applied in all sectors of the economy and affects the entire value chain. As a small country with limited resources, Switzerland has been concerned with environmental protection from an early stage. Waste collection, Minergie standards, connection to sewage treatment plants, the energy recovery of all waste, and other measures are a matter of course for the Swiss population. Legislation and regulations at a high level have forced industrial solutions and led to many years of valuable experience. This constantly yields new and innovative developments. Nowadays the work of an estimated 530,000 employees is associated with the cleantech sector, 5.5% of all jobs. The gross value added is 49 billion Swiss francs, which comprises 4.2% of the gross domestic product. 38% of Swiss cleantech companies export products and services. The sector is characterized by a heterogeneous corporate landscape, ranging from start-up/spin-off companies to large multinational groups.

www.s-ge.com/cleantech

Export Promotion Cleantech

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

cube.s-ge.com

Official database of Swiss cleantech companies

Language: English

www.cleantech.admin.ch

Official information about cleantech

Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.swisscleantech.ch

Association of the Swiss cleantech industry

Languages: German, French

2.3.5 Company Headquarters

Switzerland is a vital center for the global and regional headquarters of foreign companies. While European firms have their global headquarters in Switzerland, U.S. companies tend to open their regional headquarters here. According to a 2016 study by KPMG, more than 850 international companies have their headquarters or other core functions in Switzerland. Nearly 75% of these companies are from North America and Europe, followed by Japan (11%), China (4%), and the rest of the Asia-Pacific region. Prominent examples such as eBay, Biogen, Bombardier, General Motors, Nissan, Sony, Google, IBM, and Mondelez show the attractiveness of Switzerland as a location for company headquarters.

Some key criteria in the choice of location include the favorable tax environment, the availability of qualified staff, a high quality of life, and the advantageous geographic location. Neutrality in an economic sense is also important. All the major European markets are comfortable having a Swiss main office. Switzerland also scores highly in stability, legal certainty, and the safety of people and the environment. Companies also value the high standard of living and the quality of the education system. Other advantages include proximity to research facilities and clients and reliable double-taxation agreements. Switzerland is also perfectly suited as a test market because it offers the widest possible variety in a small area.

“Upwards of 850 international companies have headquarters in Switzerland.”

2.3.6 Financial Services

The Swiss financial center is an important element of the economy as well as a world-class cluster. In Switzerland there are some 260 banks, 200 insurance companies, and 1,800 pension funds. The majority of the financial institutions are located in Zurich, Geneva, Basel, and Lugano. In 2016, direct value creation by banks and insurance companies amounted to around 60 billion Swiss francs, with banks and insurance companies each contributing 30 billion Swiss francs. This corresponds to about 9.4% of the entire Swiss gross domestic product. Nearly 214,000 employees work in the financial sector (full-time equivalent), which is about 5.6% of the entire working population in Switzerland. Around 144,000 of these employees work at banks, while roughly 70,000 work in the insurance industry. The importance of the financial industry is also reflected in the courses offered by universities. Thanks to the “Swiss Finance Institute” – a collaborative effort between financial institutions and leading Swiss universities – education and financial research are guaranteed.

From an international perspective, the Swiss banking center is regarded very highly and is extremely competitive. Innovativeness, professionalism, and quality set Swiss banks apart. Their core competency is asset management. With a fourth of the world’s global cross-border investments, Switzerland is the market leader in cross-border private banking. In addition to the two major globally active banks, UBS and Credit Suisse, there are numerous regional and specialized institutions. This diversity is one of Switzerland’s major strengths as a banking center, because it guarantees that every customer will find the right Swiss bank for every need.

The key factors for success and the basic conditions for the insurance industry include a high per capita income, a strong need for security, a solidly structured old-age pension system, an open and internationally networked insurance center, a credible regulatory environment, and international know-how in the reinsurance business.

For more information and links relating to banking, see page 96 onward.

www.s-ge.com/financial-center

Facts and figures on Switzerland as a financial center
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.swissbanking.org

Swiss Bankers Association
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.svv.ch

Swiss Insurance Association
Languages: German, English, French

2.3.7 Trading and Resources

Switzerland is one of the world’s most important commodities trading platforms. Around one third of global trade in crude oil products is transacted via Geneva. Regarding the trade in grain, oilseed, and cotton, Geneva is first in the world and first in Europe in sugar trading. Zug is a hub for trade in mining products. At first glance, such a prominent position may seem surprising because Switzerland is a landlocked country with very few natural resources. But because of its central location, it has been a major cross-roads for various trade routes since the early days of international trade in coffee and cotton. Later, the Swiss financial center became

a hub for international trade due to its traditional locational advantages. In addition to comparatively low taxes, trading companies value its central location, good infrastructure, and connections with other countries.

Also important for the Swiss economy are the numerous commodities-related services based here, such as insurance, law firms, consulting companies, trust and fiduciary companies, and freight and security businesses. Major Swiss banks and cantonal banks as well as various foreign banks have specialized in financing commodities trading in the regional hubs. They finance the purchase of raw materials, guarantee the seamless processing of transactions, and offer protection against operational and credit risks. All in all, commodities trading amounts to around 4% of Switzerland’s GDP.

In recent years trade in commodities has continually risen in importance. On the list of the largest Swiss companies (2017), there are four commodities companies in the top five: Glencore International (1), Vitol (2), Cargill International (3), and Trafigura (4).

www.stsa.swiss

Swiss federation for commodities trading and shipping and navigation
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.vsig.ch

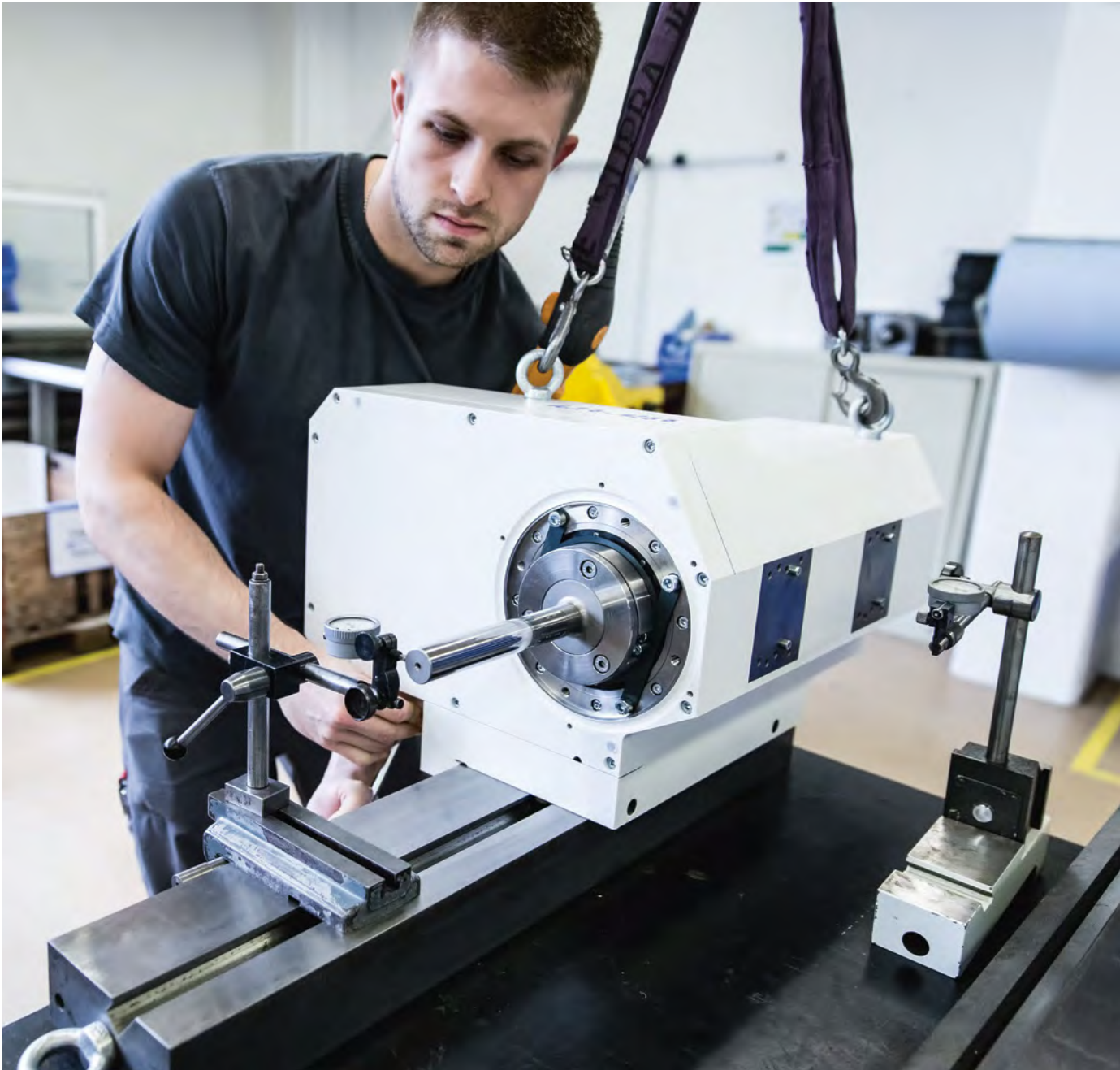
Umbrella organization of Swiss trading companies
Languages: German, French

www.lcta.ch

Lugano Commodity Trading Association
Languages: English, Italian, Russian

www.zugcommodity.ch

Zug Commodity Association (ZCA)
Language: English



ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

3

3.1	International Exchange of Goods and Services.....	44
3.2	Protection of Free Competition.....	45
3.3	Protection of Intellectual Property.....	46
3.4	Product Regulations and Product Liability	49
3.5	Land Use Planning and Environmental Protection	51

Free competition and trade and the protection of intellectual property are the cornerstones of economic success and make Switzerland attractive to both domestic and foreign companies. Efficiently organized administrative processes guarantee security for planning and day-to-day operations, while progressive environmental laws promote sustainability.

Switzerland is an extremely attractive location for global companies. The main reason for this is its liberal economic environment and an economic policy based on the free market.

Switzerland has greater economic freedom than any other country in Europe. Globally, it's in fourth place, as confirmed by the annually published Economic Freedom of the World study (cf. Fig. 13). This index measures a country's economic liberty in five areas: extent of government activity, legal structure and security of property rights, currency stability, freedom to trade internationally, and level of regulation.

Economic Freedom, 2014

Overall score from 0 to 10

(FIG. 13)

1	Hong Kong	9.03
2	Singapore	8.71
3	New Zealand	8.35
4	Switzerland	8.25
5	Canada	7.98
5	Georgia	7.98
5	Ireland	7.98
5	Mauritius	7.98
5	United Arab Emirates	7.98
10	Australia	7.93
10	United Kingdom	7.93
12	Qatar	7.91
16	USA	7.75
21	Denmark	7.67
23	Luxembourg	7.65
25	The Netherlands	7.63
30	Germany	7.55
32	Belgium	7.51
40	Japan	7.42
57	France	7.30
69	Italy	7.17
102	Russia	6.66
112	India	6.50
113	China	6.45
124	Brazil	6.27

Source: Fraser Institute, Economic Freedom of the World: 2016 Annual Report

3.1 INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE OF GOODS AND SERVICES

The Swiss economy is characterized by a high degree of international integration, with half of the country's GDP generated abroad. This is only possible thanks to the highly effective cross-border movement of goods and people.

3.1.1 Free Trade Agreements, WTO, and Elimination of Trade Restrictions

In addition to the EFTA Convention and the Free Trade Agreement with the European Union (EU), Switzerland currently has a network of 28 free-trade agreements with 38 partners outside the EU and is also a member of the WTO. It applies the most-favored-nation clause in trade with all WTO member states and is generally committed to eliminating trade restrictions worldwide.

In joining the WTO Switzerland has also undertaken to convert most non-tariff trade barriers into customs duties. Apart from a few exceptions (primarily agricultural products), domestic products are not protected against international competition. There is no actual anti-dumping law. There are essentially no volume restrictions on the importation of processed products. Imports and exports of industrial goods basically enjoy full duty and quota exemption on the European markets thanks to the free trade agreements with the EU and EFTA. Duty and quota exemption does not mean that customs clearance is not necessary but that it is not an obstacle. Thanks to PCs and the Internet it is now a largely automated process conducted via the IT applications e-dec and NCTS.

www.seco.admin.ch > Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation
Free trade agreements (WTO)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

3.1.2 Customs and Excise

Although Switzerland has been a member of the Schengen Area since the end of 2008, it is not part of the European Customs Union and the internal market. As a result, customs controls remain in place. The most important document for customs clearance is the customs declaration, which must be accompanied by the exporter's invoice (indicating the weight) and proof of origin, where necessary. A certificate of origin is required in order to benefit from preferential duty rates within the scope of free trade agreements or the Generalized System of Preferences (developing countries) or if the goods are to be re-exported and the origin is to be carried over.

Unlike most other countries Switzerland uses a system of customs clearance based on gross weight. This so-called specific customs duty is therefore levied on products for which no exemption from duty is granted. Swiss customs duties are usually lower than those of other countries. This system favors the import of high-quality technical components, which weigh very little but are extremely valuable.

In line with other countries, Switzerland levies taxes and duties at its borders, such as the automobile tax, tobacco and beer tax, mineral oil tax, the CO₂ levy, the VOC incentive tax, and the mileage-related heavy vehicle toll (MRHVT). At a standard rate of 7.7%, VAT is much lower than in neighboring countries (Germany: 19%, France: 20%, Austria: 20%, Italy: 22%).

Goods that are only intended to be held temporarily in Switzerland in intermediate storage can be stored without customs clearance and duty unpaid in bonded warehouses. The goods are therefore in transit between the border and the bonded warehouse. The subsequent exportation of the goods is then subject to the customs tariff of the importing country. The goods so stored may not be processed, or they become liable for normal customs clearance. Bonded warehouses are public facilities. They are operated by private warehousing companies and are open to all interested parties. Open bonded warehouses, meanwhile, are used for storing goods that have not been cleared through customs on a company's own premises, but separately from domestic goods. They are usually operated by shipping companies and are becoming increasingly important.

Used household effects of people moving to Switzerland that are intended for their continued personal use are exempt from customs duty. At the time of importation, the completed official form must be submitted to the Swiss customs office. Clearance of household effects must take place during customs office opening hours (see chapter 13.2.1).

www.ezv.admin.ch
Swiss Customs Administration
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.s-ge.com > Services > ExportHelp
Information about exports and customs tariffs worldwide
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

3.1.3 Rules of Origin

Raw materials and component parts that are imported from third countries can acquire Swiss-origin status and consequently be delivered tax-free to countries which have signed the free trade agreement (e.g. the agreement with the EU), if they have been sufficiently processed in Switzerland within the scope of the relevant free trade agreement. In many situations this is the case if the added value created in Switzerland is between 60% and 80% of the finished product's selling price (depending on the product).

This regulation is of interest because high-quality products often have a low weight but a high product value. They can therefore be imported cheaply into Switzerland, be processed, and then be exported to countries with tariff preference, with which a free trade agreement exists. If, for example, goods are imported in this way from a country outside the EU/EFTA area and processed in Switzerland in such a manner that they acquire Swiss-origin status, no duty is normally payable when the goods are exported to an EU/EFTA country.

www.ezv.admin.ch > Information companies > Exemptions, reliefs, preferential tariffs and export contributions > Exportation from Switzerland
Information about origin
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

3.2 PROTECTION OF FREE COMPETITION

Switzerland's economic system is based on the principles of the free market. Free and fair competition is strengthened by the Cartel Act, which has been largely harmonized with EU regulations since 1995, in which cartels are not illegal but abuses are prosecuted. The Internal Market Act ensures greater competition and the elimination of protectionist regulations at cantonal and municipal level. The Competition Commission can intervene if there are grounds for suspecting unacceptable restrictions on competition. It also investigates whether mergers have negative effects on free competition and supplies the authorities with recommendations on promoting effective competition.

“According to the World Intellectual Property Organization, Switzerland has the highest number of patent applications per resident.”

3.3 PROTECTION OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The protection of intellectual property rights is well developed in Switzerland. A comprehensive system of patent, trademark, design, and copyright protection guarantees that the results of innovation and creativity are protected at the national and international level. Patent applications and trademark or design registrations can be submitted to the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (Eidgenössisches Institut für Geistiges Eigentum, IGE) in Bern.

The IGE, the agency responsible for commercial property rights and copyrights, is a center of competence for all aspects of patents, trademarks, designs, topographies of semiconductor products, copyrights, and other related property rights. Initial information about property rights registered in Switzerland can be accessed via the IGE's own electronic property rights register. As a member of the WTO, Switzerland implements the provisions of the WTO/TRIPS Agreement.

The IGE makes information from the trademark, patent, and design register and on protected topographies available free of charge in the Swissreg database. Swissreg contains Swiss trademarks and applications for registration, but not international trademarks that could also lead to protective consequences in Switzerland. These international trademarks are registered with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva.

www.ige.ch
Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IGE)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.kmu.ige.ch
Information specifically for SMEs
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.swissreg.ch
Database of the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.wipo.int
World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
Languages: English, French, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Arabic

3.3.1 Patents

Switzerland is one of the world's most active countries in terms of patent applications. In 2016, it ranked sixth in the world and came in fourth place in Europe with 7,293 applications. In terms of the number of applications per inhabitant, it outstrips any other country.

Inventions that solve a technical problem by technical means can be protected with patents. To be eligible for a patent, the invention must fulfill three basic criteria:

- Industrial applicability: the invention must be commercially usable, actually realizable, and repeatable.
- Novelty: an invention is considered novel when it is not already state-of-the-art.
- Non-obviousness: the invention must not be obvious to someone with knowledge and experience in the subject.

Some examples of things that cannot be patented are ideas, lottery or accounting systems, as well as therapeutic, diagnostic, or surgical procedures on humans or animals and plant species. Furthermore, inventions that violate public policy or morality (e.g. certain biotechnological inventions) cannot be patented.

There are three ways to protect an invention with a patent application in Switzerland:

- Swiss patent: with national registration, the patent protection extends to Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. National applications can be submitted to the IGE in any language. A translation in German, French, or Italian must, however, be submitted within a deadline, if the application is not made in one of these three languages.
- European patent: the European Patent Convention (EPC) enables applicants to obtain protection in the member states of the EPC, including Switzerland, through a standardized patent investigation and granting procedure.
- International patent: the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), which Switzerland has ratified, enables inventors to submit an international application which then has the same effect as a national application in all named member states. International applications can be submitted to the IGE in English.

It takes an average of three to five years between the filing of a national application and the granting of the patent. An accelerated process is possible upon request. Patents expire after a maximum of 20 years.

A patent costs 200 Swiss francs for the application and 500 Swiss francs for the patent check. Annual renewal fees are payable starting four years after the date of filing.

As the IGE does not check the criteria regarding novelty and non-obviousness, it is recommended to engage a specialist (e.g. a patent lawyer) before applying for a patent. Both criteria can also be checked after the patent application through optional research into the current state of the art.

www.ige.ch
Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.epo.org
European Patent Office
Languages: German, English, French

Property Rights at a Glance

(FIG. 14)

	BRAND PROTECTION	PATENT PROTECTION	PROTECTION OF DESIGNS	COPYRIGHT ²
What is protected?	Registered trademark protected against misuse by third parties	Inventions, i.e. technical solutions to a technical problem	The form and external design of an object	Literary and artistic works (including computer programs)
How is protection obtained?	Trademark entered in trademark register	Patent of invention is issued	Design entered in design register	Automatically when the object is created
Minimum requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not infringe older third-party rights - Distinctive - Non-descriptive - Does not violate public policy or morality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Novelty - Industrial applicability - Non-obviousness - Disclosure of invention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Novelty - Overall visual appearance must be significantly different from existing designs - Does not violate public policy or morality 	Intellectual creations of literature and art with an individual character
Not available for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple symbols - Acronyms - Factual statements or descriptions - Emblems - and others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Animal species, plant varieties - Diagnostic, therapeutic, or surgical procedures on humans or animals - Use does not violate public policy or morality - Certain biotech inventions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exclusively technical functions - Ideas, concepts - Anything that violates federal law (e.g. emblem law) or treaties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content (ideas, concepts) - Laws, official decrees - Decisions of public authorities - Means of payment - Patent specifications
Excluded from protection	When brand is not used as a trademark	Private use, research, and teaching	None	Private use, quotations, backup copies, reporting
Scope of protection	Defined by the brand and the Goods and Services List	Defined by patent claims	Defined by the illustration	Defined by the actual work
Duration of protection	10 years (unlimited extensions possible)	Max. 20 years	5 years (4 x 5-year extensions possible): max. 25 years	70 years after death of creator (50 years for computer programs)
Common symbols or indications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ® for registered trademark - TM for trademark Use is optional Misuse is punishable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> +pat+, pat. pend. (patent applied for) Use is optional Misuse is punishable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mod. dép. Use is optional Misuse is punishable 	©, "Copyright", "All rights reserved", "Alle Rechte vorbehalten", "Tous droits réservés" or similar note (Use is optional)
Application fee (CH)¹	CHF 550	CHF 200 (registration) CHF 500 (optional research) CHF 500 (review)	CHF 200 (base fee) including publication of an image	None
Extension (CH)¹	CHF 700 (10 years)	CHF 100 for the 4th year, after which the fee increases by CHF 50 each year (CHF 150 for the fifth year, etc.)	CHF 200 (5 years)	None
Special features	Switzerland does not check to see whether older property rights are violated (market research recommended)	Novelty and non-obviousness are not checked in Switzerland (patent research recommended)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication can be postponed for 30 months. - Novelty is not checked in Switzerland 	Collecting societies: SUISA, SUISSIMAGE, ProLitteris, SSA, SWISSPERFORM

¹ Excludes possible costs when using a specialist.

² The Copyright Act also covers allied rights of practicing artists, manufacturers of audio and video storage media, and broadcasters.

Last updated: September 2017. Subject to change. Please refer to www.ige.ch for the most up-to-date information.

Source: Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IGE)

3.3.2 Trademarks

Trademarks are symbols which allow the products of one company to be differentiated on the market from those of other companies, thereby allowing consumers to find a product they appreciate among the mass of products on offer. A symbol can be registered as a trademark if

- it is recognized by the public as referring to a company and its registration does not restrict competitors in their economic development to an unacceptable degree;
- it does not feign characteristics that the product does not have;
- it does not violate public policy, morality, or the applicable legislation.

The IGE investigates, within the scope of the application process, whether these requirements have been met. It does not check whether other symbols, which it could be mistaken with, have already been entered into the register, or whether any third-party rights exist, which could be violated by the trademark application. It is therefore recommended that a search be performed with the IGE or a private provider before registering a trademark. The registration with IGE only applies to Switzerland. The following options are available for protecting the trademark abroad:

- The national registration of the trademark in the relevant countries.
- The registration of the trademark as an (EU) Community Trade Mark with protection in all member states of the EU.
- International registration under the Madrid system: on the basis of a national trademark, the trademark owner can register its trademark in individual signatory countries of its choice, with a single application to the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva, the assessment of protectability being carried out by the registration authorities in the respective countries.

In Switzerland, trademark applications can be submitted electronically. The registration fee is 550 Swiss francs (plus any class fees). If the symbol meets the protection requirements, it is normally registered within a maximum of six months. The ten-year trademark protection resulting from the registration can be extended by paying an extension fee as many times as desired every ten years.

www.ip-search.ch
Trademark search
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.ige.ch/ma-berater
Trade mark consultants
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

3.3.3 Design

Design appeals to the senses, triggers emotions, and creates identification and distinction. As a result design has also become a decisive market factor and forgeries are correspondingly common. New, commercially manufactured two-dimensional or three-dimensional designs of an aesthetic nature can be protected by means of registration. The registration process for a design is simple, fast, and cheap. A design can be protected for a maximum of 25 years (comprising five 5-year periods). Based on the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs, designs and models can also be registered internationally. Because Switzerland has ratified this agreement, the registrant acquires protection for Switzerland as well.

www.s-ge.com/product-design
Facts and figures on product and industry design in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.ige.ch > Protecting your IP > Designs
Protection of Designs
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

3.3.4 Copyright

Intellectual creations of literature and art with an individual character can be protected by means of copyright. This includes literature, music, pictures, sculptures, films, operas, ballets, and mimes, as well as computer programs. A work is protected by copyright as soon as it is created. There is no requirement to apply for protection or lodge the work, and no register exists. In Switzerland, copyright protection generally expires 70 years after the death of the creator, except for computer programs, which are only protected for 50 years.

3.4 PRODUCT REGULATIONS AND PRODUCT LIABILITY

For reasons of health and safety, environmental and consumer protection and to comply with international and national standards, medicines, cosmetics, cleaning agents, electrical appliances, measuring and weighing equipment, heating systems, pressure containers, and motorcycles, as well as other products, are subject to certain regulations when imported into and sold in Switzerland.

The law regulates which particular conformity assessment procedures shall apply, depending on the product's hazard potential. The procedures range from self-checks (e.g. for machines) to assessments by officially approved independent conformity assessment centers (e.g. for pressure containers) to government licensing (e.g. for medicines).

These days most countries impose a great number of technical regulations and very few products escape the net. At the federal level in Switzerland, these regulations are contained in more than 30 laws and more than 160 ordinances. In addition, some technical regulations still exist at the cantonal level.

Mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) are a politically important tool for removing technical trade barriers in the state-regulated sector and are recognized by the World Trade Organization. If the product regulations in two states are of a comparable standard, a conformity assessment conducted under the exporting country's regulations is sufficient to allow the product to be distributed in the other country. Switzerland's MRA with the European Union is the most economically important example (CE marking [Conformité Européene]).

The health and safety requirements for products are determined by laws and ordinances. With regard to product safety, Switzerland has largely adopted the regulations of the European Union (EU), so that no major market barriers exist in this area for exports and imports to and from the EU.

In addition, since July 1, 2010, the so-called Cassis de Dijon principle has applied to the EU. According to this principle, many products from the EU/EEA, which previously had to be produced, repacked or relabeled solely for the Swiss market, can now be imported more easily and without technical obstacles. The condition for this is that the products meet the regulations of the relevant EU or EEA country and were circulated there lawfully.

Swiss product liability regulations are largely comparable with those in the European Union – the manufacturer is liable for damage caused by defective goods, irrespective of whether the manufacturer himself is negligent. In Switzerland, liability applies to all products put into circulation from 1994 onwards.

The following sections give further details on the regulations relating to a number of important product categories. However, due to the large number of laws and ordinances in existence, it is essential to seek detailed information in specific cases.

www.seco.admin.ch > Work > Product safety
Product safety regulations
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.seco.admin.ch > Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation
Technical trade barriers
Languages: German, English, French

www.snv.ch > Services > Switec InfoCenter
Standards: switec - Swiss information center for technical regulations
Languages: German, English, French

www.sas.admin.ch
Accreditation: Swiss Accreditation Service (SAS)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

3.4.1 Foodstuffs

The Swiss Ordinance on the Identification and Pricing of Foodstuffs (LKV) contains strict regulations on the information that must be declared. All ingredients must be named and listed on the packaging or labels of pre-packed foodstuffs in descending order of quantity. Foodstuffs which are not defined in a federal ordinance must be approved by the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH). FOPH approval is mandatory for foodstuffs, additives, and processing agents which are genetically modified organisms (GMOs), contain such or have been obtained from such, and which are intended for sale to consumers. The presence of GMOs is tolerated if they do not constitute more than 0.9%. All other products require approval. Nutritional values and health-related information must comply with legal requirements as per the Foodstuffs Identification Ordinance (LKV). It is forbidden to market foodstuffs as having a therapeutic effect. Products with a therapeutic effect are medicines and must be approved by Swissmedic (see section 3.4.2).

For foodstuffs, parliament has passed a special resolution relating to the Cassis de Dijon principle: foreign foodstuffs that do not fully satisfy Swiss technical regulations must be approved by the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH).

www.bag.admin.ch
Information from the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

3.4.2 Pharmaceutical Products

The manufacture and sale of medicines is subject to mandatory licensing in Switzerland. It takes around 11 months to license a new pharmaceutical product with Swissmedic, the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products (excluding the company's internal processing time), making Switzerland's registration process one of the fastest in the world. Normal evaluation of a license application for a human medicine with a new active ingredient costs 70,000 Swiss francs (105,000 Swiss francs with the fast-track process).

The licensing requirements largely correspond to those in the EU, which makes it easier to apply for licensing in Switzerland and the EU simultaneously. Swiss registration enjoys high international standing, thanks to the country's exceptional scientific reputation, its strict criteria, and the large number of renowned hospitals for clinical testing. The fast-track process enables fast licensing decisions to be made (within 140 days, excluding the company's internal processing time) for vital medicines (e.g. to treat AIDS or Alzheimer's), despite rigorous testing.

www.swissmedic.ch
Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

3.4.3 Medical Devices

In Switzerland the regulation of medical devices is mainly based on the Federal Law on Medical Products and Medical Devices (HMG), the Medical Devices Ordinance (MepV) and the Ordinance on Clinical Tests with Therapeutic Products (VKlin). The same regulations for medical devices apply in Switzerland as in the EU. Bilateral contracts thereby enable free trade in medical devices produced by Swiss manufacturers within the European Union, EFTA member states, and Turkey. A medical equipment supplier that wishes to sell its product in Switzerland must be able to prove to the authorities that the product meets the fundamental requirements of EU directives and has undergone a suitable conformity assessment procedure in accordance with EU directives.

Medical devices bearing the CE mark from a recognized European test center are also deemed to comply with Swiss law, provided all the product information is provided in three languages (German, French and Italian). A manufacturer in Switzerland may use the CE mark on its medical devices and sell them on the Swiss market or export them to the EU, EFTA or Turkey. Some of these states also demand the registration of certain medical devices and their manufacturers with national authorities, in addition to the CE marking. Some non-EU states demand export certificates from the country of origin for medical devices. Swiss companies can order these certificates from Swissmedic.

www.swissmedic.ch > Medical devices > Guide to the regulation of medical devices
Guide to the regulation of medical devices
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

“With regard to product safety, Switzerland has largely adopted the regulations of the EU, so that no major market barriers exist in this area for exports and imports to and from the EU.”

3.5 LAND USE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

3.5.1 Building and Zoning

Thanks to progressive legislation on land use planning and environmental protection, densely populated economic areas can exist in harmony with rural and agricultural land. The high population density has always promoted both environmental awareness and building development. Service and industrial buildings are erected in special zones. Building and zoning regulations are governed by cantonal law, and a building permit must be obtained. The duration and scope of this process depend on the type of investment being planned. In the interests of occupational safety, industrial buildings, for example, require both planning consent and an operating license.

For straightforward building projects, such as commercial/industrial projects with no particular level of difficulty or requirement for supplementary investigations or special approvals, the process usually takes two to three months. This assumes that there are no grounds for appeal or protests. The process may vary from canton to canton.

The cantonal economic development agencies (see Section 15.2) provide information on commercial land development and available commercial buildings, as well as on the necessary administrative steps. They can also initiate and, where necessary, coordinate these steps.

www.are.admin.ch
Federal Office for Spatial Development (ARE)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

3.5.2 Environment

Swiss environmental legislation largely conforms to EU rules. Environmental law and the protective measures this gives rise to are based on the principle of cooperation. In cooperation with the business community, solutions are developed to meet both economic and environmental considerations. The measures initiated are seen as exemplary around the world. When erecting and operating industrial and commercial sites, there are a variety of federal and cantonal decrees to consider. The federal laws on the protection of the environment, controlling water pollution, and natural and cultural heritage are especially important. The Federal Environmental Protection Act sets out regulations on air and soil contamination, noise, non-ionizing radiation, waste, and environmentally harmful substances. Based on the principles of “precaution” and “polluter pays”, this act requires environmental damage to be kept to a minimum and the costs of preventing damage to be borne by the polluter. Emissions are limited by means of thresholds and regulations on building, equipment, transport, and operations, although the technology to be employed is not prescribed. Companies are granted a specific period of time to undertake remedial action, thereby allowing them to determine how and when they make the necessary investments.

Environmental impact assessments (EIA) are conducted for projects involving the planning, erection, or modification of installations that could have a serious impact on the environment. Although these assessments are a tool for protecting the environment, they only apply to specific projects as part of the regular building and planning consent process. Projects that require an environmental impact test are listed in the relevant ordinances. Such projects include transport systems, power generating plants, and high-polluting industrial plants.

www.bafu.admin.ch
Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.bafu.admin.ch/uvp
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
Languages: German, French, Italian



SWITZERLAND AND EUROPE

4

4.1	Trade and Direct Investments.....	53
4.2	Political and Economic Cooperation.....	53
4.3	The Euro.....	57

Culturally and geographically, Switzerland is situated in the heart of Europe. Although it is not a member of the European Union, it shares close economic and political ties with its European neighbors. Various bilateral agreements and a dynamic European policy form the basis for deep-rooted political partnerships and a substantial amount of economic integration, which benefit both the Swiss economy and the financial center, as well as the EU.

4.1 TRADE AND DIRECT INVESTMENTS

Switzerland and Europe share close economic ties. As the destination for 56% of Swiss exports and with a share of 73% of Swiss imports (as per 2016), the EU is by far Switzerland's most important trading partner. In 2016, Switzerland was not only the third most important destination for goods exported from the EU (8.2% of all exports), but also its third largest supplier (7.1% of all imports), surpassed only by the USA and China in both cases. At the end of 2015, Swiss direct investments in the EU totaled 545 billion Swiss francs. That represents a share of almost 50% of all direct Swiss investments abroad.

With the exception of agricultural and food products, there are no restrictions on trade between Switzerland and EU member states. Goods with a certificate of origin from one of the member states of the EU and EFTA (Switzerland belongs to the latter, along with Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway) can circulate freely without quotas or customs barriers.

4.2 POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION

For numerous Swiss companies, including branches of foreign firms, the European market is very important. Various agreements to liberalize the market create almost equal access to the European single market. These agreements make it easier for companies from Switzerland to tap into a market of almost 500 million consumers. With the extension of these agreements to the new EU member states, Switzerland also has access to the growth markets of eastern Europe.

The bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU have been broadly expanded. Various barriers to market access were eliminated by the Free Trade Agreement of 1972 and the Bilateral Agreements I of 1999. Bilateral I includes agreements covering technical barriers to trade, public procurement, the free movement of persons, agriculture, research, and overland and air transport. Bilateral II, the second round of more extensive agreements of 2004, brought additional economic advantages as well as cross-border cooperation in other political areas. The following sections explain the most important agreements and their significance.

www.europa.admin.ch

Swiss Directorate for European Affairs
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

4.2.1 Free Movement of Persons

With the Swiss-EU Freedom of Movement Agreement (FZA), the basic rules for the free movement of persons were gradually introduced in Switzerland vis-à-vis the EU. If the FZA is expanded to include new EU member states, longstanding transitional provisions are already in place. Citizens of Switzerland and the EU states have the right to choose their place of work and residence within the territory of contractual partners. A prerequisite is that they have a valid employment contract with an employer in Switzerland, are self-employed, or, if they do not work, can provide evidence that they have adequate financial resources and comprehensive medical insurance. The agreement also liberalizes the cross-border rendering of services by individuals for up to 90 days per calendar year. Service providers can therefore render their services in a guest country for a maximum of 90 working days. This free movement of persons is reinforced by mutual recognition of vocational qualifications and coordination of the national social insurance systems. The Swiss economy is able to recruit in the EU/EFTA region thanks to the FZA workforce. This boosts the efficiency of the labor market and promotes the availability of highly qualified employees. The free movement of persons also works in the other direction, of course: Swiss nationals can work and take up residence freely in the EU as well. At the moment around 460'000 Swiss people, around 60% of all Swiss abroad, live in the EU.

The agreement specifies transition periods. During these periods the entry restrictions, such as priority for Swiss nationals and advance examinations of the wage and employment conditions, can be maintained and the number of residence permits can be limited (through quotas). Once transitional provisions expire, the agreement also allows (based on a safeguard clause) for the number of residence permits to be limited again for a period of time, if the immigration levels are above average. The transition regulations guarantee a gradual and controlled opening of the labor markets, and the accompanying measures against wage and social dumping also apply.

- Since June 1, 2007, citizens of both the "old" EU states incl. Cyprus and Malta (the EU-17) and the EFTA states have benefited from the free movement of persons. Since May 1, 2011, EU-8 citizens have also benefited from unrestricted free movement of persons as have citizens of Bulgaria and Romania (EU-2) since June 1, 2016. On May 10, 2017, the Federal Council invoked the safety valve clause with regard to working citizens of EU-2 states. The result of this decision was that the quota for EU/EFTA residence permits B was reinstated from June 1, 2017 to May 31, 2018. This affects EU-2 citizens who are self-employed or want to fill a position with a multi-year or open-ended employment contract in Switzerland.
- Croatia entered the European Union on July 1, 2013. The expansion of the FZA to include Croatia was negotiated in Protocol 3. During the first stage of expansion, special transitional provisions apply with regard to labor market restrictions and quotas.

For more information about residence and employment for EU/EFTA citizens, see section 6.4.2

www.swissemigration.ch
Employment mobility in Europe
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

Information about the Mass Immigration Initiative

On February 9, 2014, the Swiss electorate accepted the popular initiative "Against mass immigration." The new constitutional text obliges the Federal Council and parliament to introduce a new permit system within three years that limits the number of migrants by means of maximum levels and quotas. It also calls for the FZA to be renegotiated.

After the results of the Brexit referendum in June 2016 made it clear that an agreement to revise the FZA could not be reached with the EU, the parliament decided on December 16, 2016 in favor of a legal regulation that could be implemented in a manner compatible with the FZA. The legislative amendments aimed especially at making better use of the potential of the domestic workforce. The obligation to report job openings is designed to help job seekers who are registered with the public employment service in Switzerland. Another goal is to ensure that recognized refugees and temporarily admitted individuals receiving social assistance are better integrated into the labor market.

The Federal Council enacted the required implementation provisions on December 8, 2017. The measures take effect on July 1, 2018.

www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence > Free Movement of Persons Switzerland – EU/EFTA and www.eda.admin.ch/dea > Bilateral agreements > Overview > Bilateral agreements I (1999) > Free movement of persons
Up-to-date information about the free movement of persons

4.2.2 Schengen Agreement

The Schengen cooperation has made travel easier by abolishing identity checks at the borders between Schengen countries (internal borders). At the same time a range of measures has improved international cooperation between courts and the police in the fight against crime. This cooperation includes security measures such as strengthened controls on external Schengen borders, increased cross-border police cooperation (for example through the European search system SIS), and more efficient cooperation between judicial authorities. The Schengen visa is also valid for Switzerland. Tourists from India, China, Russia, or other countries that require a visa no longer need an additional Swiss visa for a short visit to Switzerland during their travel through Europe, which increases Switzerland's attractiveness as a vacation destination.

4.2.3 Elimination of Technical Barriers to Trade

For most industrial products, conformity evaluations – such as tests, certificates, and product approvals – are mutually recognized. Re-certification upon export to the EU is no longer necessary because product inspections by Swiss testing institutes recognized by the EU are sufficient. This also eliminates double inspections according to Swiss and EU requirements. In areas where EU and Swiss regulations differ and two conformity certificates are still required, both can be issued by the Swiss testing institute. This process simplifies administrative procedures, reduces costs, and strengthens the competitive position of the export industry.

4.2.4 Research

There is a long tradition of cooperation between Switzerland and the European Union in the areas of research and innovation. Researchers in Switzerland have participated in EU research framework programs since 1988, with Switzerland in the status of either a non-member country or an associated partner. In the latest generation of programs, "Horizon 2020," Switzerland was considered a partially associated country until the end of 2016. National measures for financing Swiss participation in projects came into effect for areas of Horizon 2020 that Switzerland is not associated with. As of the beginning of 2017, Switzerland has been fully associated with Horizon 2020.

www.sbfi.admin.ch > Research & Innovation > EU Framework Programmes for Research > Horizon 2020
Up-to-date information on Switzerland's status in Horizon 2020
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

This does not jeopardize support for research in Switzerland. The Temporary Backup Schemes of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF) provide researchers with a temporary substitute for the funding instruments of the European Research Council (ERC). The Federal Council aims to ensure that Swiss researchers can once again participate in EU framework research programs.

4.2.5 Rail, Road, and Air Transport

The Overland Transport Agreement regulates the mutual opening up of the market for the transport of persons and goods by road and rail, together with fee systems based on the cost-by-cause principle. Network access in the EU is increasing the competitiveness of the railways and opening up new market opportunities for Swiss transport companies. Swiss airlines have access to the liberalized European air transport market, on the basis of reciprocity, putting them on a more or less equal footing with their European counterparts. Duty-free sales at Swiss airports or on flights to and from Switzerland are still available.

4.2.6 Public Procurement in Switzerland

In accordance with the multilateral agreement on public procurement (GPA) of the World Trade Organization (WTO), certain clients must make an international request for a proposal for the procurement of goods and services and construction projects over a certain amount (termed the threshold value) in order to promote transparency and competition within public procurement. On the basis of the GPA, the scope of application of the WTO rules has been extended. This now comprises procurement by districts and communities; procurement by public and private clients in the rail transport, gas, and heat supply sectors; and procurement by private companies that operate on the basis of a special or exclusive right granted by an authority in the sectors of drinking water and power supply, municipal transportation, airports, or river and maritime shipping.

The agreement provides for the option of removing procurement or contracting in certain sectors, in which there is verifiable competition, from the scope of application. Accordingly, the telecommunication sector was removed in 2002.

The rules for contracting are based on three principles:

- Equal treatment of all providers (non-discrimination)
- Transparency of the process
- Right of recourse against decisions within the scope of the tender and awarding process (above certain threshold values)

In accordance with WTO regulations, the public sector and affected companies are obliged to issue and carry out tenders for procurement and orders that exceed a certain threshold level. In principle the most economical or best-value offer must be chosen, as long as the offered goods or services are of comparable quality. However, the selection may also be based on the lead times, quality of service, or environmental friendliness. The client can also define requirements for the observance of regional or sector-wide wage and working conditions. Public tenders by the federal government and cantons are posted on an electronic information system. With regard to the considerable public expenditure in the EU and Switzerland, this further opening of the procurement market creates opportunities for the export industry (e.g. mechanical engineering) and the services sector (e.g. engineering and architecture firms). Furthermore, the increased competition among providers leads to reduced prices and thus considerable savings for the public bodies that issue the contracts.

www.europa.admin.ch > Bilateral agreements > Agreements and implementation > Texts of the agreements > Public procurement markets
Public procurement in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.simap.ch
Information-sharing platform for public contract awarding bodies and providers
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

4.2.7 Trade in Agricultural Products

The agreement on processed agricultural products governs trade in products from the foodstuffs industry (e.g. chocolate, cookies, and pasta). The EU does not impose import or export duties on trade with Switzerland. In response, Switzerland has reduced its import and export duties accordingly. There is free trade of sugar and of products which do not contain any raw materials besides sugar that are relevant to agricultural policy. The simplification of technical regulations is beneficial to consumers and increases opportunities for exporting quality agricultural products. A comprehensive agreement on the agricultural and foodstuffs sector, intended to fully open the markets for agricultural products and foodstuffs for both sides, is still being negotiated. The agreement would lift both tariff barriers to trade (e.g. duties and quotas) as well as non-tariff barriers (e.g. various product regulations and import requirements). This opening-up of the market will confront the agriculture sector with considerable challenges. To ensure that new market opportunities are seized and the affected sectors can be supported in the new market situation, free trade should be introduced gradually and supported by accompanying measures.

4.2.8 Taxation of Savings Income

Switzerland supports the EU system of taxing cross-border interest payments to individuals under the Savings Tax Agreement. Swiss banks operate a system of tax retention (similar to Swiss withholding tax) which is deducted at a rate of 35% on interest income earned in Switzerland by persons subject to EU taxation. This system of tax retention ensures that the EU interest taxation system cannot be evaded by switching to Switzerland, while at the same time ensuring that Swiss laws and banking secrecy are upheld. Related companies with their principal base in Switzerland, as well as subsidiaries in EU member states, no longer pay withholding tax on payments of dividends, interest, or license fees. This increases Switzerland's appeal as a business location.

In May 2015, Switzerland and the EU signed an agreement on the automatic exchange of information on tax matters. The new global standard will supersede the Savings Tax Agreement as of 2017/2018.

www.efd.admin.ch > Topics > Taxes > International taxation > Taxation of savings agreement with the EU

Current information on taxation of savings income
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

4.3 THE EURO

Even though the official currency of Switzerland is the Swiss franc, the euro is an accepted form of payment at practically all hotels and in many businesses. Swiss banks offer euro accounts, and cash withdrawals in euros are possible at most ATMs. The globalized Swiss financial center is set up to conduct all bank transactions in euros. Even public telephones accept euros. Due to its location in the heart of the European Monetary Union and the fact that the EU is its largest trading partner, the euro is extremely important for Switzerland. This is particularly the case in the tourism sector and for companies active in the import/export business.



ESTABLISHING AND MANAGING A COMPANY

5

5.1	Corporate Structures	59
5.2	Accounting	63
5.3	Auditing	63
5.4	Establishing a Company	64

Establishing a company can be done quickly and easily. Numerous official and private organizations assist entrepreneurs in selecting the appropriate legal form for their company and can provide advice and support. The federal government's various websites offer a wide range of information on all aspects of the company formation process, from business plan to official registration.

5.1 CORPORATE STRUCTURES

Economic freedom, which is guaranteed under the Swiss Constitution, allows anyone, including foreign nationals, to operate a business in Switzerland, to form a company, or to hold an interest in one. No approval by the authorities, no membership of chambers of commerce or professional associations, and no annual reporting of operating figures are required to establish a business. However, foreign nationals must have both work and residence permits in order to conduct a business personally on a permanent basis.

Swiss law distinguishes between the following types of business entities: partnership-type unincorporated companies (sole proprietorship, limited partnership, or general partnership) and capital-based incorporated companies (stock corporation or AG, limited liability company or GmbH). The "limited partnership for collective investment" (KKK) corresponds to the "limited partnership" form common in English-speaking countries. The type of limited liability company referred to as GmbH & Co. KG, a legal form common in Germany and Austria, does not exist in Switzerland. The appropriate form of business entity for a foreign company establishing a location in Switzerland depends on many factors, including the nature and time horizon of the business, general legal and tax conditions, and the strategic goals of management (headquarters, production facility, sales office, financial or service company, etc.). Companies and private individuals from foreign countries are allowed to determine the legal form that is right for their business. This requires careful evaluation, in which tax considerations play a crucial role. It is therefore advisable to engage an advisor or consultant familiar with the Swiss legal and tax system at an early stage in the process.

The following basic options are available for establishing a business in Switzerland:

- Forming an unincorporated or incorporated company
- Setting up a branch office
- Acquiring an existing company in Switzerland (either unincorporated or incorporated)
- Formation of a joint venture (unincorporated or incorporated company)
- Forming a strategic alliance with or without an equity interest

The most common choices for a foreign company located in Switzerland are subsidiaries (in the form of a stock corporation or limited liability company, i. e. an AG or GmbH) and branch offices. The newly created limited partnership for collective investment is also an attractive option for risk capital.

The following criteria are crucial when selecting the right form of business entity:

- Capital: organization or incorporation expenses, capital needed, and minimum capital required
- Risk/liability: the higher the entrepreneurial risk or financial investment, the more advisable it is to select a limited liability form of company
- Independence: freedom of action may be restricted depending on the corporate structure
- Taxes: the business income and assets of the company and the owner are taxed either separately or together, depending on the corporate structure
- Social security: certain social insurance plans are obligatory, voluntary or non-existent, depending on the legal form

www.kmu.admin.ch
Official Swiss SME portal
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

5.1.1 Stock Corporation (AG)

The stock corporation – Aktiengesellschaft (AG) in German – is the most important and most common type of corporate structure in Switzerland. In addition, it is often chosen by foreign companies as the legal form for their Swiss subsidiaries. The AG is a distinct legal entity (with its own legal personality) and its liability is limited to the company assets. The share capital is determined in advance and subdivided into shares. The AG is an appropriate legal form not just for large companies but also for small and medium-sized enterprises. It is the customary legal form for holding companies and financial enterprises.

A stock corporation can be founded by one or more individuals or legal entities; at least one person has to be a shareholder. The share capital must be at least 100,000 Swiss francs. In order to found a stock corporation, at least 50,000 Swiss francs must be deposited and the stock capital must be increased to at least 100,000 Swiss francs by a later date.

The AG's supreme body is the board of directors. It consists of one or more members, who are not required to be shareholders. There are no requirements regarding the nationality or legal residence of the directors. At least one member (of the board of directors or the executive board) authorized to represent the company must reside in Switzerland. The compensation paid to the members of an AG's board of directors varies widely depending on the industry, size of the company, and sales revenue. The average compensation in Switzerland for a member of the board of directors in companies with up to 1,000 employees is about 25,500 Swiss francs per annum. The most common forms of compensation are annual lump-sum payments and reimbursement of expenses. On average the board of directors in this type of company consists of 3.6 people.

5.1.2 Limited Liability Company (GmbH)

A limited liability company (GmbH) is a separate business entity with its own legal personality. It can be formed by one or more individuals or commercial companies, and its stated capital (nominal capital) is specified in advance. Each shareholder has an interest in the nominal capital in the form of one or more nominal shares having a nominal value of at least 100 Swiss francs. The nominal capital must total at least 20,000 Swiss francs and must be deposited in full. A nominal share can be easily transferred in writing. The owner of the invested capital must, however, be entered in

the commercial register. Essentially all shareholders are entitled to joint management of the company; at least one of them must have their place of residence in Switzerland.

The GmbH is an attractive alternative to the stock corporation, in particular for small and medium-sized enterprises. Due to the fact that a board of directors is not required, the structural costs of a GmbH can be kept comparatively low. On the other hand this means that full responsibility is concentrated on the managing director. Depending on the size, there is only a limited auditing obligation. In addition, the GmbH has the advantage of less share capital compared to an AG, but the disadvantage of the lack of anonymity: all shareholders, including those who join the company at a later date, are disclosed.

5.1.3 Branch Office

Instead of founding a subsidiary in Switzerland, a foreign company can also set up a branch office (which is the third most common corporate structure for foreign companies in Switzerland). These branch offices have a certain organizational and financial independence from the parent company. From a legal point of view the branch office is a part of the foreign company, although it can sign contracts on its own behalf, perform transactions, and also appear in court at its place of business as a plaintiff and a defendant. As soon as a branch office is formed, it must be registered in the commercial register. As far as licensing, registration, taxation, and accounting records are concerned, a branch office is treated like any Swiss company. In order for a foreign company to establish a branch office in Switzerland, it must have an authorized representative whose legal residence is in Switzerland.

5.1.4 Limited Partnership for Collective Investment

The limited partnership for collective investment (abbreviated as KkK in German) corresponds to the limited liability partnership (LLP) common in English-speaking countries. As an instrument for risk capital investment, this form of company is reserved exclusively for qualified investors. In contrast to the provisions of the Swiss Code of Obligations regarding limited partnerships, according to which the partner with unlimited liability must be an individual, the fully liable partner in a limited partnership for collective investment must be a stock corporation.

This legal form has existed in Switzerland since 2006. For investors and limited partners, it is an alternative to setting an LLP in Luxembourg, Ireland, or the Channel Islands (specifically Jersey and Guernsey). This has strengthened Switzerland's status as a financial center and created the conditions for an increase in professional services for specialized risk capital, private equity, and hedge fund managers in Switzerland.

Legal Forms at a Glance

(FIG. 15)

	SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP	GENERAL PARTNERSHIP	STOCK CORPORATION (AG)	LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY	BRANCH OFFICE
Establishment/formation requirements	Commencement of independent economic activity with the aim of ongoing profit	Signing of a partnership agreement (no particular form). If business activity has yet to be conducted, the company comes into being when it is entered in the commercial register	Public authentication of formation, approval of the statutes, selection of the board of directors and (in the absence of dispensation under OR 727a II) the auditors, entry in commercial register	Public authentication of formation, approval of the statutes, if applicable appointment of management, representatives, and (in the absence of dispensation under OR 727a II) auditors, entry in commercial register	Entry in commercial register
Purpose	Small business, personal activity (e.g. artist)	Smaller, ongoing, mainly personal businesses	Suitable for almost all types of profit-oriented business	Smaller, mainly personal businesses	Operation that is legally part of a larger company but has a certain amount of economic autonomy
Name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Owner's last name (with or without first name) – Possible additions: type of activity, invented name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Last name of at least one shareholder with wording indicating the partnership status – Possible additions: type of activity, invented name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Any name (personal name, type of activity, invented name) – The legal form must be indicated in the company name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Any name (personal name, type of activity, invented name) – The legal form must be indicated in the company name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Same name as main company – Special additions permitted – If the main company is foreign: location of main company, location of branch office – Indication of legal form
Legal nature	Sole property of company owner	Unincorporated company	Legal entity	Legal entity	Legal entity
Entry in the Commercial Register	Commercial operations must be registered (otherwise, registration is possible but not mandatory)	Commercial operations must be registered	Comes into existence upon entry in commercial register	Comes into existence upon entry in commercial register	Mandatory entry in commercial register
Founder	An individual is the sole proprietor	Two or more individuals	At least one shareholder (individual or legal entity)	At least one partner (individual or legal entity)	Main company
Bodies	None	Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – General meeting – Board of directors (at least 1 member) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – General partners' meeting – Executive board (at least 1 member) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bodies of main company – Managed by own executives, authorized representative resident in Switzerland
Auditor	May be used	May be used	Yes, in the absence of dispensation under OR 727a II, depending on size – attainment of two of the three following parameters in two successive fiscal years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – total assets of CHF 20 million – sales of CHF 40 million – average headcount over the year of 250 employees or more 		
Liability	– Unlimited liability of owner with personal assets	– Primary liability of company assets, subsidiary unlimited and joint liability of each partner with personal assets	– Sole liability of company assets, only obligation of shareholders to full payment of share capital	– Sole liability of company assets, facultative limited obligation to pay additional contributions as per statutes, liability only for additional contributions tied to own nominal shares	– Main company

Source: State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Swiss Code of Obligations (OR)

	SOLE PROPRIETORSHIP	GENERAL PARTNERSHIP	STOCK CORPORATION (AG)	LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANY	BRANCH OFFICE
Minimum capital	- No requirements	- No requirements	- Minimum of 100,000 Swiss francs, minimum deposit of 50,000 Swiss francs.	- Minimum of 20,000 Swiss francs, deposited in full	- No capital required (endowment capital of foreign parent company is sufficient)
Costs of consulting, establishment, notary	- 700 – 1,200 Swiss francs	- 2,400 – 4,400 Swiss francs	- from 1,900 Swiss francs (electronic) - from 7,000 Swiss francs (traditional) (see 5.4.3)	- from 1,800 Swiss francs (electronic) - from 7,000 Swiss francs (traditional) (see 5.4.3)	- from 1,000 Swiss francs
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Simple and low-cost formation process - Few formal requirements - Proprietor/partners can perform roles of corporate bodies - Double taxation of profit is avoided (only the proprietor's/partners' income is taxed because the company is not a legal entity) - Suitable for very small businesses 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited liability and risk capital - Easier transferability of shares - Regulated representation rights - Foreigners can own all shares/nominal shares (but at least one person who can handle all legal business must reside in Switzerland) - Easy access to the capital market - Suitable for businesses with more capital - Swiss character of company 	- Lower minimum capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No separate capital required - Simpler and cheaper to set up than an incorporated company (no stamp duty or withholding tax on profit transfer) - Parent company can exert direct influence - Low tax burden - Tax exemption for Swiss profits in parent company's country under numerous double taxation agreements
Disadvantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unlimited liability of proprietor/partners - Ownership interests difficult to transfer - Lack of anonymity, proprietor/partners must be listed by name in the commercial register - More difficult access to the capital market - Social insurance obligation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In some cases, double tax burden (taxation of company profit and dividends) - More complex and expensive formation process, professional advice recommended 	- Amount of share capital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreign parent company shares liability for branch office - Changing to a subsidiary later difficult from a tax point of view - Lacks Swiss character
				- No shareholder anonymity	

Source: State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), Swiss Code of Obligations (OR)

“Establishing a company in Switzerland can be done quickly and easily.”

5.1.5 Sole Proprietorship

The sole proprietorship or single-owner company is the most popular corporate structure for small businesses. It exists legally whenever an individual conducts commercial activities alone or, in other words, operates a business or a company. The owner of the sole proprietorship bears the entrepreneurial risk and is liable for that risk with his or her entire private and business assets. On the other hand, the owner also has the sole power to determine business policy. If the business is successful, it can be easily transformed into a corporation. If it fails, liquidation is easier than for other legal forms. The sole proprietorship does not need to be registered in the commercial register unless annual sales exceed CHF 100,000.

5.1.6 General Partnership

If two or more individuals come together to operate a business under a joint name in accordance with standard commercial practice, this type of operation is called a general partnership. A general partnership is created by a partnership agreement between the participants. Since it (like a sole proprietorship) is not a distinct legal entity, it is not required to pay taxes. Taxes are paid by the individual partners. The partners have unlimited joint liability for any business debts or obligations of the partnership to the extent of their own assets. Entry in the commercial register is required.

5.1.7 Joint Venture

The joint venture is becoming more and more important as a form of partnership. It is not regulated by law and is an appropriate form for a joint activity with a Swiss partner. A joint venture is often operated as a joint investment in a newly formed corporation (a foreign supplier, for example, establishes a manufacturing or sales company together with the Swiss seller). Joint ventures can also be operated as an ordinary partnership in the case of small projects (e.g. a research project for a limited time period).

5.1.8 Ordinary Partnership

The ordinary partnership is a contractual association of several individuals or legal entities for a business purpose that is not required to be entered in the commercial register. Anonymity is preserved but each partner is jointly and personally liable for the joint project.

5.2 ACCOUNTING

The general accounting regulations in Switzerland are brief and to the point. The accounts required for the type and scope of business must be kept in an orderly manner and allow identification of business assets and of receivables and payables associated with business operations as well as operating results (profit or loss) in each business year. The law requires that the income statement (profit and loss account) and the balance sheet be drawn up annually according to generally accepted accounting principles and that they be complete, clear, and easily understood. This means that the accounting system can be based on any internationally accepted standards (such as US GAAP, IFRS, or Swiss GAAP FER).

Corporations (AGs) must meet detailed minimum requirements concerning the structure of the annual financial statements in order to increase transparency. They must include, as a minimum, a balance sheet and an income statement with previous-year comparisons and explanatory notes. The annual financial statements of group companies must be consolidated in a single set of consolidated financial statements if two of the following parameters are present in two successive fiscal years:

- Total assets of 10 million Swiss francs,
- Annual sales of 20 million Swiss francs,
- An average headcount over the year of 200 employees.

5.3 AUDITING

Annual financial statements are audited for correctness and accuracy by people and companies, which have the required state license. Normally they are fiduciaries, fiduciary companies, or auditing companies. The auditing obligation depends on the size and economic importance of the corporation (AG) or limited liability company (GmbH). Regular audits apply to companies that are required to prepare consolidated financial statements, or if two of the three parameters below are present in two successive fiscal years:

- Total assets of 20 million Swiss francs,
- Annual sales of 40 million Swiss francs,
- An average headcount over the year of 250 employees or more

If these conditions are not met, then the annual financial statements are only subject to a limited audit (questioning of management, appropriate detailed checks, analytical audit procedures, etc.). The audit may also be dispensed with entirely, subject to the approval of the shareholders, if the company has no more than an average of ten full-time positions during the year.

www.treuhandsuisse.ch
Swiss Fiduciary Association
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.expertsuisse.ch
Swiss Expert Association for Audit, Tax, and Fiduciary
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

5.4 ESTABLISHING A COMPANY

5.4.1 Process

Parties who intend to establish a company in Switzerland can move more quickly from the planning stage to implementation if a clear and concrete business strategy has been worked out in advance. Once the decision to locate to Switzerland has been made, the economic development agency of the selected canton can help to coordinate the project locally until the start of operations. Banks, consulting companies, fiduciary companies, and attorneys specializing in company law are also available to answer specific questions.

The formation of a company takes two to four weeks from the submission of required documents to the date when the company is considered legally established (when it has legal effect with respect to third parties). The time required can be less in simple cases and depending on the canton.

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) provides an online desk for founding companies called “StartBiz.” With this eGovernment solution, sole proprietorships, limited liability companies, stock corporations, general partnerships, and limited partnerships can register with OASI offices, VAT authorities, and accident insurance companies.

It is also possible for sole proprietorships, general partnerships, and limited partnerships to be entered into the commercial register, so that the complete foundation of these companies can be carried out via “StartBiz.” Normally, foreign companies in Switzerland are founded with the legal form of an incorporated company (GmbH or AG). Furthermore, the foundation of a stock corporation or a limited liability company (AG or GmbH) requires entry in the commercial register, which has to be done by a public notary (this can also be done online).

www.s-ge.com/company-foundation
Facts and figures on establishing a company in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.easygov.swiss
Electronic registration and creation of new companies
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.kmu.admin.ch > Practical knowledge > Establish an SME
Online notary for company formations (AG/limited liability company)
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.startups.ch
Private platform for the establishment of new companies
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

Process of Establishing a Company (AG, GmbH)

(FIG. 16)

STEP	TIME REQUIRED IN WEEKS					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Preliminary examination, registration, and approval of company (name)	■					
Preparation of necessary documents (corporate charter or articles of incorporation, statutes, application, etc.)		■				
Payment of the company capital into a specified bank. The payer must prove their identity. For foreigners it may be worth bringing references from Swiss partners.			■	■		
Establishment and preparation of corporate charter or articles of association: statutes, auditor’s declaration of acceptance, confirmation of a recognized bank that the share capital has been deposited and is at the free disposal of the company (if the company does not have its own offices after being formed: declaration of adoption of domicile)			■	■		
Publication in official journal of the canton					■	
Entry of responsible person(s)/entities in the appropriate registers (commercial register, land register)						■
Registration as company liable to tax						■

Source: Documentation of cantonal economic development agencies

5.4.2 Entry in the Commercial Register

The commercial register includes all commercial enterprises doing business in Switzerland. It specifies each company's extent of liability and its authorized representatives. Its central focus is its public disclosure role. Accordingly, the Central Business Names Index, Zefix, which is maintained online by the Federal Commercial Registry Office, is open to anyone for consultation and can also respond to inquiries as to whether a company name is available. All entries in and deletions from the commercial register are published in the Swiss Official Gazette of Commerce.

As a rule, any trading, manufacturing, or other form of commercial enterprise is required to be registered in the commercial register. Registration guarantees that the company name is protected. It is only after registration in the commercial register that legal entities receive their own legal personality and status. The company or business name under which a commercial enterprise is operated can be freely chosen, as long as it complies with legal regulations. Stock corporations (AGs) and limited liability companies (GmbHs) must specify the legal form as part of the company name. If the company name of a general partnership does not list all partners by name, it must contain the last name of at least one partner along with wording that indicates the relationship between partners. The company name of a sole proprietorship must include the owner's last name but may not contain any additional wording indicating a relationship between partners or associates. Application for registration in the commercial register can be done electronically via the company formation portal for all legal company forms, provided that the applicable requirements are met.

www.zefix.ch
Zefix - Central Business Name Index
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.shab.ch
Swiss Official Gazette of Commerce
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

5.4.3 Costs of Forming a Company

The costs for forming a stock corporation (for a limited liability company the fees and consulting costs are slightly lower) comprise various fees, the costs varying depending on whether the process is carried out traditionally or via an electronic platform operated by the SECO (see 5.4.1).

The purpose of the securities issue tax is the non-gratuitous or free foundation and increasing of the nominal value of participation rights. The tax is levied at 1% of the amount accruing to the company as consideration for the participation rights but at least 1% of the nominal value, with an exemption for the first 1 million Swiss francs. This exemption applies generally to the formation of corporations and to capital increases up to 1 million Swiss francs. Existing companies may therefore increase their capital to 1 million Swiss francs without owing any securities issue tax.

Excluding the securities issue tax, the fixed formation costs therefore total 6,000 to 8,000 Swiss francs for the traditional process and approximately 2,000 Swiss francs for the electronic process. For a small business that does not need to provide extensive documentation, the costs for establishing a company amount to a maximum of 2,000 Swiss francs. The total costs for forming a company, including professional consulting fees, vary depending on the share capital. Establishing a corporation is more time-consuming and generally costs more than forming a partnership.

www.kmu.admin.ch > Practical knowledge > Establish an SME
Costs of forming a company with different legal forms
Languages: German, French, Italian

Costs of Forming a Stock Corporation (AG)

(CHF)

(FIG. 17)

COSTS OF FORMING A COMPANY	TRADITIONAL	ELECTRONIC
Share Capital	100,000	100,000
Consulting services (corporate charter or articles of association, taxes, commercial register, share certificates, establishment documents, founding assembly, etc.)	5,000 – 7,000	300 – 850
Commercial register fee	600	600
Certification fees	1,000	600
Securities issue tax	–	–
Total costs	7,000 – 9,000	1,900 – 2,450

Source: startups.ch

Costs of Forming a Limited Liability Company (GmbH)

(CHF)

(FIG. 18)

COSTS OF FORMING A COMPANY	TRADITIONAL	ELECTRONIC
Share capital	20,000	20,000
Consulting services (corporate charter or articles of association, taxes, commercial register, share certificates, establishment documents, founding assembly, etc. – depending on complexity)	4,000 – 6,000	200 – 550
Commercial register fee	600	600
Certification fees	1,000	600
Stamp duty	–	–
Total costs	6,000 – 8,000	1,800 – 2,150

Source: startups.ch



VISAS, RESIDENCE PERMITS, AND WORK PERMITS

6

6.1	Entering the Country and Visas	67
6.2	Temporary and Permanent Residence	68
6.3	Residing in Switzerland without Gainful Employment...	69
6.4	Residing in Switzerland with Gainful Employment	70
6.5	Naturalization	73

Switzerland's prosperity is partly due to the immigration of foreign workers. Not only do they boost the economy, they also enrich the culture. Residence in Switzerland is now easier for EU/EFTA citizens thanks to bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU. In the labor market they have the same rights as Swiss workers. For people from other countries who wish to live and work in Switzerland, certain provisions apply.

6.1 ENTERING THE COUNTRY AND VISAS

The requirements for entering Switzerland differ depending on the purpose of the stay (for example, tourism, visit, employment, family reunification, or study) and the duration of the stay (short or long term). The State Secretariat for Migration publishes the current requirements on its website.

www.sem.admin.ch
State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

6.1.1 Visa Requirements

Depending on your nationality and/or the duration of your stay, you may need a visa to enter Switzerland. As a rule, persons requiring a visa must submit the visa application to the Swiss representation responsible for their place of residence. The corresponding application can be downloaded from the website of the representation or the SEM. In addition to a valid, recognized travel document, the application must include proof of travel health insurance and additional documents that verify the reason for the journey. The representation's website provides information on visa fees and documents that have to be submitted. The Swiss representation abroad may require a letter of sponsorship to be submitted before it issues the visa if the applicant does not have sufficient financial funds or if there is some doubt on this point.

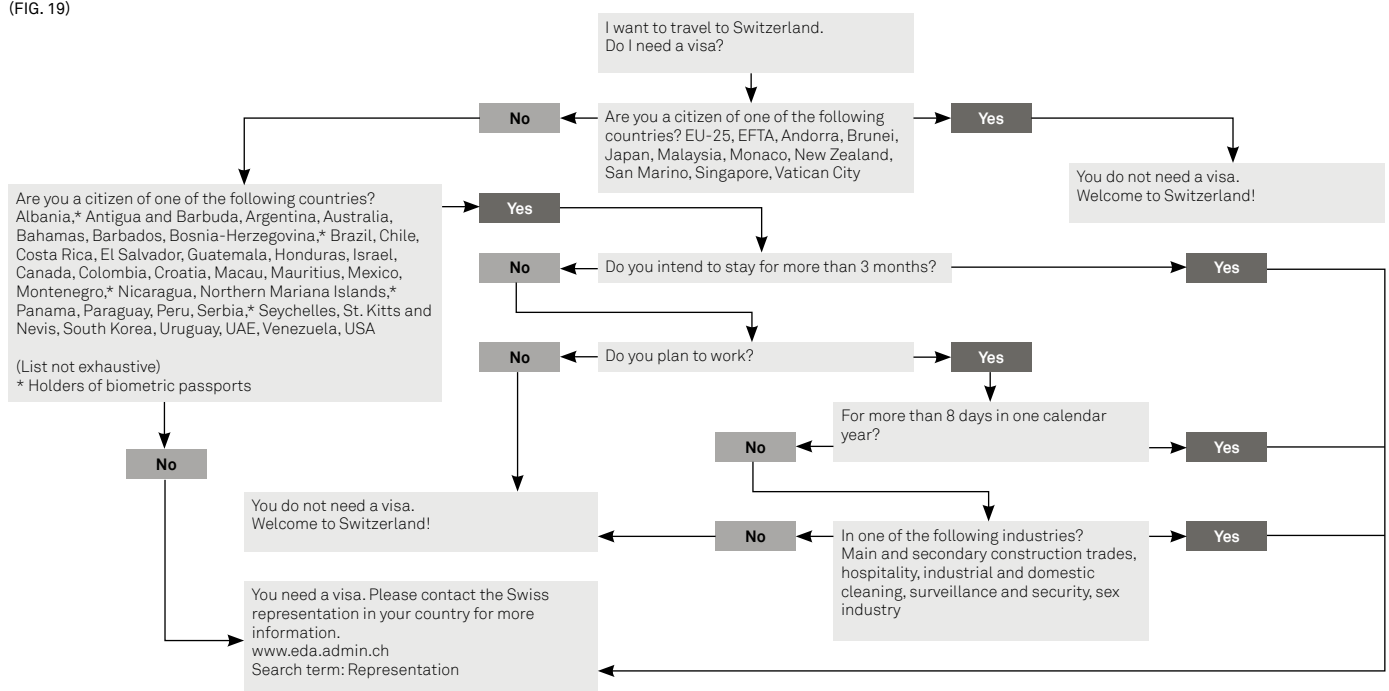
www.swiss-visa.ch
Switzerland's online visa system
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish

www.eda.admin.ch
Swiss representations abroad
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence
Information about entering Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

Do I Need a Visa?*

(FIG. 19)



*Information is for guidance only. A general visa waiver does not mean, for instance, that no permit is required for work. Please consult the responsible Swiss representation.

6.1.2 Visa Procedure

Persons requiring a visa must submit the visa application to the Swiss representation responsible for their place of residence. Travel documents and any other requested documents which explain the reason for the journey must be submitted along with the application. The representation's website will provide detailed information about the required documents and the relevant application forms. All documents, letters or certificates that are not in German, French, Italian, or English must be submitted with a translation.

In some cases, the representation abroad may require a declaration of sponsorship. Detailed information on this requirement can be found on the SEM's website:

- Information on entry to the Schengen area/visa procedures: www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence > Do I require a visa > Entry to the Schengen Area
- Information on letters of invitation and declarations of sponsorship: www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence > Do I require a visa > Letters of Invitation and Declarations of Sponsorship

If the visa request is declined, it is possible to appeal the decision by writing to the SEM (in German, French, or Italian) within 30 days of notification and explaining the reasons for the appeal. An advance on costs is payable to the SEM for handling the appeal. The appeal will not be processed unless the required advance on costs is paid.

www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence
Visa application form
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Arabic, Turkish, Serbian, Albanian, Indonesian

Types of Permits

(FIG. 20)

Permit B Residence permit	For temporary residents (foreigners visiting Switzerland for a specific purpose for a longer period with or without employment).
Permit C Permanent residence permit	For permanent residents (foreigners who have been granted permanent residence after living in Switzerland for 5 or 10 years. Unlimited right to stay in Switzerland).
Permit Ci Residence permit with employment	This document is issued by the cantonal authorities for the employed spouses and children of employees of foreign representations or intergovernmental organizations (IO).
Permit G Cross-border commuter permit	For cross-border commuters (foreigners who live in the border zone of a neighboring country and work in the adjacent border zone in Switzerland).
Permit L Short-term residence permit	For short-term employment and other short stays.
Permit F Provisionally admitted foreigners	For provisionally admitted foreigners. This permit is issued by the cantonal authorities on the instruction of the Federal Office for Migration.
Permit N Asylum seekers	For asylum seekers. This permit is issued by the cantonal authorities following a decision by the Federal Office for Migration.
Permit S Persons in need of protection	For persons in need of protection. This permit is issued by the cantonal authorities following a decision by the Federal Office for Migration.

Source: State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), 2017

6.2 TEMPORARY AND PERMANENT RESIDENCE

Temporary and permanent residence permits are issued by the cantonal migration offices. It may be possible to work depending on the type of permit issued. Foreigners residing in Switzerland for more than three months receive a residence permit indicating which type of authorization has been granted (see Fig. 20).

www.sem.admin.ch > About us > Contact > Cantonal authorities
Cantonal migration and labor market authorities
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.ch.ch > Foreigners in Switzerland
Information for foreigners in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence
Overview of residence
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

6.2.1 Family Reunification

Citizens of Switzerland and EU/EFTA citizens with a residence permit or a short-term EU/EFTA residence permit are allowed to have their families join them, regardless of their nationality. The following are classified as family:

- Spouses and children who have not yet reached the age of 21 or who are considered dependents
- Parents and parents of the spouse, who are provided with sufficient financial support

Students are only allowed to be joined by their spouses and children who are their dependents.

People from third countries with permanent residence permits (permit C) have the right to allow their children and husband/wife to join them. People with residence permits (permit B) have no legal right to this. The cantonal migration authorities can, however, permit the move if people from third countries can prove that they have a suitable place to live, sufficient income, and an established residence (a residence which has not caused any complaints). Husbands, wives, and children of Swiss nationals and people with permanent residence permits or residence permits can take up self-employed or employed work all over Switzerland.

www.ch.ch > Foreign nationals in Switzerland
Family reunification – third countries
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.ejpd.admin.ch > Topics > Immigration
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

“Temporary Residence and permanent residence permits are issued by the cantonal migration offices.”

6.3 RESIDING IN SWITZERLAND WITHOUT GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

6.3.1 Stays of up to 3 Months

Switzerland has been an associate member of the Schengen Agreement, and thus part of the Schengen Area, since December 12, 2008. The provisions of the Schengen Agreement govern entry into Switzerland and stays of up to three months that do not require a permit.

Generally, staying in Switzerland without employment (e.g. for a visit, tourism) for up to three months does not require a permit. However, a visa is necessary for nationals of certain countries. Foreigners may stay in Switzerland for no more than three months within a six-month period calculated from the first time of entry. The reference period of 180 days is always calculated based on the inspection date and covers the 180 days preceding the inspection date. Persons requiring a visa must comply with the amount of time they are permitted to stay as stipulated on their visa.

To enter the country, foreigners must have a valid travel document that is recognized by Switzerland. For persons requiring a visa, Switzerland issues Schengen visas, which are generally valid for the entire Schengen Area for stays of up to three months.

6.3.2 Longer Stays

Stays of more than three months also require a permit for persons who are not gainfully employed (retirees, students, job seekers, and others). Permits are issued by the cantonal migration offices. A distinction is made between short stays (less than one year), temporary stays (of limited duration), and permanent stays (of unlimited duration).

Non-EU/EFTA nationals must submit the application for a residence permit (together with the visa application) to the relevant Swiss representation before entering Switzerland. Different documents will be required depending on the purpose of the stay (studying, retirement, medical purposes, etc.). If the conditions for a permit are fulfilled, then either a short-term permit will be issued (for a stay of less than one year) or a residence permit (permit B) valid for one year if the applicant is to stay longer than one year. After entering the country, the permit holder must register with the relevant municipality.

EU/EFTA nationals who are not gainfully employed are granted the right to stay in Switzerland based on the free movement of persons agreement. After arrival, a residence permit must be applied for in the municipality at the same time as registration and will be granted if the following requirements are met:

- The unemployed person must have sufficient funds to prevent them from becoming dependent on state aid so they do not become a burden on their new country of residence.
- They must have health insurance that covers all risks (including accidents).

The EU/EFTA residence permit is valid throughout Switzerland for five years and is automatically extended by the relevant authorities if the above-mentioned requirements continue to be met. Unemployed persons may be joined at a later date by their families if they have sufficient funds to support them.

6.3.3 Special Case: Students

The procedure described in 6.3.2 also applies to students. The following conditions also apply:

Students who are citizens of EU or EFTA states, the U.S., Canada, Australia or New Zealand must generally provide credible proof that they have sufficient funds to support themselves during stays of more than three months (at the relevant Swiss representation or municipality upon registration). Students must also prove that they are enrolled at a recognized educational institution in Switzerland and will be attending a course of general, vocational, or professional education. If these requirements are met, the student will receive a residence permit for the duration of their studies or for the period of one year if their studies last longer than one year. The permit will be extended until the student has completed their studies provided the requirements for the permit continue to be met.

Students who are not citizens of EU or EFTA member states, the U.S., Canada, Australia, or New Zealand must also include the following documents together with their personal entry application, which they submit to the relevant Swiss representation:

- Letter of acceptance from the institution
- Proof of payment for tuition fees
- Proof of sufficient funding for living expenses for the duration of the course of study
- Diplomas/school certificates
- Written agreement to leave Switzerland after completion of studies
- Additional sheet documenting language proficiency. Language proficiency is judged based on a short interview at the consulate or other representation.

The Swiss representation sends the entry application, including documentation and assessment of language proficiency, to the relevant cantonal migration authorities for their approval.

6.4 RESIDING IN SWITZERLAND WITH GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

People working in Switzerland during their stay in the country or people staying for more than three months need a permit from the cantonal migration office. A distinction is made between short stays (less than one year), temporary stays (of limited duration), and permanent stays (of unlimited duration).

The employer is responsible for obtaining a work permit from the migration or employment office (depending on the canton).

Since the bilateral agreements on the free movement of persons and the revised EFTA convention entered into force, different conditions have applied to EU/EFTA citizens than to people from other countries. EU-27/EFTA citizens are on equal footing with Swiss employees. Transitional provisions apply in the case of Croatian citizens. Citizens of non-EU countries are subject to entry restrictions, labor market checks, and priority treatment for EU/EFTA citizens. Foreign asylum seekers may stay in Switzerland in accordance with the provisions of asylum legislation.

The cantons are responsible for deciding whether foreigners may stay and reside in the country. The Confederation is consulted for permission and considers applications from the point of view of Switzerland as a whole. The cantonal migration authorities are responsible for the control of aliens. Foreigner nationals must register with the Residents' Registration Office in the municipality in which they reside within eight days.

For anyone intending to relocate to Switzerland, it can be advantageous to bundle the permit applications and to discuss them beforehand. The cantonal economic development agencies provide advice on how to proceed and how long the process takes.

6.4.1 Recognition of Foreign Qualifications

Certain professions, particularly in the health, teaching, and technical sectors and in the administration of justice, are regulated. To practice these professions it is necessary to possess a diploma, certificate, or professional qualification. Foreign qualifications have to be recognized by the responsible authorities. Different authorities may be responsible for recognition, depending on the profession. Normally the authorities which regulate training for a particular profession are also responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Within the scope of the agreement on the free movement of persons, Switzerland works closely with the EU and participates in the European qualification recognition system. People from third countries also have the opportunity to have their qualifications recognized in Switzerland.

www.sbfi.admin.ch > Education > Recognition of Foreign Qualifications
Regulated professions / recognition of foreign qualifications
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.crus.ch > Services > Recognition/Swiss ENIC > Regulated Professions
Regulated professions / recognition of foreign qualifications
Languages: German, English, French

Work and Residence Permits: Rules and Procedures

(FIG. 21)

RULES FOR EU/EFTA CITIZENS		RULES FOR CITIZENS OF NON-EU/EFTA COUNTRIES
EU-27/EFTA	CROATIA	
Short-term residence permit (Permit L-EU/EFTA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entitlement as long as proof is provided of employment in Switzerland lasting between 3 months and 1 year (for employment of less than 3 months in one calendar year: registration only). - Family reunification possible. 	Short-term residence permit (Permit L-EU/EFTA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Entitlement as long as proof is provided of employment lasting up to 1 year. Renewal after 1 year if secure employment is obtained, subject to quota. - Quotas are redefined each year. - Priority for Swiss workers, inspection of remuneration and working conditions. - Family reunification possible. 	Short-term residence permit (Permit L) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For highly qualified individuals (forming a company, training new employees, specialists working for international companies): 12 months, can be extended to 24 months. - Family reunification possible. - Quotas are redefined each year. - Trainees / interns: valid for 12-18 months, no provision for family reunification.
Residence permit (Permit B-EU/EFTA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Valid for 5 years, after presentation of a certificate of employment with duration of 1 year or more or unlimited duration. - Full-time residence for specific purpose with main residence in Switzerland. - Family reunification possible. - Entitlement to work in self-employed capacity. 	Residence permit (Permit B-EU/EFTA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quotas are redefined each year. - Permission required to become an employee. - Priority for Swiss workers, inspection of remuneration and working conditions. - Family reunification possible. - Otherwise as EU-27. 	Residence permit (Permit B) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full-time residence in Switzerland for work purposes with main residence in Switzerland. - Priority for Swiss workers, inspection of remuneration and working conditions. - Family reunification possible. - Annual renewal of permit is a formality. - Quotas are redefined each year.
Permanent residence permit (Permit C-EU/EFTA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Normally issued on the basis of permanent residence agreements or agreements based on reciprocal rights once a person has resided in Switzerland for 5 years. - Holders have the same rights as Swiss workers on the labor market. 	Permanent residence permit (Permit C-EU/EFTA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As EU-27 	Permanent residence permit (Permit C) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can usually be applied for after 10 years' uninterrupted residence in Switzerland (five years for U.S. citizens). - Holders are no longer subject to employment restrictions. Entitlement to work in self-employed capacity.
Cross-border commuter permit (Permit G-EU/EFTA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unrestricted geographical mobility. - Holder must return with main residence in an EU/EFTA country every week. - Self-employment possible. - Period of validity depends on employment contract, but 5 years maximum, with possibility of extension. 	Cross-border commuter permit (Permit G-EU/EFTA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geographic mobility within all Swiss border zones. - Priority for Swiss workers, inspection of remuneration and working conditions. - Set-up time of six months for self-employed cross-border commuters. 	Cross-border commuter permit (Permit G) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Valid for 12 months for border zone of canton in which permit issued; annual renewal required. - Applicant has been resident for at least 6 months with permanent residence permit in border zone of a neighboring country. - Weekly return to this place of residence.

Source: State Secretariat for Migration (SEM), 2017

6.4.2 Residence and Employment for EU/EFTA Citizens

EU/EFTA nationals are treated the same as Swiss nationals in the labor market as a result of the free movement of persons agreement. Job seekers may remain in Switzerland for three months without a permit. Unrestricted free movement of persons already applies to members of EU-27 countries; citizens of Croatia are subject to limitations during the first phase of transitional provisions (priority treatment of Swiss nationals, salary and work conditions, quotas). These permits can be extended subsequently. Anyone who enjoys full freedom of movement (EU-27) no longer requires a work permit but is still required to obtain a residence permit. This will be issued by the cantonal migration authorities upon presentation of confirmation of employment. If the work contract expires within three months, no permit is needed, but these workers are still required to register. Service providers (self-employed or posted workers) based in the EU-27 or EFTA region no longer require a license for activities in Switzerland lasting less than 90 work days per calendar year. They simply need to register, which can be done via the Internet. Exceptions are made for services requiring a license that are provided for companies based in Croatia in the following economic sectors: primary and secondary construction, gardening and landscaping, cleaning, and surveillance/security.

The introduction of the free movement of persons is being accompanied by a series of measures designed to prevent wage and social dumping, as well as by the mutual recognition of professional qualifications, and the coordination of social insurance issues. This simplifies the recruitment of employees from EU/EFTA countries and the attendance and use of educational institutions in these countries, which boosts the efficiency of the labor market and increases the availability of highly qualified workers.

For more information about the free movement of persons, see 4.2.

www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence
Free movement of persons Switzerland – EU/EFTA
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.europa.admin.ch > Services and publications
Brochure: "European Nationals in Switzerland"
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

6.4.3 Residence and Employment for Non-EU/EFTA Citizens

Citizens from countries outside the EU/EFTA require a work and a residence permit. Holders of a long-term residence permit are free to change jobs and place of employment, and to be self-employed anywhere in the country without requiring special permission. In important cases, holders of a short-term residence permit may also work for an employer in another canton.

Priority is given to highly qualified and specialized professionals, as well as to entrepreneurs and executives, recognized scientists and persons involved in cultural affairs, employees of internationally active corporations and key persons with international business relations. This approach aims to promote economic, scientific, and cultural exchanges and to support the transfer of decision-makers and specialists of international companies. In particular, it is designed to give qualified scientists the opportunity to continue working in Switzerland after completing their studies. It is ultimately in the interest of the Swiss economy that foreigners temporarily working in Switzerland be permitted to bring their family to Switzerland, and that partners and children of holders of a long-term residence permit have the right to be employed or self-employed in Switzerland.

Key regulations:

- Residence permit B: generally valid for one year. Option to change jobs and cantons with permission, tax at source, quotas. (Some exceptions: e.g. spouses of Swiss citizens have the same rights as Swiss citizens.)
- Permanent residence permit C: same rights as Swiss nationals in labor market, no tax at source.
- Cross-border commuter permit: possible to change jobs with permission, not possible to change cantons, tax at source.
- Short-term residence permit L: not possible to change jobs or cantons, tax at source.
- Trainee permit: maximum of 18 months, only for training purposes for young professionals.
- Asylum seekers: work permit one month following submission of application for asylum. Possible to change jobs with permission, not possible to change cantons. Tax at source, 10% of salary is retained as security.
- Transfer of managerial staff: essential management staff may reside in Switzerland for three years in accordance with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The permit can be extended for one year.

The employer is responsible for checks and due diligence, as well as for ensuring that a foreign employee has permission to assume the position. In order to obtain an entry visa, the employer must prove that it was not possible to find a suitable candidate in Switzerland or the EU/EFTA region and that the training of a suitable employee within a reasonable period was not possible.

www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence > Labour/Work permits
Employment for non-EU/EFTA citizens
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

6.4.4 Trainees/Interns

Switzerland has negotiated agreements with numerous countries on the exchange of trainees/interns. These agreements make it easier to obtain residence and work permits of limited duration. Trainees or interns from countries which have no special agreement with Switzerland must follow the normal application procedure for work and residence permits.

Trainees/interns are defined as people who can provide evidence of being engaged in professional training or a course of study. The age limit is 35 years (exceptions: Australia, New Zealand, Poland, Russia and Hungary: 30 years). The job must be in the profession learned or in the area of study/training and may last no more than 18 months. Canadian students who would like to complete an internship as part of their education are also admitted, while for Japanese students only university graduates are permitted. There are special quotas for trainees/interns, and national legislation giving priority to Swiss nationals does not apply. There is no provision for trainees/interns to bring their families with them.

Because of the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the EU, citizens of EU-27 and EFTA countries only need a short-term residency permit for au pair employees. The permit can be extended to a maximum of 18 months.

www.swissemigration.ch provides a guide for foreign trainees/interns and potential employers, as well as addresses, a standard employment contract, and an application form.

www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence > Labor/Work permits > Young professionals (trainees)
Guide for foreign trainees/interns and Swiss employers
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

6.5 NATURALIZATION

The naturalization process consists of three stages. It is possible to apply for Swiss citizenship in your municipality or canton. Each municipality and canton has its own requirements for naturalization in addition to those imposed by the federal government (see below).

The following requirements must be met to become a naturalized Swiss:

- Resident for 12 years in Switzerland (years of residence between ages 10 and 20 count double)
- Integration into Swiss life
- Familiarity with the Swiss lifestyle, customs, and traditions
- Observance of Swiss laws
- No threat to the domestic or international security of Switzerland

Foreign spouses of Swiss citizens benefit from a simplified naturalization process (after five years of residence in Switzerland and after three years of marriage), as do children of a Swiss parent who are not yet Swiss citizens.

www.sem.admin.ch > Entry & residence
Swiss citizenship/naturalization
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.ch.ch > Foreigners in Switzerland
Naturalization: Information
Languages: German, English, French, Italian



REAL ESTATE

7

7.1	Looking for the Right Property.....	75
7.2	Commercial Real Estate.....	76
7.3	Residential Real Estate.....	79
7.4	Legal Aspects: Building Permits.....	81
7.5	Legal Aspects: Purchase of Real Estate by Persons Abroad.....	82

Although Switzerland has many different types of real estate available for commercial purposes, there is a shortage of residential real estate, especially in city centers, much like in other international cities. People looking for suitable properties to rent or buy will find the Internet and newspapers very useful. Even individuals resident in foreign countries can purchase commercial real estate in Switzerland without prior authorization. When it comes to residential property, however, they are subject to certain restrictions.

7.1 LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT PROPERTY

7.1.1 Residential and Commercial Real Estate

The Internet and newspapers are the most important sources of information when you are searching for a suitable property. Local acquaintances can also be a big help. The range of real estate on offer includes apartments, single-family and multi-family residences, offices and commercial properties, and even parking lots and garages – for renting or buying.

Another good source of information are the websites of real estate fiduciary agencies. You can find them through real estate search portals or via the website of the Swiss Real Estate Association SVIT, for example. Municipalities' websites are also useful: many of them now include information about future building projects, including both rental properties and properties for sale.

The cantonal economic development agencies support investors in all administrative matters and offer assistance in finding construction sites or other real estate.

www.svit.ch
Swiss Real Estate Association (SVIT)
Languages: German, French

www.alle-immobilien.ch
www.homegate.ch
www.immoscout24.ch
www.comparis.ch > Property
Residential properties
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.s-ge.com/realestate
Commercial properties (in cooperation with Swiss Circle)
Languages: German, English

7.1.2 Temporary Accommodation / Furnished Apartments

The range of available hotels and vacation accommodation in every price category is very broad in Switzerland, due to the fact that Switzerland is a tourist destination. The best starting point for anyone searching for appropriate accommodation is again the Internet. The Switzerland Tourism website "MySwitzerland.com" gives you a good overview.

Furnished and serviced apartments are expensive. There are real estate providers and firms specializing in expatriate services that can offer assistance. There is no nationwide overview of all providers, so it is a good idea to search online using keywords such as serviced apartments, furnished studio apartments, temporary housing, or holiday or vacation apartments.

www.myswitzerland.com > Accommodation
Hotels and vacation accommodations
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

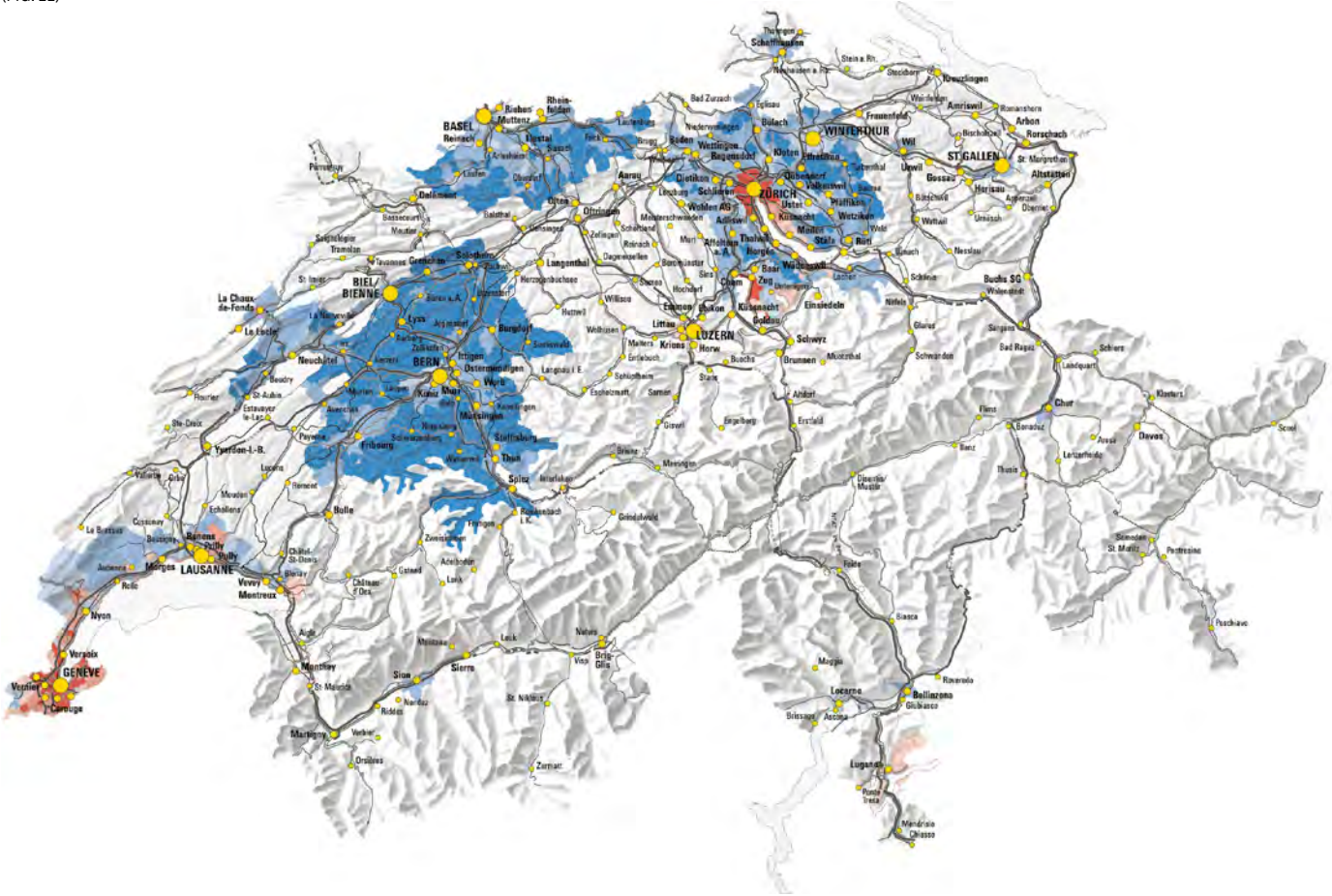
www.xpatxchange.ch > Moving
Relocation agencies, providers of furnished and serviced apartments
Language: English

7.2 COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

7.2.1 Renting

Market Prices for Office Space
(last updated: 2nd quarter of 2017)

(FIG. 22)



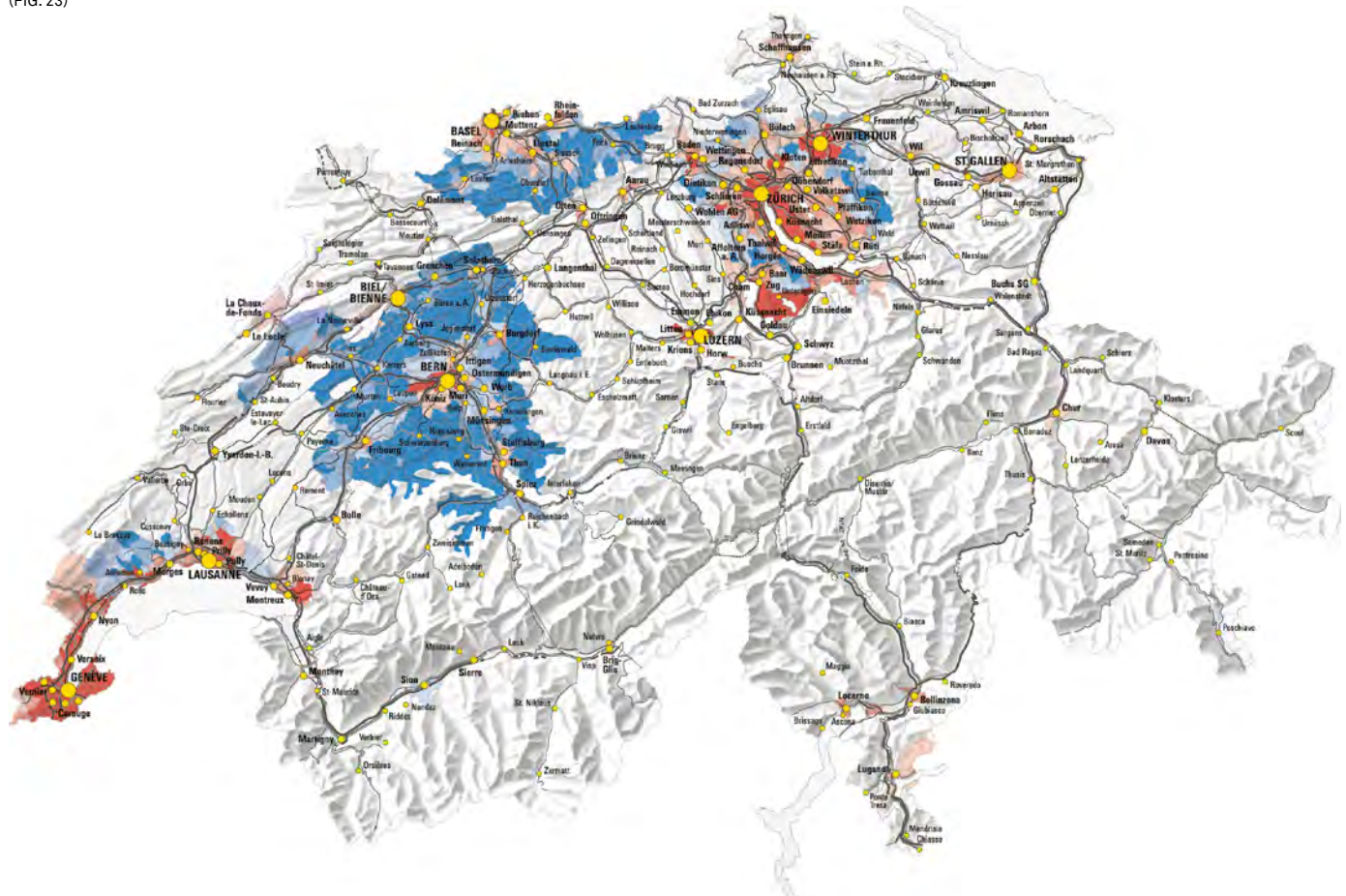
Source: Wüest Partner, source map: swisstopo

Net rent (CHF) per square meter of useful space and year (median)
Major cities: data for whole city

- Over 320
- 280 to 320
- 250 to 280
- 200 to 250
- 150 to 200
- Under 150

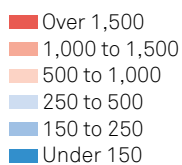
Building Land: Market Prices for Commercial Buildings (last updated: 2nd quarter of 2017)

(FIG. 23)



Source: Wüest Partner, source map: swisstopo

In CHF per square meter
(average location, undeveloped, with roads and services)



7.2.2 Buying

Individuals residing in other countries may purchase commercial real estate in Switzerland. EU/EFTA citizens who are resident in Switzerland have the same rights as Swiss nationals in terms of the purchase of real estate and do not require permission. Nationals of third countries and persons who are resident abroad may purchase real estate with some restrictions.

A Purchase Transaction

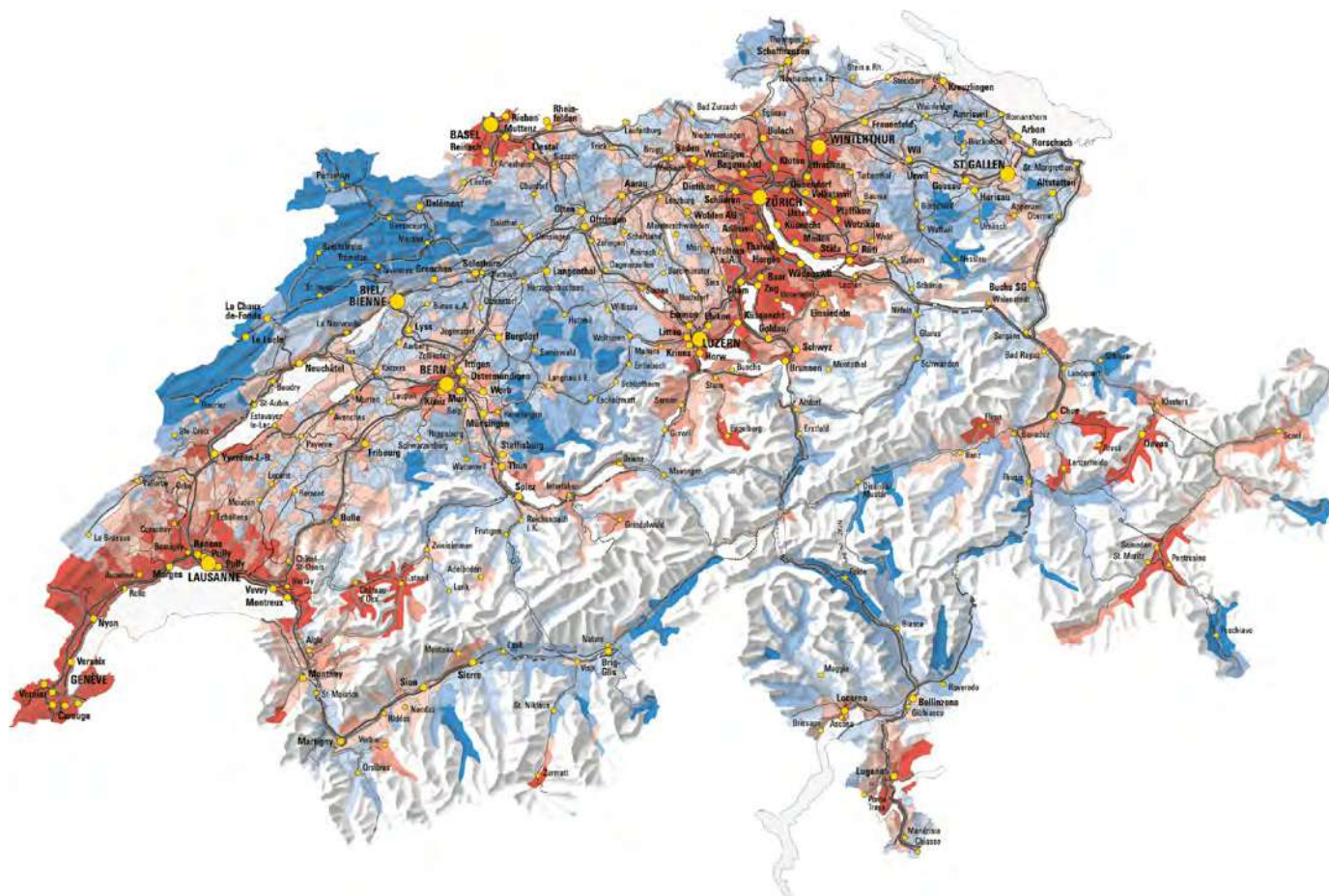
(FIG. 24)

Preliminary assessment: legal circumstances (public and private law)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Construction law conditions- Statistical analysis- Land registry of polluted sites- Road projects- Trade licenses- Air action plan- Noise sensitivity level- Taxes- Examination of all land register entries (easements, reservations, notes)- Cadastral map- Building insurance- Valuation- Finance- Personal check of seller- Letting and leasing arrangements
Completion of sales nego- tiations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Precise definition of property for sale- Determination of price- Taking possession- Specification of finance- Financial securities
Notarization at the relevant location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Signing of contract in the presence of a notary- Payment of financial securities if applicable
Official completion in the relevant land register district	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Exchange: handover of property against payment- (Signing of land register entry)

Source: Buying and selling real estate. Bürgli Nägeli Rechtsanwälte, www.schweizerische-immobilien.ch

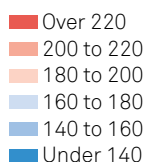
Market Prices for Rented Accommodation (last updated: 2nd quarter of 2017)

(FIG. 25)



Source: Wüest Partner, source map: swisstopo

Net rent (CHF) per square meter
Main useful space and year (median)



7.3 RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE

7.3.1 Renting

Two out of three people in Switzerland live in rented accommodation. Demand is high and availability scarce, especially in cities and large urban areas. Since 2003, the vacancy rate has been varying around the 1% mark (2017: 1.47%). It therefore takes some patience and luck to find the right place to live.

A number of factors can affect rents. The cantons with the highest rents are usually prime locations within reach of major urban centers. Another factor that explains high rents is a low tax burden.

Market Prices for Owner-Occupied Accommodation
(last updated: 2nd quarter of 2017)
(FIG. 26)



Source: Wüest Partner, source map: swisstopo

In CHF per square meter of usable space

- Over 8,000
- 7,000 to 8,000
- 6,000 to 7,000
- 5,000 to 6,000
- 4,000 to 5,000
- Under 4,000

7.3.2 Buying

The acquisition of residential property by individuals resident abroad is subject to certain legal restrictions (see 7.5). In 2015, the home ownership rate in Switzerland was about 38.4%. It is especially high among families with children, older people, and people with higher incomes.

Once the right property has been found, the next step is to sign a contract of sale. This contract forms the basis for any real estate acquisition and must be drawn up and notarized by a notary. It obliges the seller to transfer the property and the buyer to pay the agreed purchase price. The contract also describes the property and stipulates the date on which the property will be handed over and the securing of any capital gains tax on the property.

Before signing the contract, it is advisable to check the land register to see whether any rights and encumbrances are associated with the land on which the property stands or will be built. By providing proof of interest, you can obtain detailed information in the form of an extract from the land register, for which there is a fee. The information recorded in the land register can be complex. Although a right-of-way is easy for the layperson to understand, the situation is much more complicated when it involves building law or regulations applying to condominiums. In these cases, it may be advisable to consult an expert. The notary who handles the sale can also provide further information. The contract of sale, which must always be publicly notarized, represents the actual underlying transaction and is required for subsequent registration in the local land register. Ownership actually passes to the buyer when the land register entry is made. There is no centralized land register for all of Switzerland; each canton maintains its own register under the supervision of the Federal Office of Justice.

www.ch.ch > Homeownership in Switzerland > Homeownership: getting information
Information about the land register
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.grundbuchverwalter.ch
Swiss Land Register Administrators Association
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.hausinfo.ch > Finances and taxes > Purchases and sales
Additional costs for condominiums
Languages: German, French

7.4 LEGAL ASPECTS: BUILDING PERMITS

Buildings and structures may only be erected or altered with the consent of the appropriate authorities. The construction project must first comply with the municipality's zone use plan, and then must also meet other requirements based on planning law and environmental regulations (water, air, waste, and noise) or requirements in the interests of public health and safety.

The building permit process takes an average of three months. Submitting a planning application (application for a building permit) is basically a standardized process. In addition to the project plans, a number of other forms and types of evidence must be submitted, depending on the particular project. It is in the owner's interest to obtain a legal building permit as quickly as possible since the owner must bear the financing costs during the planning and building permit phases. The typical building permit process has four stages:

- a) Notification of the authorities, consultation
- b) Submission of planning application, preliminary examination, additional investigation (environmental impact assessments, historic preservation, etc.)
- c) Application review, public notification (publishing a notice and staking out the extent of the structure), issue of the building permit (including conditions and deadlines)
- d) Period in which objections to the project can be submitted, construction approval

The purchase of land for residential construction is subject to the provisions described in 7.5.

www.ch.ch > Homeownership in Switzerland > Planning application and building permit
Planning applications and building permits
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

7.5 LEGAL ASPECTS: PURCHASE OF REAL ESTATE BY PERSONS ABROAD

The acquisition of real estate in Switzerland by persons abroad is restricted by law and may require a permit. However, the permit requirement basically applies only to the purchase of vacation homes and residential property that will not be used directly by the party in question. As such, foreign nationals resident in Switzerland may purchase both residential and commercial properties.

7.5.1 No Permit Required

No permit is required for real estate that is used for the pursuit of a business activity, i.e. a professional, commercial, or industrial activity (with the exception of land for the construction, trade, or letting of housing). The concept of business activity is very broad. It applies not only to the classic forms of trade, industry, and commerce but also to the financial and services sectors. It therefore covers self-employed professionals such as IT specialists and hotel owners, as well as the operation of a trade or service center and even industrial production. The acquisition of an interest in real estate companies engaged in the buying and selling of such properties is also possible. Residential property can also be acquired under the “business establishment” heading if it is necessary for business purposes (such as accommodation for caretakers or technicians whose permanent on-site presence is required) or if separation from the business property would be impractical or unreasonable.

7.5.2 Permit Required

A permit is required for the purchase of non-commercial real estate by the following groups:

- Foreign nationals who reside outside Switzerland.
- Non-EU/non-EFTA nationals resident in Switzerland who do not have a permanent residence permit.
- Companies whose head office is located outside Switzerland (even if the owner is a Swiss citizen).
- Companies that have their legally registered and actual head office in Switzerland but are controlled by non-Swiss nationals who reside outside Switzerland. This is the case if foreigners hold more than one third of the company capital, have more than one third of the voting rights, or have provided significant loans.
- Buyers who purchase a piece of property for the account of a person abroad (fiduciary transaction).

The permit requirements apply not only to the transfer of real estate ownership requiring land register entries but also to any legal transaction that gives a non-resident actual control over any real estate for which a permit is required. For this reason, these groups are not allowed to invest directly in the housing market or conduct real estate dealings involving residential properties.

Permit Requirements for Different Groups

(FIG. 27)

GROUP	NO PERMIT REQUIRED FOR PURCHASE OF...
All persons	Commercial Real Estate
Citizens of member states of the European Union (EU) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) whose main residence is in Switzerland (usually with EU/EFTA B residence permit or EU/EFTA C permanent residence permit)	All types of real estate and property
Non-EU or non-EFTA citizens who have the right to permanently reside in Switzerland (with a C permit)	All types of real estate and property
Non-EU or non-EFTA citizens whose main residence is in Switzerland, who do not yet have the right to permanently reside in Switzerland (usually with a B permit)	Main residence
Companies headquartered in Switzerland controlled by persons who do not require a permit	All types of real estate and property
EU and EFTA cross-border commuters (with EU/EFTA G permit)	Second home in the area of employment

Source: Federal Office of Justice (FOJ), 2017

7.5.3 Reasons for Permit

Permission for the acquisition of properties for which a permit is required may be granted in the following cases on the grounds provided for by law:

- Banks and insurance companies licensed in Switzerland for acquiring real estate in compulsory enforcements and liquidation proceedings if the real estate is encumbered with a mortgage in their favor.
- Insurance companies for actuarial reserves for domestic business.
- The real estate acquisition is used by a Swiss company for the purposes of retirement plans for employees working in Switzerland.
- The property will be used specifically for a charitable purpose.
- Heirs or legatees must sell the property within two years (unless there are close ties with the property that merit protection).
- Hardship: a permit may be granted for a vacation home or a hotel condominium unit if the seller is in financial difficulty and has offered the property without success to individuals who are not required to obtain a permit.
- Certain cantons only: the acquisition of a vacation home by an individual abroad in a tourist resort.
- Certain cantons only: an individual not resident in Switzerland may receive a permit to purchase a second home in a location with which he/she has close economic, scientific/academic, or cultural ties.
- Certain cantons only: acquisition of real estate for the construction of subsidized housing.

7.5.4 Enforcement

Enforcement of the law is primarily the responsibility of the canton in which the real estate is located. The authority designated by the canton decides whether or not a transaction requires a permit and whether or not a permit should be granted. Under certain conditions, persons abroad can also be permitted to purchase a vacation home. However, ownership of real estate in Switzerland does not entitle a foreign owner to a residence permit.

“Foreign nationals resident in Switzerland may purchase both residential and commercial properties.”



LABOR MARKET AND LABOR LAW

8

8.1	Employment and Unemployment	85
8.2	Cost of Labor	86
8.3	Employment Contracts and Employee Representation..	87
8.4	Working Hours and Holidays	89
8.5	Termination and Short-Time Work	90
8.6	Social Insurance.....	91
8.7	Recruitment	95

Switzerland has one of the most productive workforces of any national economy. Its labor market is characterized by liberal legislation, light-touch regulation, and exceptional social stability. Labor disputes are solved by the social partners. Strikes are rare. The social insurance system for workers is based on the principles of solidarity and personal responsibility. High salaries attract qualified workers and employers benefit from competitive unit labor costs thanks to low social security contributions.

8.1 EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Switzerland has about 4.6 million employed people (as at Q2 2017), about 2.1 million of whom are women. The rate of unemployment as defined by the International Labor Office (ILO) is 4.4%, among the lowest in Europe. Foreigners account for 26% of the employed population. 37% of employed people work part-time. 27% of women work part-time, compared to just 9% of men. Switzerland has consistently had low unemployment.

The Swiss workforce is highly qualified, about 40% having undergone tertiary training. Swiss employees are famous worldwide for their multilingualism, and Swiss managers have above-average international experience.

International Experience by Managers, 2017

1 = Low, 10 = High

(FIG. 28)

1	Hong Kong	8.10
2	Switzerland	8.04
3	United Arab Emirates	7.98
4	The Netherlands	7.42
5	Luxembourg	7.32
6	Singapore	7.30
7	Qatar	7.25
8	Ireland	6.85
9	Sweden	6.71
10	Belgium	6.66
11	Germany	6.62
12	United Kingdom	6.38
13	Denmark	6.36
16	Austria	6.14
27	USA	5.54
41	India	5.01
47	Italy	4.72
49	Russia	4.66
52	China	4.64
53	Brazil	4.64

Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

In terms of motivation to work, the Swiss rank third worldwide behind Norway and Denmark (Fig. 29). Swiss employees identify very strongly with their companies, partly because most companies are small or medium-sized.

International Comparison of Motivation to Work, 2017

1 = Low, 10 = High
(FIG. 29)

1	Norway	8.07
2	Denmark	8.06
3	Switzerland	7.83
4	Austria	7.57
5	The Netherlands	7.33
6	Hong Kong SAR	7.28
7	Ireland	7.23
8	United Arab Emirates	7.21
9	Sweden	7.15
10	Germany	7.09
14	Luxembourg	6.85
15	Singapore	6.84
17	Japan	6.78
20	USA	6.42
21	United Kingdom	6.36
27	China	6.20
32	India	6.00
39	Brazil	5.47
45	Italy	5.20

Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

8.2 COST OF LABOR

8.2.1 Wages

Salaries are relatively high in Switzerland, reflecting the country’s high levels of prosperity and output. Generous salaries are a symbol of success and make the country attractive to qualified workers. Due to the lower deductions (taxes, social insurance) compared to other countries, Switzerland also holds first place when it comes to net income.

Regular official surveys of wage levels and structures show considerable differences both within and between the individual sectors.

www.lohnrechner.bfs.admin.ch
Individual wage calculator
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.bfs.admin.ch > Look for statistics > 03 Work and income
Wages, income from employment and labor costs
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

8.2.2 Non-Wage Labor Costs

The deciding factor for employers is not the salaries that they pay, but rather the unit labor cost. Although salaries are high in Switzerland, the non-wage labor costs that employers must bear in addition to gross salaries (employer’s social security contributions) add only about 15%. Coupled with high productivity, modest taxes, and low capital costs, this means that at the end of the day many employers pay less than in other European countries.

8.2.3 Productivity

Productivity is another important aspect of labor. In international comparisons this is usually measured in terms of gross domestic product per hour worked. By this standard, Switzerland is one of the world’s most productive countries.

Productivity, 2016

GDP per employed person, in US dollars
(FIG. 30)

1	Ireland	143,574
2	Luxembourg	143,279
3	Switzerland	141,082
4	Norway	140,429
5	USA	122,597
12	France	92,581
13	Austria	91,604
14	The Netherlands	86,255
17	Hong Kong SAR	84,099
18	United Kingdom	82,795
19	Singapore	80,849
20	Germany	79,641
21	Japan	76,392
23	Italy	74,552
49	Brazil	19,891
52	Russia	17,691
55	China	14,431
63	India	4,305

Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

8.3 EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS AND EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATION

The Swiss labor market is generally considered one of the world's most liberal (Fig. 31). Swiss labor law specifies the rights and obligations of employees and employers alike. It contains considerably fewer provisions than the legislations in the EU states and is set out in several laws – the Swiss Code of Obligations (individual employment contracts, collective bargaining agreements, normal employment contracts), the Labor Act (general health and safety, working and rest times, young people, pregnant women, and new mothers) as well as the Accident Prevention Law (occupational health and safety).

The mandatory law of the Swiss Confederation and the cantons has precedence over the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement, although different provisions can be specified to the benefit of the employee, provided nothing else is stated in the compulsory law. If, on the other hand, the legal provisions are not mandatory, agreements made between the parties have precedence. Certain mandatory labor law regulations can be amended by collective agreement, but they cannot be amended by an individual employment contract.

Salaries are negotiated either directly between the employer and employee, or within the scope of collective bargaining agreements. Here too, the legislator refrains from strict regulations in accordance with the liberal economic system. This allows a certain amount of room for direct agreements between the social partners.

8.3.1 Individual Employment Contract

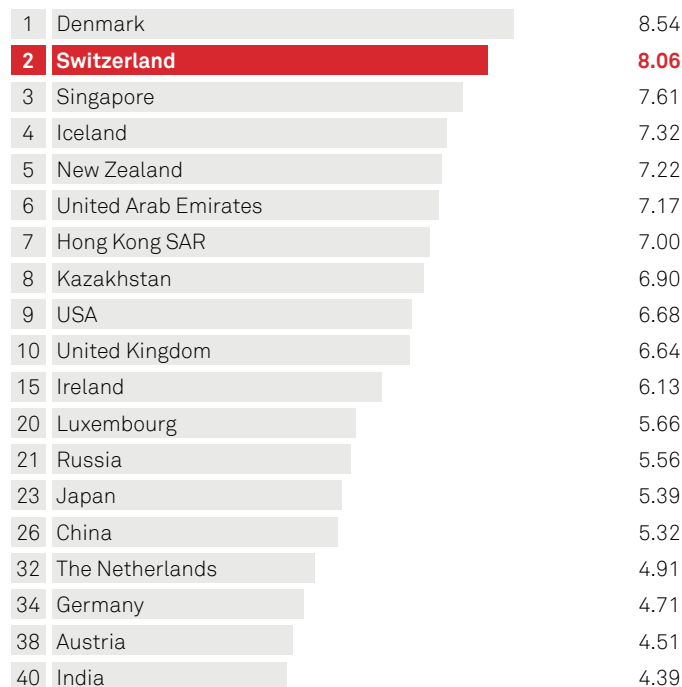
Employers are required to provide employees with the key points of the employment contract in writing by no later than one month after the employee starts work.

In larger companies, it is recommended to have an employee handbook containing the most important employment provisions, as the employment contract itself only contains provisions on wages, the notice period and special terms (e.g. a non-competition clause, overtime, inventions, etc.). Employment contracts and employee handbooks must conform to the mandatory provisions of the Swiss Code of Obligations, labor law, and the provisions of collective bargaining agreements, where applicable. Employee handbooks should not be confused with agreements between the employer and the works council, as practiced in EU countries (and which do not exist in this form in Switzerland). However, industrial companies are required to establish “work rules.” These work rules must state the regulations on occupational health and safety and accident prevention. Employees or their representatives must be consulted before the rules come into force.

Companies may include in the employment contract a non-competition clause both for the duration of the employment with the company and beyond. Through a non-competition clause, the employer prevents employees who leave the company from using special knowledge that they gained while working there in a way that provides competition for their former employer. In practice, demanding requirements are imposed on the wording and enforcement of such clauses. There is no mandatory provision for

Deregulation of the Labor Market, 2017

Hinders entrepreneurial activity 1 = Greatly, 10 = Not at all
(FIG. 31)



Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

“The Swiss labor market is considered one of the world’s most liberal.”

compensating employees for agreeing to such non-competition clauses. Non-competition clauses, for example, must:

- be written
- be clearly defined (location, area, client group); general restrictions do not suffice
- specify the duration; in general no longer than three years
- define real execution, penalties, and their effects.

8.3.2 Collective Bargaining Agreements

Collective bargaining agreements are concluded between employers' and employee associations. By doing so, these parties define the minimum conditions (e.g. minimum salaries, holiday entitlement, working hours, periods of notice, or pension age) that individual employment contracts cannot go below. A collective bargaining agreement is normally agreed for a set term. During the term, both sides have an obligation not to engage in industrial action.

With the declarations of general applicability, the scope of a collective bargaining agreement is extended to all employees and employers in a particular sector. Minimum wages which have been negotiated within the scope of a collective bargaining agreement of this kind have to be observed by all employers. The approximately 600 (2014) non-binding collective bargaining agreements must be observed only if the contractual parties are members of the respective associations. In Switzerland there are 42 generally binding collective bargaining agreements that have been issued by the federal government and 39 issued by the cantons (2016).

If there are differences of opinion between an employer and the workforce, an amicable solution is sought, often internally. This fundamental approach dates back to the 1937 "peace agreement" between Swiss employers and employee organizations. In accordance with the mutual agreement to maintain peace, workers and management seek to resolve conflicts through discussions. Solution-oriented employer-employee relations are the norm in Switzerland (cf. Fig. 32).

www.seco.admin.ch > Arbeit > Personenfreizügigkeit und Arbeitsbeziehungen
 Collective Bargaining Agreements
 Languages: German, French, Italian

8.3.3 Co-Determination and Employee Representation

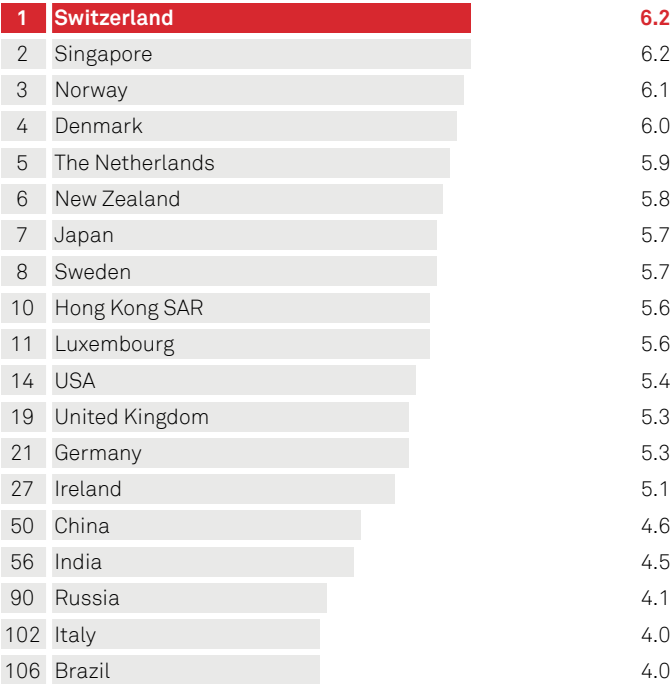
The Co-Determination Act governs the participation of employees in the company and applies to all private companies with employees in Switzerland, regardless of their size. Participation consists mainly of informing and listening to employees. In the areas listed below, the employer must inform employees of all significant circumstances, new developments, and changes. Employees have the right to take their questions and comments to their employer and make suggestions. The act also governs the election of employee representation committees. Employees are entitled to representation in all companies with 50 or more employees. Employers need only inform or consult the employee representative or the affected employees in the following instances:

- In all matters relating to occupational safety and worker protection
- On the transfer of operations
- In the event of mass layoffs
- When joining a professional pension scheme

In addition, the employer must inform the employees at least once a year about the impact the course of business is having on employment and the staff.

Unanimity Among Employers and Employees, 2017

1 = Total confrontation, 7 = Total cooperation
 (FIG. 32)



Sources: WEF, The Global Competitiveness Index 2017 – 2018

Works councils in the EU have far greater powers than employee representation committees under Swiss law. The major difference is that, in contrast to works councils, Swiss employee representation committees are not able to push through their own views or to force a decision. Their rights are limited to being informed, having their views heard, and providing decision-making input.

8.4 WORKING HOURS AND HOLIDAYS

8.4.1 Normal Working Hours, Maximum Working Hours, and Working Time Models

Employment contracts or collective bargaining agreements generally stipulate that normal working hours for employees in Switzerland are 40 to 44 hours per week. The legal maximum working time in Switzerland has remained stable over many decades. The maximum number of working hours per week is 45 hours for industrial companies (this also applies to office staff and technical employees and sales personnel in large retail stores). For commercial operations, the maximum is 50 hours per week. This differentiation between normal and maximum working hours is important for defining overtime and excess hours.

In practice, there are many ways of adapting working hours to the needs of a business: for example, flex-time, the range model, two-shift or multiple-shift operation, or continuous operation (7 x 24 hours x 365 days) are all possibilities. In particular should continuous operation be required, the daily and weekly maximum hours can be extended and break times can be distributed differently.

8.4.2 Overtime and Excess Hours

Overtime is defined as any work undertaken beyond normal working hours and up to the permitted weekly maximum. Employees are obliged to perform such overtime to the extent that they are able to do so and which they may be reasonably expected to perform. By law, overtime must be paid at a premium of 25%. It is possible, however, for the premium to be waived in writing. Instead of overtime pay, employees may be compensated through time in lieu of at least the same duration, provided the employer and employee agree to this. Employees in managerial positions can also be compensated for overtime in general through their normal salary.

If the weekly maximum number of working hours is exceeded, this is referred to as excess hours. Under the Labor Act, excess hours may not exceed two hours per day for an individual employee. In total, excess hours may not exceed 170 hours per year for employees with a weekly maximum working time of 45 hours, or 140 hours for employees with a weekly maximum working time of 50 hours. Unless compensated by time in lieu within a reasonable time-frame, excess hours must be paid at a premium of 25%.

In contrast to many European countries, the consent of the employee representation committee is not necessary in Switzerland for overtime or excess hours. Neither is it necessary to obtain official approval, provided the above limits are not exceeded.

8.4.3 Daytime and Evening Work

Working hours from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. are considered daytime work. Work undertaken between 8:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. constitutes evening work. Daytime and evening work do not require approval. However, evening work may be introduced only after consultation with the employee representation committee or, if there is none, after consultation with the affected employees. This rule allows the introduction of two-shift operation without official approval. The working time of an individual employee, including breaks and excess hours, must not exceed 14 hours.

Daytime, Evening, and Night-time Periods

N = Night-time period, A = Approval required

(FIG. 33)



Sources: State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

“Compared with other countries, Switzerland has highly investor-friendly labor market provisions.”

8.4.4 Night Work, Working on Sundays and Holidays

Approval from the authorities is generally required if night work is needed (apart from companies where special conditions apply). For temporary night work, a premium of 25% must be paid. For permanent or regularly recurring night work, employees are entitled to paid leave of 10% of the time worked during night hours. This leave must be granted within one year. There is no entitlement to compensation in the form of paid leave if the average shift time, including breaks, does not exceed seven hours, or if the person working at night is employed for only four nights per week.

Sunday is defined as the time between 11 p.m. on Saturday and 11 p.m. on Sunday. Except where special regulations apply to certain sectors, approval from the relevant authority is also needed for work on such days. Only one holiday – August 1 (Swiss National Day) – is treated as equivalent to a Sunday throughout the country. The cantons may declare up to eight additional holidays as equivalent to a Sunday. They must be differentiated from the legally recognized public holidays. Although the same rules generally apply to these days as to holidays treated as Sundays, the legal basis for this is defined by the canton or municipality and so may differ in detail from the provisions regarding Sundays.

8.4.5 Leave and Public Holidays

All employees in Switzerland are entitled to at least four weeks' paid leave per year (young people under the age of 20 are entitled to five weeks), at least two of which must be taken consecutively. Part-time employees are also entitled to paid leave in proportion to the percentage of standard hours they work. Leave must be taken, and may not be compensated through payment. There are no further statutory leave entitlements. However, longer entitlements are customary in collective bargaining agreements, and 25 days per year are usually granted to employees over the age of 50. During paid leave, salaries are paid in exactly the same manner as during regular working time. Additional vacation pay, as frequently encountered in tariff agreements in the EU, is unknown in Switzerland.

In addition, employees normally have time off on nine legally stipulated public holidays. As cantons may stipulate their own public holidays, some cantons may have more public holidays. Only August 1, New Year's Day, Ascension Day, and Christmas Day are holidays throughout Switzerland. All other public holidays vary from canton to canton. Employees also receive time off for weddings, funerals, moving, dental appointments, etc. The law does not stipulate how much time may be taken off.

www.feiertagskalender.ch
Calendar of public holidays
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

8.5 TERMINATION AND SHORT-TIME WORK

An employment contract can be terminated in writing or verbally at any time by either party and without valid reason. Under Swiss law, the employee representation committee does not have a say in this type of termination. Only in the case of mass layoffs does the employee representation committee have the right to be consulted by the employees. The employee representation committee must be given an opportunity to submit proposals about how the layoffs can be avoided or the number of layoffs can be limited and how the effects can be alleviated. Essentially, the recipient of the notice of termination has the right to demand that the reason for termination be stated in writing. There is no investigation of whether or not the termination is socially unjustified, i.e. whether the reasons are related to performance or other characteristics of the employee or whether difficult business considerations made the redundancy necessary. An employment contract can be ended through:

- Termination
- Termination due to change of contract (conclusion of a new employment contract with altered conditions)
- Agreement to terminate employment (mutual cancellation of the employment contract)
- Termination on a specific date (for fixed-term contracts)
- Retirement
- Death of the employee

8.5.1 Notice Periods and Termination Protection

In general, the notice period is defined in the employment contract, in the standard employment contract, by the relevant profession or in the collective bargaining agreement. If there is no contract or regulation, then the provisions of the Swiss Code of Obligations apply:

- During the probationary period (max. 3 months): 7 days
- In the first year of service: 1 month
- In the second to ninth year of service: 2 months
- From the tenth year of service onward: 3 months.

The notice period can be changed in writing but may not be shorter than one month (except under a collective bargaining agreement during the first year of service). For employees in managerial positions, notice periods of up to six months are often fixed from the very outset of employment. Unless otherwise agreed, the employment relationship ends after the probationary period at the end of each month. In order for the termination notice to be legally valid, the person to be dismissed must receive it before the notice period begins. In the case of an unconditional summary dismissal, the employee's salary must continue to be paid out until the end of the notice period even though the work performance ends immediately (though not fiduciary duty and other duties).

Termination without notice is only possible under certain restrictive conditions: the continuation of the individual employment relationship may no longer be acceptable (for example fraud, refusal to work, or competition with the employer). In most cases, a warning is required in advance. If there is an important reason, termination without notice must occur immediately (within a few days) or the right is forfeited.

Flexibility in Hiring and Firing, 2017

1 = Obstructed by regulations,
7 = Employers have flexibility to decide

(FIG. 34)

1	Hong Kong SAR	5.8
2	Switzerland	5.6
3	Singapore	5.6
4	United Arab Emirates	5.5
5	USA	5.4
6	Iceland	5.4
7	Denmark	5.2
8	United Kingdom	5.1
18	Germany	4.6
19	India	4.6
24	China	4.5
34	The Netherlands	4.2
44	Ireland	4.1
46	Russia	4.0
75	Luxembourg	3.7
101	Norway	3.4
113	Japan	3.2
127	Italy	2.8
133	France	2.4
136	Brazil	1.8

Sources: WEF, The Global Competitiveness Index 2017 – 2018

It is improper to dismiss an employee on the grounds of their age, skin color, or religion, nor for affiliation with a political party or a union. An abusive termination is valid but can be challenged and may give rise to compensation (a maximum of 6 months' wages at the court's discretion). Employees cannot be fired during certain "blackout periods," which apply to illness, accidents, pregnancy, military service, civil defense, community service, or relief activities abroad. Dismissal in these situations is not valid and is referred to as termination during barred periods.

Compared with other countries, Switzerland has highly investor-friendly labor market conditions. It is relatively easy for companies to hire employees and then dismiss them again to react flexibly to economic change.

8.5.2 Short-Time Work and Mass Layoffs

A company may be forced to take measures to lower staff costs in the event of a deterioration in the order situation or for other reasons. Overcapacity may be alleviated through a temporary reduction in or a complete halt to production. In order to maintain jobs, an employer that applies for short-time work receives 80% of the lost income of his employees through his unemployment insurance for a specific period. This is done to prevent dismissal as a result of a temporary and unavoidable lack of work. However, employees have the right to reject the short-term work compensation and to continue to receive the full salary. By doing so, however, they risk being dismissed, as dismissals are the last resort with which an entrepreneur can respond to fluctuations in the level of

employment. In the case of mass layoffs, the Swiss Code of Obligations (OR Article 335d-335g) requires employers to

- consult and inform their employees, and
- inform the cantonal employment office in writing.

www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch > Employers > Insurance Benefits
Short-time work brochures, forms, and addresses
Languages: German, French, Italian

8.6 SOCIAL INSURANCE

The Swiss social insurance system is based on three coordinated pillars: state-sponsored, employer-sponsored, and personal plans. Personal responsibility is a key factor in this system. As a result, the overall tax and contribution burden remains modest by international standards.

The three pillars of Swiss social security are as follows:

1st Pillar: This first level meets the basic needs of the insured or beneficiary through the government-sponsored, old-age and survivors' pension (OASI), as well as long-term disability insurance (DI). Both are compulsory and funded jointly through contributions (percentage of salary) by the employer, the employee, and taxes.

2nd Pillar: Occupational pension plans (BVG), which supplement the first pillar, enable people to maintain their accustomed standard of living after retirement. All persons working in Switzerland must be insured. The plans are funded through contributions (percentage of salary) by the employer and the employee.

3rd Pillar: Individual, voluntary self-provision of the employed person should cover the further personal needs, above all by saving on bank and insurance costs. The individual provision of the third pillar are partially tax-deductible.

These three pillars of social insurance are supplemented by unemployment insurance, the compensation system for loss of income due to military service or civil protection, maternity benefits, and family allowances, which are governed by cantonal law.

www.bsv.admin.ch
Swiss Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.bsv.admin.ch > Information for > Companies / SMEs
SME counselor for social insurance
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.kmu.admin.ch > Practical Knowledge > Personnel > Human Resource Management
Social insurance for SMEs
Languages: German, French, Italian

Overview of Obligatory Social Insurance Contributions

(FIG. 35)

INSURANCE	EMPLOYEE	EMPLOYER	SELF-EMPLOYED	UNEMPLOYED
Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance (OASI)	4.2% of salary	4.2% of salary	max. 7.8%	Min. 392 CHF Max. 19,600 CHF
Disability Insurance (DI)	0.7% of salary	0.7% of salary	max. 1.4%	Min. 65 CHF Max. 3,250 CHF
Compensation for loss of income and maternity benefits	0.225% of salary	0.225% of salary	max. 0.45%	Min. 21 CHF Max. 1,050 CHF
Occupational accidents	None	0.74% (premium rates according to risk)	Insured through the mandatory health insurance scheme	-
Non-occupational accidents	1.35% (from 8 hours/week)	None	Insured through the mandatory health insurance scheme	-
Health Insurance	per capita	None (voluntary contributions may be possible)	per capita	per capita
Unemployment Insurance	1.1% for portions of income up to CHF 148,200, 0.5% for salary shares over CHF 148,200	1.1% for portions of income up to CHF 148,200, 0.5% for salary shares over CHF 148,200	(non-insurable)	-
Occupational Pension Funds	7.73% (estimated as % of insured salary, max. CHF 842,400) Amount depends on insurance regulations	10.43% (estimated as % of insured salary, max. CHF 842,400) Amount depends on insurance regulations	voluntary	-
Family Allowances	only in the canton of Valais (0.3% of payroll)	0.3%–3.63% of total income (depending on family compensation fund)	0.3%–3.4%	-

Sources: Swiss Federal Social Insurance Office, 2017

8.6.1 Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance

OASI provides old-age benefits (a retirement pension) or benefits to dependents (widows' and orphans' pensions). The benefits depend on the amount of previous income and the amount of time for which contributions were made. OASI insurance is mandatory for everyone who lives or works in Switzerland. All men and women who work in Switzerland are required to contribute, with the employer paying half of the contribution and the employee the other half. The non-active population, such as students, disabled people, pensioners, or housewives that live in Switzerland, also pay a contribution. The insurance is based on the pay-as-you-go process: the current economically active generation finances today's pensioners.

8.6.2 Disability Insurance

The aim of disability insurance is to help integrate or reintegrate persons who are disabled due to birth defects, illness, or accidents into the workforce. A pension is paid only if the person is unable to take up employment or return to his/her job. Contributions are mandatory and levied together with OASI contributions.

8.6.3 Accident Insurance

Accident insurance covers all persons employed in Switzerland against accidents at the workplace, occupational illnesses, and non-occupational accidents. Healthcare and ancillary needs (treatment, required medical aid, travel, and transport costs) and payments (daily benefits allowance, disability pensions, lump-sum compensation, perpetual care benefits, and survivors' benefits) are all covered. The employer funds the premiums for occupational accidents and illness, while the employee pays the premiums for non-occupational accidents. The employer must finance the entire premium amount, but part of this amount is deducted from the employee's salary. The amount is based on the employee's insured salary. The maximum insured salary is 126,000 Swiss francs per year.

www.bag.admin.ch > Topics > Insurance
Swiss Office of Public Health (FOPH) information on accident insurance:
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

8.6.4 Health Insurance and Daily Sickness Insurance

Mandatory health insurance offers cover for illness, pregnancy, and accidents where there is no accident insurance for this. Employees are free to choose their policy. Everyone has the right to basic insurance, regardless of their health or age. In addition, voluntary supplementary policies can be taken out (generally requiring a health check). Premiums are charged per person, not based on income. The amount of the premium depends, amongst other things, on the amount of the division of costs (0-2,500 Swiss francs) of the selected model and the municipality. Employers do not generally make health insurance contributions.

In Switzerland there is no legal obligation for employers to conclude daily sickness insurance for their employees. If group insurance is not arranged for employees, employers are obliged to pay employees their full salary for a certain period (depending on years of service) if they are unable to work through no fault of their own. The same applies to pregnant women who cannot attend work for health reasons.

That is why many employers take out daily sickness insurance for their employees. The costs depend on the scope of coverage (illness, maternity, accident). Maternity benefits as per the Compensation for Loss of Earnings Act have precedence over daily sickness benefits. If at all, daily sickness benefits are paid to supplement maternity benefits, provided there is no over-compensation.

www.bag.admin.ch > Topics > Insurance
Swiss Office of Public Health (FOPH) information on health insurance
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.priminfo.ch
Comparison of health insurance premiums (FOPH)
Languages: German, French, Italian

8.6.5 Compensation for Loss of Income and Maternity Benefits

The Ordinance on Compensation for Loss of Income compensates people who have lost part of their income due to military service or civil defense. The ordinance also covers loss of income during pregnancy (maternity benefits). Insurance is mandatory, and must be paid by everyone who makes OASI contributions (half is met by the employer, half by the employee).

Employed pregnant women receive 80% of their average salary before delivery, up to a maximum of CHF 196 per day, for fourteen weeks. The only conditions are that they had mandatory OASI cover for the nine months immediately before the birth, worked for at least five months during pregnancy, and were still deemed able to work at the time of delivery. It is not possible to dismiss women while they are pregnant or for 16 weeks after delivery. Employed mothers are forbidden from working for up to eight weeks after delivery.

www.bsv.admin.ch > Social Insurances > Income Compensations
Information from the FSIO on compensation for loss of income
Languages: German, French, Italian

8.6.6 Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment insurance (ALV) continues to pay a partial salary upon unemployment for a limited amount of time and promotes the re-entry of the unemployed person into the job market. It is mandatory for employees. All workers who are not self-employed must make contributions. Unemployment insurance is financed equally by the employer and the employees (each pays 1.1%). It is not possible for self-employed persons to insure themselves against unemployment, even voluntarily. In order to receive unemployment benefits, employees must be able to demonstrate payment of at least 12 monthly contributions within the last two years, to prove that they have worked. For EU/EFTA citizens, contributions made in their home country also count if employment that required contributions was carried out in Switzerland after arrival. Another requirement is that the person must be in a position to take up work, which means that he/she is ready, able, and permitted to take on appropriate work and participate in integration measures. Regular application for jobs is mandatory. Compensation generally amounts to 70% of the salary subject to OASI (average of the last six contribution months or, if more advantageous, the last twelve prior to unemployment) or 80% for children requiring support, in the case of disability or for those with income of less than 3,797 Swiss francs. The maximum insured salary is 10,500 Swiss francs a month. As a rule, a maximum of 520 daily allowances may be drawn within a two-year period.

www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch > Unemployed – what now?
Information for the unemployed
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

8.6.7 Occupational Pension Funds

Occupational pension funds serve to ensure that an employee's accustomed standard of living can be maintained after retirement. They are based on the Federal Act on Occupational Pensions, which since 1985 has provided mandatory insurance for all employed persons from the age of 18 (against risks) and from the age of 25 (savings plan). A person must currently earn a minimum of 21,150 Swiss francs to participate (2015). The maximum mandatorily insured salary is 84,600 Swiss francs. The employer contributes at least as high a premium as the employee. Some employers choose to pay more. Premiums can vary between 7% and 18% of income, based on age and sex (the older the person, the higher the premium). The payment of the pension is based on a legally determined conversion rate, which constitutes the statutory minimum (6.8%, conversion rate as of 2014). Pension funds are foundations, cooperatives, or public law institutions that are monitored by cantonal and federal supervisory authorities. Smaller companies often join a collective pension foundation or association.

www.bsv.admin.ch > Social Insurances > Occupational pension funds
Swiss Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO) information on occupational pension funds
Languages: German, French, Italian

8.6.8 Family Allowances

Family allowances partially compensate the costs of raising children. The support, which to date has been limited to just employees, was extended to cover self-employed people on January 1, 2013. In some cantons, entitlement is income-dependent. Normally, people who are not gainfully employed only have a claim if their annual income does not exceed 42,300 Swiss francs. Special regulations apply to agriculture. Only one allowance is available for each child.

Family allowances include child and education allowances, as well as birth and adoption allowances mandated by the individual cantons. All cantons provide the following minimum allowances per child per month:

- A child allowance of 200 francs for children up to the age of 16.
- An education allowance of 250 francs for children between the ages of 16 and 25.

Family allowances are financed almost exclusively by the employer, except in Valais (where they are partially financed by the employee).

www.ch.ch > A-Z > Family allowances
Calculation of family allowances by canton
Languages: German, French, Italian

8.7 RECRUITMENT

There are many options for recruiting external candidates:

1. Ads in newspapers or specialist journals
2. Online ads
3. Contact with universities and colleges
(Internet platforms/trade fairs)
4. External consultants
5. Headhunters
6. Regional employment centers
7. Third parties

Each employer's choice depends on its needs and budget.

8.7.1 Public Employment Service

The regional employment centers (RAV) are public service providers that specialize in advising and placing job-seekers. About 130 RAVs offer employers personal assistance with their recruitment through a personnel consultant. There are many well-qualified job seekers registered with the RAVs who are immediately available for permanent or temporary positions. On request, RAVs can screen applicants according to the employer's criteria, thus making the selection process easier. RAVs can also advertise open positions in the internal job market on its website or on teletext. The employment service website is the largest job exchange in Switzerland. One advantage is that all RAV services are free.

www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch > For Employers
Regional employment agencies
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

8.7.2 Private Employment Agencies

It may be worth using an employment agency to find a highly qualified specialist or manager. These agencies do most of the legwork: designing job ads, planning media use, and selecting applicants. It also makes sense to work with an employment agency if the name of the company is to be kept confidential due to sector-specific or internal reasons. However, this method is expensive, as it may cost one or more months' salary for the position to be filled.

8.7.3 Headhunters

Headhunters, or executive search consultants, act as a bridge between a company's need for highly qualified specialists and managers and the desire of such individuals to find challenging and attractive positions. Headhunters specialize in recruiting through direct contacts and work on a mandate basis. They range from companies specialized in certain industries to large international firms with household names and boutique companies especially suited to generalist tasks, complex jobs, or unconventional solutions. Hiring a headhunter is always beneficial if the usual paths of internal recruitment or ads on websites and in newspapers fail to produce results.

8.7.4 Staffing/Temporary Employment Agencies

Hiring staff for a limited amount of time through temporary employment agencies is useful if there is a temporary surge of orders or if staff need replacing at short notice. An hourly wage is agreed between the agency and the client, which is usually 1.4 to 2 times the normal hourly rate. However, only the hours worked must be paid, and all ancillary costs are included. The agency remunerates temporary staff as their employer and is responsible for all social contributions and insurance. The same labor law protections apply as with "traditional" forms of employment.

Temporary employment agencies require a cantonal license in order to operate. They are also required to set aside a significant deposit to cover the claims of their employees. A federal license and a higher deposit are also required to operate abroad. Hiring staff from abroad is prohibited (except under very strict conditions within the Group).

www.hrswiss.ch
HR Swiss: Swiss Association for Human Resources Management
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.swissstaffing.ch
Employment services trade association
Languages: German, English, French, Italian



FINANCIAL CENTER AND CAPITAL MARKET

9

9.1	Banks	97
9.2	Swiss Stock Market: SIX Swiss Exchange	99
9.3	Business Lending and Real Estate Financing	100
9.4	Risk Capital	101
9.5	Interest and Capital Costs	103
9.6	Inflation	103

Accounting for 9.4% of GDP and employing around 213,000 people (5.6% of the employed population in Switzerland), the Swiss financial sector is of key economic importance. The main areas of expertise are private banking, asset management, and insurance. Switzerland's long tradition of economic and financial stability is reflected in low inflation, low interest rates, and the significant international role that the Swiss franc plays, particularly in the asset management and issue underwriting business.

9.1 BANKS

9.1.1 Structure and General Conditions

In Switzerland there are some 260 banks, 200 insurance companies, and 1,800 pension funds. Apart from the two major global banks, UBS and Credit Suisse, which together hold just under 50% of total assets, the cantonal, regional, and savings banks also play an important role. In addition, there are many smaller financial institutions and private banks, some of which offer highly specialized services such as commodity trade finance. The group of 24 cantonal banks, which are either entirely or partially under state ownership and most of which offer a government guarantee, have a domestic market share of about one third. Their share of the total assets of all Swiss-based banks in 2016 was about 18%. Another 111 foreign-owned banks with a share of 10.4% of the total assets can be added to this number. Switzerland is a center for professional asset management for private clients and institutional investors. With a market share of 24% in 2016, it is the world leader in the cross-border asset management business. Overall, Swiss banks managed assets totaling 6,650.8 billion Swiss francs in 2016.

Switzerland's success as a financial center is due to many different factors. Its political and macroeconomic stability are the basic foundation upon which the trust of clients is built – trust which is so important in the financial business.

Global Financial Centers, 2017

Overall score from 1 to 1,000

(FIG. 36)

1	London	780
2	New York	756
3	Hong Kong SAR	744
4	Singapore	742
5	Tokyo	725
6	Shanghai	711
7	Toronto	710
8	Sydney	707
9	Zurich	704
11	Frankfurt	701
14	Luxembourg	695
15	Geneva	694
26	Paris	680
30	Dublin	672
33	Amsterdam	667
50	Munich	646
57	Brussels	638

Sources: The Global Financial Centres Index (GFCI 22), 2017

The Swiss franc, with its status as an important international reserve and diversification currency, also contributes to this. Strong global integration and an efficient financial infrastructure allow market players to manage assets and risks profitably and diversify them internationally. Switzerland enjoys a good reputation abroad as a financial center, and it is an attractive location for businesses and an international clientele.

www.swissbanking.org
Swiss Bankers Association (SBA)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

9.1.2 Supervision

In comparison with other countries, the regulatory obstacles and burdens in the Swiss banking system are relatively low. A permit is required to open a bank, trade professionally in securities, manage a fund, and in some cases to operate as an asset manager. The Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FINMA), currently supervising over 550 financial institutions, can provide detailed information about specific requirements.

As an independent supervisory authority, FINMA protects financial market clients, namely creditors, investors, and insured persons, thus strengthening public trust in Switzerland as a functioning, reliable, and competitive financial center. In addition, self-regulation has proved itself as an additional form of governance for the Swiss financial market. FINMA is required by the legislature to support self-regulation and to provide it with the necessary space. Corresponding regulations are proposed, for example, by the Swiss Bankers Association and are approved and implemented by FINMA.

All banks operating in Switzerland require a license. The supervisory standards applied in Switzerland not only govern the capital resources and adequacy of the banks but also include the whole range of prudential rules and codes of conduct. As an additional safety cushion, Swiss law specifies higher capital requirements than the Basel Capital Accord (Basel I-III).

www.finma.ch
Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FINMA)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

9.1.3 Services

Banks in Switzerland offer a vast range of financial products and services for both private and corporate clients. As the Swiss banking system is based on the universal bank principle, the banks can offer all banking services, such as:

- Credit or lending business
- Asset management and investment consulting
- Institutional investment business
- Payment transactions
- Deposits (savings accounts, etc.)
- Securities (stock exchange trading)
- Issue and underwriting business (bond underwriting)
- Financial analysis

Despite this, very different groups of banks and areas of specialization have developed.

Generally speaking, any adult may open a bank account in Switzerland. However, the banks reserve the right to refuse to accept a client. For example, a bank may refuse to enter into a business relationship with “politically exposed persons,” as such clients could represent a reputational risk for the bank. The same applies to companies, irrespective of whether they are domiciled in Switzerland. Most Swiss banks do not require a minimum deposit for normal savings or current accounts. Many banks offer accounts in euros, U.S. dollars, or other currencies, in addition to Swiss francs.

If clients have a specific complaint against a bank that is domiciled in Switzerland, they may approach the Swiss Banking Ombudsman, who provides neutral, free information and mediation.

www.ubs.ch
www.credit-suisse.ch
Major banks
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.kantonalbank.ch
Cantonal banks
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.raiffeisen.ch
Raiffeisen banks
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.regionalbanken.ch
Regional and savings banks
Languages: German

www.vav-abg.ch
Association of Swiss Asset and Wealth Management Banks
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.abps.ch
Association of Swiss Private Banks
Languages: German, English, French

www.swissprivatebankers.ch
Association of Swiss Private Banks
Languages: German, English, French

www.foreignbanks.ch
Association of Foreign Banks in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.bankingombudsman.ch
Banking Ombudsman
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

9.1.4 Protection of Deposits

Swiss deposit insurance esisuisse insures customer deposits with banks and securities dealers in Switzerland. If the customer deposits are no longer available as a result of bankruptcy, customers receive up to a maximum of 100,000 Swiss francs of their money from the liquidator. This applies per customer and institute.

Privileged deposits

In the event of bankruptcy, deposits of up to 100,000 Swiss francs per client and financial institution are privileged (in any currency). 'Privilege' in this case means that the deposits are assigned to the second bankruptcy class and thus paid out in liquidation before the claims of the third bankruptcy class. To secure the liquidation, the financial institutions must hold 125% of the privileged deposits in the form of liquid assets in Switzerland.

Secured deposits

esisuisse protects privileged deposits with a Swiss office up to 100,000 Swiss francs per client and financial institution. These deposits thus benefit from priority payout and the protection provided by esisuisse.

Function of deposit insurance (esisuisse)

If FINMA closes a financial institution (bank, securities dealer), the available liquid assets of the financial institution are initially used for the immediate payment of privileged deposits. esisuisse is only activated if the available liquid assets are insufficient to repay the secured customer deposits. esisuisse asks its members (all financial institutions are necessarily members) for the necessary funds via LSV and forwards them within 20 working days to the liquidator commissioned by FINMA. esisuisse provides a maximum of 6 billion Swiss francs. In addition to the liquidity required by law, financial institutions must constantly hold liquid assets amounting to half of their maximum contribution obligations to esisuisse.

www.esisuisse.ch

Deposit Protection of Banks and Securities Dealers
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

9.2 SWISS STOCK MARKET: SIX SWISS EXCHANGE

SIX Swiss Exchange is one of Europe's most important stock exchanges. It has outstanding liquidity in Swiss securities trading and connects companies from around the world with international investors and trading participants.

Switzerland is a very attractive financial center for capital-seeking domestic and foreign companies, as it is well manageable, closely networked, and internationally oriented. It is thus hardly surprising that the financial center of Switzerland boasts an extraordinary number of global corporations, financial service providers and strong investors. This gives SIX Swiss Exchange a natural competitive advantage and gives listed companies access to an experienced and well-capitalized Swiss and international group of investors and high liquidity.

Thanks to its self-regulatory competence, the Swiss Exchange creates market-friendly conditions for the listing and trading of domestic and foreign shares, bonds, ETFs, ETPs, funds, and structured products.

The SIX Swiss Exchange combines the locational advantages of the Swiss financial center with first-class services and is the ideal listing location for companies of all origins, size, and sector affiliation. It sells its own index range, which includes the SMI,* Switzerland's most important stock index.

With the world's most efficient trading technology and a broad selection of connection options and interfaces, SIX Swiss Exchange offers its participants outstanding trading conditions. It maintains a close dialogue with its domestic and foreign customers and works with them to create the optimal environment for its success. It also offers access to a strong global network, which includes the market data provider SIX Exfeed AG and the fund database Swiss Fund Data.

The SIX Swiss Exchange is part of the SIX Group, which offers services in the area of trading and processing as well as financial information and payment transactions.

www.six-swiss-exchange.com

Swiss Stock Market:
Languages: German, English, French

“Switzerland's financial center and the country's appeal as a location make the SIX Swiss Exchange very attractive to domestic and foreign businesses.”

9.3 BUSINESS LENDING AND REAL ESTATE FINANCING

Establishing a business is generally a medium to long-term objective. As a rule, significant up-front investments and project financing are needed. Swiss banks place great emphasis on thorough market analysis and professional management.

9.3.1 Financing of Current Business Activity

To finance current business activities, banks grant various types of short-term loans. These can take the form of unsecured loans or loans secured by collateral. The primary sources of credit for commercial finance are market performance, profitability, prospects, and the quality of the company's leadership. These factors are important for the bank in assessing whether the company can repay the loan. Whether or not the company can provide securities is of secondary importance in the commercial business.

As digitization (Industry 4.0) increasingly compels many companies to shift financing resources away from the acquisition of tangible capital goods and towards a fundamental redesign of their production processes, financing requirements are also changing. Banks are required to properly understand and assess business models and their potential in the digitized world while companies must be able to provide the banks with the relevant information.

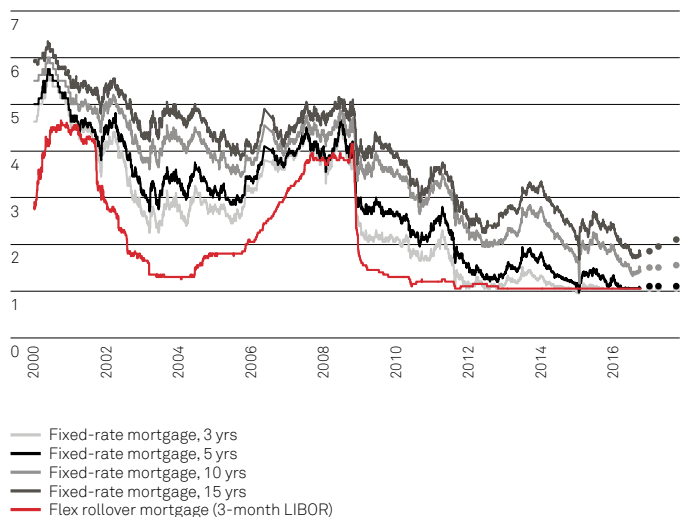
The variety and quality of service providers in Switzerland offer excellent conditions for corporate clients to receive the right financing solution from a wide range of offers. In addition to common products such as operating loans, investment loans, and leasing, special products such as start-up financing, commodity trade finance, convertible loans, guarantees, and equity loans are provided by business angels, venture capital companies, and private equity investors.

In addition, banks provide companies with the full range of derivative instruments (futures and options) that enable companies to selectively manage financial risks (such as interest rate or currency fluctuations).

Mortgage Rates, 2000–2016

Interest rate in %

(FIG. 37)



Sources: Credit Suisse, 2016

“In 2016, venture capital companies invested over 909 million Swiss francs in innovative new companies in Switzerland.”

9.3.2 Mortgages

If the acquisition of real estate or the building of a production facility accompanies the foundation or establishment of a business, mortgages can be an important credit instrument. There are three main types of mortgage in Switzerland: fixed-rate, variable-rate, and money-market mortgages (also called Libor mortgages). While the interest rate for a variable-rate mortgage is continually adjusted to the prevailing capital market rate, the interest rate on a fixed-rate mortgage is typically fixed for one to fifteen years. The interest rate on a money-market mortgage is based on the Libor rate for the euro money market. Providers add a margin on top of this rate, which depends on the creditworthiness of the borrower. Up to 80% of the property's market value may be borrowed; up to 65% of this is taken as a first mortgage, which does not need to be amortized as is usual in other countries; any amount in excess of this is borrowed under a second mortgage, which must be amortized. The bank checks the quality of the property and the creditworthiness of the borrower on the basis of its guidelines. Generally speaking, a minimum requirement is that purchasers should provide at least 20% of the purchase price from their own assets. Secondly, the annual cost of the purchase (interest, repayments, and maintenance) should not total more than one third of the purchaser's gross income. Interest rates are negotiable, so it is worthwhile to request offers from a number of lenders.

For commercial real estate, the collateral value depends increasingly on the earning-power value. For industrial projects, normally 50% of the total plant value (market value or construction cost, including machinery and equipment) can be financed against real estate pledges at very attractive rates. For office and service buildings, the loan-to-value ratio is normally around 70%, but it also depends on the (property-specific) risks. Interest rates and terms generally applied to business investments today depend on the creditworthiness of the company and the rating it is given by the lending bank. Recognition of the risk and of future prospects is therefore crucial.

Owners of residential property must pay federal and cantonal taxes on their property as notional income. The rule of thumb for federal tax is an imputed rental value of at least 70% of average market rental, and for cantonal and communal taxes an imputed rental value of at least 60%. In return, homeowners may deduct mortgage interest and maintenance costs. This is the reason why the first mortgage is rarely ever amortized.

www.hausinfo.ch > Finance & taxes
Financial aspects of home ownership
Languages: German, French

www.hypothekenrechner.ch
Financial feasibility calculator
Language: German

9.4 RISK CAPITAL

In 2016, venture capital companies invested over 909 million Swiss francs in innovative new companies in Switzerland. This represents more than twice the volume of investment since 2012. Alongside the state development programs and loans from business banks, venture capital (VC) is an important pillar of innovation in Switzerland with between 80 to 150 transactions per annum. The federal authorities also support the creation of venture capital through the Federal Act on Venture Capital Companies (RKG), which provides two tax incentives:

- Recognized venture capital companies are exempt from securities issue tax on their capital at the time the company is founded, or for any subsequent capital increase. With respect to direct federal tax, they also have a lower threshold value for claiming the equity participation deduction.
- Private individuals who assist in the foundation and development of new companies as business angels are entitled to relief from direct federal tax if they grant subordinated loans for the formation of start-up companies from their private assets.

The availability of venture capital and similar financing may fluctuate and therefore lacks transparency. Universities, consultants, and the business community jointly provide a number of platforms, some of them online, to bring entrepreneurs and investors together.

www.startupticker.ch > Assets > Swiss Venture Capital Report
Online platform for start-ups
Language: English

www.seca.ch
Swiss Private Equity & Corporate Finance Association (SECA)
Languages: German, English, French

9.4.1 Venture Capital

Some financial companies specialize in providing risk capital or venture capital. Venture capital companies contribute to the share capital of a company, with the aim of making large profits if it flourishes or goes public. They provide financial resources without requiring the traditional forms of security. Only fast-growing young companies which are likely to generate significant revenue in a short period of time and have sales potential and a capital requirement of several million Swiss francs are normally considered for this kind of financing. Venture capitalists consider themselves to be guides during the development phase of the financing project. After their job is done, they withdraw and sell their investment to the company founder or other investors.

www.kmu.admin.ch > Practical knowledge > financial > financing
Overview of financing sources
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.swiss-venture-club.ch
Information platform, network for businesses
Languages: German, French, Italian

State Support Schemes

(FIG. 38)

INSTRUMENT	BENEFICIARY	REGIONS	MEASURES
New Regional Policy NRP	Industry, production-related services	Economic regeneration areas	Tax relief in respect of direct federal tax
Commercial guarantees	SMEs, commercial undertakings	All of Switzerland	Bank loan guarantees (max. 500,000 CHF)
Guarantees for mountain regions	SMEs, commercial undertakings	Mountain regions	Bank loan guarantees (max. 500,000 CHF) Interest cost subsidies
Hotel credit	Hotel industry	Tourist and mountain regions	Direct loans Guarantees Interest cost subsidies (partial)
Measures to support independent professional activities	Unemployed	All of Switzerland	Daily allowances (max. 90 days for planning phase) Bank loan guarantees (max. 500,000 CHF)
Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI)	Projects for research collaboration at universities and businesses	All of Switzerland	Payment of researchers' salaries

Sources: various federal government agencies, information collated by Generis 2014

9.4.2 Business Angels

During their start-up phase, many promising young companies need seed financing of less than 2 million Swiss francs. Although risk capital is increasingly available these days, the minimum size of financing transactions has risen correspondingly for both risk capital providers and investment companies. Very few professional risk capital providers consider financing deals of less than 2 million Swiss francs. More and more often it is so-called “business angels” – individual investors – who finance start-ups. Typically, business angels have experience and connections in addition to capital that they have ideally acquired as an entrepreneur, which is why they are often also consultants and mentors to young entrepreneurs. Business angels generally invest twice or even three times over in the companies: they invest their capital, experience, and time, which gives young entrepreneurs their “smart money.” Essentially business angels also follow clear return prospects just like venture capital investors. The aim is to start, develop, and establish new companies and to ultimately make them attractive for future investors. Consequently, young entrepreneurs are usually closely supported by business angels, who also demand corresponding access to the business plans.

www.businessangels.ch
Business Angels Switzerland (BAS)
Languages: German, French

9.4.3 State Support

Although there is relatively little direct financial assistance available in Switzerland, where the state mainly restricts itself to creating favorable operating conditions, the country does offer a wide variety of tools to support companies, ranging from administrative assistance and tax relief to guarantees.

The cantonal economic development agencies (see Annex page 154f) also tend not to take direct stakes in companies, although they can offer assistance in finding affordable construction sites or can provide tax relief during the start-up phase or during a planned expansion.

One rare exception is the Swiss Federal Foundation for the Promotion of the Swiss Economy (Eidgenössische Stiftung zur Förderung schweizerischer Volkswirtschaft), which grants interest-free loans and, in exceptional cases, may also provide a share of the risk capital subject to a personal financial commitment on the part of the company founder.

www.kmu.admin.ch > Practical knowledge > financial > financing
State support on financing
Languages: German, French, Italian

9.5 INTEREST AND CAPITAL COSTS

Switzerland is one of the most economically and politically stable countries in the world and is regarded as a “safe haven” (Fig. 39). The country is in a healthy financial situation. This applies to the finances of the central state – at the federal level – as well as the cantons and municipalities. The public balance in Switzerland was positive at 2.2 billion Swiss francs (0.3% of GDP) in 2016. By contrast, the euro area and the OECD member states had a negative reference value (-1.6% and -3%, respectively). The Maastricht government debt-to-GDP ratio fell below 40% of GDP in 2006 and has since been further reduced thanks to the debt brake. In 2016 it remained at 29.2%.

Credit Rating: Top Ten Most Secure Countries, 2016

Maximum = 100 points

(FIG. 39)

1	Norway	88.64
2	Switzerland	87.92
3	Singapore	86.62
4	Luxembourg	84.61
5	The Netherlands	84.60
6	Denmark	84.30
7	Sweden	83.77
8	Canada	82.26
9	Germany	82.23
10	Australia	81.15

Sources: Euromoney, September 2016

Switzerland's high credit standing, together with its high savings rate, leads to large amounts of foreign funds and therefore to low interest rates when compared to other countries. Business and investment activities can thus be financed relatively inexpensively. In recent years, the average difference in money and capital market rates between Swiss francs and euros has been between 1.5 and 2%. The IMD management institute in Lausanne also highlights the positive effect of capital costs on economic development, with Switzerland coming out in first place in its ranking (Fig. 40).

www.liik.bfs.admin.ch
National Consumer Price Index (CPI)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.efv.admin.ch
Federal Finance Administration (EFV)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

9.6 INFLATION

Switzerland has always lived up to its reputation as a stable country. The rate of inflation, as measured using the Swiss consumer price index, has consistently remained well below those of the EU and the major industrialized nations. While it has remained in negative territory for years, it has been moving at rates of 0.5% since the beginning of 2017.

Capital Costs, 2017

1 = hinders economic development

10 = promotes economic development

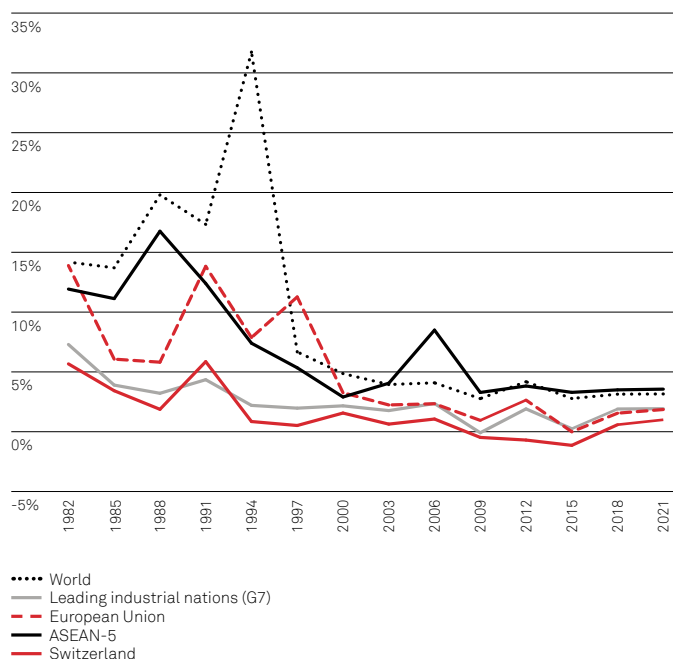
(FIG. 40)

1	Switzerland	7.68
2	Hong Kong SAR	7.28
3	Germany	7.24
4	The Netherlands	7.18
5	Sweden	7.15
6	USA	7.14
8	Singapore	6.96
9	Luxembourg	6.95
18	United Kingdom	6.54
20	Belgium	6.47
21	Ireland	6.47
23	Japan	6.43
33	France	5.75
35	Italy	5.44
48	India	4.29
52	China	3.82
60	Russia	2.49
63	Brazil	1.60

Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

Inflation, 2016

(FIG. 41)



Sources: IMF WEO Report, April 2016



OVERVIEW OF THE SWISS TAX SYSTEM

10

- 10.1 Taxation of Corporate Taxpayers..... 105
- 10.2 Tax Charge Rate in International Comparison..... 108
- 10.3 Taxation of Individual Taxpayers 109
- 10.4 Withholding Tax..... 112
- 10.5 Value Added Tax..... 113
- 10.6 Other Taxes..... 116
- 10.7 Double Tax Treaties..... 117
- 10.8 Tax Proposal 17 117
- 10.9 Transfer Pricing Rules..... 117

The Swiss tax system mirrors Switzerland's federal structure, which consists of 26 sovereign cantons with 2,222 independent municipalities. Based on the constitution, all cantons have full right of taxation except for those taxes that are exclusively reserved for the federal government. As a consequence, Switzerland has two levels of taxation: the federal and the cantonal/communal level. The reform of the income tax system implemented in recent years provided for harmonization of the formal aspects of the various cantonal tax laws, for example, determination of taxable income, deductions, tax periods, and assessment procedures. The cantons and municipalities still have significant autonomy for the quantitative aspects of taxation, however, particularly with respect to determining the applicable tax rates. Consequently, the tax burden varies considerably between cantons/municipalities.

10.1 TAXATION OF CORPORATE TAXPAYERS

10.1.1 Corporate Income Tax – Federal Level

The Swiss federal government levies corporate income tax at a flat rate of 8.5% on profit after tax of corporations and cooperatives. For associations, foundations, and other legal entities as well as investment trusts, a flat rate of 4.25% applies. At the federal level, no capital tax is levied.

Taxable Persons

Taxable persons include Swiss resident legal entities, i.e., Swiss corporations, limited liability companies, and corporations with unlimited partners, cooperatives, foundations, and investment trusts with direct ownership of immovable property. As partnerships are transparent for tax purposes, the partners are taxed individually. Companies which have their registered office or place of effective management in Switzerland are considered resident.

Taxable Income

Resident companies are subject to corporate income tax on their worldwide income with the exception of income attributable to foreign permanent establishments or foreign real estate (immovable property). Such income is excluded from the Swiss tax base and is only taken into account for rate progression purposes in cantons that still apply progressive tax rates.

Non-resident companies are subject to tax only on Swiss source income, i.e., income and capital gains derived from Swiss business, permanent establishments, or immovable property, whereas income from immovable property includes income from trading in immovable property.

As a matter of principle, the legally prescribed/statutory accounts of a Swiss company and – in the case of a foreign company the branch accounts – form the basis for determining taxable income. Apart from the indirect participation exemption for shareholdings (dividend and capital gains income), various adjustments required by tax law and the use of existing loss carryforwards (the loss carryforward period can be seven years), there are very few differences between statutory profit and taxable profit. Besides personnel expenses and expenses for merchandise, the most common allowable tax deductions are amortization and depreciation, tax expense, interest expenses, and management remuneration, as well as service fees/royalties. However, these expenses may only be deducted if they meet the requirements of the arm's length principle.

“Switzerland offers a modern tax system geared to the needs of business and the economy.”

Thin Capitalization Rules

The Swiss Federal Tax Administration has issued safe harbor rules for thin capitalization purposes that apply to related party debt. Third-party financing is not affected by these rules. Specifically, a unique asset-based test is used to determine whether a company is adequately financed. The thin capitalization rules require that each asset class must be underpinned by a certain minimum equity portion (generally expressed as a prescribed percent of the fair market value but often the lower book values suffice).

Related-party debt exceeding the allowable debt as calculated according to the percentages provided from the Tax Administration is classified as equity and added back to the taxable capital for purposes of the cantonal/communal annual capital tax, unless it can be proven that in this particular case the debt terms applied meet the requirements of the arm's length principle and are therefore appropriate. Moreover, the allowable interest deductibility on debt is determined by multiplying the allowable debt by the safe harbor interest rates. If interest payments to related parties exceed the amount which can be paid based on the allowable debt, they are added back to taxable profit if market-related prices cannot be proven on an arm's length comparison. In addition, such excessive interest payments are regarded as hidden dividend payments, which are subject to withholding tax.

Group Taxation

Separate entity taxation applies in Switzerland for income tax purposes. It is not anticipated that group taxation will be introduced anytime in the near future.

Group Reorganizations

Group reorganizations are governed by the Swiss merger law, which also comprises individual tax standards alongside the legal standards as a supplement to the applicable tax laws.

Provided certain prerequisites are met, reorganizations are possible on a tax-neutral basis, as long as the applicable tax accounting values of assets and liabilities remain unaltered and the assets remain in Switzerland.

10.1.2 Corporate income tax – Cantonal and Municipal Level

Given the tax harmonization at the cantonal/municipal level, most tax rules are identical or very similar to the rules on the federal level set out above (e.g. participation exemption, loss carryforward rules and, in most cases, thin capitalization rules).

Overview of ordinary profit tax rates

Combined effective income tax rates (for direct federal and for cantonal and local taxes) for properly taxed companies in 2017 were between 12.43% and 24.16%, depending on the canton and municipality.

Special Tax Regimes

In contrast to the Swiss federal tax law, all cantonal tax laws provide special tax regimes, in addition to the direct federal tax, which may be obtained provided that the legal conditions of the tax harmonization law are met. Tax proposal 17 will replace the special tax regimes set out below with new measures aimed at underpinning and increasing Switzerland's attractiveness as a location (see section 10.8).

www.s-ges.com/corporate-taxation

Facts and figures on Corporate Taxation in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

A) Holding Company

The holding company tax status is available to Swiss companies (or permanent establishments of a foreign company) whose primary purpose according to the by-laws is to hold and manage long-term equity investments in affiliated companies. Furthermore, either the participations or participation income (dividends or capital gains) must represent at least two thirds of the company's total assets or income over the long term.

A holding company which meets one of these requirements is exempt from all cantonal/communal income taxes, with the exception of income from Swiss real estate. As a matter of principle, the effective tax rate of a holding company is 7.83% (i.e., direct federal income tax rate) prior to participation relief for qualifying dividends and capital gains. A reduced capital tax on cantonal/communal tax level applies.

B) Mixed Trading Company

This has been given different names by the cantons, however in an international context, this tax status is most often referred to as the “mixed (trading) company” tax status.

A mixed company may be engaged in limited commercial business activity in Switzerland. As a general rule, at least 80% of the income from commercial activities must derive from non-Swiss sources (i.e., a maximum of 20% of income may be linked to Swiss sources). Many cantons additionally require that at least 80% of costs must be related to activities undertaken abroad.

If a company meets the above criteria, it may apply for tax treatment in accordance with the following rules:

- Qualifying income from participations (including dividends, capital gains, and revaluation gains) is exempt for cantonal and communal tax purposes.
- Other income from Swiss sources is taxed at the normal rate.
- A portion of foreign source income is subject to cantonal/municipal income taxes depending on the degree of business activity carried out in Switzerland.
- Expenditure that is justified for business purposes and is related economically to certain income and revenues is deductible. In particular, losses from participations can only be offset against taxable income from participations (i.e., income that is not obtained tax-free).
- Reduced capital tax rates are applicable.

10.1.3 Capital Tax

Annual capital tax is only levied at cantonal/communal level. The basis for the calculation of capital tax is in principle the company’s net equity (i.e. share capital, paid-in surplus, legal reserves, other reserves, retained earnings). The taxable base of companies also includes any provisions disallowed as deductions for tax purposes, any other undisclosed reserves, as well as debt that economically has the character of equity under the Swiss thin capitalization rules. Some cantons even provide for crediting the cantonal corporate income tax against capital tax.

The tax rates vary from canton to canton and depend on the tax status of the company. In 2017, this ranged from 0.0010% to 0.5250% for companies subject to ordinary taxation, and from 0.0010% to 0.4007% for companies eligible for a special tax regime.

10.1.4 Tax Relief

Tax relief can be granted at cantonal and communal level and in explicitly defined regions at federal level for qualified new investments for up to 10 years.

Federal Level

The federal government has defined economically weaker regional community centers and regions which are entitled to grant business incentives including partial or full corporate income tax breaks for up to 10 years (see section 14.2.2).

Tax breaks are provided for investment projects that meet certain requirements. Besides the creation of new production-related workplaces or investing, these also include conditions, for instance, that a competitive situation among existing companies should not arise.

Cantonal and Municipal Level

Most cantons offer partial or full tax breaks for cantonal/communal tax purposes for up to 10 years on a case-by-case basis. In particular, incentives may be obtained for creating a new presence or for an expansion project with particular economic relevance for the canton. Most importantly, however, business incentives are generally granted in connection with the creation of new jobs locally, i.e. requirement of at least 10 to 20 new jobs in most cantons.

10.2 TAX CHARGE RATE IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

The international comparison of the total tax rate shows that Switzerland has a tax system which is consistently extremely competitive compared with other highly developed industrial countries. The total tax rate measures the amount of all taxes and mandatory contributions borne by the business and is expressed as a percentage of commercial profits. The total amount of taxes borne is the sum of all the different taxes and contributions payable after accounting for deductions and exemptions.

The taxes and contributions included can be divided into the following categories:

- profit or corporate income tax
- social contributions and labor taxes paid by the employer (for which all mandatory contributions are included, even if paid to a private entity such as a pension fund)
- property taxes
- sales taxes (and cascading sales taxes as well as other consumption taxes such as irrecoverable VAT)
- other taxes (such as municipal fees and vehicle and fuel taxes)

It should further be noted that the Swiss tax system is not only attractive for corporate taxpayers but also for individual taxpayers as it provides for a modest tax burden in international comparison as well.

Total Tax Rate, 2016
(% profit)
(FIG. 42)



Sources: PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2017

10.3 TAXATION OF INDIVIDUAL TAXPAYERS

10.3.1 Personal Income Tax

Taxable Persons

Individuals are subject to taxation on federal and cantonal/communal levels if they have their permanent or temporary residence in Switzerland. Temporary residence is given provided the individual, regardless of any temporary interruptions, stays in Switzerland for a) at least 30 days carrying out a professional activity or b) for 90 days or more without pursuing any professional activity. According to the Swiss tax system, partnerships are transparent; hence each partner is taxed individually.

The income of married couples is aggregated and taxed according to the principle of family taxation. The same applies to any registered civil partnerships. Income of minor children is added to that of the adults. An exception is income earned by minors that is subject to a separate tax.

The federal as well as cantonal/communal income taxes are levied and collected by the cantonal tax authorities and are assessed for a period of one year (calendar year) on the basis of a tax return to be filed by the taxpayer.

Individuals who do not set up a place of residency in Switzerland are only obliged to pay tax on their income in Switzerland.

Taxable Income

Resident individuals are subject to tax on their worldwide income. However, revenues derived from business conducted abroad, from permanent establishments, and from immovable property situated abroad are exempt and are taken into account only for the determination of the applicable tax rate (exemption with progression). The total income includes income derived through gainful activities, both as an employee and when self-employed, income from compensatory or subsidiary payments, and income from movable and immovable property. Taxable income also includes the notional rent value of property that the resident lives in.

Certain types of income such as inheritance, gifts, matrimonial property rights, subsidies paid from private or public sources, etc. are by law excluded from income tax, however, they could be subject to other taxes such as gift tax or inheritance tax (see Chapter 10.3.6). Moreover, individuals may deduct earning costs from gross income including, for example, travel costs between home and their place of work, social security contributions, and contributions to approved savings plans. Additional deductions may be claimed for dependent children and insurance premiums as well as for married couples (single and double income couples). However, the extent of deductions allowed may vary greatly from canton to canton. In addition, interest payments on loans, mortgages, etc. for business purposes are fully deductible. The deductibility of interest for private purposes related to private assets is, however, limited to an aggregate income from movable and immovable assets plus 50,000 Swiss francs. Furthermore, value-preserving property expenses can be deducted, or an all-inclusive deduction can be applied instead.

Individual tax rates are typically progressive, whereas a maximum tax rate of 11.5% applies at the federal level. The cantons may set their own tax rates. The applicable cantonal tax rates therefore vary significantly from canton to canton (around 11.4% to 33.5% in cantonal capitals). A special family rate was introduced for the 2011 fiscal year at the federal level. This is based on the rate for married couples, but provides for an additional tax deduction per child.

Capital Gains

Depending on whether a capital gain is realized on personal or business property or on movable or immovable property, such gain is taxed differently. Gains on movable personal property are exempt from taxation whereas gains realized on movable business property are attributed to ordinary income.

Losses

Contrary to personal losses, business losses are tax deductible and may be carried forward for seven years if they cannot be offset against the taxpayer's other taxable income in the respective tax period.

Distribution of Capital Contributions

Since January 1, 2011, the distribution of qualified capital contributions is tax free. They are subject to neither withholding tax (chapter 10.4) nor income tax on the part of the receiving individual. While this already applied to the repayment of share capital prior to January 1, 2011, it now also applies to repayments on investments, premiums, and assignments of joint stock companies made after December 31, 1996, as tax-free distributions.

Tax at Source

Foreign employees who do not possess a residence permit are taxed for their earned income by a tax deduction at source. If the source-taxed income exceeds 120,000 Swiss francs (500,000 Swiss francs in Geneva) per annum, a tax declaration has to be submitted. In other cases, the tax at source is definitive. The employee can, however, assert a special deduction in a separate process.

Employees who have retained their residence abroad are taxed on their earned income at the source, regardless of their nationality, and in general cannot submit a tax declaration in Switzerland for their earned income.

The legislation governing tax at source is in the process of being revised. There are plans for a reduction in the income threshold for a tax declaration. The issues being looked at primarily involve questions of procedure, in particular as regards persons who have no residence in Switzerland but have almost exclusively income from Swiss sources.

10.3.2 Wealth Tax

Net wealth tax is only levied at the cantonal/communal level in accordance with the respective cantonal tax laws and rates. The tax is based on the balance of the gross assets including but not limited to immovable property, movable assets such as securities and bank deposits, (cash) redemption value of life insurance, cars, shares of non-distributed inheritances, etc. Shareholdings in foreign businesses and plants are not subject to wealth tax, nor are properties abroad. These assets are, however, taken into account for the calculation of the applicable wealth tax rate, if it is a progressive rate (tax exemption with progression). Individuals can deduct debts from the gross assets, as well as tax exemptions, which vary from canton to canton and according to marital status and whether the person in question has children.

The wealth tax is progressive in most cantons, whereby the cantons can set their own tax rates. The maximum tax burden therefore varies considerably and ranges from 0.11% to 1%. The federal government does not charge wealth tax.

10.3.3 Expatriates

Qualifying expatriates are foreign managers and certain specialists (e.g. IT specialists) seconded to Switzerland on a temporary basis for a period of up to five years, i.e. the (secondment) contract may only be limited in time for a maximum of five years. Expatriates may claim tax relief on work-related expenses incurred due to their stay in Switzerland.

The following expenses incurred by expatriates are deductible:

1) relocation costs including travel costs to and from Switzerland, 2) reasonable accommodation costs in Switzerland if the residence abroad is still maintained, 3) costs for children of school-going age attending a private school provided that residence is in Switzerland and if local state-funded schools cannot offer adequate educational provisions in their language. Instead of identifying the actual costs for relocation and accommodation, the taxpayer may claim a monthly lump-sum deduction which may vary from canton to canton. Any reimbursement from the employer of work-related costs incurred by the expatriate must be declared in the employee's payslip.

The entitlement to benefit from expatriate status for tax purposes ceases once temporary employment is replaced or superseded by a permanent position.

The federal government revised its Expatriates Ordinance. The changes envisage a restriction with regard to the group of entitled persons and more stringent requirements for the application of deductions.

10.3.4 Cross-Border Commuters

Cross-border commuters are those people who live abroad (e.g. in Germany, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, and Austria) and work in Switzerland and who commute from home to work and back each day.

The Swiss taxation of such individuals differs, depending on their place of work and domicile (home country/country of residence). The double tax treaty with Germany, for example, provides for an apportionment of the taxation rights between the two countries. The country of work is limited to a flat-rate withholding tax of 4.5% of the gross salary of the cross-border commuter. Such partial taxation of cross-border commuters in the country of work does not relieve the commuter from taxation of the earned income at the place of residence (e.g. taxation with credit). The cross-border commuter status is abandoned if the employee cannot return to his/her domicile abroad on more than 60 working days per year for business reasons. Cantonal agreements vary for cross-border commuters from France.

10.3.5 Lump-Sum Taxation

Both federal and most cantonal tax regulations provide for the possibility to make use of a special tax arrangement often referred to as lump-sum taxation. Under this, qualifying taxpayers resident in Switzerland are taxed on the basis of expenditure and living costs in Switzerland (instead of on the more customary basis of total income and total assets).

Qualifying taxpayers who may apply for lump-sum taxation are individuals who do not have a right to Swiss citizenship who take up temporary or permanent residence in Switzerland for the first time or after an absence of at least ten years and who do not carry out any gainful occupation in Switzerland. The lump-sum taxation provisions are tailored to financially independent persons who are not seeking to work in Switzerland.

In case of spouses moving to Switzerland, the requirements for benefiting from lump-sum taxation must be satisfied by both spouses. As a rule, it is not possible for one spouse to be taxed on a lump-sum basis while the other spouse is taxed on an ordinary basis.

The basis of taxation is calculated annually on the expenses incurred by the taxpayer in Switzerland and abroad. The calculation not only considers the expenses of the taxpayer but also those of the spouse and dependent children as long as they live in Switzerland. Expenses usually taken into account are food, clothing and accommodation, education, leisure activities, and all other expenses linked with the standard of living. The exact calculation is determined together with the relevant tax authorities of the canton in which the person wishes to become a resident. In any case, the measurement base must correspond either with a) at least seven times the rent paid on rental property or the rental value of the taxpayer's property if he lives in his own house or apartment or b) three times the annual costs of lodging if the taxpayer lives in a hotel or similar accommodation. If the taxpayer owns or rents more than one property, the most expensive will be taken into account. A minimum taxable income of 400,000 Swiss francs applies for direct federal tax from January 1, 2016.

Generally, individuals who apply for lump-sum taxation are considered Swiss residents and may also apply for treaty relief on their foreign-source income. Some double taxation treaties, however, allow for treaty benefits only if all income from the source country is subject to ordinary taxation in Switzerland. The abolition of lump-sum taxation continues to be the subject of political debate. Lump-sum taxation remains an option in the following cantons: Aargau, Appenzell Inner Rhodes, Bern, Friborg, Geneva, Glarus, Grisons, Jura, Lucerne, Neuchâtel, Nidwalden, Obwalden, St. Gallen, Solothurn, Schwyz, Thurgau, Ticino, Uri, Vaud, Valais, and Zug.

10.3.6 Inheritance and Gift Tax

Inheritance and gift taxes are not harmonized. Consequently, the cantons are free to levy such tax and the various cantonal laws differ considerably in almost every respect. With the exception of the canton of Schwyz, all cantons levy inheritance and/or gift taxes for certain asset transfers if the deceased or donor had been resident of the respective canton or if real estate located in the canton is transferred.

Inheritance and gift tax rates are mostly progressive and are usually based on the degree of relationship between the deceased or donor and the beneficiary and/or the amount received by the beneficiary. In all cantons, spouses are exempt from inheritance and gift taxes; most cantons also exempt direct descendants.

10.4 WITHHOLDING TAX

A federal withholding tax is levied at source on the gross amount of dividend distributions by Swiss companies, on income from bonds and similar indebtedness by Swiss issuers, as well as on certain distributions of income by Swiss investment funds, and interest payments on deposits with Swiss banking establishments.

Since the capital contribution principle came into effect on January 1, 2011, repayments of capital contributions made by the shareholder after December 31, 1996, and declared and accounted for correctly are now treated the same as repayments of nominal capital. With regard to withholding tax, these repayments are in general tax-free. The repayment of capital contributions for individuals (if shares are held as private assets) now no longer represents taxable income (see chapter 10.3.1).

Lottery winnings are also subject to withholding tax (money won in excess of 1,000 Swiss francs, valid from 2013), as are insurance benefits.

Generally, the debtor is liable for the tax and is required to withhold the amount due, irrespective of whether the recipient is entitled to a full or partial refund. A refund is only possible provided that the respective earnings are properly declared for the purposes of income taxation. The aim is to prevent tax evasion. For Swiss resident corporate taxpayers, withholding tax is reimbursed by way of a refund, whereas for individuals the tax is credited against total tax liability through the regular taxation procedure.

For non-resident taxpayers, the withholding tax generally represents a final tax burden. However, a partial or total refund may be granted based on an international double tax treaty or a bilateral agreement concluded by Switzerland with the country in which the recipient of the earnings is residing.

It should further be noted that a reporting procedure may be applied for certain qualifying dividend distributions, replacing the withholding and refund procedure.

10.4.1 Domestic Rates

The tax rate applied on dividend distributions including deemed profit distributions and interest payments relating to bonds and bond-like debt instruments as well as on interest payments made by banks or bank-like institutions to non-banks is 35%. There is no withholding tax on interest payments relating to qualifying ordinary company loan agreements. Provided that royalties, licenses, and service and similar fees payable by Swiss individuals or corporations are at arm's length, no withholding tax is levied.

10.4.2 Treaty Rates

Most double taxation treaties provide for a reduction of the normal 35% rate on dividends. The reduced rate is usually 15% for portfolio investors and 0%, 5%, or 10% for substantial corporate owners. Some treaties require the taxation of Swiss-source income in the recipient's country of residence. Otherwise no relief will be granted. With regard to interest income, most treaties allow for a reduction as well, typically up to 10%. In some treaties a full refund is granted.

However, a reduction is only possible if the person applying for treaty benefits is actually entitled to claim the treaty.

“Thanks to a number of double taxation treaties and bilateral agreements, taxpayers resident outside of Switzerland can be reimbursed for all or part of their withholding tax.”

10.4.3 Bilateral Agreements with the EU

In May 2004, Switzerland and the European Union (EU) concluded eight bilateral agreements (“Bilateral Agreements II”) in addition to the seven existing bilateral agreements (“Bilateral Agreements I,” in force since June 1, 2002).

One of the agreements is the Savings Tax Agreement providing for measures equivalent to those laid down in the EU Savings Tax Directive. To entice Switzerland to enter into the Savings Tax Agreement, the same agreement also incorporated language that was practically identical to the version of the EU Parent/Subsidiary Directive and the EU Interest/Royalty Directive in effect at that time.

Accordingly, dividend, royalty, and interest payments between Switzerland and the member states of the EU will not be subject to withholding tax, provided various conditions such as minimum shareholding and holding period are fulfilled.

As of 2017/18, the Savings Tax Agreement will now be replaced by the new Global Standard for Automatic Exchange of Information (AIA), which covers not only interest income but all types of capital gains and also trusts and foundations (AIA Agreement). The withholding tax exemption of cross-border payments of dividends, interest, and royalties between affiliated companies enshrined in the Savings Tax Agreement will continue to apply.

In general, the bilateral agreements, including the AIA Agreement, also apply to new EU member states joining the EU after July 1, 2005 (e.g. Bulgaria, Romania).

The application of the above mentioned benefits from the AIA Agreement can be denied in cases of abuse or fraud. This is because of the explicit reservation made in the AIA Agreement as to the use of domestic or agreement-based provisions for the prevention of fraud or abuse, both by Switzerland and by the individual EU member states.

Double tax treaties between Switzerland and EU member states with more favorable tax treatment of dividend, interest, and royalty payments remain unaffected.

10.5 VALUE ADDED TAX

Although Switzerland is not an EU member state, its value-added tax (VAT) system was structured in accordance with the sixth EU VAT Directive (“Sixth Council Directive on the harmonization of the laws of the Member States relating to turnover taxes” whereby turnover refers to revenue) as a non-cumulative, multi-stage tax that provides for deduction of input tax. As a result, Swiss VAT is levied as an indirect tax on most goods and services at the federal level only and applies to each stage of the production and distribution chain. It is designed as a tax owed by the supplier of goods or services (i.e., the tax liability is based on the payment made by the recipient of the goods or services).

10.5.1 Taxable Persons

Any legal entity, establishment, partnership or association without legal capacity, institution, etc. that operates an enterprise (obtains revenues through business or professional activity for a long period of time, regardless of whether there is an intention to make money) is liable for tax. There is a registration obligation if global taxable turnover exceeds 100,000 Swiss francs per year. All permanent domestic establishments of a Swiss parent company form one taxable entity together with the parent company. All domestic establishments of a foreign parent company are also classed as one taxable entity. On the other hand, the domestic establishments and the foreign parent company are each considered a separate taxable entity. A VAT obligation (without mandatory registration) also does not apply to taxable recipients in Switzerland if, in a calendar year, they render services not exceeding 10,000 Swiss francs to companies domiciled abroad that are not entered in the taxpayer register and provided that the service takes place in Switzerland according to the “place of supply is where the recipient is established” principle.

If the revenues of a taxpayer (turnover from taxable supplies of goods and services) are less than 100,000 Swiss francs per year (or less than 150,000 Swiss francs for sports clubs and non-profit institutions), then the entity is exempt from tax liability. However, any such entity may also waive exemption from tax liability. Upon registration with the Federal Tax Administration, the taxpayer receives a VAT number based on the company identification number. The VAT number is added to the company identification number (e.g. CHE123.456.789 VAT). Since January 31, 2014, the only valid number has been the VAT number based on the company identification number, which has replaced the former six-digit reference number. Taxable recipients in Switzerland who obtain services from companies domiciled abroad and who are not entered in the taxpayer register must declare the services in the context of their normal VAT returns if the place of the service is in Switzerland according to the principle “the place of supply is where the recipient is established”.

A special regulation exists for holding companies. In general the acquisition, holding, and selling of shareholdings is a commercial activity within the meaning Swiss VAT legislation. Shares of capital in other companies over 10% are classed as shareholdings, which are held with the intention of long-term investment and have a considerable influence. The qualification of the holding activity as a commercial action means that the holding company can be voluntarily registered due to the waiving of the exemption from tax. The advantage of the registration is that pre-tax that is due within the scope of the holding activities can be claimed, although the sale of shareholdings essentially represents income exempt from tax (normally, however, a pre-tax correction is necessary due to interest income).

10.5.2 Taxable Supplies

VAT is levied on the following types of services:

1. Delivery of goods in Switzerland (including Liechtenstein),
2. Provision of services in Switzerland (including Liechtenstein),
3. Purchase of services (and certain domestic deliveries) from companies domiciled abroad and
4. Import of goods.

Certain services provided to foreign recipients (as well as the export of goods and the delivery of goods abroad) are not taxed or are zero-rated with full input tax recovery. The delivery of goods for the purposes of VAT is not limited to goods deliveries as defined by Swiss commercial law. The VAT law provides for a number of transactions which, in the sense of value added taxation, are considered to be supplies of goods such as the maintenance of machinery, the rental or leasing of property, the sale of electricity, etc.

10.5.3 Taxable Amount

The basis for the calculation of the taxable amount for the supply of goods and services is the agreed upon or the collected gross remuneration (in cash or in kind). Input tax, i.e., the tax paid on purchases of goods and services, can be deducted from the value added tax owed. Consequently, only the value added is taxed (net all-phase principle).

10.5.4 Tax Rates

Since January 1, 2018, the standard rate has been 7.7% on all taxable supplies of goods or services. A reduced rate of 3.7% is applicable for accommodations. A reduced rate of 2.5% applies on certain categories of goods and services for certain basic needs such as water supply, food and non-alcoholic beverages, cattle, poultry, fish, cereals and grain, books and newspapers, services of non-commercial radio and TV broadcasts, etc.

The Federal Tax Administration offers further simplified VAT accounting for small businesses with turnover of below 5.005 million Swiss francs (incl. VAT) and a tax liability of 103,000 Swiss francs (calculated according to the applicable net tax rate) or less per year. Small businesses may opt to submit VAT based on a balanced tax rate which is lower than the standard rate of 7.7% if they, in return, waive the standard procedure for input VAT accounting, which would otherwise be deducted from the VAT levied on revenue (input VAT deduction). This simplified taxation method must be approved by the Swiss Federal Tax Administration and maintained for at least one year. Contrary to the normal case of quarterly billing, a VAT return has to be submitted only twice a year.

10.5.5 Exemptions

The law differentiates between VAT-exempt revenue and revenue excluded from VAT. No VAT is levied in either case, but a distinction is made regarding the input VAT deduction.

In cases of exclusions, no input tax deduction is possible for the taxes paid in generating the revenue excluded from VAT. Excluded activities are the healthcare sector, education, culture, sport, social care, most banking and insurance activities, rental and sale of real estate, as well as gambling and lotteries. However, for most of these excluded revenues, it is possible to opt for voluntary taxation. This option is, however, not possible in the case of banking and insurance revenue, as well as the renting and purchase of real estate exclusively for residential use. In contrast to activities excluded from VAT, exempt activities allow for an input VAT deduction for all taxes paid in generating the revenue in question (true exemption). An example of an activity exempt from tax is the export of goods (see also section 10.5.7).

Business activities abroad are not subject to Swiss VAT. These types of revenue are generally the result of international business models. A typical example is a Swiss trading company that buys products from a foreign manufacturing company and sells them to customers in a third country, shipping the products directly to those customers. Activities involving the supply of goods or services abroad only entitle the taxpayer to deduct input tax if the revenue does not qualify as VAT exempt.

10.5.6 Deduction of Input Taxes

An enterprise registered for VAT is liable for VAT on all supplies (sales tax) and will incur VAT on purchases for the business (input tax). In most cases, input taxes may be deducted from the amount of total value added taxes due, and so do not generally represent an additional burden for a business. VAT is a genuine expense only for the end consumer or for a business involved in transactions for which no input tax can be recovered (businesses with excluded income such as banks and insurance companies).

10.5.7 Exports

In addition to exported goods, certain services – if rendered to a recipient domiciled abroad – are also exempt from Swiss VAT (with credit).

However, the Swiss VAT law includes a list of services that are either taxable where the service provider is domiciled or are subject to special provisions according to this list (e.g., services in connection with real estate, hotel and restaurant services; services in relation to culture, sports, and the arts; passenger transport, etc.). Services not included in this list that are provided to a foreign recipient are not subject to Swiss VAT (a catch-all provision – the “place of supply is where the recipient is established” – is applied).

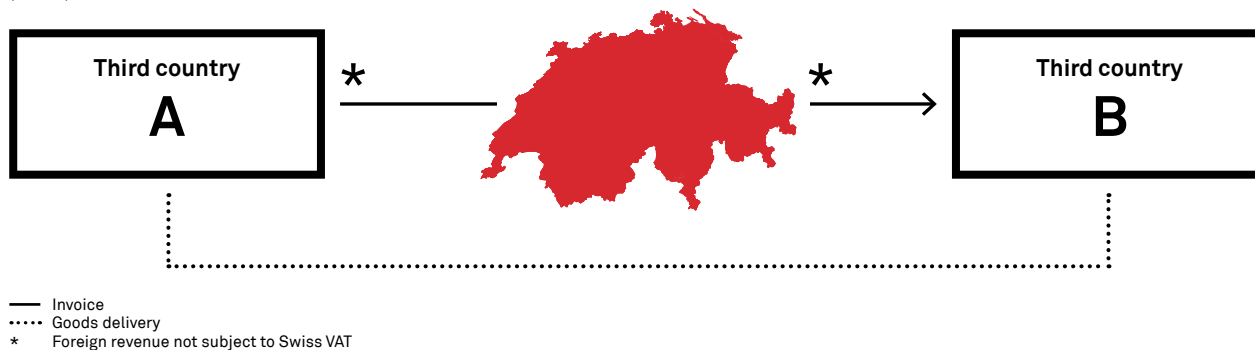
However, the VAT-exempt or non-taxable nature of such services must be proven by the underlying documents such as invoices, agreements, etc. The same applies to export shipments, where a customs export/import certificate is required for tax exemption.

10.5.8 International Business Activity

The basic VAT rules described above have the following effect in the case of a Swiss trading company that buys products from a foreign manufacturing company and sells them to customers in a third country, shipping the products directly to those customers:

International Business Activity

(FIG. 43)



Sources: compiled by the author

10.5.9 Non-Resident Enterprises

Foreign businesses supplying goods or certain services to or within Switzerland wishing to waive the exemption from tax liability or with corresponding sales revenues in excess of the threshold stated in chapter 10.5.1 are required to appoint an authorized VAT representative based in Switzerland. Such entrepreneurs may claim input VAT directly. Exempted from compulsory VAT duties are foreign companies that only provide services in Switzerland exempt from tax or recipient-centered services (except telecommunications or electronic services to non-taxable recipients), or deliveries of electricity in pipelines, gas via the natural gas distribution network, and district heating to taxable persons in Switzerland.

Non-resident entrepreneurs without taxable activities in Switzerland are entitled to a refund of Swiss VAT if their foreign activities would qualify as taxable turnover under Swiss VAT law and if the country of residence grants reciprocal treatment to Swiss entrepreneurs (VAT refund).

“At 7.7%, Switzerland has the lowest rate of VAT in Europe.”

10.6 OTHER TAXES

10.6.1 Stamp Taxes

Generally, the tax liability arises on special legal transactions such as the issuance of shares (issuance stamp tax also known as capital duty) or the trading of securities (securities transfer stamp tax).

The tax on the issuance and the increase of equity of Swiss corporations is 1% on the fair market value of the amount contributed, with an exemption on the first 1 million Swiss francs of capital paid in, whether it is made in an initial or subsequent contribution.

The transfer of Swiss and foreign securities in which a Swiss securities dealer participates as a contracting party or as an intermediary is subject to Swiss securities transfer stamp tax (often called “securities turnover tax” whereby turnover refers to revenue). Depending on the issuer’s residence (Switzerland or foreign country), the tax rate is 0.15% or 0.3% and is calculated on the consideration of the securities traded.

Swiss securities dealers are defined as any persons professionally engaged in buying or selling securities for their own account or for another person, including Swiss banks and other Swiss bank-like institutions. Furthermore, companies holding taxable securities whose book values exceed 10 million Swiss francs and remote members of a Swiss stock exchange with regard to Swiss titles which are quoted on the Swiss stock exchange are considered Swiss securities dealers.

10.6.2 Real Estate Taxes

Capital gains on Swiss immovable property are either subject to a special cantonal real estate gains tax or to ordinary corporate income tax depending on the system that is applied in the canton where the immovable property is located.

Furthermore, in some cantons the transfer of real estate is subject to a conveyance tax, whereas on the federal level no taxes of such kind are levied. As a general rule, conveyance tax is assessed on the purchase price or the taxable value of the real estate and is typically paid by the purchaser of the real estate. Depending on the canton, the applicable tax rate varies between 1% and 3%.

Moreover, about half of the cantons levy a special wealth tax on real estate. This tax is due every year in addition to the general wealth tax. The tax is levied at the place where the property is situated and is assessed on the market or taxable value of the real estate without allowing for deduction of debts. The applicable tax rate is 0.3%.

10.7 DOUBLE TAX TREATIES

To minimize the effect of double taxation in Switzerland and abroad, Switzerland has concluded tax treaties covering direct income taxes with all major industrial countries and many other countries. Most of these treaties are patterned on the principles of the OECD model convention, which defines where the income or the assets are to be taxed and also describes the method for the elimination of double taxation. Switzerland adopted the tax exemption method, exempting income allocable to a foreign country from taxation in Switzerland. The respective income and assets are only considered for the calculation of the applicable tax rate (progression). On certain income streams (dividend, interest, and license fees) both states, the state in which the income is earned and the state of the recipient's residence, are entitled to tax them. However, the double tax treaty limits the right of taxation of the source state, and the source tax can be credited against the tax levied in the recipient's state of residence. To date, more than 80 tax treaties are in effect, plus also the EU bilateral agreements as of July 1, 2005. As Swiss tax treaties are treated as international conventions, they generally supersede federal as well as cantonal/municipal tax rules.

Swiss double tax treaties apply to persons (individuals or companies) who are resident in one or both of the contracting states. As already mentioned in chapter 10.3.5, Swiss residents applying for lump-sum taxation generally qualify for treaty relief as well. However, some treaties provide for special conditions to be met in order to benefit from the treaty applied.

Apart from the tax treaties covering direct income taxes, Switzerland also concluded a few tax treaties in the area of inheritance and estate tax. Switzerland has not negotiated any double tax treaties concerning gift taxes so far. Furthermore, there are some special treaties relating to cross-border commuters, taxation of international air and transport services, and the tax situation of international organizations and their staff.

10.8 TAX PROPOSAL 17

Switzerland is currently in the process of modernizing its corporate tax system. The goal is to provide an attractive tax environment for companies and to ensure that taxation arrangements are in line with internationally established tax practices.

The Swiss Federal Department of Finance (FDF) has already prepared a new proposal with tax proposal 17 (SV17). The reform is expected to come into effect no earlier than 2020. Until then, the current attractive tax regime will remain valid at national level.

Current information on tax proposal 17 can be found on the website of the Swiss Federal Department of Finance.

www.efd.admin.ch > Tax proposal 17
Federal Department of Finance (FDF)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.s-ge.com/corporate-taxation
Facts and figures on Corporate Taxation in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

10.9 TRANSFER PRICING RULES

According to Swiss tax law, transactions between group companies must be at arm's length. Switzerland does not have separate transfer pricing legislation and does not plan to introduce such legislation in the near future. Instead, the Swiss tax authorities follow the transfer pricing guidelines of the OECD to determine if a transaction between related parties is at arm's length. In Switzerland, no specific documentation requirements for transfer pricing purposes must be observed. A company doing business in Switzerland should however have the appropriate documentation on file verifying the arm's-length nature of transactions with related parties.

www.efd.admin.ch
Federal Department of Finance (FDF)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian



INFRASTRUCTURE

11

11.1	Transportation.....	119
11.2	Communication.....	124
11.3	Energy.....	125
11.4	Water.....	125
11.5	Post.....	126
11.6	Healthcare.....	126

Image
Swiss Rhine port, Basel

Switzerland is closely integrated into the European transportation infrastructure thanks to a dense network of road, rail, and air connections. Frequent and reliable connections guarantee the smooth and efficient transport of passengers and goods. The supply of energy, water, communication services and postal services is guaranteed at all times. A well-developed healthcare system ensures that the population has access to medical care without having to travel long distances.

Infrastructure Quality, 2017

1 = Underdeveloped, 7 = Extensive and efficient
(FIG. 44)

1	Switzerland	6.6
2	Singapore	6.4
3	Hong Kong SAR	6.4
4	United Arab Emirates	6.2
5	The Netherlands	6.2
6	Japan	6.2
7	Finland	6.1
8	France	6.1
9	Austria	5.9
10	USA	5.9
11	Denmark	5.8
12	Germany	5.7
16	Luxembourg	5.6
24	Norway	5.2
27	United Kingdom	5.0
46	India	4.6
47	China	4.5
52	Ireland	4.4
58	Italy	4.3

Sources: WEF, Global Competitiveness Index 2017 – 2018

11.1 TRANSPORTATION

The Swiss economy is supported by an excellent distribution infrastructure for supplying goods and services. With 1.7 kilometers (approx. 1 mile) of roads per square kilometer, Switzerland is one of the continent's most densely developed countries for motorized transport. Nevertheless, Switzerland is rightly known as a railway country, particularly as the national railway network has a length three times that of the freeway network.

The Swiss government's transport policy is primarily aimed at improving the country's attractiveness as a business location and managing increasing mobility in an environmentally compatible manner.

www.uvek.admin.ch

Swiss Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC)

Languages: German, English, French, Italian

11.1.1 Road Traffic

Switzerland's highway network is one of the densest in the world. There are currently approx. 1,840 km (1,143 miles) of national highways in operation, providing access to all parts of the country. The high proportion of tunnels is remarkable: 250 tunnels are currently in operation. When finished, the currently planned national road network should run for a total of 1,892.5 kilometers (1,175 miles) and include more than 270 tunnels with a combined length of 290 km (180 miles). At least three quarters of the Swiss highway system consist of four-lane divided freeways. The national highways are also major international transport routes. The connection between Germany and Italy through the Gotthard Tunnel is of critical importance in Europe.

In order to use Switzerland's freeways (Autobahnen), every domestic and foreign motor vehicle weighing up to 3.5 metric tons must have a special freeway sticker or "vignette" (currently 40 Swiss francs). The sticker is valid for a calendar year and can be purchased at customs and post offices, gas stations, and freeway rest stops. No special tunnel fees are charged for using the Gotthard and San Bernardino transalpine tunnels.

A performance-related vehicle fee (LSVA) is levied on domestic and foreign trucks (motorized vehicles intended for goods transportation with a total weight of more than 3.5 metric tons). In addition to the total weight, the fee depends on the relevant emission category (Euro 0 - II) and the kilometers driven in Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. For the most-used transit routes from the German to Italian border (about 300 km [186 miles] from Basel to Chiasso), 40-ton trucks pay a fee of CHF 270 - 370 depending on the emission category. In addition, a night-time (10:00 pm - 5:00 am) and Sunday driving ban applies to trucks.

www.astra.admin.ch
Federal Roads Office (FEDRO)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.strassenverkehrsamt.ch
Cantonal road traffic offices
Languages: depends on canton

www.ezv.admin.ch > Information companies > Taxes and duties
Performance-related and lump-sum heavy vehicle fees
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.swisstunnel.ch
Specialist group for underground construction
Languages: German, English, French

11.1.2 Rail

Because of the punctuality and reliability of their public transport systems, the Swiss are the most frequent rail travelers in all of Europe. Every day, some 10,000 trains run on the 3,000-kilometer (1,865-mile) rail network operated by SBB (Swiss Federal Railways). In addition to SBB, there are a number of private railway companies in Switzerland that operate on tracks covering more than 2,000 kilometers (almost 1,250 miles). In spite of the fact that this rail network has the highest capacity utilization in Europe, the trains are very punctual. In 2015, 74% of passenger trains reached their destination within three minutes of the scheduled arrival time. In order to protect the population and the environment, more and more freight traffic will be moved from road to rail in the future.

Three major rail projects now underway will provide important benefits to Switzerland and Europe in the medium and long term. They will increase transport capacities, reduce passenger and freight traffic on roads and highways, and help protect and preserve the ecologically sensitive Alpine region:

- ZEB: The "Future Development of the Rail Infrastructure" (ZEB) project was approved by parliament in 2008 and is due to be completed by 2025. The more than 100 authorized projects it contains are worth a combined 5.4 billion Swiss francs and include measures to improve both the frequency and capacity of the rail network. The ZEB project is currently in its third phase, in which various rail lines, especially feeder lines for the Gotthard Base Tunnel, are being made twin-track at a cost of about 300 million Swiss francs.
- AlpTransit or NRLA Project: The new Lötschberg and Gotthard transalpine lines are designed to provide new, fast north-south connections and facilitate substantial expansion of capacity and services. Every day, 42 passenger trains pass through the 34-kilometer (21-mile) Lötschberg base tunnel, which was completed in 2007, at speeds of up to 250 km/h (155 mph). This brings both Valais as well as northern Italy closer to the center of Switzerland. You can now get to Milan from Bern in less than 2 ¾ hours. As for freight transport, the new Lötschberg base route helps meet a key goal of Swiss transport policy, which aims to transfer transalpine freight traffic from road to rail. The route enables transport capacities to be increased substantially, while the larger tunnel cross-sections enable heavier freight trains to pass through (shuttle profile). The AlpTransit or NRLA (New Rail Link through the Alps) project is being built in stages. The Gotthard Base Tunnel, which was opened on June 1, 2016, is the longest tunnel in the world, at 57 kilometers (more than 35 miles).

- Link to the European high-speed rail network: Connection to the European high-speed rail network (TGV and ICE) will make Switzerland the most important hub in Europe's future high-speed network. The Swiss government will invest a total of 992 million Swiss francs in the rail network by the end of 2020 to provide better connections with the European high-speed rail network. This will shorten travel times from Switzerland to Paris, Lyon, Munich, Ulm, and Stuttgart.

www.sbb.ch
Swiss national railway operator SBB
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.bav.admin.ch
Federal Office of Transport (FOT)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

11.1.3 Shipping and Navigation

When the train and the car were invented, over a century ago, ships and boats were already navigating Swiss waters on a regular basis. Nevertheless, success of cars and trains had a negative impact on shipping and navigation, and the transportation of people and goods on Switzerland's rivers and lakes declined continuously. However, shipping and navigation remain an important part of tourism and international trade.

The River Rhine quickly developed into one of Europe's most important waterways. This was favored by the revised Rhine Navigation Treaty of October 17, 1868, also known as the Mannheim Treaty. Thanks to this agreement, Switzerland has legally guaranteed access to the North Sea. Switzerland also has a deep-sea fishing fleet as well as a (fictitious) deep-sea port in Basel. To this day, shipping is important for Switzerland's trade in goods. Every year, Switzerland's Rhine ports process about 7 million metric tons of goods and about 100,000 containers. Indeed more than 10% of all Swiss foreign trade passes along the Rhine. That is still a sizable proportion, particularly when compared to air freight, which accounts for less than 1% of foreign trade. However as a mode of transport for people, ships really only play a role in tourism and for day trips. Some 13 million passengers a year are transported along and across Switzerland's waterways.

www.port-of-switzerland.ch
Swiss Rhine port
Languages: German, English, French

11.1.4 Air Travel

Zurich Airport is one of the most important transport hubs in Europe. Passengers appreciate the excellent standard of service at this airport. This is confirmed by its high ranking in the annual airport rankings. For example, in 2017 Zurich Airport received the World Travel Award as Europe's leading airport for the 14th time for its user-friendliness and quality standards. Zurich Airport received the Eco-Innovation Award for the first time in 2011 for its extensive and systematic environmental management system. It was also the first airport to introduce emission-dependent landing fees.

Some 27.6 million passengers used the Zurich airport in 2016. The freight volume in the same period totaled 433,577 metric tons. The airport currently serves 178 destinations in 65 countries on four continents. Switzerland's two other international airports – Geneva and Euro-Airport Basel – also have many connections to key European business centers and holiday destinations and a number of direct flights to overseas destinations. Geneva handled 16.5 million passengers and 70,400 metric tons of freight in 2016. In the same year, Basel Airport processed 7.3 million passengers and 55,000 metric tons of freight.

The fact that the three international airports are located in border areas only a short distance away from neighboring countries facilitates international trade to and from the EU through Switzerland. Airfreight is an important freight transport option for exporting companies in the areas around their airports. The most important export products include specialty chemical and pharmaceutical products, high-tech products, automotive components, and perishable goods.

Just over three-quarters of Swiss airfreight is processed at the cargo hub in Zurich. But the two other international airports, Geneva and EuroAirport Basel, are also becoming increasingly important freight support points, particularly for express and courier services. The volumes handled by the world's leading express, package, and courier services are growing.

The regional airports in Bern, Lugano, and St. Gallen-Altenrhein also offer attractive scheduled flights to European destinations on a daily basis. Sion and St. Moritz-Samedan have seasonal business connections that are not only important for tourism but also save time for the entire service sector.

www.flughafen-zuerich.ch
Zurich Airport
Languages: German, English, French

www.gva.ch
Geneva Airport
Languages: German, English, French

www.euroairport.com
EuroAirport Basel
Languages: German, English, French

Direct Intercontinental Flight Connections from Zurich (ZRH) and Geneva (GVA)

In parentheses: airport; duration of flight

(FIG. 45)

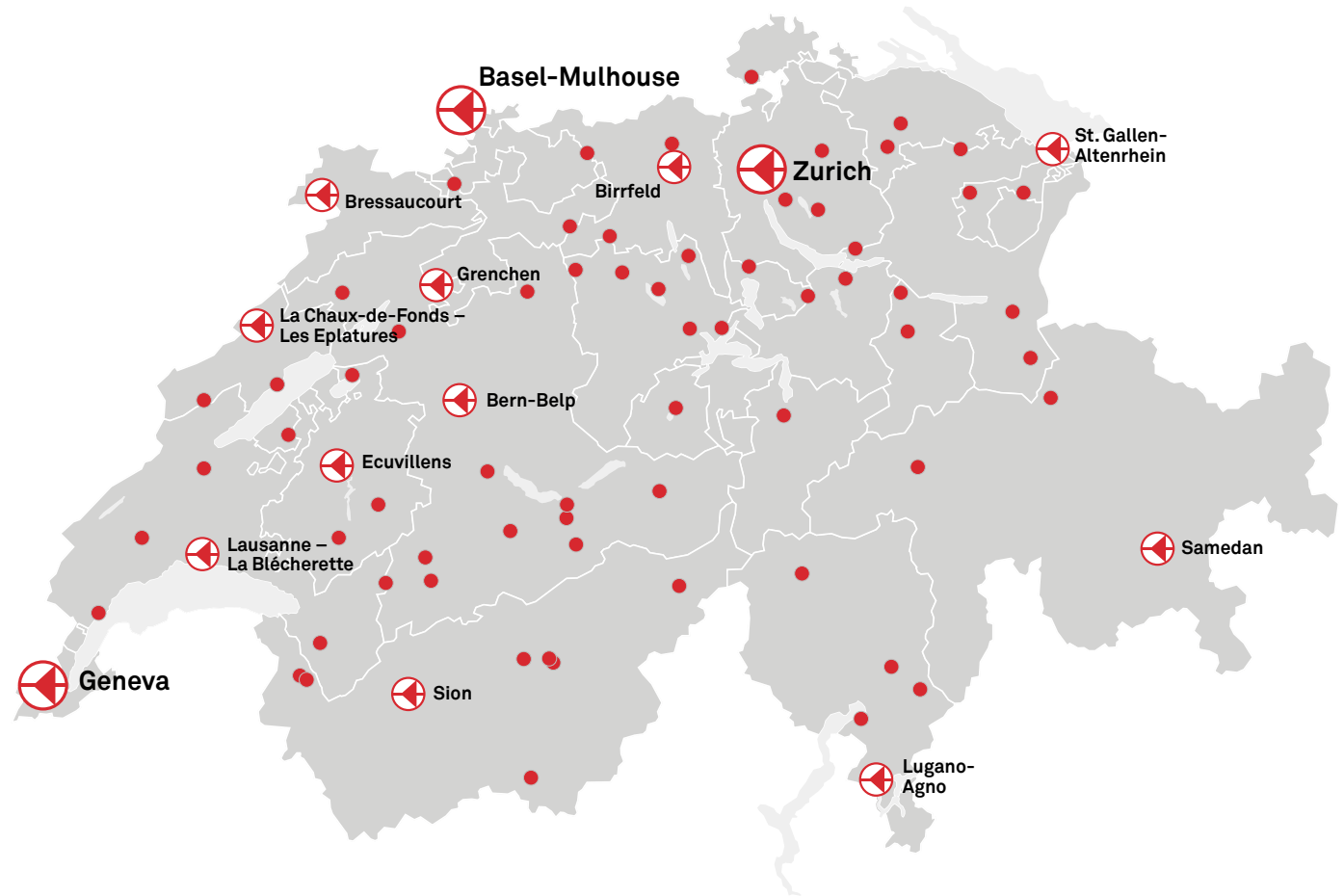





Sources: Zurich Airport, Geneva Airport; own representation of S-GE 2016

- | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 San Francisco
(ZRH; 12:15h) | 15 New York JFK
(ZRH / GVA; 08:40h) | 29 Cairo
(ZRH / GVA; 03:55h) | 43 Abu Dhabi
(ZRH / GVA; 06:25h) |
| 2 Vancouver
(ZRH; 10:40h) | 16 Boston
(ZRH; 08:15h) | 30 Hurghada
(ZRH; 04:25h) | 44 Muscat
(ZRH; 07:50h) |
| 3 Los Angeles
(ZRH; 12:30h) | 17 Punta Cana
(ZRH; 10:20h) | 31 Sharm el Sheikh
(ZRH; 04:25h) | 45 Mumbai
(ZRH; 08:15h) |
| 4 Calgary
(ZRH; 12:00h) | 18 São Paulo
(ZRH; 12:00h) | 32 Marsa Alam
(ZRH; 04:45h) | 46 Maldives
(ZRH; 09:30h) |
| 5 Las Vegas
(ZRH; 11:55h) | 19 Rio de Janeiro
(ZRH; 12:00h) | 33 Nairobi
(ZRH; 07:40h) | 47 Delhi
(ZRH; 07:40h) |
| 6 Chicago
(ZRH; 09:40h) | 20 Casablanca
(ZRH / GVA; 02:50h) | 34 Tel Aviv
(ZRH / GVA; 03:50h) | 48 Phuket
(ZRH; 11:05h) |
| 7 Atlanta
(ZRH; 10:25h) | 21 Marrakesh
(ZRH / GVA; 03:15h) | 35 Beirut
(ZRH / GVA; 03:50h) | 49 Bangkok
(ZRH; 11:00h) |
| 8 Toronto
(ZRH; 08:50h) | 22 Algiers
(GVA; 01:55h) | 36 Moscow
(ZRH; 03:15h) | 50 Singapore
(ZRH; 12:05h) |
| 9 Tampa
(ZRH; 11:05h) | 23 Tunis
(ZRH / GVA; 02:00h) | 37 Amman
(ZRH / GVA; 06:25h) | 51 Hong Kong
(ZRH; 11:55h) |
| 10 Havana
(ZRH; 11:20h) | 24 Cape Town
(ZRH; 11:25h) | 38 Jeddah
(GVA; 05:20h) | 52 Beijing
(ZRH / GVA; 10:00h) |
| 11 Miami
(ZRH; 10:25h) | 25 Enfidha
(ZRH; 02:05h) | 39 Riad
(GVA; 06:00h) | 53 Shanghai
(ZRH; 11:30h) |
| 12 Washington
(ZRH; 09:10h) | 26 Djerba
(ZRH / GVA; 02:25h) | 40 Doha
(ZRH / GVA; 06:00h) | 54 Seoul
(ZRH; 10:50h) |
| 13 Montreal
(ZRH / GVA; 08:10h) | 27 Johannesburg
(ZRH; 10:25h) | 41 Mauritius
(ZRH; 11:05h) | 55 Tokyo
(ZRH; 11:50h) |
| 14 New York Newark
(ZRH / GVA; 09:05h) | 28 St Petersburg
(ZRH; 03:00h) | 42 Dubai
(ZRH / GVA; 06:05h) | |

Switzerland's National and Regional Airports

(FIG. 46)



 national airport  regional airport  airfield, heliport

Sources: Swiss Federal Office for Civil Aviation (BAZL); own representation of S-GE 2016

www.bazl.admin.ch

Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation (FOCA)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.swiss.com

Swiss International Air Lines
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.flughafen-zuerich.ch

Zurich Airport
Languages: German, English, French

www.gva.ch

Geneva Airport
Languages: German, English, French

www.euroairport.com

EuroAirport Basel
Languages: German, English, French

www.aerosuisse.ch

Umbrella association of the Swiss aerospace industry
Languages: German, French

www.aopa.ch

Aircraft Owners' and Pilots' Association
Languages: German, French

For international corporations, the ability to schedule business flights at short notice is becoming more and more critical. In addition to the national airports, there are also regional airports throughout the country set up to handle business aviation, and most of them are suitable for smaller jets. The modern infrastructure of these airports is designed for business travelers, offering either customs clearance or allowing authorized cross-border travel by persons from the areas covered by the Schengen Agreement (for the Schengen Area). In Switzerland there are countless providers of business flights which have their own offices at larger airports and airfields. The offers range from charter planes to the use of pooled planes.

11.2 COMMUNICATION

Switzerland has outstanding access to ICT infrastructure. According to the latest study by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the country ranks second worldwide. In 2016, more than 50% of Switzerland's inhabitants were subscribed to fixed-line broadband Internet access. That puts Switzerland significantly above the average for OECD countries (30%) and among the leading nations worldwide (Fig. 47). To ensure that the further development of Internet services and applications is possible, the speed and performance of the network has to be constantly increased. Consequently, the coordinated implementation of a national optical fiber network – to which all residential and commercial buildings are connected – is being intensively promoted.

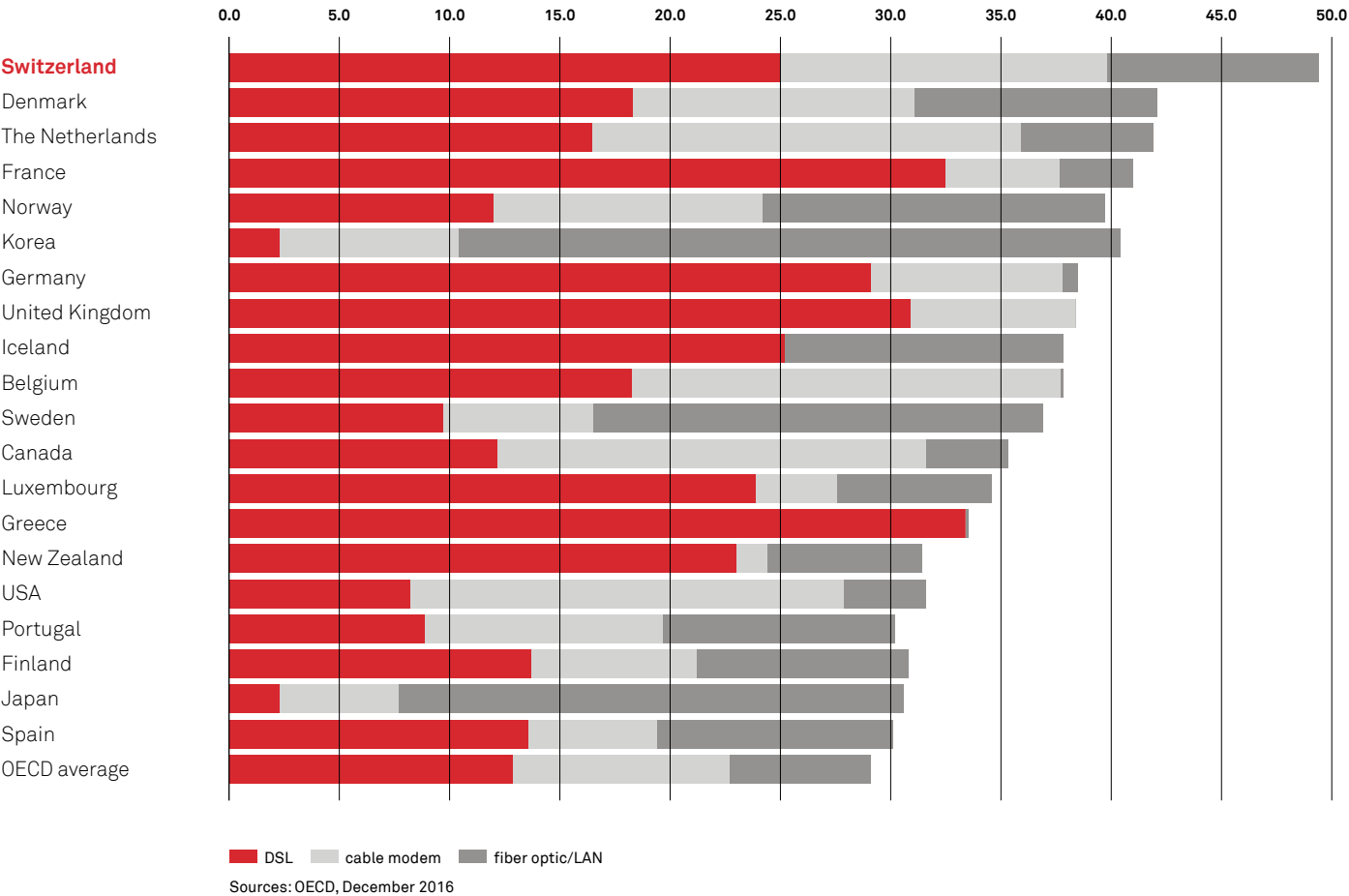
“In 2016, more than 50% of Switzerland's inhabitants were subscribed to fixed-line broadband Internet access.”

www.bakom.admin.ch
Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.bfs.admin.ch > Look for statistics > Culture, media, information society, sports
Information society indicators
Languages: German, French

www.nic.ch
Swiss Internet domain name registry (.ch, .li)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

Broadband Internet Access, 2016
Subscribers to high-speed Internet connections per 100 inhabitants
(FIG. 47)



11.3 ENERGY

Switzerland has a reliable and secure nationwide energy supply system. Petroleum products accounted for 50.2% of gross energy consumption in Switzerland in 2016. Electricity accounted for 25% of final consumption and was generated for the most part in Switzerland. Compared to the neighboring countries, Switzerland has a practically CO₂-free production mix. The most important power suppliers in Switzerland are hydroelectric power plants (2016: 59%) and nuclear power plants (2016: 32.8%). Compared to other countries, Switzerland thereby has an attractive energy mix at relatively low production costs, which are not directly linked to the price of oil and natural gas. Switzerland's integration into the interconnected European energy system ensures that the entire country is supplied with electricity, even during periods of particularly high power consumption. This also applies to the other forms of energy, such as natural gas and petroleum. An extensive network of almost 3,500 gas stations provides fuel for motor vehicles. Within the scope of Swiss environmental policy, mineral oil taxes are levied on gasoline and diesel (approx. 0.75 Swiss francs per liter), revenues that are appropriated specially and mainly flow back into road-building (steering tax). To promote environmentally friendly fuels, fuels from renewable sources (such as biogas, bioethanol, biodiesel, vegetable and animal oils) are partially or fully exempt from the mineral oil tax. The taxation of natural and liquid gas used as fuels is also reduced. In addition there are voluntary private measures, such as the climate charges on fuels, with which reduction measures are financed domestically and abroad. Nevertheless, the price of gasoline (unleaded 98), which averaged 1.60 Swiss francs per liter in October 2017, is comparatively moderate.

The Swiss electric power market is highly fragmented. Approximately 700 utility companies supply the country with electricity, including eight associated companies and numerous small producers. Thanks to the partial liberalization of the market in 2009, major consumers (i.e. those requiring more than 100,000 kWh per year) can now choose their supplier. A federal statute is required to introduce the complete opening up of the market, which can then be challenged in a referendum.

www.bfe.admin.ch
Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.stromkunden.ch
Group of major electricity consumers
Language: German

11.4 WATER

Switzerland is a water-rich country. Six percent of Europe's fresh water is stored in the Swiss Alps. The Gotthard massif in the center of the Swiss Alps forms a continental divide as far as Europe's water is concerned. From there the Rhine flows to the North Sea, the Rhone to the western Mediterranean, the Ticino (Po) to the Adriatic Sea, and the Inn (Danube) to the Black Sea.

www.bafu.admin.ch > Topics > Water
Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) - Water
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

11.4.1 Drinking Water

The water that flows through all water pipes in Switzerland is so fresh and pure that it meets the purity requirements for mineral water, even though it is a thousand times cheaper. Even the water in public fountains can be drunk without concern. Only 2% of annual precipitation is utilized for the drinking water supply. The Swiss population consumes about 300 liters of water per capita per day in homes, industry, and commercial operations. On average, household consumption accounts for 142 liters of this. Drinking water from water pipes costs an average of about 2 Swiss francs per thousand liters in Switzerland. At a cost of 0.30 Swiss francs per person per day, the cost is just under 0.90 Swiss francs per day for a 3-person household. Groundwater from wells and springs accounts for 80% of consumption, and the rest comes primarily from lakes.

www.trinkwasser.ch
Drinking water
Languages: German, French, Italian

11.4.2 Waste Water Disposal and Water Pollution Control

Because of its role as the “water reservoir” of Europe, Switzerland is obliged to make special efforts in water pollution control. Purification of waste water is a necessary requirement for maintaining and preserving water ecosystems over the long term. Thanks to modern wastewater purification technology, there is no health risk associated with swimming in Switzerland’s many lakes and rivers. The waste water from households, industry, business and agriculture is piped to purification systems through sewage pipes running a total length of 40,000-50,000 kilometers (about 25,000-31,000 miles). Today, 97% of all Swiss households are connected to one of the country’s approx. 900 wastewater treatment plants.

11.5 POST

Swiss Post serves the entire country (universal nationwide service). It is a byword for reliability, breaking European records again and again.

In recent years, the postal market has undergone fundamental changes. In addition to the state-run postal system, numerous private companies are now offering postal delivery services in certain areas in which competition is allowed. The package delivery market (for packages over 1kg) was liberalized in 2004. Since April 2006, letters weighing more than 100g can be handled by private postal services, provided that they have the required license. Swiss Post has maintained its monopoly only on the delivery of domestic letters and letters from abroad weighing 50g or less. Further liberalization will not take place for the time being, although full liberalization continues to be discussed.

The postal service provides an overall dense network of access points. As of late December 2016, there were 1,323 post offices, 849 agencies, and 1,005 postomats. In an international comparison with seven other European countries, Switzerland had the highest density of post office branches per area and the smallest average distance to the nearest post office branch. In addition, Swiss Post offers total logistics solutions ranging from procurement through warehousing to information logistics, including cross-border service.

www.post.ch
Swiss Post
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.bakom.admin.ch
Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

11.6 HEALTHCARE

11.6.1 Medical Care

Highly trained medical professionals, famous hospitals and top medical institutions help make the Swiss healthcare system among the best in the world. By international standards, Switzerland has a cost-intensive healthcare system relative to GDP. A dense network of hospitals, pharmacies, and medical and dental practices ensures universal access to out-patient and in-patient care. Emergency medical care on the road (emergency services of hospitals) and by air (Swiss air-rescue service Rega or TCS) is well developed and functions professionally. An organization called Spitex provides medical care at home.

The life expectancy at birth has almost doubled in Switzerland since 1900. According to an OECD study, the Swiss people have the world’s third-highest life expectancy, at an average of 83 years (see fig. 48).

11.6.2 Health Insurance

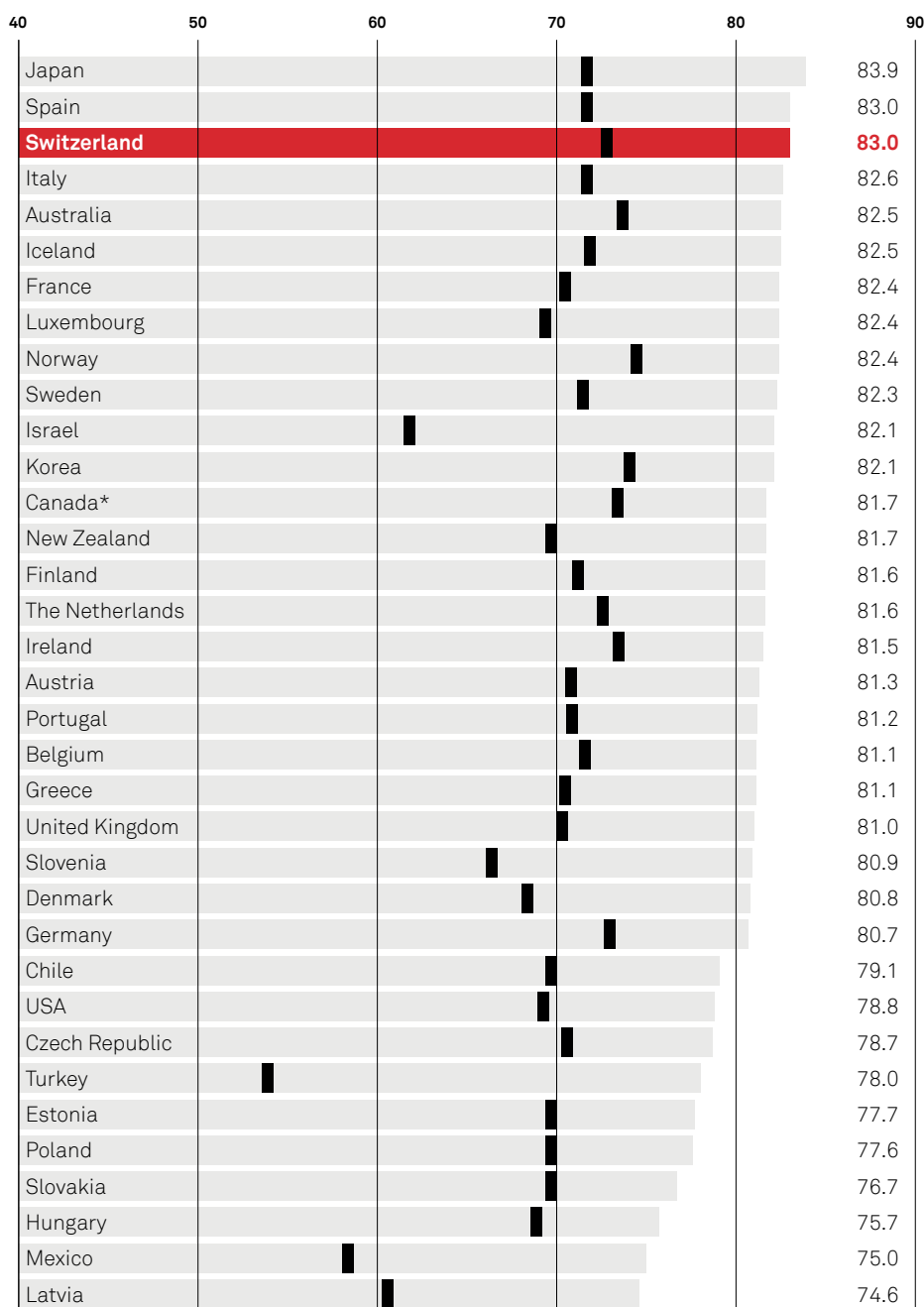
The basic health insurance that all persons residing in Switzerland are required to carry guarantees access to good medical care. This covers medical treatment in the event of illness or accidents if treatment is not covered by accident insurance (even in foreign countries in some cases). The system is not state-run, but offered through private health insurance companies. Additional insurance is optional.

www.bag.admin.ch > Topics > Insurances
Overview of health insurance
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

“At an average of 83 years, the Swiss people have the world’s third-highest life expectancy.”

Life Expectancy at Birth, 1970 and 2015

(FIG. 48)



■ 2015 (*2013) ■ 1970

Sources: OECD Health Statistics 2017

www.bag.admin.ch
Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.redcross.ch
Swiss Red Cross
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.hplus.ch
Hospitals in Switzerland
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.fmh.ch
Swiss Medical Association (FMH)
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.doctorfmh.ch
Swiss doctors directory
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.rega.ch
Swiss air rescue service (Rega)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.spitex.ch
Spitex association, Switzerland
Languages: German, French



EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

12

12.1	Schooling and Vocational Training	129
12.2	Further Education	132
12.3	Universities and Colleges	132
12.4	International Private Schools and Boarding Schools	135
12.5	Research and Development	135
12.6	Switzerland Innovation - The Swiss Innovation Park	138

For a country like Switzerland with few natural resources, a well-educated workforce and constant innovation are its most important capital. Swiss education and research policy is designed accordingly. Switzerland's public schools, universities, postgraduate programs, and international private and boarding schools are famous worldwide for their quality. The country's federal structure also ensures both high quality and proximity of the business world and research institutions to the educational system. One special feature of Swiss education is the dual training system: students have a choice between the traditional educational path at high schools and universities or, on the other hand, industrial vocations and careers in the service sector, where they receive hands-on training on the job.

12.1 SCHOOLING AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Switzerland's dual vocational training system is unique worldwide and provides the country with a highly qualified and innovative workforce and thus a leading position in the global economy.

Under the Swiss system, the cantons are responsible for the quality and type of education (basic education, universities, universities of applied sciences) within their territory. Only the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH/EPFL) are under federal direction. Various coordinating bodies ensure that the educational and training plans are harmonized between cantons.

www.edk.ch
Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.educa.ch
Swiss education server
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

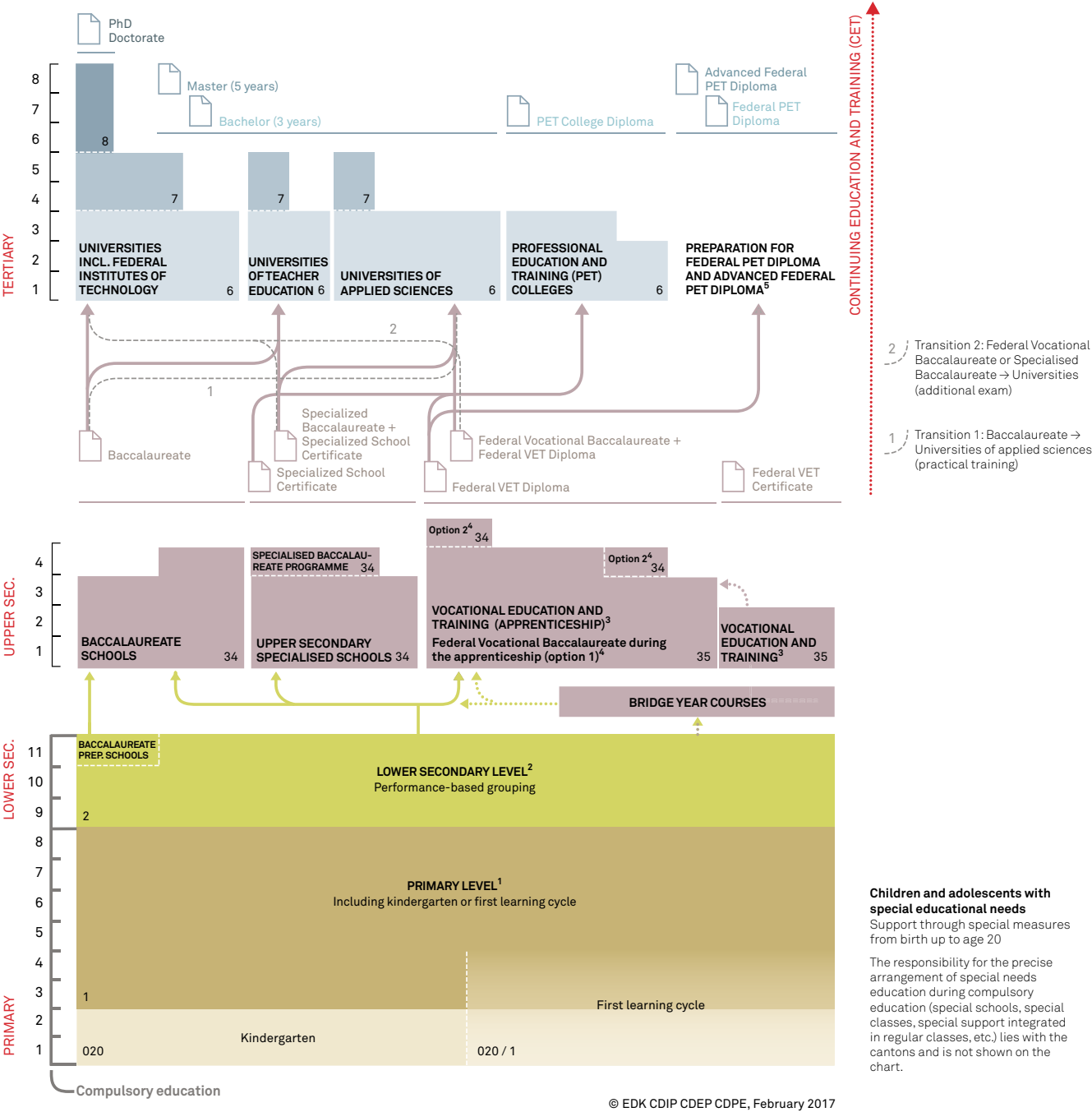
www.bildungssystem.bfs.admin.ch
Education statistics
Languages: German, French

12.1.1 Basic and Further Education

Education begins at the kindergarten level at age five or six. Primary school starts at age seven and runs through to grades four to six, followed by a lower secondary school the levels of which correspond to their personal ability. The name and curriculum of the educational levels varies from canton to canton. Once they have completed lower secondary school, students have finished their compulsory nine years' schooling. They can then either begin vocational training or attend high school to prepare them for university studies. Aside from apprenticeship and high school, students can continue their education beyond the statutory minimum by attending an intermediate diploma school to earn a specialized diploma.

The Swiss Education System

(FIG. 49)



ISCED | International Standard Classification of Education 2011

- ISCED 8
- ISCED 7
- ISCED 6
- ISCED 4
- ISCED 34 + 35
- ISCED 2
- ISCED 1
- ISCED 020

- Two years of kindergarten or the first two years of a first learning cycle: included in compulsory education in the majority of cantons
- Lower secondary level: 4-year scuola media in the Canton of Ticino (pursuant to exception clause in Art. 6 HarmoS Agreement)
- Vocational education and training (apprenticeship): training company + VET school + intercompany courses; full-time school education possible
- Federal Vocational Baccalaureate: combined with an apprenticeship (option 1) or after an apprenticeship (option 2); duration option 2: full-time 1 year, part-time 1.5 – 2 years
- Federal PET examination / Federal PET diploma = ISCED 6
Advanced federal PET examination / Advanced federal PET diploma = ISCED 7

Quality of the Education System, 2017

1 = completely fails to meet the economy's needs,
10 = meets the economy's needs

(FIG. 50)

1	Switzerland	8.94
2	Finland	8.93
3	The Netherlands	8.59
4	Norway	8.43
5	Denmark	7.93
6	Singapore	7.88
7	Canada	7.81
8	Ireland	7.78
9	Germany	7.71
18	Hong Kong SAR	6.68
22	France	6.43
23	Luxembourg	6.35
25	USA	6.13
26	United Kingdom	6.04
30	Japan	5.91
32	Italy	5.74
34	China	5.55
37	India	5.25
43	Russia	4.66
62	Brazil	2.34

Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

95% of students finish their mandatory education at a local state school. Only 5% attend private schools. Public schools enjoy a good reputation. In the 2012 OECD Program for International Student Assessments (PISA), Swiss students scored higher than the average in OECD states, with public schools achieving slightly higher scores than private ones. Within Europe, Switzerland is in second place overall behind the Principality of Liechtenstein. The IMD management institute has also confirmed that Switzerland has a high-quality education system that meets the economy's needs (Fig. 50).

Switzerland's public schools not only provide an education, they also fulfill an important integration function: children with different social, linguistic, and/or cultural backgrounds all attend the same schools. For Switzerland, a country with four national languages, multilingual skills are extremely important. In addition to their mother tongue, children are taught a second national language and English from primary school onward.

In 2014, public-sector spending on education in Switzerland was just under 36 billion Swiss francs. That's 5.6% of the gross domestic product. On a per-capita basis, this level of spending puts Switzerland in first place worldwide.

www.pisa.oecd.org

PISA study

Languages: German, English, French

www.bfs.admin.ch

Swiss Federal Statistical Office

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Romansh

Public per Capita Spending on Education, 2015

in US dollars

(FIG. 51)

1	Luxembourg	4,820
2	Switzerland	4,324
3	Sweden	4,203
4	Norway	4,050
5	Iceland	3,832
6	Denmark	3,749
7	USA	3,435
12	Austria	2,770
14	United Kingdom	2,633
15	The Netherlands	2,408
17	France	2,374
18	Ireland	2,168
22	Germany	1,738
23	Singapore	1,568
24	Hong Kong SAR	1,397
27	Italy	1,189
28	Japan	1,130
42	Brazil	570
49	Russia	347
51	China	307
62	India	49

Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

12.1.2 Vocational Training

Basic vocational training begins after the completion of compulsory education. Great importance is placed on practical on-the-job training. More than three quarters of all young people complete a work-and-training-based apprenticeship lasting three to four years and consisting of practical work in a company coupled with study of the accompanying theory at a vocational school for the relevant sector. In addition, students are eligible to obtain professional certification, which entitles them to enter a university of applied sciences where they can earn a Bachelor's or, in some cases, a Master's degree. Universities of applied sciences provide a tertiary level of education. 88% of Swiss students continue their education once they have completed compulsory schooling, placing Switzerland near the top of all OECD countries with regard to further education.

This dual system ensures that businesses have a choice of well-qualified and practically trained employees ready to enter the relevant sector. Youth unemployment is significantly below that of the average in the Euro countries. It is important to note that the practical aspect of vocational training in no way reduces the importance of in-depth teaching in school.

Professional education and training play an important role in Switzerland. Higher specialist and professional training courses are conducted with the approval of the federal authorities and professional associations. Successful completion of these courses leads to the attainment of a Swiss federal vocational certificate or diploma. In Switzerland there are nearly 150 federally recognized schools offering professional college degree programs, the majority of which are engineering colleges. These schools teach qualifications that are often learned only at universities in other countries. Vocational degrees are mutually recognized through bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU. The plethora of Switzerland's vocational training courses is made easier to understand and compare by the National Qualification Framework for Swiss Vocational and Professional Education and Training (NQF VPET) as well as explanations about certificates and diploma supplements.

www.s-ge.com/education

Facts and figures on professional training in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.sbfli.admin.ch

State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.wbf.admin.ch > Topics > Education, research and innovation

Information issued by the Swiss Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.swissworld.org > Education

Education in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.berufsberatung.ch

Advice on choosing a profession, higher education course and career
Languages: German, French, Italian

12.2 FURTHER EDUCATION

Continuing training plays an important role in Switzerland. Public institutions such as universities and universities of applied sciences offer not only postgraduate programs but also courses on various specialized topics which are open to everyone, not just graduates. Non-students can also register to sit in on regular courses. Adult education courses are publicly subsidized and open to everyone. There is also a wide variety of courses offered by private educational establishments, from language courses to yoga and managerial courses.

www.weiterbildung.ch

www.ausbildung-weiterbildung.ch

www.seminare.ch

Overview of continuing training (providers and courses)
Language: German

www.up-vhs.ch

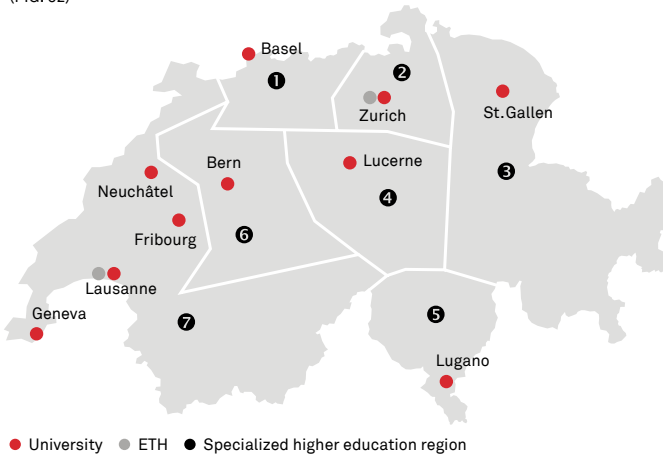
Swiss Adult Education Association
Languages: German, French

12.3 UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

12.3.1 Universities and Institutes of Technology

Universities and Institutes of Technology

(FIG. 52)



Specialized higher education region

- 1 University of Applied Sciences Northern Switzerland (Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz)
- 2 University of Applied Sciences Zurich (Fachhochschule Zürich)
- 3 University of Applied Sciences Eastern Switzerland (Fachhochschule Ostschweiz)
- 4 University of Applied Sciences Central Switzerland (Fachhochschule Zentralschweiz)
- 5 University of Applied Sciences Southern Switzerland (Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana)
- 6 University of Applied Sciences Bern (Fachhochschule Bern)
- 7 University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland (Haute école spécialisée de Suisse occidentale)

Sources: State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SERI), 2017

Annual Tuition Fees

(Bachelor degree, in CHF)

(FIG. 53)

	EPF LAUSANNE	ETH ZURICH	UNIVER- SITY OF BASEL	UNIVER- SITY OF BERN	UNIVER- SITY OF FRIBOURG	UNIVER- SITY OF GENEVA	UNIVER- SITY OF LAUSANNE	UNIVERSI- TY OF LUCERNE	UNIVERSITY OF NEUCHÂTEL	UNIVER- SITY OF ST. GALL	UNIVER- SITY OF ZURICH	USI (LUGANO MENDRISIO)
Domestic stu- dents	1,266	1,288	1,700	1,568	1,310	1,000	1,160	1,620	1,030	2,452	1,538	4,000
Additional fees for international students					300			600	550	3,800	1,000	4,000
Total for interna- tional students	1,266	1,288	1,700	1,568	1,610	1,000	1,160	2,220	1,580	6,252	2,538	8,000

Sources: berufsberatung.ch 2017

In Switzerland there are ten cantonal universities at which the main language of instruction is either German (Basel, Bern, Zurich, Lucerne, St. Gallen), French (Geneva, Lausanne, Neuchâtel), Italian (Lugano), or bilingual – German and French (Fribourg). There is a Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (French) and one in Zurich (German). In the 2015/2016 autumn semester, around 145,946 students were enrolled in these twelve universities, of whom 50% were female and 29.9% were foreign students. This is one of the highest percentages of international students worldwide. At 50%, the number of foreign professors is also comparatively high, and has been rising since 2002, underlining the international aspect of Swiss universities.

The range of subjects offered for study at Swiss universities is very wide. With the exception of medicine, there are no specific restrictions on admission. For a Bachelor's/Master's degree, foreign students must meet the language requirements and some universities require students to pass an admissions exam. Tuition fees for international students are also very reasonable. In addition to tuition, between CHF 18,000 and CHF 28,000 a year are required for living expenses, depending on the city and personal needs. As a result of the Bologna Accords, which aim to create a European higher education area, all Swiss universities have converted all courses of study to the Bachelor's/Master's system. Within the scope of this reform, courses of study are increasingly offered either partially or fully in English (esp. Master's courses). Switzerland participates in international student exchange programs such as ISEP, which enable foreign students to study at a Swiss university for a semester.

Swiss universities have earned high praise worldwide for their curricula and fields of research in certain areas of specialization in various degree subjects. The two Federal Institutes of Technology in Zurich (ETHZ) and Lausanne (EPFL) work together with the international research community to conduct cutting-edge research. They strive to attract world-renowned scientists. Swiss universities regularly rank among the top 100 universities worldwide and even higher in Europe, while some institutes are part of the world elite. Swiss colleges and universities are also involved in international research programs and offer postgraduate studies (e.g. in cooperation with foreign academic institutions).

www.sbfli.admin.ch

State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.universityrankings.ch

University ranking
Languages: German, English, French

www.swissuni.ch

Swiss association of university continuing education
Languages: German, French

www.swissuniversity.ch

Information for foreign students
Language: German, English, French, Italian

Executive MBAs: The Most Important Providers

(FIG. 54)

SUPPLIER	TEACHING LOCATIONS	HOMEPAGE
International Institute for Management Development (IMD)	Lausanne (Switzerland), Europe (Ireland, Romania), Shanghai (China), Silicon Valley (United States)	www.imd.org/emba English
Omnium Alliance (University of St. Gallen, University of Toronto, partner schools)	Brazil, China, India, Canada, Switzerland Hungary, Argentina, Turkey United Arab Emirates	www.omniumgemba.com www.gemba.unisg.ch English
University of St. Gallen	St. Gallen (Switzerland), China, USA, Brazil, Russia, India, South Africa	www.emba.unisg.ch German/English
University of Zurich	Zurich (Switzerland), Yale (US), Fudan (China)	www.emba.uzh.ch English
Rochester-Bern (University of Bern, University of Rochester)	Bern (Switzerland), Rochester (US), Silicon Valley (US), Shanghai (China)	www.rochester-bern.ch English
Zurich Institute of Business Education	Zurich (Switzerland), Shanghai (China)	www.ceibs.ch German/English
ZfU International Business School	Zurich (Switzerland)	www.zfu.ch/mba German
EMBA Lucerne	Lucerne (Switzerland)	www.hslu.ch/emba German

Sources: collated internally

12.3.2 Universities of Applied Sciences

Universities of applied sciences offer practical training at the Bachelor’s and Master’s level for professionals, most of whom have professional certification and have already gathered professional experience. In addition to normal teaching, these universities carry out research and development projects with private companies, particularly SMEs, and provide advanced training courses to local enterprises.

As a result, universities of applied sciences have partial responsibility for regional science and technology transfer and therefore continuously interact with industry. They have a large pool of teaching, research, and development and services skills that are strongly geared to clients, markets, and practice. In their role as research institutes, they are supported at the national level by the Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI) and work together with the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology and universities.

www.sbfi.admin.ch > Hochschulen > kantonale Hochschulen > Fachhochschulen und pädagogische Hochschulen
Overview of universities of applied sciences
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.kti.admin.ch
www.innosuisse.ch
Commission for Technology and Innovation
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

“In Switzerland, more than 100,000 children at 260 private schools are taught in German, French, Italian, or English (and in some cases in other languages).”

12.3.3 Executive MBA (EMBA) Programs

A special type of further education is the Executive MBA program, which is aimed at managers with many years’ managerial experience under their belt. Generally, EMBA courses are work-study programs that are based on a modular system. Most of the degree programs also include time studying abroad in addition to the courses in Switzerland. IMD in Lausanne is a prime example of a top Swiss school whose EMBA program is regularly ranked as one of the best in the world. The program at the University of St. Gallen is also one of the best programs in the entire world.

www.find-mba.com > Europe > Switzerland
MBA/EMBA- Programs in Switzerland
Language: English

www.ausbildung-weiterbildung.ch
Swiss continuing training portal
Language: German

www.swissuniversity.ch
Programs at Swiss universities
Language: German, English, French, Italian

Cost of Private International Schools, 2014

in US dollars

(FIG. 55)

City	ENGLISH SCHOOL		FRENCH SCHOOL		GERMAN SCHOOL	
	Annual fees for primary school	Annual fees for secondary school	Annual fees for primary school	Annual fees for secondary school	Annual fees for primary school	Annual fees for secondary school
Amsterdam	19,448	20,680	6,936	10,914	9,551	9,551
Brussels	33,156	40,388	6,787	8,228	12,962	14,600
Budapest	19,568	20,518	6,136	7,261	5,117	5,117
Dublin	16,889*	20,238*	5,047	7,507	6,290	5,935
Frankfurt	20,589*	22,391*	4,844	5,908	NA	NA
Geneva	24,568	NA	16,807	18,985	13,233	13,233
London	22,884	24,194	7,481	9,129	10,069	10,069
Milan	17,492	19,935	5,645	7,000	7,573	7,573
New York	39,650	39,650	22,760	25,950	18,875	18,875
Paris	28,214	32,758	6,734	6,754	10,506	10,506
Singapore	23,613	28,551	14,995	16,810	12,975	14,971
Vienna	17,514*	22,235*	7,944	8,061	NA	NA

* No English school available. Information is based on the international school.

Sources: Mercer, Cost-of-Living Report, March 2014

12.4 INTERNATIONAL PRIVATE SCHOOLS AND BOARDING SCHOOLS

The Swiss education system also includes private schools. The more than 260 private schools teach courses in one of the three national languages – German, French and Italian – or in English (and some also offer other languages) to over 100,000 students. International schools are primarily important for employees of foreign companies who often remain in Switzerland for only a short time. During their stay, the children receive a suitable education in their native language or an international education and are prepared for the school-leaving certificates valid in their home country, such as the German Abitur, French baccalauréat, or US university admission certificate. Suitable establishments can be found in every region and all cities. The school fees are average compared to other countries.

Swiss boarding schools are known not only for their high level of education, but also for their strict discipline and international student body. Often they have very selective acceptance criteria and are known for their elite standing in the world.

www.swissprivateschoolregister.com
Register of private schools in Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.swiss-schools.ch
Swiss Federation of Private Schools (SFPS)
Languages: German, English, French, Spanish, Italian

www.sgischools.com
Swiss Group of International Schools
Language: English

12.5 RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

12.5.1 Conducting Research in Switzerland

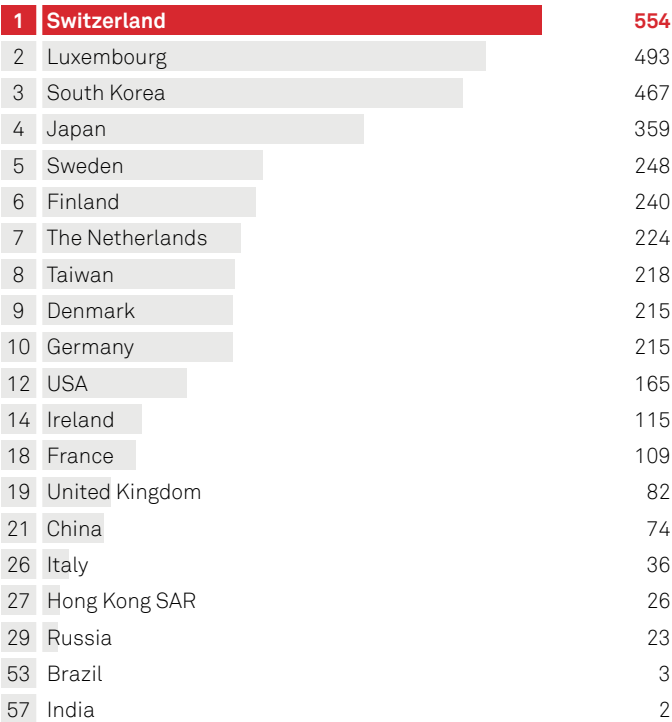
The faster the pace of technological change, the greater the role that research and development play in a country's economy. Switzerland is one of the world's most research-intensive countries. In 2015 it spent more than 3% of its GDP on research and development. Since 1996, the real rate of change has been 4.1% as an annual average and thereby higher than the average annual economic growth during the same period (2.9%). All relevant indicators put Switzerland in the top ranks in international comparisons.

Of the CHF 21.7 billion spent on research and development in 2015, 72% (approx. CHF 15.6 billion) was financed by the private sector. The pharmaceutical industry (39%) and the engineering industry (12%) have the highest expenditure.

Relative to its population, Switzerland has the world's second-highest proportion of Nobel laureates (Fig. 57). Switzerland even tops international rankings in terms of patent applications (see fig. 56).

Patent Applications per 100,000 Inhabitants, 2015

(FIG. 56)



Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

Publishing articles in scientific journals (whether printed or digital) is the most important way to distribute research findings and knowledge. The “impact factor” shows how often articles in one journal are cited in another. Across all scientific disciplines, Switzerland is in second place overall behind the US on this scale. The impact of Swiss publications has been increasing continuously since the 1980s and is now 17% higher than the global average. If the number of publications is compared to the size of the population, Switzerland is currently the world’s most productive nation, with 3.9 publications per 1,000 inhabitants (Fig. 58).

Government funding is provided principally for basic research. The private sector and the scientific community work closely together. Each institute at university and college level has a coordination office for cooperation with the private sector. The Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI) can make significant financial contributions to research and development projects in which companies cooperate with non-profit research organizations.

www.sbfi.admin.ch > Topics > Research and innovation
State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SBFI)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

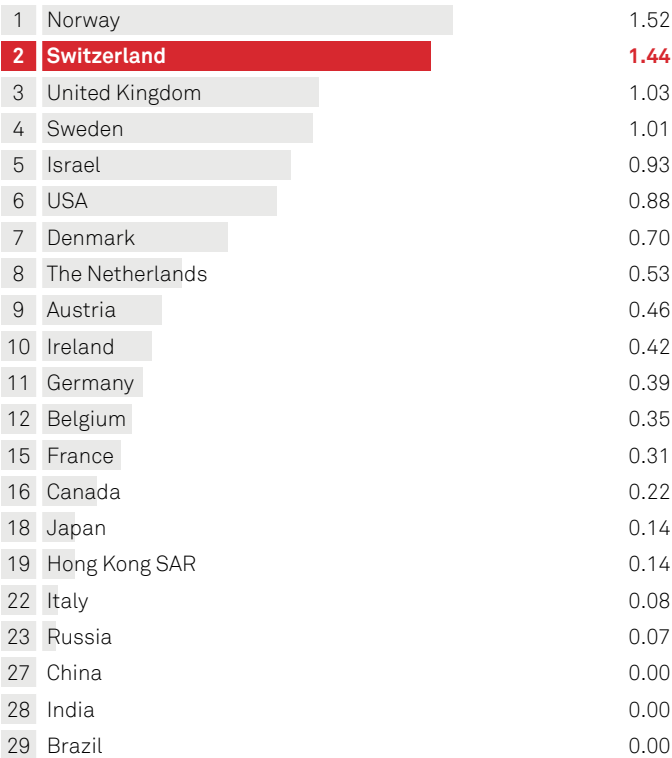
www.kti.admin.ch
Commission for Technology and Innovation
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.snf.ch
Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.myscience.ch
Swiss Portal for Research and Innovation
Languages: German, English, French

Nobel Laureates per Million Inhabitants, 2016

(FIG. 57)



Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

12.5.2 International Collaborative Research

The Swiss private sector has a keen interest in research cooperation with partners abroad, particularly from the EU. Research and development cooperation with innovative foreign partners also gives smaller companies access to know-how from which they can benefit. Bilateral agreements with the EU create even more favorable conditions for this type of cooperation.

Further information on international collaborative research can be found in Section 4.2.4.

www.snf.ch > The SNSF > Research policies > International cooperation
International Collaborative Research
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.sbfi.admin.ch > Research & Innovation > International Cooperation in Research and Innovation
International cooperation in education, research and science
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

Scientific Publications, Average 2009–2013

(FIG. 58)

	NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS PER 1000 INHABITANTS	SHARE OF WORLDWIDE PUBLICATIONS	NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS PER RESEARCHER
Switzerland	3.9	1.2%	0.86
Finland	3.5	0.7%	0.46
Denmark	3.4	0.8%	0.49
The Netherlands	3.4	2.3%	0.94
Sweden	3.2	1.2%	0.60
United Kingdom	2.3	5.7%	0.56
France	2.2	5.7%	0.58
USA	2.2	27.1%	0.55
Austria	1.8	0.6%	0.41
Italy	1.7	4.0%	0.93
Germany	1.6	5.3%	0.39
Japan	1.0	5.0%	0.19
China	0.2	8.4%	0.16

Sources: State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SERI), 2017

Research Establishments in Switzerland

(FIG. 59)

INSTITUTION		LOCATION	HOMEPAGE
CERN	European Organization for Nuclear Research	Geneva	mwww.cern.ch English, French
EAWAG	Aquatic research institute of the ETH	Dübendorf (ZH), Kastanienbaum (LU)	www.eawag.ch German, English, French
EMPA	Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Science + Technology	Thun (BE), Dübendorf (ZH), St. Gallen	www.empa.ch German, English, French
PSI	Paul Scherrer Institute	Villigen (AG)	www.psi.ch German, English, French
SLF	Swiss Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research	Davos (GR)	www.slf.ch German, English, French, Italian
The Graduate Institute	The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies	Geneva	www.graduateinstitute.ch English, French
WSL	Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research	Birmensdorf (ZH), Bellinzona (IT), Davos (GR), Lausanne (VD), Sion (VS)	www.wsl.ch German, English, French, Italian

Sources: Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF)

12.6 SWITZERLAND INNOVATION – THE SWISS INNOVATION PARK

Switzerland Innovation, Switzerland’s innovation park, offers technology companies space to cooperate with leading international universities, including the prestigious Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH Zurich and EPFL), and to use research results to develop marketable products and services. Switzerland Innovation thrives off of interdisciplinary cooperation between science and industry, which opens up new ways of marketing for a new era.

Switzerland Innovation’s technology parks are the ideal location for research-oriented companies to develop their next ground-breaking or highly profitable product. Switzerland thus lives up to its reputation as the most innovative country in the world.

12.6.1 Innovation Focus Areas

Switzerland Innovation focuses on five innovation focus areas: health and life sciences, mobility and transportation, energy, the environment and natural resources, manufacturing and production, and computer and computational science. Each of these fields is a breeding ground for the development of a broad range of innovations that benefit society in areas such as robotics, artificial intelligence, space, nanotechnology, materials research, additive manufacturing, diagnostics, cancer treatments, or renewable energy.

12.6.2 Switzerland Innovation Parks

Switzerland Innovation Park Network West EPFL

Switzerland Innovation Park Network West EPFL brings together the prestigious Swiss Federal Institute of Technology EPFL and the specialized sites of western Switzerland. This productive scientific environment offers the perfect platform for disruptive innovation in all of the innovation focus areas. Scientific collaboration with internationally renowned professors and innovative spin-offs enables the research and development teams of large corporations and creative start-ups to shape the future with new innovations and product developments.

Switzerland Innovation Park Zurich

In close proximity to the top-ranking Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zurich and the University of Zurich, Switzerland Innovation Park Zurich is creating a new platform for research, development and innovation. The first projects in this park came from the areas of robotics and mobility, space travel, and financial and blockchain technology. For example, the ETH intends to establish a robotics and mobility hub to promote collaboration between academic research, companies, and start-ups.

Switzerland Innovation Park Basel Area

The Switzerland Innovation Park Basel Area offers a platform and infrastructure for innovative research and development groups that want to settle close to the world’s leading companies in the sectors of health and life sciences. For example, the “Advanced Osteotomy Tools” spin-off of the University Hospital Basel and the University of Basel deals with robotic surgery and completely redefines bone surgery (osteotomy) through the use of lasers, robotics, and navigation systems.

Innovation Focus Areas and Specialist Areas

(FIG. 60)



Sources: Switzerland Innovation; own representation of S-GE

Switzerland Innovation Park Innovaare

Switzerland Innovation Park Innovaare is a unique innovation center near the Paul Scherrer Institute (PSI) that boasts large-scale, state-of-the-art research facilities. Based on PSI's special expertise, innovations in the area of accelerator technology, new materials and processes, people and health, and energy are brought to market maturity.

Switzerland Innovation Park Biel/Bienne

Switzerland Innovation Park Biel / Bienne has four competence centers – modern production techniques, battery technology, medical technology and smart factory – as well as five priority areas for research and development: health and life sciences; energy, environment and natural resources; manufacturing and materials; computer and information technology; and mobility and transport. Its laboratories and research services are available for SMEs and start-ups and it supports them in development and implementing marketable products.

12.6.3 Target Audience

The strategic position of Switzerland Innovation at the forefront of global research attracts many highly innovative businesses. Nowhere else offers such a wide range of new technologies and the combined expertise of some of the world's leading experts making breakthrough innovations a reality. Research teams and innovation cells work together in an environment that inspires innovation and is focused on successfully launching new products on the global market. Target groups include:

- Medium-sized and large technology companies that develop new marketable products, services, and processes.
- Established companies from high-tech industries with a high value-added ratio and a clear focus on research and development and innovation activities.
- Research groups, the research and development teams of corporations, and start-ups.

12.6.4 Services

A wide range of services and excellent research infrastructure have been specifically designed to ensure the full potential and operational effectiveness of R+D staff and innovation cells at Switzerland Innovation. This includes, among others:

- Support for cooperation with world-class academic partners and easy access to the best talent and researchers.
- A network of thriving high-tech start-ups and spin-offs.
- A platform for the exchange of ideas and for partnering with the research and development teams of international companies.
- Industrial liaison officers who help R & D personnel to expand their options.
- Approximately 200,000 square meters of high-quality laboratories, offices, conference rooms and co-working spaces; large research institutions with accelerator facilities.
- A business-friendly and politically stable environment; access to research funding from Switzerland and the EU; very high quality of life that is attractive to top talents and their families.

www.switzerland-innovation.com
Switzerland Innovation Foundation
Languages: German, English, French



LIVING IN SWITZERLAND

13

13.1	Safety and Quality of Life.....	141
13.2	Relocation and Integration.....	143
13.3	Renting an Apartment	143
13.4	Telephone, Internet, and TV	144
13.5	Insurance	145
13.6	Public Transport	145
13.7	Leisure Activities.....	145
13.8	Income and Cost of Living.....	146

Image
Lakeside promenade, Lugano

Thanks to the excellent quality of life and the safe environment, life expectancy in Switzerland is among the highest in the world. The unspoiled natural surroundings and highly diverse cultural and recreational opportunities attract not only many tourists but also qualified foreign employees. Swiss households have an average monthly earned income of 7,566 Swiss francs, of which about 70% remains as disposable income for consumption after deduction of social security contributions and taxes. Switzerland therefore has the highest purchasing power in the world, despite relatively high prices.

13.1 SAFETY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Switzerland is a very safe country and offers an extremely high quality of life. Switzerland receives high scores, in both cities and rural regions, for important criteria such as income, healthcare, climate and geography, political stability, safety and security, individual freedom, and family and community life.

The Swiss cities of Zurich, Geneva, Basel, and Bern have for years occupied the top spots in global rankings of cities compiled by the global consultancy firm Mercer (see fig. 61).

International Comparison of Quality of Life, 2017

(FIG. 61)

1	Vienna, Austria
2	Zurich, Switzerland
3	Auckland, New Zealand
4	Munich, Germany
5	Vancouver, Canada
6	Düsseldorf, Germany
7	Frankfurt, Germany
8	Geneva, Switzerland
9	Copenhagen, Denmark
10	Basel, Switzerland
11	Sydney, Australia
12	Amsterdam, Netherlands
13	Berlin, Germany
14	Bern, Switzerland
16	Toronto, Canada
21	Luxemburg, Luxembourg
25	Singapore, Singapore
34	Dublin, Ireland
38	Paris, France
40	London, United Kingdom
41	Milan, Italy
44	New York, USA

Sources: Mercer Survey, Quality of Living Rankings, 2017

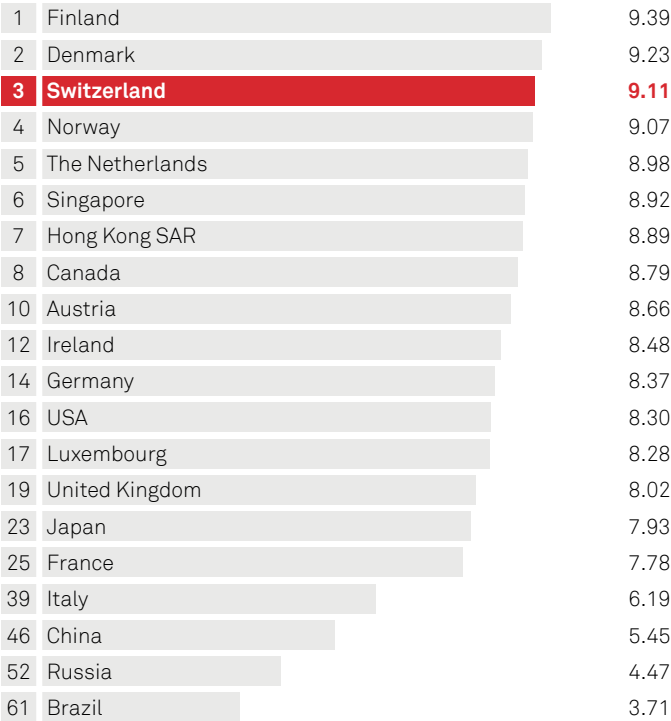
Everyone is guaranteed freedom of movement and safety – everywhere and at all times. There are relatively few large population centers or extensive monotonous and impersonal housing developments. Children generally walk to school unaccompanied. The safe environment and the traditional discretion of the Swiss people are widely valued. Even internationally known celebrities can mostly move about in Switzerland without personal protection.

Switzerland acts like a magnet to qualified workers from abroad. An international comparison of the most attractive countries has ranked it number 1 for several years (see fig. 63) thanks to its stable economic and political climate, top-notch education system, and high productivity. Its people also have high level of international expertise and enjoy an excellent quality of life.

“Switzerland is the country of choice for qualified workers from abroad.”

Personal Safety and Property Rights, 2017

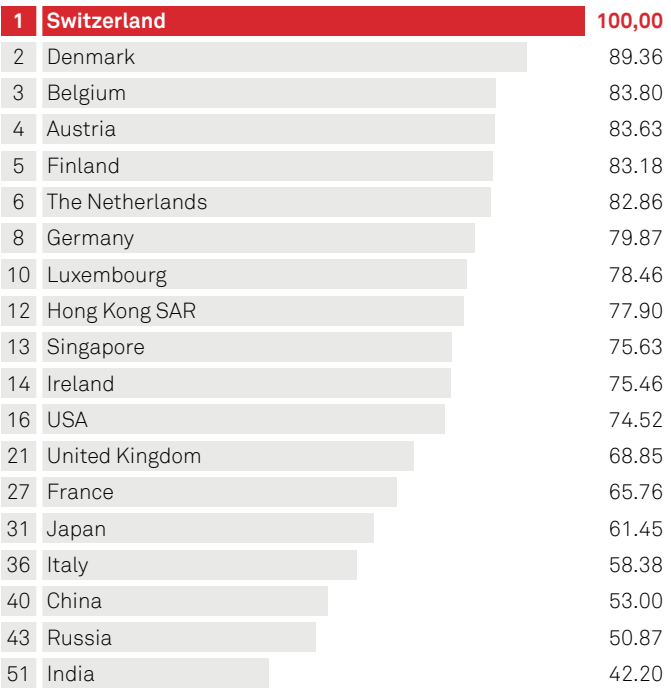
1 = Low, 10 = High
(FIG. 62)



Sources: IMD World Competitiveness Center 2017

Recruiting and Retaining Highly Skilled Labor, 2017

Overall score 0–100
(FIG. 63)



Sources: IMD World Talent Ranking 2017

13.2 RELOCATION AND INTEGRATION

More than 10,000 foreign enterprises currently operate in or from Switzerland. Many of them often send foreign managers and specialists to Switzerland for short-term temporary stays to work as expatriates. There are specialized relocation agencies, expat groups, books, and websites designed to help these transferred employees settle in and adapt quickly to life in Switzerland.

Moving to a foreign country raises many questions depending on one's individual situation. Which school is the most appropriate? Where can you shop? How do we find a house? How high are the taxes, duties, and other fees? There are competent, internationally experienced consultants in all parts of the country who can give further assistance with these issues. Specialized relocation agencies offer comprehensive packages that cover relocation issues and the initial orientation period in Switzerland. The Internet offers a wealth of information. A number of the cantonal economic development agencies also have their own online information platforms that cater specifically to expatriates.

www.ch.ch > Moving to Switzerland
Moving to Switzerland
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

13.2.1 Moving

The personal effects of people moving to Switzerland (household items, personal collections, animals, vehicles, etc.) can be imported duty-free. The only requirement is that the imported items must have been used personally abroad for at least six months and will continue to be used in Switzerland after arrival. In addition to a list of personal effects to be imported, the entry-point customs office must on arrival also be provided with an employment contract, rental agreement, or the de-registration certificate from the country of departure (for citizens from EU25/EFTA countries) or residence permit (nationals of other countries). After entering Switzerland you are obligated to register with the local residential authorities within fourteen days. To do so, the following documents are required:

- A valid official identification document such as a passport or ID card (for each family member entering the country)
- Confirmation of health insurance (proof of mandatory basic coverage). The period for registering with a Swiss health insurance fund is three months, so confirmation of health insurance can also be submitted later.
- A passport photo (for each family member entering the country)
- Marital status documents (e.g. an excerpt from the register of births and marriages, marriage certificate, birth certificates for children, etc.)
- An employment contract

If a vehicle is being brought into Switzerland, it must be registered for a technical inspection and be insured and licensed in Switzerland within twelve months. A Swiss driver's license is also required within the same time period.

www.ezv.admin.ch > Information individuals > Personal property, students, holiday homes, getting married and inheritance > Importing into Switzerland
Form for listing imported personal effects
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

13.2.2 Language Courses

Many Swiss citizens understand English and/or a second national language of Switzerland. In order to become integrated into Swiss society, however, knowledge of the national language spoken in the particular region is a great advantage. Depending on the area, the language may be German, French, Italian, or Romansh. The fact that there are four national languages in Switzerland does not mean, however, that all Swiss people speak four languages.

There are large numbers of private companies and individuals offering language courses tailored to every need. Public institutions also offer language courses in the respective national language, partly in conjunction with immigrant integration efforts. We recommend searching the Internet or consulting the Website of the Swiss Federation for Adult Learning for courses.

www.alice.ch > Services > Finding further education
Swiss Federation for Adult Learning
Languages: German, French

13.3 RENTING AN APARTMENT

Anyone interested in renting an apartment should contact the advertiser (often a professional property management company) and set up an appointment to see the apartment. If the apartment meets your expectations, you are generally asked to fill out an application form. This form includes information such as age, marital status, profession or occupation, children, residential status, employer, salary, and pets. Applicants are often required to provide an abstract from the debt enforcement register as proof that they can pay the rent. This document can be obtained from the local debt enforcement office.

13.3.1 Deposits and Rental Agreements

Tenants must often pay a certain amount in advance as a security deposit. This may total up to three months' rent, which is deposited in a special bank account in the tenant's name. The deposit serves as security for the landlord. After moving out, the tenant receives the deposit back with interest.

Tenants have the right to move into a clean and usable property. The formal handover takes place before the new tenant moves in. The tenant and landlord inspect the condition of the property together and record any defects in writing.

In general, tenants pay their rent monthly in advance for the next month. Tenants mostly also pay additional costs for heating, hot water or cable television, for example. Tenants receive monthly or quarterly bills from the utility company for the electricity consumed in the apartment itself. Since there are a number of providers of telephone and Internet services (and often cable television as well), tenants enter into separate agreements for these services and pay the providers directly.

“In Switzerland you can choose among countless providers of fixed-line and mobile telephony, VoIP, and Internet access.”

If landlords wish to increase the rent (after renovation or a rise in mortgage rates, for example), they must do so using an official form. Any tenant who considers a rent increase to be unreasonable has 30 days in which to submit a written appeal to the arbitration authority.

The lease or rental agreement may be terminated by either the tenant or the landlord. The required terms of notice are stated in the agreement. Any tenant giving notice of termination must do so in writing, preferably by registered mail. Married couples have equal rights. This means that the notice of termination is not valid unless signed by both spouses. When moving out, tenants are required to hand over a clean property. The tenant and landlord inspect the condition of the property together and record any defects in writing. They then decide jointly which party shall pay for any repairs that might be necessary.

13.3.2 House Rules and Maintenance

In most cases, professional property management companies are responsible for building management. In large buildings in particular, there is also a building superintendent who can answer tenants' questions, make minor repairs, and oversee security and maintenance. Regional tenants' associations can also assist tenants with problems.

www.bwo.admin.ch > How we live > Info sheet "Living in Switzerland"

Important information for tenants

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian

Tenants' associations

German-speaking Switzerland: www.mieterverband.ch

Language: German

French-speaking Switzerland: www.asloca.ch

Language: French

Ticino: www.asi-infoalloggio.ch

Language: Italian

13.4 TELEPHONE, INTERNET, AND TV

Before liberalization in 1998, the Swiss telecommunications market was dominated by Swisscom. Today you can choose among numerous providers of landline and mobile telephone, VoIP, and Internet services. Swisscom, Salt, and Sunrise are the major providers of mobile telephone services. However, there are also other companies that use the networks of the major providers and offer very attractive terms (including M-Budget Mobile, CoopMobile, yallo, mobilezone). All services are also available to foreign nationals who are living in Switzerland temporarily. Even so, registration is obligatory (even for prepaid plans). Setting up Internet access is easy. Analog connections, ISDN, DSL, and a variety of cable connections are available.

upc cablecom and Swisscom are market leaders in television. With upc cablecom's analog cable connection, which is already installed in three quarters of all Swiss households, you can receive more than 60 TV channels. An additional receiver is required for digital reception. It is also possible to receive more than 200 channels via the telephone line with Bluewin TV (from Swisscom). More than 300 regional cable operators offer services similar to those of upc cablecom. And of course you can also receive television programs via satellite. Anyone who listens to the radio or watches television in Switzerland must always pay reception fees. These license fees must be paid regardless of which programs are watched or listened to or how they are received. The license fees for radio and TV channels are invoiced and collected by Billag AG.

www.local.ch
Phone book
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.comparis.ch
Comparison of providers and prices
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.teltarif.ch
Comparison of providers and prices
Language: German

www.billag.com
Billag
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

13.5 INSURANCE

Swiss citizens enjoy comprehensive insurance coverage. Swiss families spend an average of 19% of their household budget on insurance. Medical insurance is by far the most expensive insurance.

Contributions to pension and unemployment insurance are mandatory, as are medical and fire insurance (for property owners). Contributions to pension and unemployment insurance are set by the government and are deducted directly from employees' salaries. Medical and liability insurance can be purchased privately based on one's own choice of provider.

Tenants are urged to take out insurance covering household contents and personal liability (available either separately or in combination). Contents insurance covers damage such as water damage to the floor caused by an overflowing bathtub. Personal liability insurance covers damage caused by the insured person to third parties (property damage and/or personal injury).

Every owner of a motor vehicle is required to have motor vehicle liability insurance. This covers personal injury and/or property damage caused by operation of the insured motor vehicle, regardless of who is driving the vehicle at the time of the accident. Comprehensive and fully comprehensive cover are also recommended.

13.6 PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Thanks to public transport, people in Switzerland have many ways to get around, even if they do not have their own car. The rail, bus, and boat network is very dense, and traffic intensity is one of the highest in the world. Boats not only operate for tourism purposes but also represent important transport connections. There is not a single village in Switzerland that is not served by some form of public transport at least every two hours.

There is a wide range of tickets and passes for public transport. The basic rule is that the longer a pass is valid, the cheaper it is. For a 12-month pass you pay the equivalent of eight months' worth of single tickets. And with the "GA travelcard," a pass for all forms of public transport, you can travel at all times on the entire SBB rail network, most private railways, boats, buses, and urban transit networks. The low-priced "Halbtax-Abo" gives holders a 50% discount on SBB routes as well as many private and mountain railways. Children up to 6 years of age travel free of charge. Under-16s with a "Junior travelcard" can travel for free with their parents, as can those with the "Children's Co-travelcard" when accompanied by an adult. Young people between the ages of 16 and 25 can ride free in 2nd class cars after 7 p.m. with the "Track 7" pass. Although these special rates benefit people living in Switzerland, tourists can also benefit from offers that are designed especially for them.

www.sbb.ch
Swiss national railway operator SBB: Timetable, tickets
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.swisstravelsystem.com
Traveling in Switzerland for foreign visitors
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

13.7 LEISURE ACTIVITIES

13.7.1 Recreational and Cultural Offers

Switzerland offers a great variety of cultural and recreational activities. It is no coincidence that the country is an ideal year-round destination for nature lovers, sports enthusiasts, people seeking peace and quiet, art aficionados, and business travelers. Switzerland is synonymous with individuality, true relaxation, and adventure. Both tourists and permanent Swiss residents find just what they need here: summer and winter sports on the doorstep, charming market towns and busy urban centers, culture and nature, relaxation, and action every hour of the day. Thanks to decentralized residential development, cultural life and opportunities for participating in sports and social activities are plentiful in both the city and the countryside. Switzerland is home to prestigious events like the Lucerne Festival and Montreux Jazz festival, the Menuhin Festival in Gstaad, the Film Festival in Locarno, Art Basel, the Omega European Masters golf tournament in Crans-Montana, Swiss Indoors Basel, and the world-class athletics meeting in Zurich. In addition to these major events, there is also a lively local cultural scene.

With more than 1,100 museums, Switzerland has the world's highest density of museums. Nine opera houses and 15 theaters provide venues for a wide range of theatrical events, from amateur dramatics to performances by international artists. More than 800 libraries are open to the public. Switzerland's ten largest libraries hold more than 55 million titles.

Lovers of the great outdoors will find all their heart desires in the country's 20 nature reserves and on the more than 85,000 kilometers (53,000 miles) of footpaths and mountain hiking paths. The nature reserves cover a total area of 6,335 square kilometers (2,446 square miles) and thus about 15% of the total surface area of Switzerland. There are also 11 UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Sites to marvel at. These include the prehistoric houses on stilts all around the Alps, the terraced vineyards of Lavaux, the three castles of Bellinzona, the Benedictine monastery in St. Gallen, and the old town of Bern.

Popular sports are also extremely beloved in Switzerland. Football clubs and gymnastics associations can be found in the smallest communities. Switzerland's sport infrastructure comprises more than 28,000 sports facilities, including more than 4,000 sports halls and more than 3,500 all-weather fields. In elite sports, it's clear to see that Switzerland is primarily a winter sports country. For example, Switzerland typically finishes among the top ten nations at the Winter Olympics. Tennis is one exception to this rule. There are no fewer than two Swiss players – Roger Federer and Stanislas Wawrinka – among the world's top ten (as of 2017). It's therefore hardly surprising that the sport is extremely popular, even among amateur players.

www.myswitzerland.com
Swiss Tourist Board, including calendar of events
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.theater.ch
Theater and dance
Languages: German, French, Italian

www.swissworld.org > Society > Traditions
Seasonal customs
Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

13.7.2 Associations and Volunteer Work

Many Swiss citizens are actively involved in clubs and pursue hobbies during their non-working hours. Even the smallest communities and villages cultivate and promote an active cultural and club life and offer the necessary infrastructure. From music, theater, sports, and politics to hiking and conservation, there is hardly an area of life that does not have its own special club. There is often no clear-cut dividing line between hobbies and volunteer work. Approximately a fifth of the population in Switzerland engages in institutionalized volunteer and thus unpaid work. Since Switzerland does not require clubs and organizations to be registered, there is no complete list. However, the homepages of municipal websites generally give information about local clubs.

www.benevol.ch
Volunteer work
Languages: German, French

www.ch.ch > Addresses of administrative authorities
Communal authorities
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

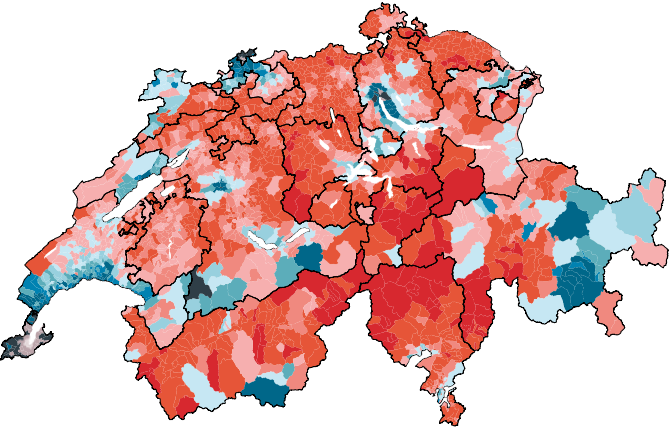
13.8 INCOME AND COST OF LIVING

The average Swiss household has 2.17 inhabitants with a combined monthly earned income of 7,566 Swiss francs. Together with income from other sources and transfer income, gross income totals 9,946 Swiss francs. After deduction of social security contributions and taxes, approximately 70% remains as disposable income for consumption. There are considerable regional differences in real disposable income (after the deduction of all fixed costs). Real disposable income is below the Swiss average (low RDI value), not only in the business centers but also in a small number of mountain communities. These are popular tourism areas with very high real estate prices. The cantons of Aargau, Lucerne, Schaffhausen, Schwyz, Solothurn, and Thurgau are in attractive locations and have high real disposable income (high RDI value), while the cities of Bern, Geneva, Lausanne, and Zurich are at the other end of the scale (Fig. 64).

According to a UBS study (Fig. 66), Switzerland is in first place with the world's highest purchasing power, i.e. the highest real disposable income when compared with prices.

Real Disposable Income of Swiss Municipalities, 2016

(FIG. 64)



Sources: Credit Suisse, 2017

RDI Indicator 2016



Average Household Budget, 2015

(CHF)

(FIG. 65)

GROSS INCOME (EARNED INCOME TRANSFERS, ETC.)	9,946	100.0%
Mandatory transfer expenses	-2,773	-27.9%
Social security contributions	-976	-9.8%
Taxes	-1,208	-12.1%
Health insurance: premiums for basic cover	-589	-5.9%
Monetary transfer expenses to other households	-215	-2.2%
DISPOSABLE INCOME	6,957	70.0%
Other insurance, fees, and transfers	-582	-5.8%
CONSUMER SPENDING	-5,298	-53.3%
Foodstuffs and non-alcoholic drinks	-627	-6.3%
Alcoholic drinks and tobacco	-108	-1.1%
Restaurants and accommodation	-571	-5.7%
Clothing and shoes	-222	-2.2%
Living costs and energy	-1,458	-14.7%
Furnishings and ongoing household costs	-235	-2.4%
Health spending	-261	-2.6%
Transportation	-759	-7.6%
Communication	-187	-1.9%
Entertainment, recreation, and culture	-557	-5.6%
Other goods and services	-314	-3.2%
SPORADIC INCOME	311	3.1%
SAVINGS	1,388	14.0%
Number of people per household (median)	2.17	

Sources: Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO), 2017

International Comparison of Purchasing Power, 2015

Hourly wage divided by total cost of goods, including rent

(FIG. 66)

Luxembourg	134.3
Zurich	130.5
Geneva	127.5
Munich	104.2
Frankfurt	102.0
Berlin	101.9
New York	100.0
Lyon	96.9
Paris	92.4
Dublin	91.4
Brussels	90.9
Oslo	86.6
London	85.3
Amsterdam	81.7
Rome	80.8
Tokyo	80.0
Hong Kong SAR	70.4
São Paulo	65.4
Copenhagen	64.5
Moscow	41.4
Shanghai	29.6
Beijing	23.6
Mumbai	20.3

Sources: UBS, Prices and Earnings 2015

www.bfs.admin.ch > Look for statistics > Economic and social situation of the population > Income, consumption, and wealth

Statistics on income, consumption, and wealth

Languages: German, English, French, Italian



INVESTMENT PROMOTION

14

14.1	Responsibilities and Services.....	149
14.2	Promotional Policy and Instruments.....	150

Investment promotion is an important part of Swiss economic policy and takes the form of close cooperation between businesses, the state, the cantons, and Switzerland Global Enterprise. The activities used to promote foreign direct investment in Switzerland are organized and coordinated by Switzerland Global Enterprise on behalf of the state.

14.1 RESPONSIBILITIES AND SERVICES

In accordance with Switzerland's federal form of government, responsibility for investment promotion is shared between the federal government and the cantons.

Acting on behalf of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the cantons, Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE) informs foreign potential investors about Switzerland's particular strengths as well as the underlying conditions for doing business in Switzerland. The offices S-GE maintains abroad are known as "Swiss Business Hubs" (SBH). The specialists at these hubs are the first point of contact for foreign investors. Foreign investors from countries without SBHs can contact the S-GE team of experts in Switzerland directly. Its services for foreign companies include assessing the potential of their projects before they are presented to the cantons.

Area and cantonal economic development agencies are responsible for informing potential investors about the advantages of locating a business in their respective canton, presenting them with concrete location proposals, and organizing local support for investors as they settle in. Even after an investment project has been completed successfully, the economic development agencies continue to look after the investors through a kind of customer service.

S-GE supports foreign investors with the following tasks through the network of cantonal economic development agencies and various private-sector partners:

- Making contact with regional and cantonal economic development offices
- Looking for the ideal location in Switzerland
- Meeting legal and administrative requirements
- Working together with research centers and universities
- Obtaining work and residence permits
- Defining the ideal corporate structure and understanding the Swiss tax system

Switzerland Global Enterprise supports companies at all times throughout their investment project. Contact addresses can be found in the appendix.

www.s-ge.com/invest

Switzerland Global Enterprise S-GE

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

www.s-ge.com/areas

www.s-ge.com/cantons

Areas and cantons

Languages: German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese, Japanese

14.2 PROMOTIONAL POLICY AND INSTRUMENTS

In line with Switzerland’s liberal economic system, economic policy in Switzerland focuses on optimum structuring and support for the general business environment. Financial assistance programs are time-limited and strategic. In general, financial assistance from the state always complements private initiatives.

The possible funding options, the mix of various instruments and the scale of payments depend on the specific investment project. There is always room for individual solutions. It is therefore advisable, once a project has been roughly evaluated, to discuss it with the cantonal economic development agencies first.

14.2.1 Cantonal Promotion

Most Swiss cantons have their own economic development agencies, although some of these work together with other cantons. All cantons can offer tax relief to businesses as an economic development incentive. Other forms of economic assistance vary from canton to canton, depending on interest and regional economic conditions.

14.2.2 Tax Relief as Part of Regional Policy

As part of federal regional policy, specific support is given for the economic development of structurally weak regions such as mountainous areas and rural districts. The federal government can support major investment and innovation projects as well as the establishment of new companies in these regions through tax relief. The main requirement for federal tax relief is that the canton in question also supports the project by providing an equivalent level of tax relief. Since July 1, 2016, 93 regional centers in 19 cantons belong to the regions applying such relief.

The application process for tax relief in connection with regional policies is always handled by the cantons. The cantonal economic development agencies in question provide consultation on the best way to proceed.

See also chapter 9.4.3

www.seco.admin.ch > Promotion activities > SME policy
Tax Relief as Part of Regional Policy
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

Examples of Cantonal Business Promotion Instruments

(FIG. 67)

RANGE OF SERVICES	TYPE OF SUPPORT
Procurement of sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Providing commercial premises and land– Contribution to the costs of planning and / or building industrial premises– Subsidizing the cost of converting corporate buildings
Taxes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Offering tax relief during the start-up or construction phase as well as for restructuring projects
Funding investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Granting or assisting with securities for bank loans– Assisting with interest-rate cuts or paying/waiving interest costs– Offering interest-free or low-interest cantonal loans– One-off contributions (“à fonds perdu”)

Sources: Legal basis and information from cantonal economic development agencies

Areas of Application for Tax Breaks, 2016

(FIG. 68)



● Areas of application as per DEA directive of July 1, 2016

Sources: State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), 2017

14.2.3 Switzerland Innovation

Switzerland Innovation offers domestic and foreign business in Switzerland's first-class locations for developing innovative ideas into marketable products. As a collective instrument of the Federal Government, cantons, science, and industry, Switzerland Innovation strengthens Switzerland's innovative capacity in international competition and creates a platform for making connections between Swiss universities and innovative enterprises.

Large sites suitable for development in the vicinity of leading universities are made available to internationally operating businesses for setting up research and development facilities. Switzerland Innovation consists of five regional locations and one national foundation.

For more information on Switzerland Innovation, please see chapter 12.6.

14.2.4 Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI)

CTI is Switzerland's federal innovation promotion agency. For more than 60 years, it has fostered the transfer of knowledge and technology between businesses and universities. It brings partners from these two areas together in applied research and development projects and provides assistance to start-up companies during the development phase. Switzerland has one of the highest levels of innovation of any country in the world. CTI has a budget of about CHF 100 million and operates under the motto "Science to Market." Companies work with universities to generate new knowledge that can be used to develop products and services and bring them to market.

CTI provides funding for:

- market-oriented R+D projects carried out jointly by companies and universities in the areas of industry and services,
- the establishment and development of science-based companies,
- transfer of knowledge and technology through platforms and networks.

R&D project grants are available in all disciplines involving scientific innovation. Project applications are submitted in accordance with the bottom-up principle. Grants are awarded on the basis of innovative content and market potential.

In its Venturelab program, CTI helps promising entrepreneurs get started by guiding them through customized training modules. The modules give them the tools and methods they need to implement an exciting business idea and establish a new company. Young entrepreneurs can also apply for professional coaching. Support is provided to knowledge-intensive technology-based companies with great market potential.

The CTI promotes knowledge and technology transfer (KTT) between universities and industry, where this does not happen without support. CTI's KTT support strengthens knowledge and technology transfer between universities and industries in the same region. Professionally run national thematic networks (NTNs) provide on-site assistance to SMEs and universities in making contacts and developing projects.

Innovative Swiss companies and researchers are also offered development opportunities through access to international programs and networks such as IS, ESA, and EUREKA.

For the CTI to be as effective as possible in its role as a promoter of innovation and to be well equipped for the challenges of the future, it was converted on January 1, 2018 from a government commission to a public institution called Innosuisse.

www.kti.admin.ch
Commission for Technology and Innovation (CTI)
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.innosuisse.ch
Innosuisse - Swiss agency for innovation promotion
Languages: German, English, French, Italian

www.venturelab.ch
Venturelab
Languages: German, English, French

www.ctistartup.ch
KTI Start-up
Language: English

14.2.5 Technology Parks and Business Incubators

Facilities and support centers designed to encourage or facilitate entrepreneurial activity are now part of an economy's infrastructure. Switzerland has a large number of technology parks and business incubators or start-up centers. Most have joined together to form networks or associations. They differ in concept and specific focus; some have developed in close cooperation with universities while others stem from purely private initiatives. They offer premises (generally at preferential rates) for the start-up and development phase as well as shared infrastructure and professional support.

Participation by their umbrella organizations in international networks enables them to use technology park infrastructures throughout Europe. This enables companies to speed up the difficult start-up phase and save on start-up costs. A number of business incubation centers have also been formed in major cities. They too serve as short-term start-up locations for foreign companies establishing new operations in Switzerland by providing flexible and expandable premises, contacts, and business incubation support.

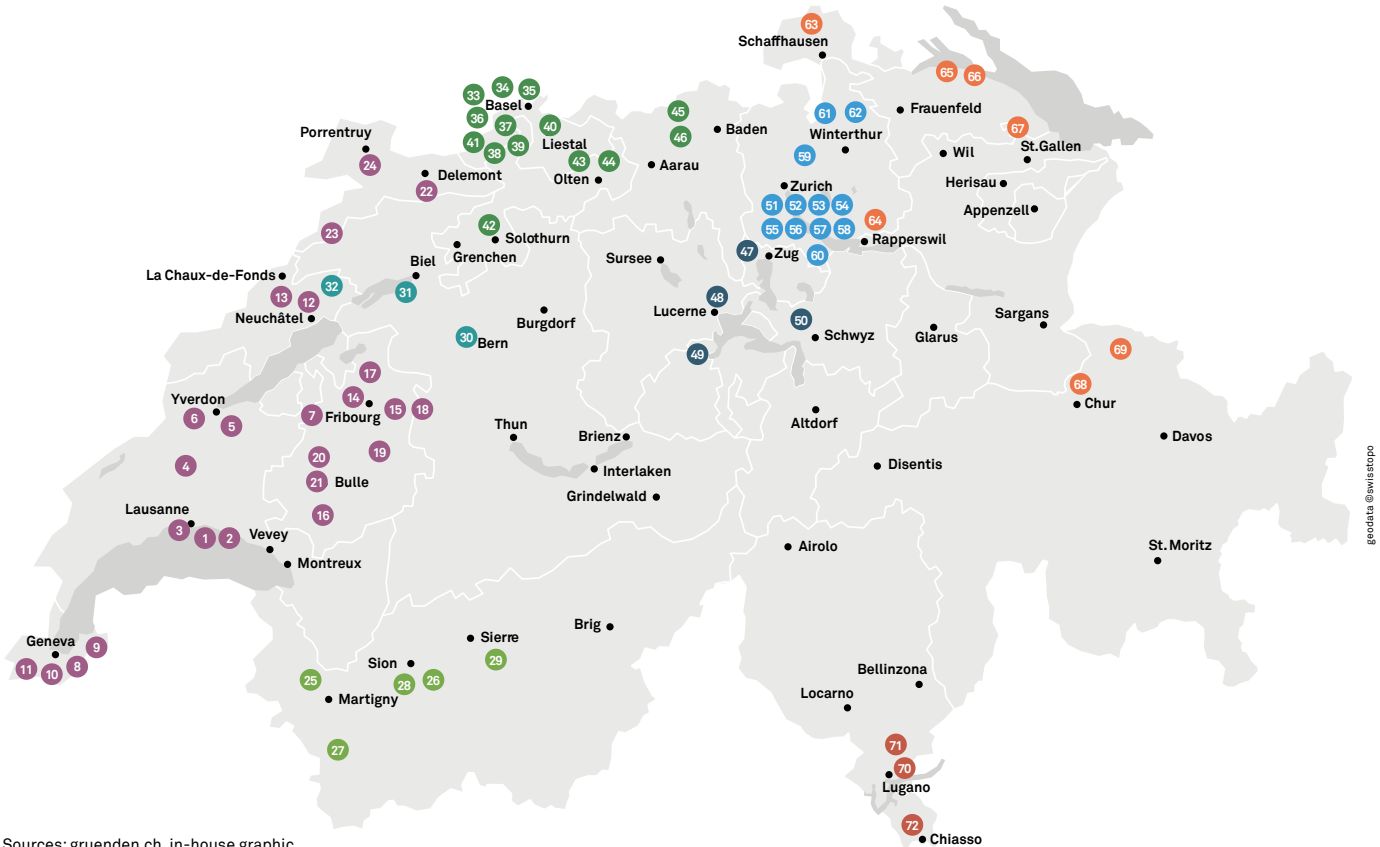
Technology parks and business incubators have the following advantages:

- They provide services such as consultation, coaching, telephone services, etc.
- They offer contacts to universities
- Companies are surrounded by like-minded entrepreneurs
- Infrastructure and flexible premises
- Networking
- Higher chance of success: the average survival rate is more than 90%

www.swissparks.ch
Association of Swiss Technology Parks and Business Incubators
Language: English

Technology Parks and Business Incubators

(FIG. 69)



Sources: gruenden.ch, in-house graphic

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Technopark-Allianz

www.technopark-allianz.ch

SwissParks – Association of Swiss Technology Parks and Business Incubators

www.swissparks.ch

Interest group Coworking Schweiz

www.coworking-schweiz.ch

Switzerland Innovation, innovation park at 5 locations

www.switzerland-innovation.com

WESTERN SWITZERLAND

1 EPFL Innovation Park, Lausanne

www.epfl-innovationpark.ch

2 Biopôle Business Park Lausanne, Epalinges, Life Sciences

www.biopole.ch

3 La Fondation des Ateliers de la Ville de Renens, Renens

www.ateliersvdr.ch

4 TecOrbe, Cleantech, Orbe
www.tecorbe.ch

5 Y-Parc - Swiss Technopole, Yverdon-les-Bains
www.y-parc.ch

6 Center for microwelding, Sainte-Croix (VD)
www.technopole1450.ch

7 Aéroport Broye, Aviation and aerospace industry, Payerne
www.aeropole.ch

8 Campus Biotech, Geneva
www.campusbiotech.ch

9 Impact Hub Geneva
<http://geneva.impacthub.net>

10 Ecllosion SA, incubator, Plan-les-Ouates
www.ecllosion.com

11 FONGIT, technology center, Plan-les-Ouates
www.fongit.ch

12 Neode Parc center for micro / nanotechnology, Neuchâtel
www.neode.ch

13 Neode Parc center for micro- / nanotechnology, La Chaux-de-Fonds
www.neode.ch

14 Bluefactory, innovation center, Fribourg
www.bluefactory.ch

15 Fri Up, business incubator, Fribourg
www.friup.ch

16 Fri Up, business incubator south, Vaulruz
www.friup.ch

17 Fri Up, business incubator north, Murten
www.friup.ch

18 Innovation Lab Fribourg
www.innolabfribourg.ch

19 Marly Innovation Center, Marly
www.marly-innovation-center.org

20 Venturi Start-up Accelerator, Villaz-St-Pierre
<http://venturi.vivier.ch>

21 Le Vivier, Technology park
Parc technologique Villaz-St-Pierre
www.vivier.ch

- 22 medtech lab, Creapole SA, Courroux
www.creapole.ch
- 23 media lab, Creapole SA, La Noirmont
www.creapole.ch
- 24 micro lab, Creapole SA, Porrentruy
www.creapole.ch

VALAIS

- 25 BioArk, biotechnology center, Monthey
www.bioark.ch
- 26 BlueArk, technology center for renewable energy, Sion
www.blueark.ch
- 27 IdeArk, technological center for multimodal interaction, Martigny
www.ideark.ch
- 28 PhytoArk, development center for plant-based products, Sion-Conthey
www.phytoark.ch
- 29 TechnoArk, ICT center, Sierre
www.technoark.ch

BERN

- 30 Impact Hub Bern
www.bern.impacthub.net
- 31 Switzerland Innovation Park, Biel/Bienne
www.innocampus.ch
- 32 Technologieparks, Saint-Imier, TP I (Techtransfer), TP II (Cleantech)
www.saint-imier.ch

NORTHWEST SWITZERLAND

- 33 Basel incubator, start-up center of the University of Basel and the FHNW
www.basel-incubator.ch
- 34 Technologiepark Basel
www.technologiepark-basel.ch
- 35 Switzerland Innovation Park, Basel
www.switzerland-innovation.com/baselarea
- 36 Startup Academy, Basel
www.startup-academy.ch
- 37 Stellwerk Basel, for self-employed people in creative industries
www.stellwerkbasel.ch
- 38 Business Park Laufental & Thierstein, Zwingen
www.bplt.ch
- 39 business parc, Reinach
www.businessparc.ch
- 40 Tenum AG, center for construction, energy and environmental technology, Liestal
www.tenum.ch
- 41 TZW technology center, Witterswil, Life Sciences
www.tzw-witterswil.ch
- 42 Business incubator, Canton of Solothurn, Solothurn
www.gzs.ch

- 43 Plug&Start, Start-up Factory, Olten
www.plug-and-start.ch
- 44 SwissbioLabs, Olten, accelerator for diagnostics and bioanalytics
www.Swissbiolabs.ch
- 45 Switzerland Innovation Park Innovaare at PSI, Villigen
www.parkinnovaare.ch
- 46 Technopark Aargau, Brugg
www.technopark-aargau.ch

CENTRAL SWITZERLAND

- 47 BusinessPark Zug, business incubator
www.businessparkzug.ch
- 48 Technopark Lucerne, ROOT D4
www.technopark-luzern.ch
- 49 microPark Pilatus, Alpnach
www.microparkpilatus.ch
- 50 Technology center Schwyz, Steinen
www.tzsz.ch

ZURICH

- 51 Technopark Zurich
www.technopark.ch
- 52 BlueLion, Zurich; incubator for ICT and cleantech companies
www.bluelion.ch
- 53 Impact Hub Zurich
www.zurich.impacthub.ch
- 54 StartZentrum Zurich
www.startzentrum.ch
- 55 Switzerland Innovation Park Zurich
www.switzerland-innovation.com/Zurich
- 56 Swiss Startup Factory, Zurich
www.swissstartupfactory.com
- 57 Biotechnology park, Schlieren Zurich
www.bio-technopark.ch
- 58 startup space, Schlieren Zurich
www.startup-space.ch
- 59 glaTec - Empa incubator, Dübendorf
www.glatec.ch
- 60 grow - Gründerorg. Wädenswil
www.grow-waedenswil.ch
- 61 Technopark Winterthur, Winterthur
www.technopark-winterthur.ch
- 62 RUNWAY, Start-up incubator, ZHAW Winterthur
www.zhaw.ch/runway

EASTERN SWITZERLAND

- 63 RhyTech - Materials Work, Neuhausen
www.rhytech.ch
- 64 Futur foundation, business incubator Rapperswil-Jona
www.futur.ch
- 65 High tech center, Tägerwilen
www.high-tech-center.ch

- 66 Bodensee Technologie & Trade Center, business incubator, Kreuzlingen
www.bttc.ch
- 67 Startfeld Innozentrum, St. Gallen
www.startfeld.ch
- 68 HTW Entrepreneurship Lab, Chur
www.e-towerchur.ch
- 69 Innozet, TRUMPF, Grösch
www.innozet.ch

TICINO

- 70 Centro Promozione Start-up, Lugano
www.cpstartup.ch
- 71 Tecnopolo Manno
www.agire.ch
- 72 Tecnopolo Chiasso
www.agire.ch

15.1 INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

15.1.1 Swiss Business Hubs Investment Promotion (target markets)

Europe

Germany

Swiss Business Hub Germany
c/o Consulate General of
Switzerland
Hirschstrasse 22
70173 Stuttgart, Germany
Phone +49 711 22 29 43 29
stu.sbhgermany@eda.admin.ch

France

Swiss Business Hub France
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
142, rue de Grenelle
75007 Paris, France
Phone +33 1 49 55 67 85
par.sbhfrance@eda.admin.ch

Italy

Swiss Business Hub Italy
c/o Consulate General of
Switzerland – Italy
Via Palestro, 2
I-20121 Milan
Phone +39 02 77 79 1641
mil.sbhitalia@eda.admin.ch

Russia

Swiss Business Hub Russia
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
Kursovoy Per. 7
119034 Moscow, Russia
Phone +7 495 225 88 41
mot.sbhrussia@eda.admin.ch

UK & Ireland

Swiss Business Hub UK & Ireland
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
16-18 Montagu Place
London W1H 2BQ, UK
Phone +44 20 7616 6000
lon.sbhuk@eda.admin.ch

Americas

Brazil

Swiss Business Hub Brazil
c/o Consulate General of
Switzerland
AV. Paulista 1754, 4º andar Edificio
Grande Avenida
01310-920 São Paulo / SP, Brazil
Phone +55 11 33 72 82 00
sao.sbhbrasil@eda.admin.ch

USA

Swiss Business Hub USA
c/o Consulate General of
Switzerland
633 Third Avenue, 30th Floor
New York, NY 10017-6706, United
States
Phone +1 212 599 5700 ext 1032
nyc.sbhusa@eda.admin.ch

Asia

China

Swiss Business Hub China
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
Sanlitun Dongwujie 3
100600 Beijing/China, China
Phone +86 10 8532 88 88
bei.sbhchina@eda.admin.ch

India

Swiss Business Hub India
c/o Consulate General of
Switzerland
102 Maker Chamber IV, 10th floor
222, Jamnalal Bajaj Marg
Nariman Point
Mumbai 400 021, India
Phone +91 22 2285 8161
mum.sbhindia@eda.admin.ch

Japan

Swiss Business Hub Japan
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
5 Chome-9-12 Minamiazabu
Tokyo 106-0047, Japan
Phone +81 3 5449 8424
tok.sbhjapan@eda.admin.ch

15.1.2 Additional Switzerland Global Enterprise Swiss Business Hubs

Austria

Swiss Business Hub Austria
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
Prinz Eugen-Strasse 9a
1030 Vienna, Austria
Phone +43 1 795 05 37
vie.sbhautria@eda.admin.ch

Poland

Swiss Business Hub Poland
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
Aleje Ujazdowskie 27
00-540 Warsaw, Poland
Phone +48 22 628 04 81
var.sbhpoland@eda.admin.ch

Spain

Swiss Business Hub Spain
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
Calle Nuñez de Balboa 35A-7,
Edificio Goya
28001 Madrid, Spain
Phone +34 91 432 04 66
mad.sbhspain@eda.admin.ch

Turkey

Swiss Business Hub Turkey
c/o Consulate General of
Switzerland
Esentepe Mah. Büyükdere Cad.
173, 1. Levent Plaza A Blok Kat: 3
34394 Levent - Sisli - Istanbul,
Turkey
Phone +90 (0) 212 283 12 82
ist.sbhturkey@eda.admin.ch

Canada

Swiss Business Hub Canada
c/o Consulate General of
Switzerland
1572, Docteur-Penfield Avenue
QC H3G 1C4 Montreal, Canada
Phone +1 514 932 7181
mon.sbhcanada@eda.admin.ch

Mexico

Swiss Business Hub México
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
Paseo de las Palmas No. 405, Torre
Optima I, piso 11 Col. Lomas de
Chapultepec
11000 Mexico D.F., Mexico
Phone +52 55 91 78 43 70
ruben.arazadiaz@eda.admin.ch

South Africa

Swiss Business Hub Southern
Africa
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
Brooklyn Square 0075
ZA-0181 Pretoria
Phone +27 12 452 0690
pre.sbhsa@eda.admin.ch

ASEAN

Swiss Business Hub ASEAN
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
1 Swiss Club Link
289754 Singapore
Phone +65 6594 6580
sin.sbhasean@eda.admin.ch

Hong Kong

Swiss Business Hub Hong Kong
c/o Consulate General of
Switzerland
62/F Central Plaza
18 Harbour Road
Wan Chai, Hong Kong
Phone +852 35 09 50 00
claudia.solenthaler@eda.admin.ch

Gulf States

Swiss Business Hub Middle East
c/o Consulate General of
Switzerland
Dubai World Trade Center
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Phone +971 4 329 09 99
dai.sbhdubai@eda.admin.ch

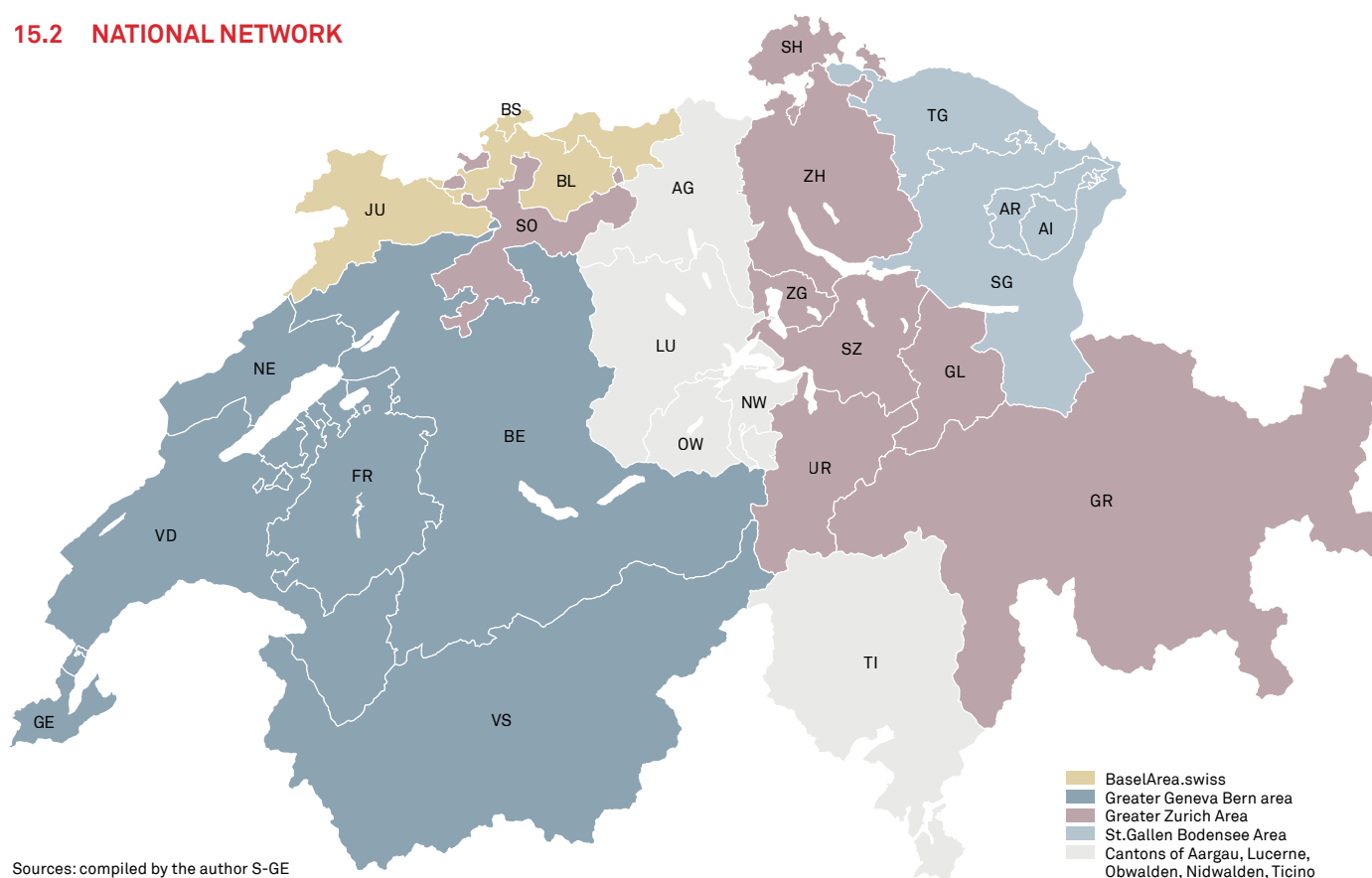
South Korea

Swiss Business Hub South Korea
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
20-16, Daesagwan-ro 11gil
Yongsan-gu
140-887 Seoul, Korea
Phone +82 2 739 9511 / 12 / 13 / 14
seo.sbh-korea@eda.admin.ch

Indonesia

Swiss Business Hub Indonesia
c/o Embassy of Switzerland
Jl. HR Rasuna Said Blok X3/2
Kuningan
12950 Jakarta-Selatan, Indonesia
Phone +62 21 525 60 61
wolfgang.schanzenbach@eda.
admin.ch

15.2 NATIONAL NETWORK



Sources: compiled by the author S-GE

15.2.1 Cantonal Business Promotion Agencies

Aargau (AG)

Aargau Services promotional activities
Rain 53
P.O. Box
5001 Aarau, Switzerland
Phone +41 62 835 24 40
Fax +41 62 835 24 19
aargau.services@ag.ch
www.aargauservices.ch

Appenzell Ausserrhoden (AR)

Officer for economy
Government building
9102 Herisau, Switzerland
Phone +41 71 353 64 38
Fax +41 71 353 66 92
wirtschaft.arbeit@ar.ch
www.ar.ch/wirtschaft

Appenzell Innerrhoden (AI)

Officer for economy
Marktgasse 2
9050 Appenzell, Switzerland
Phone +41 71 788 94 44
wirtschaft@ai.ch
www.ai.ch/standort

Basel-Stadt (BS) and Basel-Landschaft (BL)

BaselArea.swiss
Dufourstrasse 11
4010 Basel, Switzerland
Phone +41 61 295 50 00
info@baselarea.swiss
www.baselarea.swiss

Bern (BE)

Promotional activities
Canton of Bern
Münsterplatz 3
3011 Bern, Switzerland
Phone +41 31 633 41 20
info@berninvest.be.ch
www.berninvest.be.ch

Fribourg (FR)

Economic development incentive WIF
Boulevard de Pérolles 25
PO Box 1350
1701 Fribourg, Switzerland
Phone +41 26 304 14 00
Fax +41 26 304 14 01
promfr@fr.ch
www.promfr.ch

Geneva (GE)

Directorate General for Economic Development, Research and Innovation
Rue de l'Hôtel-de-Ville 11
P.O. Box 3216
1211 Geneva 3, Switzerland
Phone +41 22 388 34 34
promotion@etat.ge.ch
www.whygeneva.ch

Glarus (GL)

Department for Economics and Home Affairs
Contact point for business
Zwinglistrasse 6
8750 Glarus, Switzerland
Phone +41 55 646 66 14
Fax +41 55 646 66 09
kontakt@glarusnet.ch
www.glarus.ch

Grisons (GR)

Office for business and tourism, Grisons
Economic development incentive
Grabenstrasse 1
7001 Chur, Switzerland
Phone +41 81 257 23 42
Fax +41 81 257 21 92
info@awt.gr.ch
www.awt.gr.ch

Jura (JU)

Economic promotion of the Republic and the Canton of Jura
1, rue de la Jeunesse
2800 Delémont, Switzerland
Phone +41 32 420 52 10
Fax +41 32 420 52 11
promotioneconomie@jura.ch
eco.jura.ch

Lucerne (LU)

Economic development incentive
Lucerne
Alpenquai 30
6005 Lucerne, Switzerland
Phone +41 41 367 44 00
info@luzern-business.ch
www.luzern-business.ch

Neuchâtel (NE)

Economic service
Economic promotion office
Avenue de la Gare 2
2000 Neuchâtel, Switzerland
Phone +41 32 889 68 20
neco@ne.ch
www.neuchateleconomie.com

Nidwalden (NW)

Economic development incentive
Nidwalden
Stansstadterstrasse 54
PO Box 1251
6371 Stans, Switzerland
Phone +41 41 618 76 54
wirtschaftsfoerderung@nw.ch
www.wirtschaftsfoerderung.nw.ch

Obwalden (OW)

Location promotion in Obwalden
Dorfplatz 1
6060 Sarnen, Switzerland
Phone +41 41 660 90 66
Fax +41 41 660 90 69
info@iow.ch
www.iow.ch

Schaffhausen (SH)

Economic development incentive
Canton of Schaffhausen
Haus der Wirtschaft
Herrenacker 15
8200 Schaffhausen, Switzerland
Phone +41 52 674 03 03
Fax +41 52 674 06 09
economic.promotion@generis.ch
www.economy.sh

Schwyz (SZ)

Officer for economy
Bahnhofstrasse 15
PO 1187
6431 Schwyz, Switzerland
Phone +41 41 819 16 34
Fax +41 41 819 16 19
awi@sz.ch
www.schwyz-wirtschaft.ch

Solothurn (SO)

Economic Development Incentive
Canton of Solothurn
Untere Sternengasse 2
4509 Solothurn, Switzerland
Phone +41 32 627 95 23
Fax +41 32 627 95 92
wifoe@awa.so.ch
www.standortsolothurn.ch

St. Gallen (SG)

Promotional activities
Office for Economy and Labor of
the Canton of St. Gallen
Davidstrasse 35
9001 St. Gallen, Switzerland
Phone +41 58 229 64 64
info.vdafw@sg.ch
www.standort.sg.ch

Ticino (TI)

Ufficio per lo sviluppo economico
Viale S. Franscini 17
6501 Bellinzona, Switzerland
Phone +41 91 814 35 41
Fax +41 91 814 44 57
dfe-use@ti.ch
www.ti.ch/copernico

Thurgau (TG)

Economic development incentive
Thurgau
Administrative building
Promenadenstrasse 8
8510 Frauenfeld, Switzerland
Phone +41 58 345 55 00
info@wifoe.tg.ch
www.wifoe.tg.ch

Uri (UR)

Economic Development Incentive
Canton of Uri
Klausenstrasse 4
6460 Altdorf, Switzerland
Phone +41 41 875 24 06
wirtschaft@ur.ch
www.standort-uri.ch

Vaud (VD)

Economic development of the
Canton of Vaud
Avenue de Gratta-Paille 2
Case postale 19
1000 Lausanne 22, Switzerland
Phone +41 21 644 00 60
Fax +41 21 644 00 79
dev@dev.ch
www.dev.ch

Valais (VS)

Business Valais
Maison de Courten
Place St-Théodule
Case Postale 478
1950 Sion, Switzerland
Phone +41 27 606 73 90
info@business-valais.ch
www.business-valais.ch

Zug (ZG)

Economic contact point
Aabachstrasse 5
P.O. Box
CH-6301 Zug
Phone +41 41 728 55 04
Fax +41 41 728 55 09
economy@zug.ch
www.zug.ch/economy

Zurich (ZH)

Office for economy and labor
Promotional activities for the
Canton of Zurich
Walchestrass 19
8090 Zurich, Switzerland
Phone +41 43 259 49 92
standort@vd.zh.ch
www.standort.zh.ch

15.2.2 Intercantonal Location Marketing Organization**BaselArea.swiss**

BaselArea.swiss
Dufourstrasse 11
4010 Basel, Switzerland
Phone +41 61 295 50 00
info@baselarea.swiss
www.baselarea.swiss

GGBa

Greater Geneva Bern area
Invest Western Switzerland
World Trade Center
Av. de Gratta-Paille 2
PO Box 252
1000 Lausanne 22, Switzerland
Phone +41 21 644 00 90
info@ggba-switzerland.ch
www.ggba-switzerland.ch

Greater Zurich Area

Greater Zurich Area AG
Limmatquai 122
8001 Zurich, Switzerland
Phone +41 44 254 59 59
info@greaterzuricharea.com
www.greaterzuricharea.com

St.GallenBodenseeArea

St.GallenBodenseeArea
Davidstrasse 35
9001 St. Gallen, Switzerland
Phone +41 58 229 64 64
invest@sgba.ch
www.sgba.ch

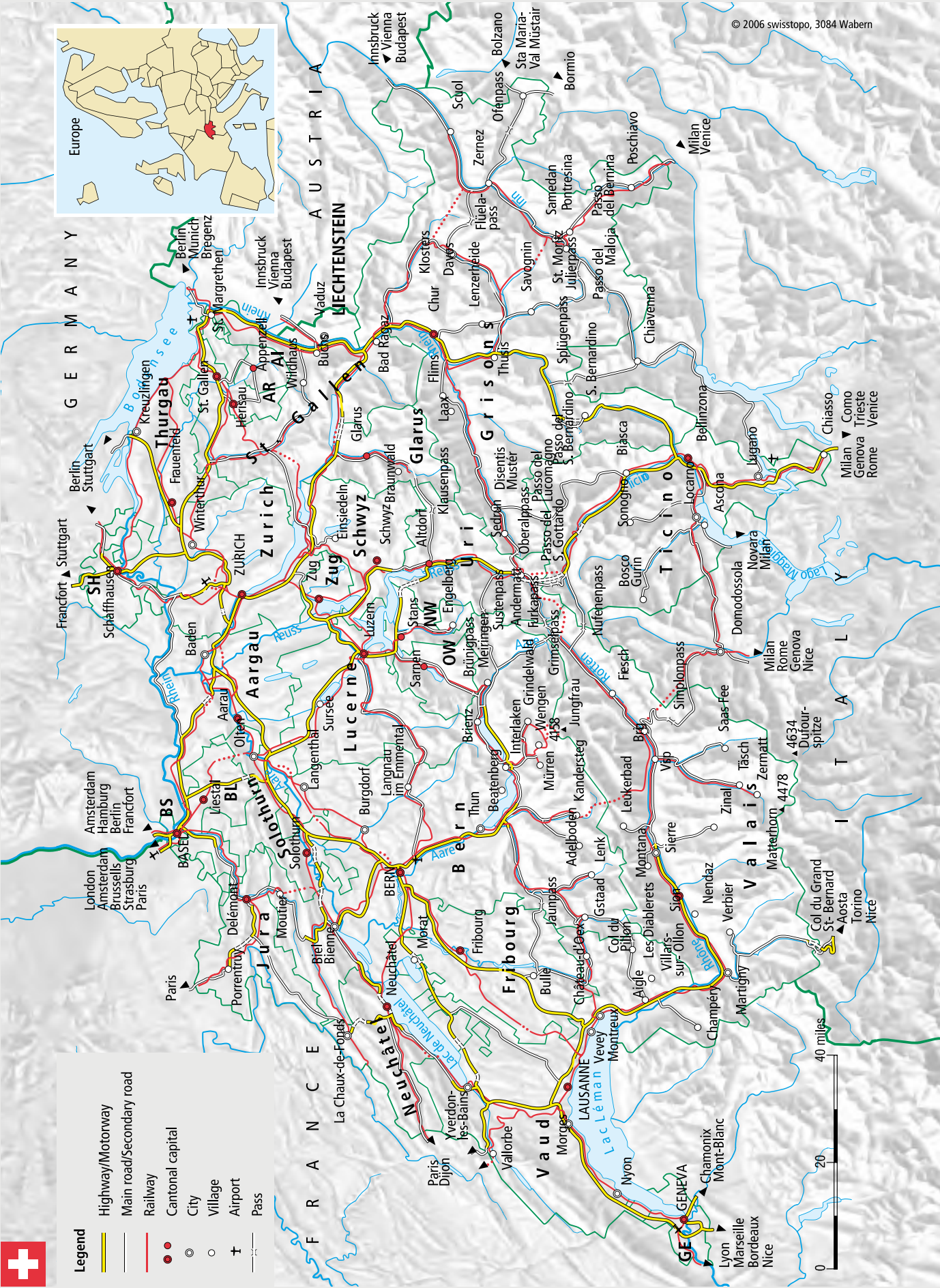
15.3 LIST OF FIGURES

FIG. 1	Reference Map.....	25	FIG. 57	Nobel Laureates per Million Inhabitants, 2016.....	136
FIG. 2	The Swiss Political System.....	26	FIG. 58	Scientific Publications, Average 2009–2013.....	137
FIG. 3	Political Stability, 2017.....	27	FIG. 59	Research Establishments in Switzerland.....	137
FIG. 4	Most Cosmopolitan Economies, 2015.....	29	FIG. 60	Innovation Focus Areas and Specialist Areas.....	138
FIG. 5	International Organizations and Major Non-Governmental Organizations Based in Switzerland.....	30	FIG. 61	International Comparison of Quality of Life, 2017.....	141
FIG. 6	Switzerland in Figures, 2017.....	31	FIG. 62	Personal Safety and Property Rights, 2017.....	142
FIG. 7	Gross Domestic Product per Capita (Nominal), 2017.....	33	FIG. 63	Recruiting and Retaining Highly Skilled Labor, 2017.....	142
FIG. 8	Industry Structure and Shares of Workforce, 2017.....	34	FIG. 64	Real Disposable Income of Swiss Municipalities, 2016..	146
FIG. 9	International Competitiveness Ranking, 2017.....	34	FIG. 65	Average Household Budget, 2015.....	147
FIG. 10	Global Innovation Index, 2017.....	35	FIG. 66	International Comparison of Purchasing Power, 2015...	147
FIG. 11	Foreign Trade by Economic Area, 2016.....	36	FIG. 67	Examples of Cantonal Business Promotion Instruments.....	150
FIG. 12	Direct Investments Capital Stock, 2015.....	37	FIG. 68	Areas of Application for Tax Breaks, 2016.....	150
FIG. 13	Economic Freedom, 2014.....	43	FIG. 69	Technology Parks and Business Incubators.....	152
FIG. 14	Property Rights at a Glance.....	47			
FIG. 15	Legal Forms at a Glance.....	61			
FIG. 16	Process of Establishing a Company (AG, GmbH).....	64			
FIG. 17	Costs of Forming a Stock Corporation (AG).....	65			
FIG. 18	Costs of Forming a Limited Liability Company (GmbH).....	65			
FIG. 19	Do I Need a Visa?.....	67			
FIG. 20	Types of Permits.....	68			
FIG. 21	Work and Residence Permits: Rules and Procedures.....	71			
FIG. 22	Market Prices for Office Space.....	76			
FIG. 23	Building Land: Market Prices for Commercial Buildings.....	77			
FIG. 24	A Purchase Transaction.....	78			
FIG. 25	Market Prices for Rented Accommodation.....	79			
FIG. 26	Market Prices for Owner-Occupied Accommodation.....	80			
FIG. 27	Permit Requirements for Different Groups.....	82			
FIG. 28	International Experience by Managers, 2017.....	85			
FIG. 29	International Comparison of Motivation to Work, 2017.....	86			
FIG. 30	Productivity, 2016.....	86			
FIG. 31	Deregulation of the Labor Market, 2017.....	87			
FIG. 32	Unanimity Among Employers and Employees, 2017.....	88			
FIG. 33	Daytime, Evening, and Night-time Periods.....	89			
FIG. 34	Flexibility in Hiring and Firing, 2017.....	91			
FIG. 35	Overview of Obligatory Social Insurance Contributions.....	92			
FIG. 36	Global Financial Centers, 2017.....	97			
FIG. 37	Mortgage Rates, 2000–2016.....	100			
FIG. 38	State Support Schemes.....	102			
FIG. 39	Credit Rating: Top Ten Most Secure Countries, 2016.....	103			
FIG. 40	Capital Costs, 2017.....	103			
FIG. 41	Inflation, 2016.....	103			
FIG. 42	Total Tax Rate, 2016.....	108			
FIG. 43	International Business Activity.....	115			
FIG. 44	Infrastructure Quality, 2017.....	119			
FIG. 45	Direct Intercontinental Flight Connections from Zurich (ZRH) and Geneva (GVA).....	122			
FIG. 46	Switzerland's National and Regional Airports.....	123			
FIG. 47	Broadband Internet Access, 2016.....	124			
FIG. 48	Life Expectancy at Birth, 1970 and 2015.....	127			
FIG. 49	The Swiss Education System.....	130			
FIG. 50	Quality of the Education System, 2017.....	131			
FIG. 51	Public per Capita Spending on Education, 2015.....	131			
FIG. 52	Universities and Institutes of Technology.....	132			
FIG. 53	Annual Tuition Fees.....	133			
FIG. 54	Executive MBAs: The Most Important Providers.....	134			
FIG. 55	Cost of Private International Schools, 2014.....	135			
FIG. 56	Patent Applications per 100,000 Inhabitants, 2015.....	136			

MAP OF EUROPE



MAP OF SWITZERLAND

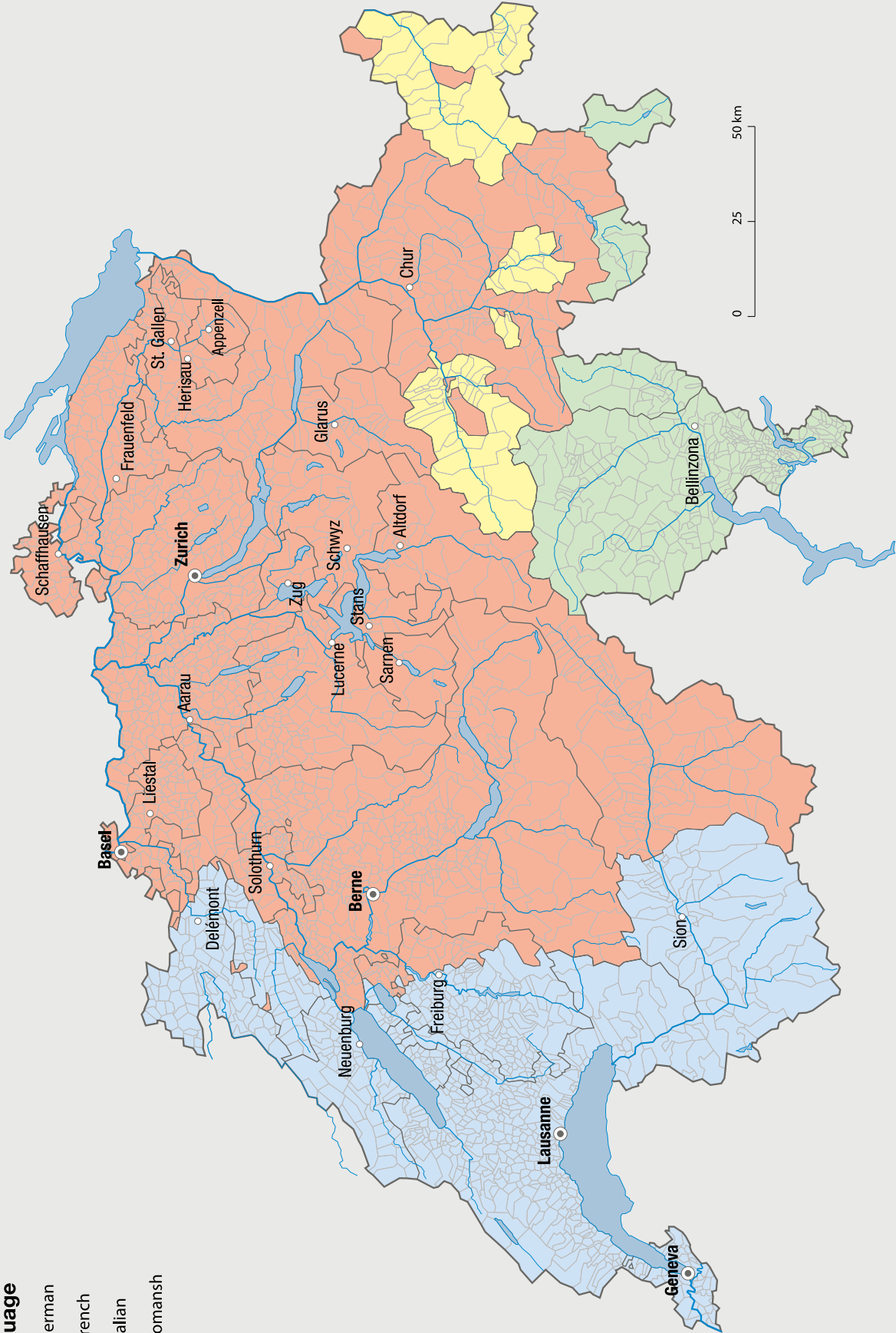


LINGUISTIC AREAS OF SWITZERLAND

Language regions

Language

- German
- French
- Italian
- Romansh



NOTES

Investment Promotion

s-ge.com/invest



Follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter:

s-ge.com/linkedin-invest

twitter.com/investCH

Switzerland Global Enterprise
Stampfenbachstrasse 85
CH-8006 Zurich
Tel. +41 44 365 51 51

s-ge.com/invest
invest@s-ge.com

