



PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGO: Bern, 20 April 2021, 08:30

Statistics on Swiss Towns 2021: Living in the city

Three-quarters of Switzerland's population live in urban areas. City dwellers occupy around 2 million homes in just under 540 000 urban buildings. Almost three-quarters of dwellings are occupied by tenants, the majority of whom live in three-room apartments. These are findings from the 'Statistics on Swiss Towns 2021', focusing on the topic 'Living in the city'. The Swiss Union of Cities and Towns publishes the yearbook together with the Federal Statistical Office (FSO).

Following the urban exodus of the 1980s and 90s, Swiss cities and towns have experienced a true revival in the past 20 years. Today three-quarters of Switzerland's population live in urban areas. 19% of the inhabitants of the 171 cities and towns reviewed are aged 19 or under, 63% are aged between 20 and 64 and 18% belong to the over-64 age group. The age structure differs little when compared with the rest of Switzerland. 47% of the urban population are single (compared with 42% in the rest of Switzerland) and 31% of city dwellers come from abroad, whereas foreign nationals account for only 20% of the population outside of towns.

The existence of such a mixed population depends heavily on the housing market structure. In 2018, in the 171 Swiss cities and towns reviewed, there were 2 million dwellings in total in 539 767 urban buildings. Of these, 46.8% were single-family houses and 35.6% multi-family houses. When considering distribution by municipality size category, the number of single-family houses is seen to increase with diminishing size. In the case of multi-family houses the opposite holds true: Whereas the ten biggest cities had an average share of more than 43%, in the other 161 towns, this share was below 33%.

Three-room apartments dominate

As far as apartment size is concerned, in most municipality size categories, three-room apartments dominate. In towns with fewer than 20 000 inhabitants, however, there are slightly more four-room apartments. Large dwellings with five rooms or more are rarest in large cities at 9.8%, whereas in the remaining size categories they account for 19% of dwellings.

69% of urban tenants live in a three or four-room apartment. In contrast, the majority of home owners in Swiss towns (86.5%) have a dwelling with four or more rooms.

The larger the town, the greater the number of tenants

From 2015 to 2017 (cumulated data), 74% of the inhabited dwellings in Swiss towns were occupied by tenants and cooperative members, whereas 25% were owner-occupied homes. In Brig-Glis, Möhlin, Spiez and Uzwil, more than half of the inhabited dwellings are occupied by private owners. In contrast, in Geneva, Lausanne, Zurich and Carouge, more than 90% of dwellings are used as rental or cooperative dwellings.

Non-profit housing development – promotion of fair housing

Towns are increasingly turning to the development of non-profit housing for socially and economically disadvantaged persons. While non-profit built homes account for 1.3% of the housing stock at national level, the large cities with an average of 11.4% of such homes, are considerably above the Swiss



average. In the city of Zurich, 22.4% of all three-room apartments and 24.4% of all four-room apartments are non-profit housing developments. But at approximately 15%, smaller towns such as Urdorf and Birsfelden also show a considerable overall share of non-profit housing.

FDP and SP strongest parties

As in previous editions, the “Statistics on Swiss Towns” also contains data on urban politics. Collection of these data was improved in 2020 in cooperation with the FSO's Politics, culture and media section. Data now shows the situation after the latest general elections.

The leading parties in urban politics are the FDP and the SP. In the urban executive authorities, the FDP has a 27.2% share of seats. The SP follows with 20.6%. Compared with the previous year, the CVP lost 0.2%. This means they are only holding onto a 15.1% share of seats. The SVP remains in fourth place but has lost 0.2% and now holds 11.4%. The Greens were able to gain 0.8% and now hold a 7.7% share of seats in the urban executive authorities. In the parliaments, the FDP held 22.3%, followed by the SP with 20.9% and the SVP with 15.3%. In fourth place come the Greens with 11.6% of seats and the CVP with a 9.3% share of seats.

As usual available in digital form and as Open Government Data

The 82nd edition of the “Statistics on Swiss Towns” is published jointly with the FSO. In addition to data on urban living, as usual it contains an abundance of information and facts on topics such as population, employment and income, finances, mobility, and education. Contents are, of course, available digitally with interactive graphs via an app and in a web publication. The data forming the basis of the publication will also be available for further use to a wide audience via the FSO data catalogue and on the opendata.swiss platform.

Additional information:

Davide Molinari, Data manager, Federal Statistical Office, 058 485 67 96.

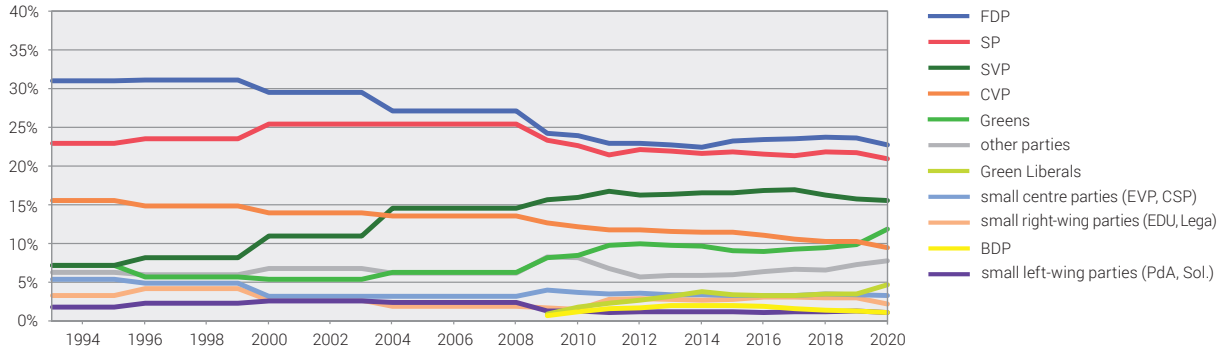
Marc Moser, Head of Communication, Swiss Union of Cities and Towns, 076 428 96 94.

Background information about Swiss Union of Cities and Towns

The Union of Cities and Towns represents the interests and concerns of Swiss towns, agglomerations and urban communes. It is the voice of urban Switzerland, where three quarters of Switzerland's population lives and where 84% of the country's economic output is produced.

Change in seat distribution in urban parliaments, 1993–2020

G1

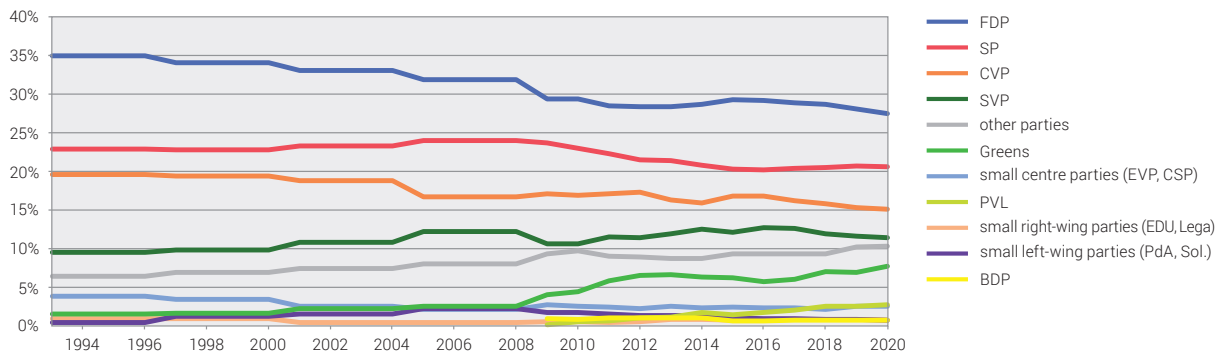


Source: FSO – Swiss Union of Cities

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Change in seat distribution in urban executive authorities, 1993–2020

G2



Source: FSO – Swiss Union of Cities

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