



# Swiss Labour Force Survey

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## Description

Conducted for the first time in 1991, the Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS) interviews individuals every year. The main purpose of the SLFS is to supply data on the structure of the working population and on people's behaviour with regard to their professional activity. Thanks to Switzerland's strict adherence to international definitions, its data is comparable with that of OECD and EU countries. The SLFS has been conducted on a continuous basis since 2010.

### Available since:

1991

### Statistical population and survey units:

Permanent resident population aged 15 and over

### Characteristics recorded:

- Occupational activity (current or previous)
- Reasons for non-activity (retirement, education or training, etc.)
- Educational background and profession
- Place of work, work volume (in hours)
- Working conditions: work schedule, night shift, work over the weekends
- Economic branch
- Job income
- Jobseeker (unemployed, underemployed)
- Professional and geographical mobility
- Education and continuing education
- Unpaid work: household and family-related chores, community service and volunteer work, helping relatives, etc.
- Migration
- Social security

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## Methodology

Survey based on sampling of individuals, whose addresses are selected at random from the FSO's sample register. This is based on official communal and cantonal population registers.

THE SLFS is conducted on the basis of the following sample:

- around 16 000 interviews until 2001
- around 35 000 from 2002 to 2009
- around 105 000 from 2010 to 2017
- around 100 000 interviews from 2018

Since 2003, the SLFS sample has been supplemented with a sample of foreign nationals (15 000 until 2010, 21,000 between 2010 and 2017 and 20 000 as of 2018). This sample was selected from the Central Migration Information System (ZEMIS) until the first quarter 2014. Since the second quarter 2014, it has also been drawn from the FSO's sample register. In total, 120 000 are now conducted per year. Persons participating in the survey are interviewed four times over a one and a half-year period (except for people aged 75 and over who are only interviewed once).

From 1991 to 2020 the SLFS was a telephone survey. Since 2021, it has been a mixed-mode survey (either online or by telephone), online being the preferred means.

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**Degree of regionalisation:**

Switzerland and major regions

**Periodicity:**

From 1991 to 2009: annually, from 2010: quarterly

**Reference period:**

From 1991 to 2009: 2nd quarter, every quarter from 2010

**Quality of statistical data:**

Coefficient of variation of 0.35% for all employed persons and 2.99% for all unemployed persons (ILO definition) (1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2021). An indication of the coefficients of variation for data by sex, nationality, age etc. is given in the quarterly press releases "Swiss Labour Force Survey and its derived statistics".

**Revision:**

2001: questionnaire revised

2002: sample increased

Since 2003: additional sample taken from Central Information Service on Migration

Since 2010: continuous survey, revision of questionnaire

Since 2nd quarter 2014: sampling frame changed

2017: revision of the cross-sectional weighting of persons between 2010 and 2016

2019: Swiss Standard Classification of Occupations 2000 (NSP2000) replaced by the new Swiss Standard Classification of Occupations 2019 (CH-ISCO-19) from 1991 to 2019

2021: revision of the questionnaire and switch from telephone (single mode) to mixed-mode (online/telephone).

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**Policy on revisions****Methodology revisions:**

Methodology is revised as necessary (e.g. revision of sources).

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**Legal bases**

Ordinance of 30 June 1993 on the Conduct of Federal Statistical Surveys (RS 431.012.1)

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**Organization**

Federal Statistical Office (FSO) with the help of LINK Marketing Services Lucerne/Lausanne/Zurich

Person responsible: Sylvie Regli Greub

Information: Labour Force section information service

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To order anonymised SFLS data for your research project: form and conditions for receipt of anonymised data (in [French](#) or [German](#)).

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