



# Statistics – A universal language



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA  
**Federal Statistical Office FSO**

# Statistics – A universal language

**Swiss Statistics**

**The Swiss Federal Statistical Office in Neuchâtel**

Publishers: Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) © FSO, 2009

Concept, editors: Armin Grossenbacher

Realization: Verena Hirsch, Heinz Wyder

Graphics: 2.stock süd, Biel

Original language: German

Translation: FSO Translation Service

Cover picture: Ruedi Walti, Basel

Photo credits:

pp. 4, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23: Ruedi Walti, Basel; New FSO building in Neuchâtel

p. 6, Digital image © 1996 Corbis; Original courtesy of NASA JSC, New York City at Night

p. 7, The World Bank Atlas 1995, Washington D.C.: p.15, Illiteracy 1990

p. 8, Swiss Federal Statistical Office (Publ.), Statistical Yearbook of Switzerland 1999, Zurich 1998: p. 98, Unemployment rates, Switzerland and neighbouring countries, end of 1997

p. 9, Federal Statistical Office (Publ.), Overview of Population Censuses conducted in Swiss Cantons (...) in 1836, 1837 and 1838, Berne 1969: Canton Neuchâtel

p. 10, Statistical Office of the Federal Department of the Interior (Publ.), Graphic/Statistical Atlas of Switzerland, Berne 1914: Table 2, Total surface area of Switzerland and its Cantons and their distribution over the productive/unproductive area

p. 11, Swiss Federal Statistical Office (Publ.), Statistical Yearbook of Switzerland 1996. Zurich 1995: p. 9, Stefano Franscini

p. 14, Swiss Federal Statistical Office (Publ.), Structural Atlas of Switzerland, Zurich 1997: p. 224, Roman Catholics as a percentage of the resident population, 1990

p. 15, FSO internet site

p. 16, Statistical Yearbook of Switzerland 2009, p. 396

p. 24, FSO library, Neuchâtel

ISBN: 978-3-303-00422-7

Order number: 287-0900 Weltsprache Statistik

288-0900 La statistique, un langage universel

289-0900 Statistica – lingua universale

290-0900 Statistics – A universal language

Available from: FSO, CH – 2010 Neuchâtel

# Contents

- 5 Preface
- 6 Statistics – A universal language  
**Our senses alone have long been inadequate for obtaining information about an increasingly complex world. This is where statistics come to our aid as a powerful tool and internationally intelligible information medium.**
- 8 Swiss statistics – International statistics  
**In all countries, public statistics have developed into a government service provided to the general public. In Switzerland, this function is carried out by the Federal Statistical Office, the national statistical unit which is also firmly rooted in the international statistical system.**
- 12 Swiss statistics – The Swiss Federal Statistical Office  
**The Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) founded in 1860 is the heart of Switzerland's statistical system. Equipped with a modern legal basis, it tackles a wide variety of tasks and provides an extensive range of services.**
- 14 From data collection to information  
**Top-quality statistical information is developed as part of a controlled scientific process. Step-by-step overview of statistical work.**
- 17 Product range  
**From books to the Internet and tables to maps. From the mere provision of data to customized information about topics such as population, education, prices and town and country planning to user needs – a wide range of Swiss statistical services that are extensively used.**
- 18 The Swiss Federal Statistical Office in Neuchâtel  
**The FSO moved into its new custom-built building with outstanding planning, architectural and ecological features in Neuchâtel in 1998.**
- 24 Contacts  
**Ways of obtaining statistical information and expert advice.**



3

2

1

# Preface

In our increasingly complex world, the role of information is becoming a key issue – for guidance, for decision making and for future planning. Information determines the quality of actions. Nowadays, statistics plays a vital role in political decisions, at parliamentary, executive or voting level, in industry and even in everyday life. Statistics has become a key factor for ensuring transparency in social and political debates.

Therefore, producers of statistics have a special responsibility: the statistical information must be scientifically sound, professionally independent, efficient and of a high quality. It must be up-to-date and easily accessible for all.

This is the mission of public statistics. The Swiss Federal Statistical Office, as the hub of public statistics in Switzerland, carries this responsibility and dedicates its work to these objectives. Its mandate also involves monitoring information once it has been produced and fed into the communication pipeline. A powerful tool like statistics calls on one hand for easily understandable presentation and on the other hand for training in how to read statistical material.

As a producer of statistical information, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office depends on close relationships with partner offices and international institutions for public statistics, with academia and information users. Implementation of society's demanding information mandate and fast response to information market requirements characterise its sphere of operation.

Within this environment, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office as an institution has to be (and remain) flexible. Motivated and competent staff, active relations with external partners, updating the information portfolio and keeping a close eye on new developments are essential.

Neuchâtel, June 2009

Jürg Marti  
Director of the Federal Statistical Office





# Statistics – A universal language

**The world is changing, shrinking and yet becoming harder to survey. How do people today find their way as citizens, politicians, businessmen or teachers? How do they tackle taking decisions about their actions in politics, business, education and in the democratic process? What resources provide them with support in this process?**

The world we live in has expanded and become more complex, so our own immediate observations are increasingly inadequate and we have to rely on information that

our five senses can no longer supply direct – on tools that enable us to extend our perception. And statistics is one of them.

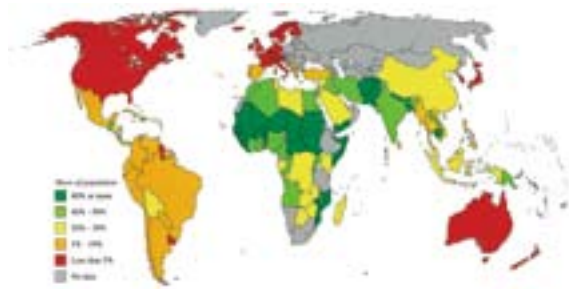
**Statistical information is a powerful tool for presenting complex issues in a comprehensible form, allowing comparisons that transcend regions and span different periods. A figure or a statistical indicator can express situations and developments fast and concisely above and beyond political and linguistic boundaries.**

## All that statistics can mean

**“Statistics”** describes the science of deriving reliable information from observing mass phenomena. In this science, the main target of research is mathematical statistical methods.

On the other hand, **“statistics”** means the findings – or statistical results – obtained from applying these scientific methods. These can cover all areas of life: medicine, technology, society, industry and the State ...

As early as the 16th and 17th centuries, statistics provided rulers with information about the status of vital aspects of their States (hence the term **“statistics”** – such as population, potential tax revenue and military power. Nowadays, public statistics (ie statistical information compiled by the Government and its offices) provides data about a broad spectrum of everyday sectors for the public as a whole. And today's public statistics are the subject of this brochure.



Lastly, **“statistics”** also means the organisation, as well as the financial and staff infrastructures, that make official statistical data possible in the first place. And that too is dealt with in this brochure.

Public statistics are well and truly present in the information society, as a guide to policy, a planning and decision-making tool as well as a basis for forecasts. It serves both the general public and specialists. It helps us gain a better knowledge of a constantly changing world, and communication and debate are based on its findings, making it part of a country's “collective memory”.

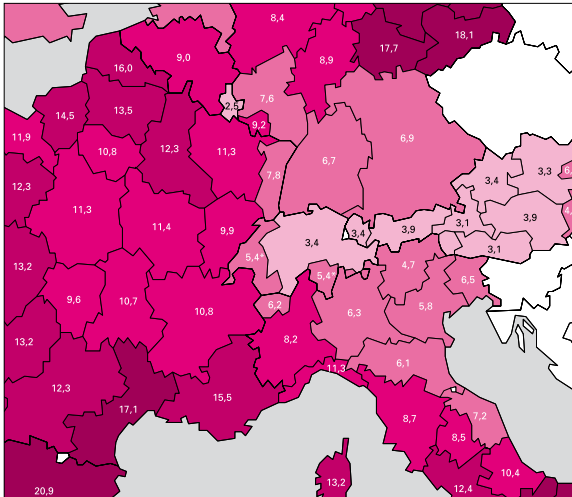
The growing use of statistics and their importance in the communication process make it increasingly important – not least for the purpose of democratic debate – for statistical information to be properly read and understood. Consequently, intelligibility and transparency as principles in information transfer and the emphasis on schools of all levels are therefore an intrinsic part of statistical work.



## Swiss statistics – International statistics

**In the process of modernising State and society, statistical information was soon recognised as a government task. In young nation States, statistics sketch out a picture of the nation, helping to shape its identity.**

**The first statistical offices date from the 18th and 19th centuries. Though originally designed for government and administration purposes, they soon opened up to meet the requirements of society as a whole. Statistics prepared by public government – public statistics – have become a State service accessible to all.**



Today, all countries have a national or central statistical office. In Switzerland, it is the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO) in Neuchâtel.

Switzerland is very keen to obtain comparisons with statistical information from other countries. In various international organizations, such as the United Nations, its specialised agencies and regional organisations and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), work has been in progress for decades on international standards for making data comparable. Statistics are a vital source of information all over the world, especially at a time when international ties are intensifying (globalisation).

The work of EUROSTAT (the European Union's Statistical Office) on harmonising and standardising public statistics is particularly important, even beyond the boundaries of the EU. Switzerland adopts them in order to gradually improve the international comparability of Swiss statistics – a recent example was the Swiss National Accounts (Gross Domestic Product). Since 1990, Switzerland has participated in many meetings organised by EUROSTAT and plays an active part in work on developing and updating the standards. The bilateral agreement on cooperation in the area of statistics came into force on 1 January 2007, enabling Switzerland to have at its disposal data comparable with that of UE partners.

International standards also cover basic principles for the smooth functioning of a country's public statistics, and the United Nations laid down the 10 Fundamental Principles of Public Statistics with this in mind. These contain ethical and organisational directives such as the professional autonomy of producers of public statistics when it comes to instructions from higher authorities, the duty to make all statistical findings generally available, transparency in the methods chosen and strict data protection for all information provided by individuals or companies in statistical surveys. These principles are also found in the key legal basis for public statistics in Switzerland – the Federal Statistics Act of 1992, as well as in the Swiss Public Statistics Charter which was approved by public statistics offices throughout the country in May 2002.

Comité de la popl

# Canton de Neuchâtel

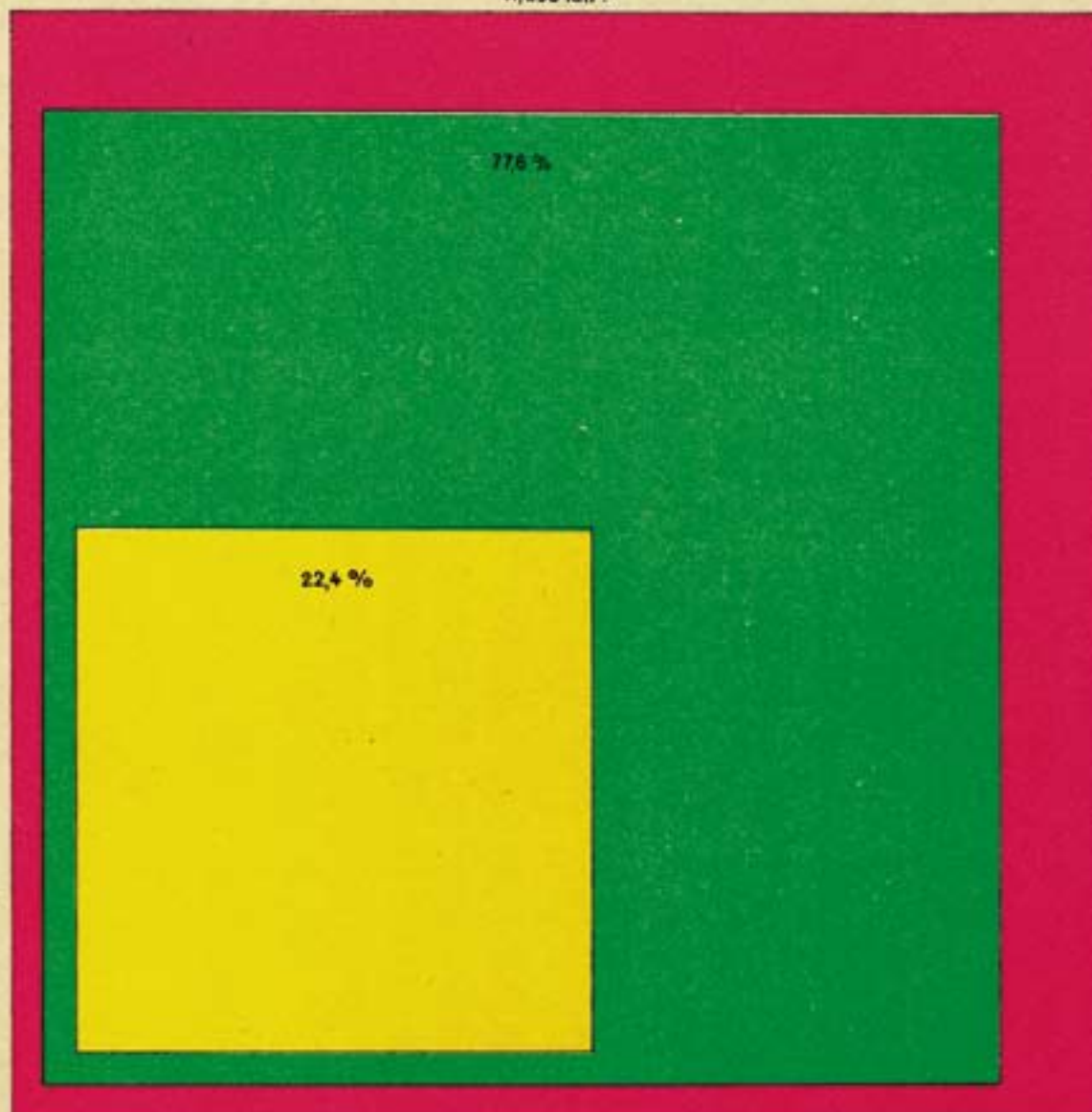
le Gouvernement du

Ressortissans d'autres Cantons.

Personnes du sex masculin.	Personnes du sex féminin.	Total.
7,181	7,353	14,534

# Schweiz - Suisse

41,298 km<sup>2</sup>



## Fribourg

1671 km<sup>2</sup>



## Luzern

1492 km<sup>2</sup>



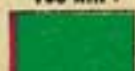
## Aargau

1403 km<sup>2</sup>



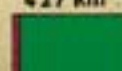
## Obwalden

493 km<sup>2</sup>



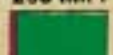
## Basel-Land

427 km<sup>2</sup>



## Schaffhauser

298 km<sup>2</sup>



### Swiss statistics – some historic dates

Numbers are older than letters. Proof has been found that statistical surveys were conducted in even the earliest civilisations (Sumer, Egypt) for taxation and military purposes.

**58 BC:** First evidence of a census within present-day Switzerland mentioned by Julius Caesar (Bellum Gallicum I, 29), who organised a population census after the Helvetians had tried in vain to flee to Gaul and sustained heavy losses.

**In pre-French Revolution** Switzerland, the way statistics looked at society and the life of the State grew and expanded, in line with English and German models. Examples include investigations by Johann Heinrich Waser (1742–1780) in Zurich or Louis Muret (1715–1796) in Berne-governed Vaud, neither of which avoided conflict with government. The cantonal Governments in their turn conducted population censuses, and in some cases live-stock censuses, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**1798,** under the Helvetic Republic, the first Confederation-wide census was attempted but remained incomplete.

**From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century,** statistics gained in importance as a source of information. Various quantitative descriptions of individual Cantons and of Switzerland as a whole were published, such as Stefano Francini's "Statistica della Svizzera" (1827), conveying and promoting the concept of a Swiss national State. Population censuses were organised nationwide (by the Diet 1836/37) as well as in various Cantons. Berne founded the first statistical office (1848/1856), followed by Zurich (1868) and Aargau (1886).

**With the founding of the Swiss Federal State in 1848,** statistics gained in importance at national level

becoming the task of the Department of the Interior under Stefano Francini who conducted the first population census in the newly founded federal State.

**1860** saw the foundation of the Federal Statistical Bureau, the forerunner of the present Federal Statistical Office. The law on conducting population censuses every ten years was passed in the same year.

**On 23 July 1870,** Parliament approved a brief law confined to organizational issues about "official statistical surveys in Switzerland".

**The Law of 1870** resulted in the non-standardized, unsystematic development of statistics, with the setting up of statistical units in various government offices.

**1891:** first edition of the Swiss Statistical Yearbook, issued by the Federal Statistical Office, a series which has been continued without interruption up to the present day.

**1987 and 1996:** the Federal Statistical Office makes key statistical information available electronically online (STATINF database and website)

**1992:** The Federal Statistical Act of 9 October 1992 replaced the 1870 Law, laying a modern foundation for Swiss statistics

**1998:** the Federal Statistical Office moved from Berne to Neuchâtel

**1999:** For the first time, the new federal constitution dating from 18 April 1999 includes an article regarding statistics

**2000:** E-census: as a worldwide pioneer, the FSO census form can be filled out on the Internet

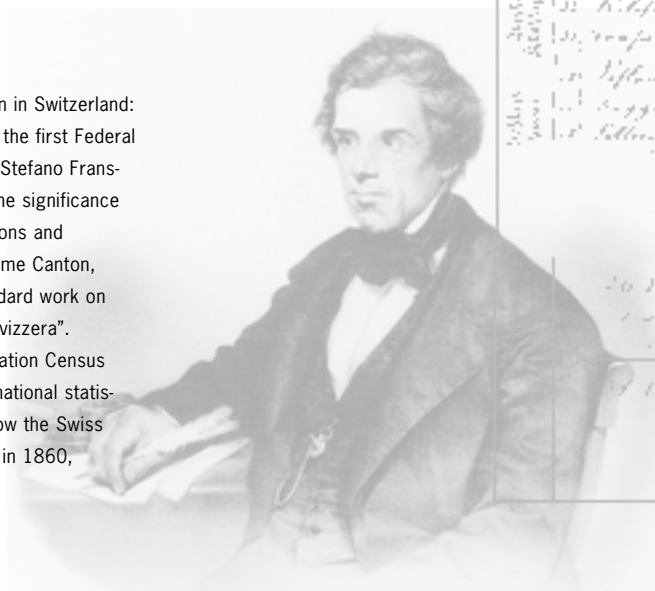
In **2007,** the bilateral cooperation agreement came into force.

**2010** marks the 150th anniversary of the FSO.

### Stefano Francini

Statistics can look back on a long tradition in Switzerland: this science had a committed advocate in the first Federal Council dating from 1848 in the shape of Stefano Francini from Ticino. Francini soon grasped the significance of statistical analysis in (political) discussions and promoted it as a tool for advancing his home Canton, Ticino. As early as 1827, he wrote a standard work on Swiss statistics entitled "Statistica della Svizzera".

Francini himself organised the first Population Census (1850) and promoted the setting up of a national statistical unit. The Federal Statistical Office (now the Swiss Federal Statistical Office FSO) was set up in 1860, 3 years after his death.



Bevölkerungszahl			
nach Jahren und den verschiedenen			
1848			
nach Cantonen			
Canton	1848	1850	1860
Aargau	120,000	122,000	125,000
Basel-Stadt	100,000	102,000	105,000
Basel-Landschaft	80,000	82,000	85,000
Bern	200,000	205,000	210,000
Basel	150,000	155,000	160,000
Solothurn	60,000	62,000	65,000
Schaffhausen	40,000	42,000	45,000
Sankt Gallen	110,000	115,000	120,000
Appenzel A.	30,000	32,000	35,000
Appenzel S.	20,000	22,000	25,000
Uri	10,000	12,000	15,000
Schwyz	20,000	22,000	25,000
Unterwalden A.	10,000	12,000	15,000
Unterwalden S.	10,000	12,000	15,000
Zug	10,000	12,000	15,000
Glarus	10,000	12,000	15,000
Basel	10,000	12,000	15,000
Sankt Gallen	10,000	12,000	15,000
Appenzel A.	10,000	12,000	15,000
Appenzel S.	10,000	12,000	15,000
Uri	10,000	12,000	15,000
Schwyz	10,000	12,000	15,000
Unterwalden A.	10,000	12,000	15,000
Unterwalden S.	10,000	12,000	15,000
Zug	10,000	12,000	15,000
Glarus	10,000	12,000	15,000
Basel	10,000	12,000	15,000
Sankt Gallen	10,000	12,000	15,000
Appenzel A.	10,000	12,000	15,000
App			

# Swiss statistics – The Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO)

**The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) constitutes the hub of the Swiss statistical system and Swiss statistics.**

- **The FSO is the national service and competence centre for statistical observation in key areas of the State and society, the economy and the environment.**
- **The FSO is the country's main producer of statistics and maintains the Swiss statistics data pool, providing information about virtually all thematic fields of public statistics by conducting surveys of private individuals or companies, analysing registers or compiling synthetic statistics. Through innovative approaches, the FSO is working on making administrative registers more suitable for statistical purposes, thus helping to take the pressure off interviewees and making the Swiss State more efficient.**
- **The FSO analyses, interprets and publishes statistical information, providing the foundation for checking the impact of government actions, decision making and future scenarios. It provides insight into society's development and its complexity and helps to make it transparent for democratic debate.**
- **The FSO stands for crucial principles of statistical activity, such as data protection, scientific procedures, professional independence, topicality and service consciousness, thus guaranteeing its credibility with the general public, among data suppliers and customers.**
- **The FSO directs the national statistical system, coordinating the statistical production of Government offices as well as cantonal and municipal statistical units, ensuring comparability of the data and drawing up the multi-year statistical programme commissioned by the Swiss Government and Parliament.**
- **The FSO is closely linked to the national and international statistical scene as well as to partners in the worlds of science, business and politics. In this way, it guarantees that the information needs of statistical users are taken into account.**
- **The process of integration in Europe also represents a challenge to Swiss statistics to produce internationally comparable information, as the only way for Switzerland to obtain meaningful data about its position in Europe and the world. For this purpose, the FSO maintains close cooperation within the framework of the European Union's statistical system.**

## Legal basis

Public statistics are based on the Swiss constitution.

In the vote held on 18 April 1999 the Swiss electorate approved a total revision of the constitution, which now includes a statistics article (Art. 65) concerning the commissioning and competence of statistics.

Article 65:

"1 The federal authorities shall obtain the necessary statistical data concerning the current status and changes in the population, the economy, society, spatial development and the environment in Switzerland.

2 They shall be authorised to issue regulations with regard to the harmonisation and management of official registers with a view to minimising the work needed for obtaining such information"

The legal basis for public statistics in Switzerland is defined in more detail in various laws, principally in the Federal Statistic Act of 9 October 1992. As the most comprehensive and long-standing statistical survey, the general census is covered by a law of its own dating from June 2007. Legislation is also needed for the simplified surveys mentioned in the constitutional article that can be carried out thanks to harmonised official registers of population and other factors. The Federal Statistical Act regulates not only the work of the Swiss Federal Statis-

tical Office (FSO) but, as its name indicates, all statistical activity at federal level.

The Federal Statistical Act provides a legal framework and does not list individual statistics and surveys which are regulated at ordinance level by the Federal Council.

The Act sets out the tasks and organisation of federal statistics as well as fundamental principles for data procurement, publications and services. In particular, it describes data protection principles.

The salient innovations in the 1992 Act are: the coordination function of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office in its capacity as the Government's central statistical unit, the establishment of a multi-year statistical programme for overall planning of Swiss statistics, and the institution of the Federal Statistics Commission as an advisory body to the Federal Council (with representatives from academia, business, social partners as well as federal, cantonal and municipal units).

Various ordinances provide more detailed instructions for implementing the Federal Statistical Act, for example concerning the organisation of federal statistics, the conduct of federal statistical surveys, fees for statistical services provided by Government administrative units, the Company and Business Register as well as the Federal Building and Housing Register.



## Two central principles of statistical activity

### Professional independence and data protection

The political authorities (ie the Federal Council or Parliament) decide which aspects of our society, economy and the environment are to be regularly surveyed with the limited resources available to public statistics. However, the methods used to survey, analyse and disseminate the statistical information must be decided by the public statistical unit on an expert, independent basis in order to obtain as true a picture of reality as possible, and not one which is influenced and distorted by certain wishes. To protect it against non-objective influence, the FSO requires legislation concerning its professional independence. This also provides a warranty for the acceptance of statistical findings as credible by all users, irrespective of their political and economic interests.

Data protection and individual privacy are fundamental principles of public statistical work, and statistical secrecy is regulated in the 1992 Federal Statistics Act.

This decree was the first example of data protection regulation at federal level in Switzerland. Information obtained by the Confederation through statistical surveys may only be used for statistical purposes, and any exceptions must be regulated by law. Statistical secrecy is used to ensure that data about private individuals, companies or businesses are not used for administrative, control, taxation or supervisory activities. It also forbids publication of the findings in a form that allows conclusions to be drawn about private individuals or legal entities. Statistical secrecy is supported by organisational measures, eg through the obligation of all persons entrusted with confidential data to maintain secrecy.

In accordance with Article 1, para. 3 of the bilateral statistical agreement, Switzerland has undertaken to produce its statistics by respecting, among other things, the principles of impartiality, reliability, objectivity and scientific independence, as stated in the European statistical code of good practice.

## FSO Profile

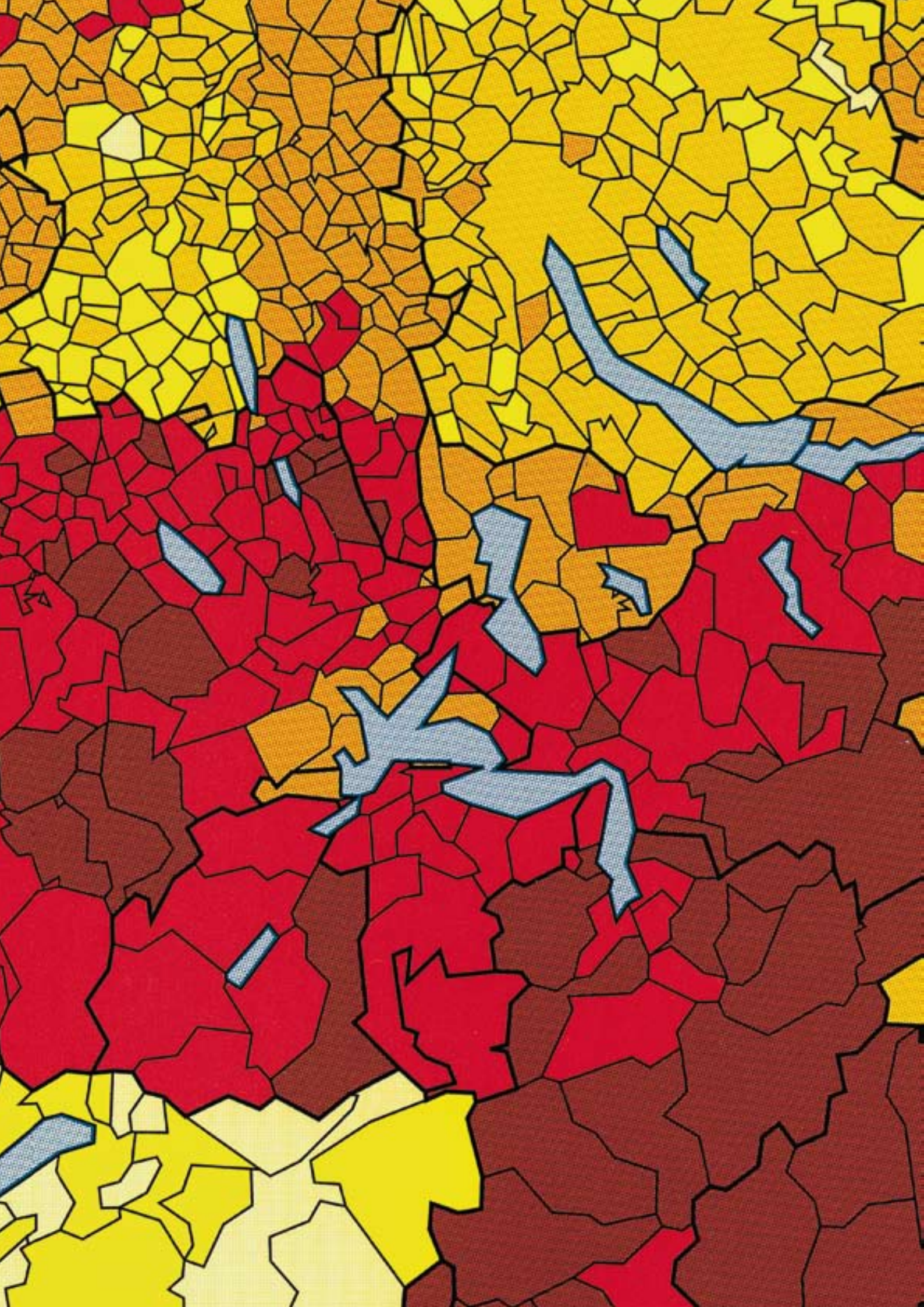
The Federal Statistical Office (FSO) which is part of the Federal Department of the Interior (FDI), employs approximately 550 people, 60% of whom hold a university or higher educational institution diploma. Additional staff are employed to cope with major surveys such as the Business Survey. The native language of half of the staff is German. The remaining half speak French, Italian (4%) or another language (2%). The average annual budget is CHF 165 million (including internal costs). The FSO edits more than 400 publications annually (printed and/or in internet) and approximately 140 press releases as well as answering more than 100,000 enquiries. Furthermore the FSO runs a very busy internet portal. In 2008 2.5 million visitors consulted 14.5 million pages.

## Statistics at the start of the 3rd millenium

Public statistics should not be satisfied with what has already been achieved. Statistics change, just as the many aspects of life with which they are concerned change. And so what does the future hold?

- An increasing number of more demanding customers require new public statistics. The administrative sector, the media, the economic sector, health, social affairs and education require precise, quantitative information concerning their respective fields. This need for statistical information is constantly growing, statistical analyses are everyday tools today. Public statistics must provide rapid, efficient and targeted orientational aids.
- Switzerland is surrounded by the growth of a larger, united Europe. Swiss public statistics are becoming increasingly interwoven with Europe. Switzerland's comparative position and how Europe views Switzerland on this basis is largely due to statistical information. Switzerland has to provide this information according to international standards, again rapidly and efficiently.
- Limited and even diminishing resources define the backdrop of public statistics. As part of the state administration, they are also subject to funding cuts. There is the risk of a gap developing between demands for funding and the available cash. In order to meet the expected increase in requirements, public statistics must make full use of the latest technology, continue developing methods of data acquisition and distribution and set up partnerships. This means expanding on-line communication for surveys and activities connected with information and promoting modernisation within the administration in order to be able to automate data acquisition through registers and administrative data, and last but not least strengthening cooperation with partners within the administration and in the private sector.







# From data collection to statistical information

**Producing top quality statistical information presupposes broad-based theoretical and practical knowledge. Meaningful statistics are not obtainable overnight.**

**Investment in scientific preparatory work, selecting survey methods that reduce pressure on interviewees, comprehensive data protection measures, the use of modern computer technology in data processing and result dissemination, as well as communication with survey partners are just a few of the keywords on the way from data collection to the supply of statistical results. Any data survey requires proof that society needs it (in the multi-year statistical programme) and the creation of legal bases.**

**From the outset, the survey concept determines the kind and scope of survey needed to best achieve the information target.**

**Various data procurement methods are used.**

- Surveys. Individuals, households and even businesses are approached direct, either by means of a questionnaire (more and more frequently in electronic form) or through telephone interviews.
- In sectors such as transport and the environment, there are also surveys that combine questions with a greater or lesser degree of automated observation. Examples include automatic traffic counters or land use statistics based on aerial photographs.
- Analysis of administrative data. The statistical analysis of data collected by administrative units as part of their decision-making, monitoring or supervisory functions is growing in importance, eg in agricultural or education statistics. This is one way of reducing the number of direct surveys and hence the pressure on interviewees. If several administrative registers are to be used, such as communal residents' registers, they must be comparable and up to date. With this objective in mind, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) is currently modernising and standardising its registers, particularly with a view to the Population Census. In this way, statistics encourage the modernization of Switzerland's administrative structure.



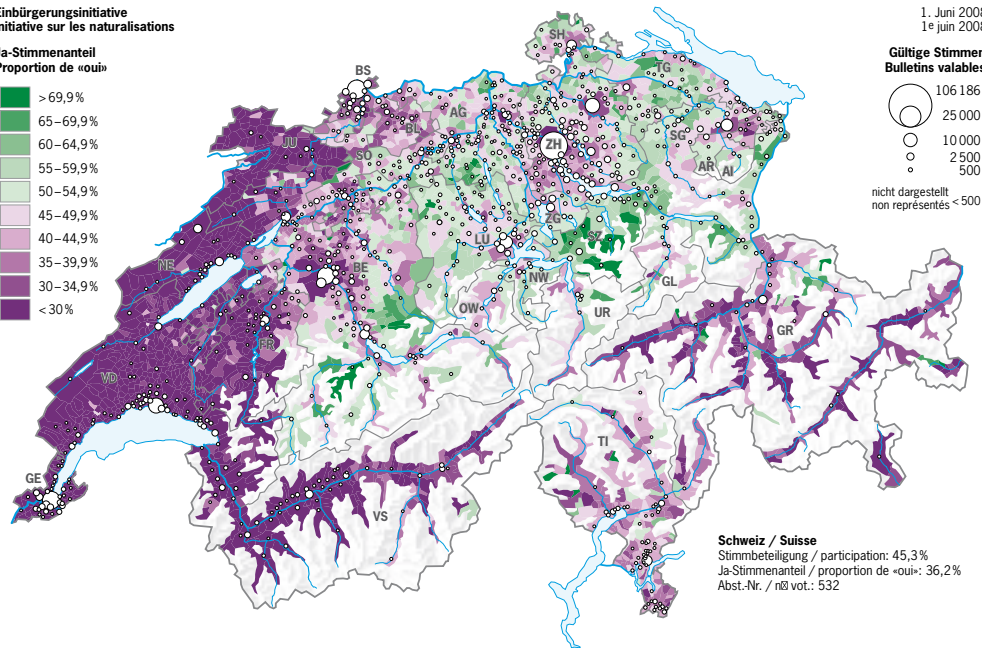
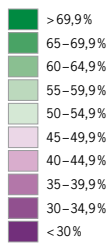
An exhaustive survey ie a survey of all units, such as inhabitants or businesses, is called for when a considerable degree of detail is needed (for instance at municipal or hectare level). The Business Survey is an example of an exhaustive survey which also enables universes to be obtained from which representative samples can be taken.

However, it is not always necessary to survey everybody. The representative random sample is crucial for statistics. Instead of a full-scale survey, interviewees are chosen from within a given framework strictly on a random basis. Then mathematical and statistical methods are used to extrapolate the findings for the partial survey to the population as a whole.

The data collected must be captured, processed and then made available, in accordance with data protection rules. Information technology is the key working tool, and ongoing quality checks are indispensable. Data are made available for analysis in databases, geographical information systems and registers. The

**Einbürgerungsinitiative**  
**Initiative sur les naturalisations**

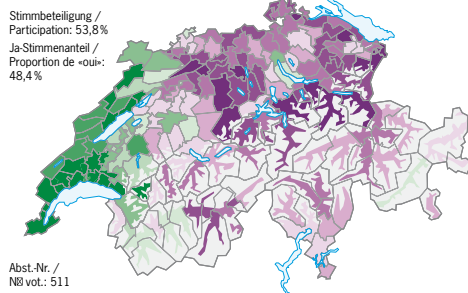
**Ja-Stimmenanteil**  
**Proportion de «oui»**



**Bürgerrechtserwerb für die 3. Generation**  
**Acquisition de la nationalité suisse par la 3ème génération**

26. September 2004  
 26 septembre 2004

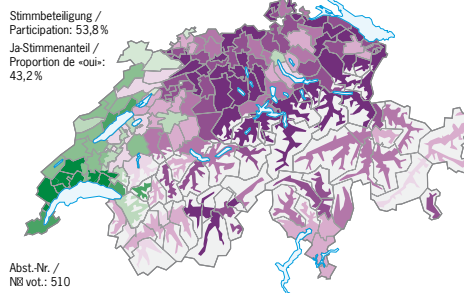
Stimmabgabe /  
 Participation: 53,8%  
 Ja-Stimmenanteil /  
 Proportion de «oui»: 48,4%



**Einbürgerung von Jugendlichen der 2. Generation**  
**Naturalisation des jeunes de la 2ème génération**

26. September 2004  
 26 septembre 2004

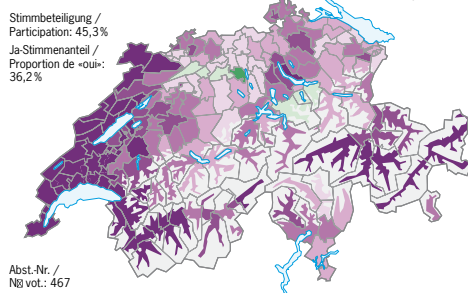
Stimmabgabe /  
 Participation: 53,8%  
 Ja-Stimmenanteil /  
 Proportion de «oui»: 43,2%



**Regelung der Zuwanderung**  
**Règlement de l'immigration**

24. September 2000  
 24 septembre 2000

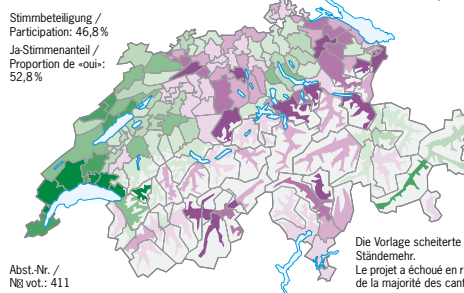
Stimmabgabe /  
 Participation: 45,3%  
 Ja-Stimmenanteil /  
 Proportion de «oui»: 36,2%



**Erleichterte Einbürgerung für junge Ausländer**  
**Naturalisation facilitée pour les jeunes étrangers**

12. Juni 1994  
 12 juin 1994

Stimmabgabe /  
 Participation: 46,8%  
 Ja-Stimmenanteil /  
 Proportion de «oui»: 52,8%



© BFS / OFS, ThemaKart, Neuchâtel

processed data only take on their real value and express a message when they have been analysed and interpreted by experts.

The dissemination of statistical findings is at the end of the chain and is its objective. For the many target groups, dissemination takes many different forms and a wide variety of channels: as comprehensive tables or information-rich indicators, supplemented by textual commentaries or visual representations such as graphs and maps, as hard-copy documents or in electronic form, through the mass media or online via Internet, as a standard package or tailored to customer needs. Nowadays, statistical information can be obtained in many different ways and is continually being adapted to the latest technological potential.

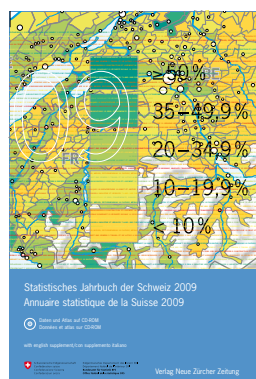
## Product range

**Federal Statistics provide statistical information for the permanent observation of key areas of life. In particular, and to an increasing extent, this also covers customised information processing and advice on information use. This information work is largely based on a government mandate: the Federal Statistical Act prescribes that statistical findings must be easily accessible to the general public, for instance in the mass media, via the Internet or in the FSO library. Consequently, many services are provided free. In contrast, market rates are charged for customized analyses prepared for individual clients, making the FSO part of the fast-developing information market.**

### **The FSO's output comprises:**

- 2–3 press releases a week with the latest findings
- around 100 scientific publications with texts, tables, graphs and maps a year
- comprehensive electronic data available on floppy disks and CD-ROM
- continually updated and expanded information on the Internet, including various electronic newsletters which can be subscribed to
- online access via the internet to the Statistical Lexicon for Switzerland, the comprehensive collection of tables, texts and graphs, as well as the database which enables individual tables to be drawn up
- annually updated overviews in the Statistical Yearbook of Switzerland (with CD-ROM) and in the pocket-sized guide to statistics – with commentaries, numerous graphs and maps
- spatial analyses in a geographic information system (GIS), superior quality thematic cartography produced by the FSO's Cartographic Unit
- information services with a wide range of specialised staff to provide information
- an automatic telephone information service as well as a fax machine available round the clock (Swiss Consumer Price Index)
- an information centre open to the general public (Espace public) in Neuchâtel with a library and electronic information
- special services for schools, with graphs and teaching aids (Forum School) Federal statistics are subdivided into the following 22 topics:

**0** Statistical Bases and Overviews **1** Population **2** Territory and Environment **3** Employment and Income from Employment **4** National Economy **5** Prices **6** Industry and Services **7** Agriculture and Forestry **8** Energy **9** Construction and Housing **10** Tourism **11** Mobility and Transport **12** Money, Banks, Insurance Companies **13** Social Security **14** Health **15** Education and Science **16** Culture, Media, Information Society, Sport **17** Politics **18** Public Administration and Finance **19** Crime and Criminal Justice **20** Economic and social Situation of the Population **21** Sustainable Development, regional and international Disparities







## The Swiss Federal Statistical Office in Neuchâtel

**The move of the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) from Bern to Neuchâtel, from German-speaking to French-speaking Switzerland, began in 1998 and was completed in 2004 with the inauguration of the tower. This step marked an important change for the FSO and Swiss statistics.**

**For the first time, most of the Office's various sections are housed under one roof in an attractive new building that gives this government institution an immediately recognizable "face".**







### **Background to the move**

The Federal Statistical Office's new location in Neuchâtel has its roots in the decentralization of Swiss federal government units in progress since the early Eighties.

#### **1980–1986**

Discussion of decentralization and Federal Government decision to move the FSO from Berne to Neuchâtel

#### **1990**

Bauart Architects, Berne won the competition to design the new FSO premises

#### **1992**

Both Houses of the Swiss Parliament approved the credit of 130 million francs

#### **1994**

Laying of the foundation stone by Federal Councillor Otto Stich

#### **1998**

Move into the 5-storey building

#### **2000**

Construction work starts on the tower to be added to the main building, which was completed in 1998, on the side of Neuchâtel station. The tower was part of the original architectural tender and the town's development plan.

#### **2004**

Move into 14-storey tower

The FSO building stands on Neuchâtel Railway Station ground, on a large terrace created early in the 20th century for freight operations. To the north, it is bordered by straight railway tracks, to the south by a slightly curved road and to the south-east by an impressive supporting wall. The station site is set apart from the rest of urban Neuchâtel by a graduated terrain.

The new complex definitely boosts the appearance of an area that is still in full development.

The slightly curved topography of the south side of the site has been incorporated into the external architecture of the main building as well as its internal layout, making for a harmonious marriage with its surroundings. On the station side, the long

main building terminates at the striking tower with its glass façade. The principal idea behind the planning of the new building was to create healthy, high-quality workplaces, with low energy consumption, self-sufficient creation of alternative energy and optimum use of available energy being fundamental specifications.

The range of materials used was limited to achieve a simple, unified effect: wood, plaster, concrete, steel and glass are combined to complement and enhance each other, playing with contrasts, room depths, light and shade, transparency and reflections and clearly highlighting structures and textures.





## Some architectural facts

### The main building

The main building was the product of a dual competition: a town-planning one covering the whole area east of Neuchâtel railway station and a specific FSO building design competition which was won by Bauart Architects, Berne in 1990.

Length: 240 metres (165-metre main wing, 75-metre open-plan office wing)

Widest point: 20 metres

Height: 20 metres

Floors: 4 plus penthouse floor, 2 basement levels

Office types: 114 individual offices, 114 offices for 2 persons, 6 open-plan offices with some 40 work-places

Conference rooms: 7, plus one large conference room on the penthouse floor with a modern audio-visual system

Computer Centre; Dispatch Unit: 1st basement level

Storeroom/Archives: 2800 sq m 2 on the 2nd basement level

Staff restaurant: Seats 154, room for 60 on terrace

Parking facilities: 110 spaces in underground garage on 1st basement level

### Tower

Length: 29 m

Width: 14 m

Height: 50 m

Floors: 13 plus penthouse, 2 basement levels

Office types: 63 individual offices, 88 offices for 2 people

Conference facilities: 9 conference rooms plus 1 in the penthouse, all equipped with modern conference facilities





### Art and the new building

The art concept for the new building is the logical extension of the growing importance of electronic dissemination methods for statistical information work and the crucial role of IT in producing statistics. For the first time in a Swiss government building, the works of art consist solely of electronic works displayed on big screens in the foyer of the main building.

The jury constituted by the Federal Art Commission selected projects by the following three artists:

Eric Lanz:  
Les choses. Video-Triptychon.



Renatus Zürcher:  
Regarde! Videoclips



Erich Busslinger:  
Inland Archiv



# Contacts



## Address

Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO)  
Espace de l'Europe 10  
2010 Neuchâtel

## Central Information Service and Library

→ Enquiries by telephone/fax

Tel: +41 (0)32 713 60 11

Fax: +41 (0)32 713 60 12

Monday to Friday

9.30–11.30 a.m.

2–4 p.m.

→ For enquiries by email:

[info@bfs.admin.ch](mailto:info@bfs.admin.ch)

→ Library

Tel: +41 (0)32 713 60 54

Fax: +41 (0)32 713 60 03

Monday, Wednesday, Friday

## Publication orders

Tel: +41 (0)32 713 60 60

Fax: +41 (0)32 713 60 61

Monday to Friday

8.30–11.30 a.m.

2–4.30 p.m.

[order@bfs.admin.ch](mailto:order@bfs.admin.ch)

## Newsletter

Press releases and news concerning certain topics  
through email subscription:

[www.statistik.admin.ch](http://www.statistik.admin.ch) → Newsletter  
subscription

## Internet

Homepage:

<http://www.statistics.admin.ch>

Statistical Lexicon of Switzerland – comprehensive  
collection of tables, texts, diagrams and maps:

<http://www.statistics.admin.ch> → Infothek

## Audiotex information about the Swiss

### Consumer Price Index

Tel. 0900 55 66 55

