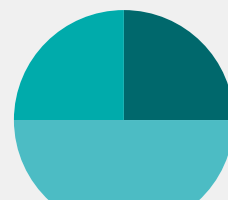




FSO News



03 Work and income

Neuchâtel, July 2025

Comments on findings

Labour market indicators 2025

This publication presents the main highlights among the vast range of employment data. The information is arranged to provide an overview of the Swiss labour market, along with the relevant statistics. Topics covered include employment, working hours, unemployment, job vacancies, dynamic aspects of the labour market, as well as salary structure and trends.

It consists of three sub-publications. This document comments on the results of the labour market indicators for the period 2019–2024 and the outlook for 2025. The additional document “Definitions” provides an overall view of the definitions used in the labour market statistics, while “Statistical Sources” describes the methodological aspects of the various data sources.

Abbreviation in the graphs

EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ELS-ILO	Unemployment Statistics (ILO-based)
ES	Employment Statistics
ESS	Swiss Earnings Structure Survey
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	Statistical office of the European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
JOBSTAT	Job Statistics
ILO	International Labour Office
LMA	Labour Market Accounts
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SLFS	Swiss Labour Force Survey
SWI	Swiss Wage Index
WAS	Wage Agreements Survey
WV	Work Volume Statistics

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2019–2024: main labour market trends in Switzerland

From the 4th quarter 2019 to the 4th quarter 2024, the number of employed persons in Switzerland increased. Over the same period, both the unemployment rate based on the ILO (International Labour Office) definition and the unemployment rate among people registered with a regional employment office (RAV; unemployed as defined by SECO) increased. The number of vacancies also increased during these five years. After falling for three consecutive years, real wages are also on the rise compared with 2023.

Moderate economic growth

Between the 4th quarters of 2019 and 2024, Swiss real gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 8.2%. It was, however, impacted by the COVID pandemic, with variations of –1.2% between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 4th quarter of 2020 and of +5.8% between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the 4th quarter of 2021. Swiss economic activity then continued to rise and between the 4th quarter of 2021 and the 4th quarter of 2023, GDP grew by 2.0%. Between the end of 2023 and the end of 2024, GDP grew by 1.6%.

Increase in the number of jobs

According to the Employment Statistics (ES), which are based on a survey of economically active persons (Swiss Labour Force Survey, SLFS), the number of employed persons rose by 4.8% between the 4th quarter 2019 and the 4th quarter 2024, rising from 5.1 million to 5.4 million. At the same time, the Job Statistics (JOBSTAT), which are based on a survey of secondary and tertiary sector enterprises, also showed an increase in the number of jobs of 7.3%, rising from 5.2 million to 5.5 million. Both the ES

and JOBSTAT were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with a 0.3% decrease in ES figures between the 4th quarters 2019 and 2020, while the JOBSTAT figures ceased to grow. Both then returned to positive annual growth at the end of 2021 (+4.6% and +6.4% between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the 4th quarter of 2023). Between the 4th quarter of 2023 and that of 2024, the number of employed persons rose by 0.8%, the number of jobs by 0.9%.

Rise in unemployment

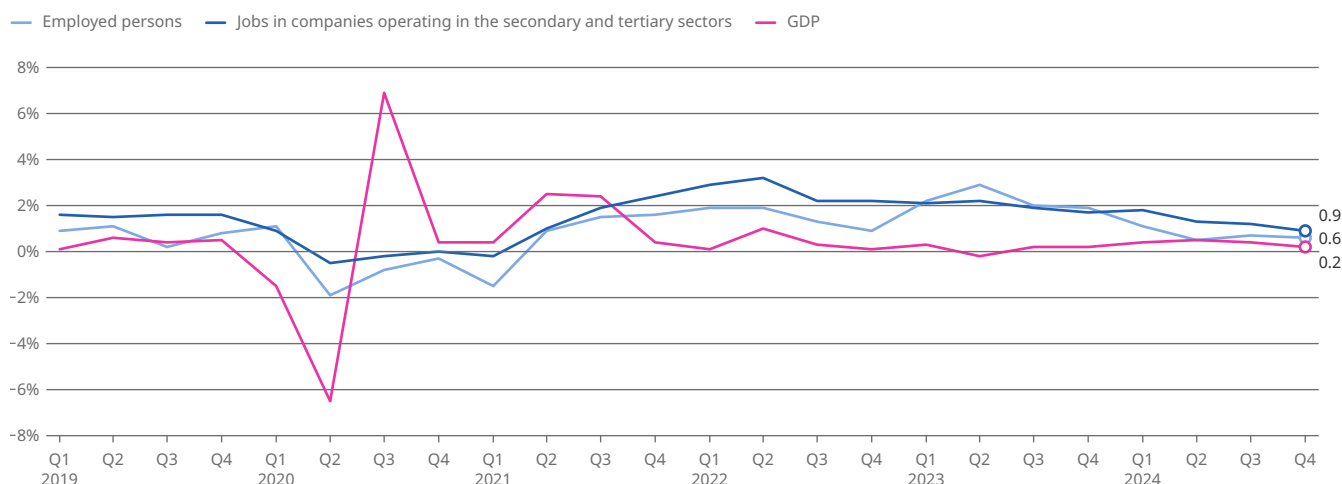
In the five years from the 4th quarter of 2019 to that of 2024, the unemployment rate based on the ILO definition rose from 3.9% to 4.4%, as did the figure for persons registered as unemployed at a regional placement office (from 2.3% to 2.6%). The relatively large difference between these two rates can be explained by the fact that the first rate also includes job seekers who are not registered with a regional employment office (RAV).

Some 3816 persons were working reduced hours at the end of 2019, compared with 5733 in 2024. There was a surge during the COVID-19 pandemic (peaking at 1.3 million in April 2020). The number of persons working reduced hours then steadily declined, to just 2848 in April 2023 and has since been rising.

Job vacancies

According to JOBSTAT, the number of vacancies available in the 4th quarter of 2024 was 10.6% higher than five years earlier. It had fallen during the pandemic (–18.6% between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the 4th quarter of the previous year, then +54.7% a year later). It then continued to grow until the 4th quarter of 2022, but at a slower rate (+18.1% between the 4th quarter of 2021 and the 4th quarter of 2022). The number of vacancies has fallen since 2022, however. From 121 000, the number fell to 109 000 a year later and 91 000 at the end of 2024.

Variation in the gross domestic product (GDP) in real terms, the number of employed persons and the number of jobs, 2019–2024



Note: GDP compared to the previous quarter, the number of employed persons and jobs compared to the corresponding quarter in the previous year

Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES), Job Statistics (JOBSTAT); SECO

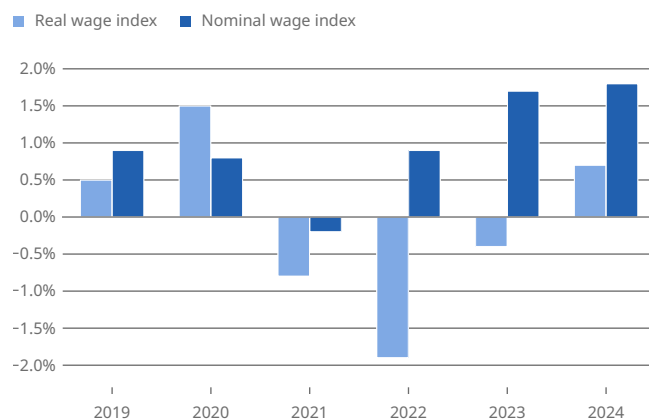
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37.6% of companies (weighted according to the number of jobs) indicated that they had difficulty recruiting qualified personnel in the 4th quarter 2024 (-2.4 percentage points compared with the 4th quarter 2023). Since the 4th quarter of 2021, this share has remained relatively stable (36.0%), but higher than during the COVID pandemic (28.0% in the 4th quarter of 2020). With economic recovery, the percentage of companies reporting difficulties grew from 40.8% at the end of 2022 to 40.0% at the end of 2023. A comparison of the past five years also reveals that companies were having more difficulty finding suitable personnel (+5.6 percentage points between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 4th quarter of 2024).

Growth in nominal and real wages

In 2024, nominal wages recorded an average increase of 1.8% compared with the previous year. Thanks to the marked slow-down in inflation, which stood at 1.1% in 2024 (compared with 2.1% in 2023 and 2.8% in 2022), the purchasing power of wages rose by 0.7% across the economy as a whole. This was the first increase since 2020, following three consecutive years of falling purchasing power (-0.4% in 2023, -1.9% in 2022 and -0.8% in 2021). Nominal wage growth varied from sector to sector, however. Growth was more marked in the tertiary sector (+1.9%) than in the industrial sector (+1.5%). Women also saw more wage growth (+2.6%) than men (+1.2%). This sustained growth in the wage index for women is in keeping with a long-term trend. Women's wages have become more similar to men's (23.7% median wage gap in 1994 compared with 9.5% in 2022), but the gender wage gap persists.

Variation in the nominal and real wage index, 2019–2024



Note: Compared to the previous year

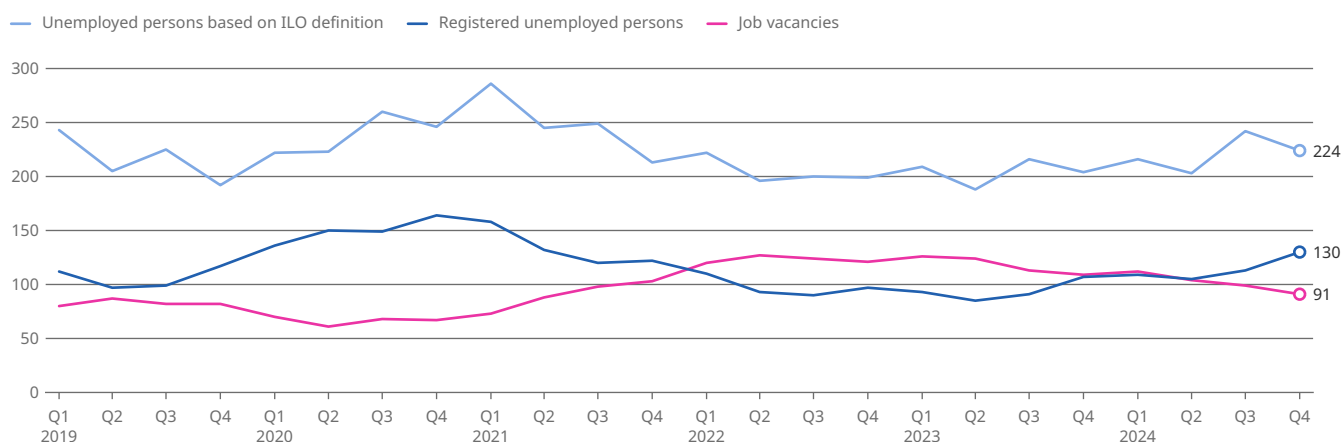
Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Swiss Wage Index (SWI)

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Unemployed persons based on ILO definition, registered unemployed persons and job vacancies, 2019–2024

In thousands



Note: Unemployment Statistics based on ILO definition: quarterly averages; JOBSTAT and SECO: values at the end of the quarter

Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Unemployment Statistics based on ILO definition, Job Statistics (JOBSTAT); SECO

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2019–2024: The situation of men and women in the labour market

Between the 4th quarters 2019 and 2024, the share of women participating in the labour market slightly increased. Women were still, however, considerably more likely than men to be working part-time (2024: 59.5% compared with 20.6%). Over a five-year period, the ILO unemployment rate grew for both men (+0.4 percentage points to 4.1%) and women (+0.5 percentage points to 4.6%). When comparing median wages in the whole economy in full-time equivalents, the gender wage gap was 9.5% in 2022, with only part of this difference explained by objective criteria.

Part-time work increasing among men

Part-time work is much more common among women than men. In the 4th quarter of 2024, 59.5% of all employed women worked part time (in other words had a work-time percentage of less than 90%), i. e. 0.2 percentage points more than in the 4th quarter of 2019. Among men, this rate has risen by 2.9 percentage points since the end of 2019 (to 20.6%). The unequal distribution of part-time work is also one of the reasons why women accounted for only 39.8% of the total actual hours worked in 2024. In the 4th quarter of 2024, 540 000 men worked part-time compared with 1.4 million women.

Women more likely than men to be employed in the services sector

For both sexes, the number of employed people increased in the secondary and tertiary sectors between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 4th quarter of 2024. The number of women and men employed in the secondary sector rose by 1.6% and 0.2% respectively. Growth in the tertiary sector was higher, at 5.4% and 6.6% respectively. Proportionally, women worked considerably

more frequently in the services sector than men in the 4th quarter of 2024 (88.3% of all employed women compared with 68.8% of all employed men). Only 10.2% of women were employed in industry and 1.5% in agriculture. For men, these figures were 28.1% in industry and in agriculture 3.0%.

Share of women in economically active population rose slightly

The number of economically active persons (employed and ILO unemployed persons together, corresponding to the labour supply) rose between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 4th quarter of 2024 by 4.3% among men (to 2.7 million) and by 4.5% among women (to 2.4 million). In five years, the share of women in the economically active population thus rose slightly (+0.1 percentage points to 47.0%). Both the number of employed women and men rose (+4.9% and +4.8%).

Breakdown in the labour force by gender, 2024



Note: Economically active persons, unemployed persons based on ILO definition and part-time employed persons: average in the 4th quarter; volume of hours actually worked: annual value

Data as on: 03.07.2025
Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS),
Unemployment Statistics (ILO-based), Work Volume Statistics (WV)

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Variation in the number of employed persons by gender, 2019–2024



Note: Compared to the corresponding quarter in the previous year

Data as on: 03.07.2025
Source: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES)

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Increase in the unemployment rate for both sexes

Between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 4th quarter of 2024, the unemployment rate based on the ILO definition rose both among women (from 4.1% to 4.6%) and among men (from 3.7% to 4.1%). While women were more affected by the COVID pandemic (+1.2 percentage points between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 4th quarter of 2020 reaching 5.4%, compared with +0.8 points at 4.5% for men), the gap disappeared in the 4th quarter of 2021 (−1.1 points for women compared with −0.3 points for men) at 4.3% and 4.2% respectively. The unemployment rate among women then held steady until the fourth quarter of 2023 (4.3% in 2022 and 4.2% in 2023), while it fell by 0.5 points for men before remaining relatively stable (3.7% in 2022 and 3.8% in 2023).

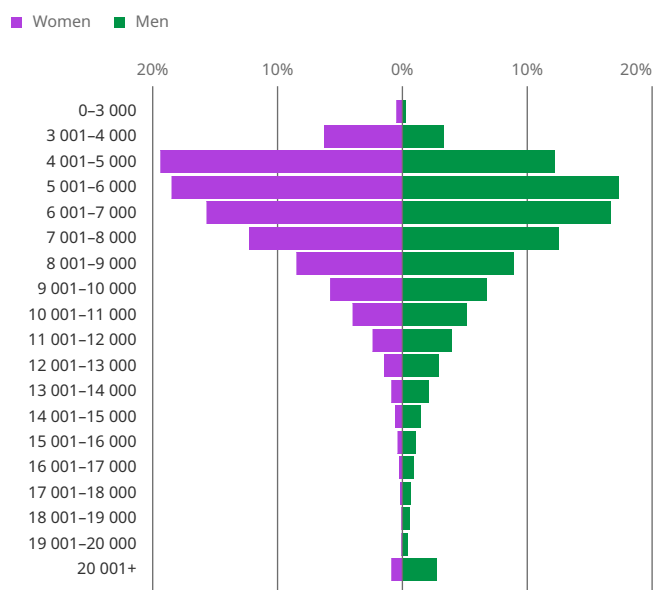
Wage inequality between women and men is gradually decreasing

In 2022, the gross standardised monthly median wage of women in the overall economy was CHF 6397 and that of men CHF 7066. The wage gap has narrowed since 2016, decreasing from 12.0% to 11.5% in 2018, to 10.8% in 2020 and 9.5% in 2022. In the private sector, in 2022 women earned 11.7% less than men (2020: 13.8%), and 9.8% less in the public sector (2020: 10.5%).

The graph on the right illustrates the distribution of women and men in different wage categories. A higher proportion of women are concentrated in the lowest wage category (below CHF 6000), while men outnumber women in the highest wage categories (over CHF 9000).

According to an analysis commissioned by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), 51.8% of the wage gap (arithmetic mean) in 2022 in the whole economy could be explained by objective factors such as place in the hierarchy, age or education. 48.2% of the pay gap remains unexplained.

Distribution of employees by wage-level class and gender (private sector and public sector together), 2022



Note: standardised gross monthly wage in francs

Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Swiss Wage Structure Survey (LSE)

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Unemployment rate based on ILO definition by gender, 2019–2024



Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Unemployment Statistics (ILO-based)

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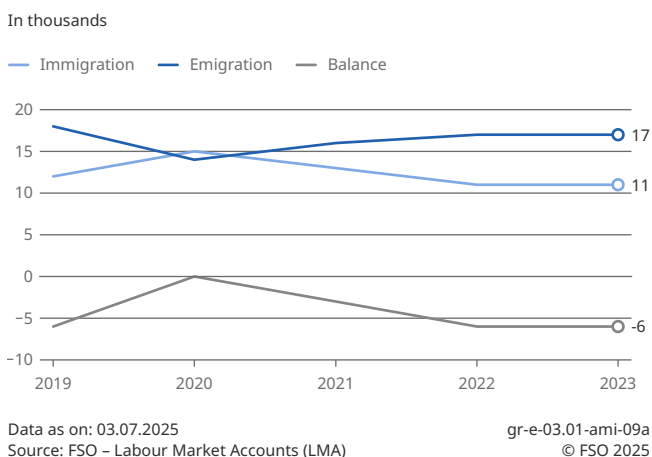
2019–2024: Swiss and foreign labour force

Since 2001 Switzerland has experienced a high influx of foreign workers. Between 2019 and 2024, the number of foreign nationals in the economically active population rose sharply, while that of Swiss nationals only increased slightly. Without naturalisations, the difference would have been markedly greater. Over the entire period under review, the unemployment rate based on ILO definition was approximately two to three times higher among foreign nationals than among Swiss nationals. Swiss workers generally earn more than their foreign counterparts, except in jobs with a high level of responsibility.

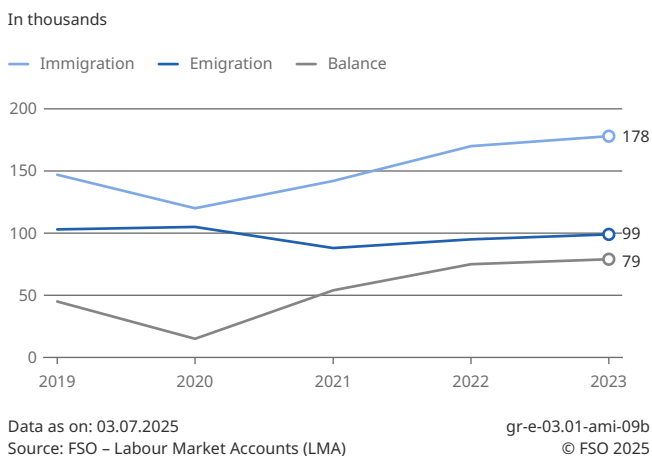
Level of foreign labour immigration remains high

Between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 4th quarter of 2024, the number of economically active persons with foreign nationality (employed and ILO unemployed) grew much faster (+13.7% to 2.0 million) than that of economically active Swiss nationals (+1.2% to 3.6 million). The strong rise in the number of foreign workers is the result of heavy immigration: during the period 2019 to 2023 (cumulation of 5 years), immigration of foreign nationals exceeded the number of emigrations by 268 000 persons. In contrast, the migration of economically active Swiss nationals resulted in a negative balance of 20 000 persons. Naturalisations play a role in the structure of the economically active population: from 2019 to 2023, some 120 000 economically active foreign nationals obtained Swiss nationality. Were it not for these naturalisations, the number of foreign economically active persons would have increased by 20.6% between 2019 and 2024, whereas that of the Swiss economically active population would have fallen (–2.2%). In the 4th quarter of 2024, foreign nationals made up 35.2% of the economically active population, compared with 32.6% five years earlier.

Swiss labour force migration, 2019–2023



Foreign labour force migration, 2019–2023



Variation in the labour force by nationality, 2019–2024



Note: Compared to the corresponding quarter in the previous year

Data as on: 03.07.2025
Source: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES), Unemployment Statistics (ILO-based)

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Foreign nationals more often affected by unemployment

In the 4th quarter of 2024, 3.5 million Swiss nationals were employed in the labour market and 113 000 were ILO unemployed. The unemployment rate for Swiss nationals stood at 3.1%, slightly higher than in the 4th quarter of 2019 (3.0%). Unemployment was higher among foreign nationals, with 1.9 million in employment and 112 000 unemployed in the 4th quarter of 2024. Unemployment based on the ILO definition stood at 7.4%, also higher than in the 4th quarter of 2019 (6.3%).

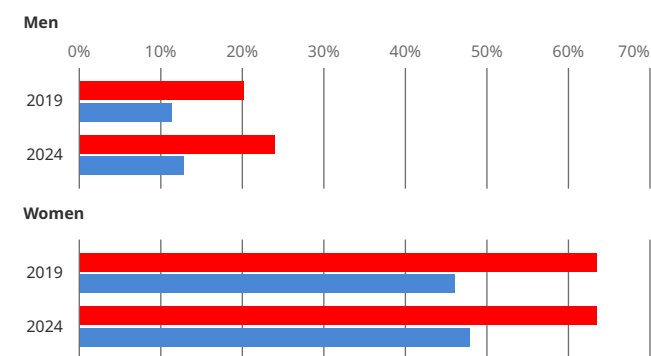
Less part-time work among foreign nationals

Between the 4th quarter of 2019 and the 4th quarter of 2024, the number of people working part-time rose among both Swiss and foreign employed persons (+2.0 percentage points to 43.1% and +1.8 percentage points to 27.9%). This type of work is common among women, albeit more common among Swiss women than foreign women: in the 4th quarter of 2024, 63.5% of Swiss women worked part-time, compared with 47.9% of foreign women. Among men, the corresponding shares were 24.0% and 12.8% respectively.

Part-time employed persons by gender and nationality

In % of employed persons, 4th quarter

■ Swiss men/women ■ Foreign men/women



Data as on: 03.07.2025
Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

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More foreigners work in paid employment

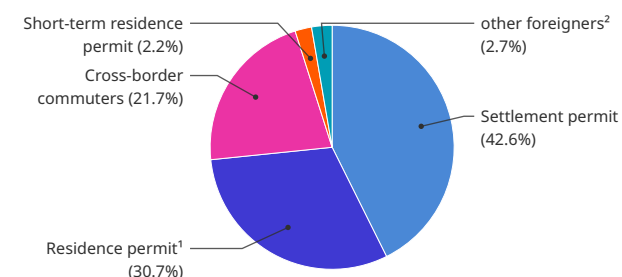
Foreign employed persons were more often salaried employees than employed Swiss nationals (94.6% compared with 89.7%). Only 5.4% were self-employed or worked in a family-run enterprise, considerably less than Swiss workers (10.3%). This difference is attributable to several factors: in addition to the matter of integration comes the impossibility for the vast majority of first-generation foreign nationals to take over a family-owned business. Moreover, the share of persons under age 40 is larger in the foreign population than in the Swiss population, whereas the 40 to 64-year-old age group has a much higher proportion of self-employed persons than among those aged under 40.

Increase in the share of foreign workers who hold a residence permit

The structure of the employed foreign population by permit status has varied over the past five years. While the share of workers with a residence permit (B or L permit, in Switzerland for 12 or more months) and of cross-border commuters (G permit) has increased (by 3.1 percentage points to 30.7% and 1.3 percentage points to 21.7% respectively), the share with a settlement permit (C permit) decreased (–4.4 percentage points to 42.6%). The same is true of holders of short-term residence permits (L permit, in Switzerland for under 12 months; –0.6 percentage points to 2.2%).

Employed persons of foreign nationality by residence permit

4th quarter 2024



¹ Incl. holders of a short-term residence permit who have been living in Switzerland for more than 12 months

² Asylum applicants, staff of Swiss embassies and consulates and Swiss naval fleet personnel, EU/EFTA citizens engaged in paid employment (not self-employed) for a Swiss employer for a maximum of 90 days per civil year

Data as on: 03.07.2025
Source: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES)

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Foreign employees: wage differences depending on residence status

In 2022, in the economy as a whole, the median monthly wage of Swiss employees was higher than that of foreign nationals (CHF 7164 compared with CHF 6089). This wage gap in favour of Swiss nationals compared with foreign nationals was observed across all categories of residence permit.

However, when looking at jobs with a high level of responsibility, foreign nationals had higher wages than their Swiss counterparts. Among senior managers, cross-border commuters earned CHF 10 707, those with resident permits CHF 12 791 and Swiss nationals CHF 10 476.

The opposite held true for jobs without managerial responsibility. At CHF 6496, the wages of Swiss nationals were higher than those of foreign nationals: CHF 5859 for cross-border commuters and CHF 5300 for residence permit holders.

2019–2024: Working conditions in Switzerland

Working conditions in Switzerland changed between 2019 and 2024: there was a drop in the actual hours worked. The same period saw an increase in flexible working hours, the number of fixed-term contracts and working from home.

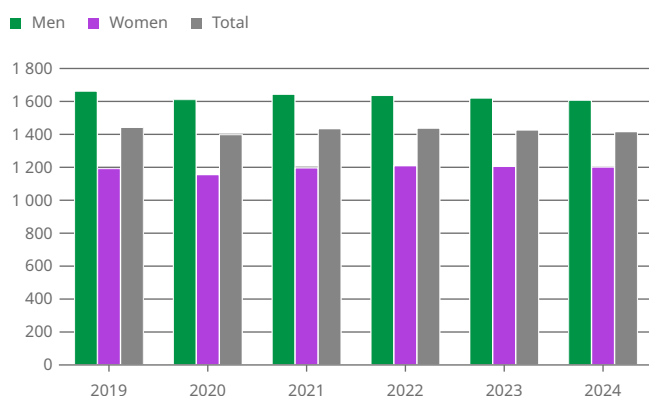
Actual annual hours worked decrease

Between 2019 and 2024, the actual annual hours worked per job fell slightly, settling at 1417 hours, i. e. a decline of 1.8% over five years (1443 hours).

Over five years, the actual annual hours worked fell among men (−3.3%) and rose among women (+0.8%). The decline was higher among self-employed persons (−11.0%) than among employees (−0.9%).

Taking into account only full-time employees, actual weekly hours worked fell between 2019 and 2024 (−1 hour and 6 minutes to 40.1 hours).

Actual annual hours worked by gender, 2019–2024



Note: In hours per job

Data as on: 03.07.2025
Source: FSO – Work Volume Statistics (WV)

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Flexible working hours on the rise

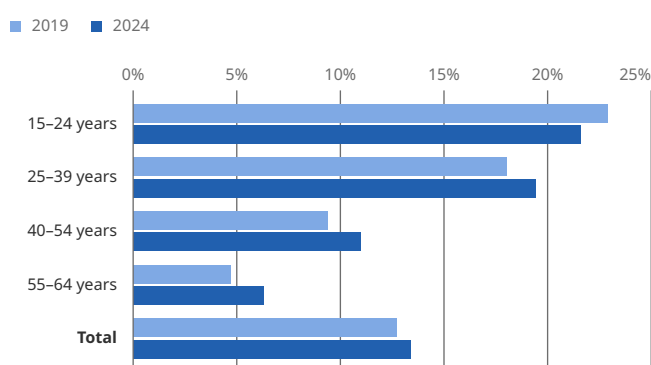
In 2024, 47.3% of employees had flexible working hours (compared with 45.9% in 2019). Men were more likely to have flexible working hours than women (51.5% compared with 42.9%). However, since 2019 the percentage of women with flexible working hours has seen a greater increase (+2.7 percentage points) than among men (+0.3 percentage points).

Young employed persons change jobs more frequently

Occupational mobility rose slightly in Switzerland between 2019 and 2024. Overall, 13.4% of employed persons changed job in 2024 (compared with 12.7% in 2019); 4.0% of them within the same company and the remaining 9.4% to another company.

There was a slight difference in the percentage of women and men changing jobs (13.9% compared with 13.0%). With increasing age, however, occupational mobility declines considerably: while approximately a fifth of 15- to 24-year-olds (21.6%) and 25- to 39-year-olds (19.4%) changed job in 2024, only 6.3% of 55- to 64-year-olds did so.

Share of employed persons with changes in employment in the past year by age groups



Note: Net turnover rate

Data as on: 03.07.2025
Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

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Young employees more often have a fixed-term contract

In the 4th quarter of 2024, 8.3% of employees (excluding apprentices) worked on a fixed-term contract compared with 7.9% in 2019. The percentage of women (9.0%) was higher than that of men (7.7%). This type of contract was most common among employees aged 15 to 24 (23.3%) and least common among people aged between 55 and 64 (4.6%), followed by those aged 40 to 54 (4.7%).

Employees (excluding apprentices) with a fixed-term contract by gender and age

In % of employed persons, 4th quarter

	Men		Women	
	2019	2024	2019	2024
Total	7.2%	7.7%	8.6%	9.0%
65 years and older ¹	19.5%	19.3%	11.4%	20.3%
55-64 years	3.3%	5.1%	3.9%	4.1%
40-54 years	2.4%	4.0%	4.1%	5.5%
25-39 years	9.8%	8.3%	9.8%	10.8%
15-24 years	21.9%	23.4%	27.9%	23.2%

¹ Less than 50 observations. The results must be interpreted with great caution.

Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

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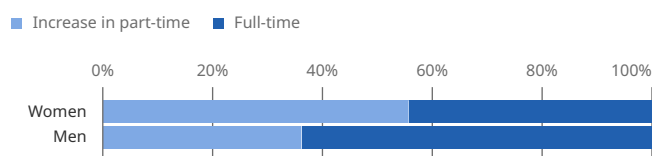
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Women have a higher rate of underemployment

In the 4th quarter of 2024, around 248 000 people working part-time said they wanted to increase their work-time percentage in the short term. This represented 4.8% of the economically active population. Women were more often underemployed than men (7.3% compared with 2.6%). This is also the case for foreign nationals (5.8% compared with 4.4% for the economically active population of Swiss nationality). Of those who are underemployed, 49.7% were looking for a full-time job, while the remaining 50.3% wanted to increase their part-time work.

Desired level of employment among underemployed persons

4th quarter 2024



Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

gr-e-03.01-ami-15

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On-call work more common among young employees and those over 64

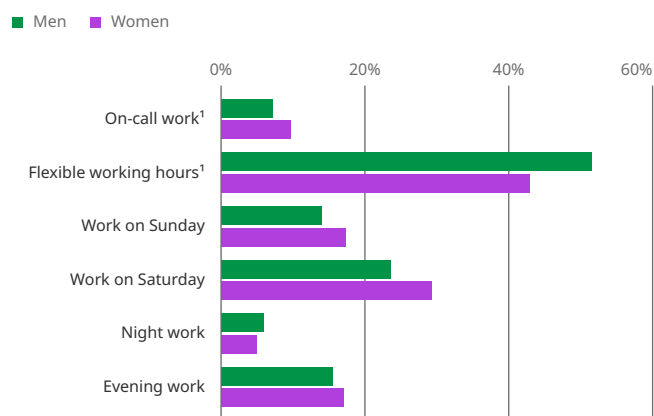
In 2024, 16.2% of employed people regularly worked evenings, i. e. between 7pm and midnight, and 5.4% worked nights, i. e. between midnight and 6am. Evening work was more common among women (17.0%) than men (15.5%), while night work was more common among men (5.9%) than women (5.0%).

In 2024, 26.2% of employed people regularly worked on Saturdays. Women were more likely than men to work on Saturdays (29.2% compared with 23.5%). There are major differences according to age: employed persons aged 15 to 24 and those aged 65 or over were the age groups most likely to work on Saturdays (36.3% and 31.5% respectively). In 2024, 15.6% of the employed population worked on Sundays (14.0% for men and 17.3% for women).

8.3% of employees (excluding apprentices) worked on-call in 2024. On-call work was more common among women (9.6%) than among men (7.1%). Looking at the different age groups, this model was most common among employees aged 65 and over (24.6%), followed by the 15 to 24 age group (16.7%).

Atypical and flexible working hours, on-call work

In % of employed persons, 2024



¹ Employees

Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS)

gr-e-03.01-ami-16

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One in ten worked mainly from home in 2024

In 2024, 9.1% of employed people worked mainly from home¹. This form of work is carried out in similar proportions among women and men (9.6% and 8.7%). By age group, it was mainly people aged 65 and over who worked from home (29.7%), followed by those in the 55–64 age bracket (9.2%).

Rise in the number of salaried employees subject to collective labour agreements (CLAs) and standard employment contracts (STCs)

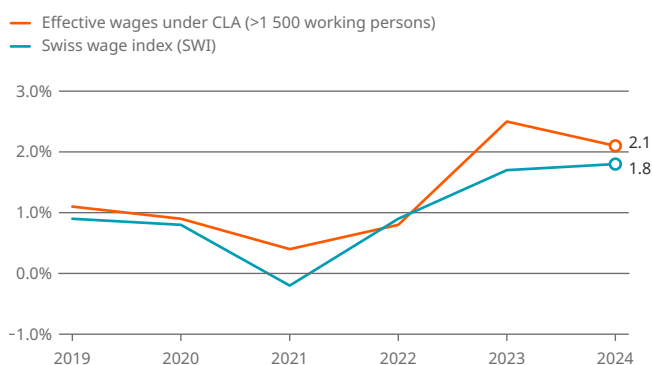
On 1 March 2021, 575 CLAs covering just over 2.1 million salaried employees were listed. 562 CLAs were CLAs with normative provisions (covering 2 million persons) and 13 CLAs had no normative provisions (covering 190 000 persons).

As of 1 March 2021, 114 STCs issued by the Federal Council or the cantons were in force in Switzerland. This corresponds to 68 ordinary STCs and 46 STCs providing for mandatory minimum wages in an economic sector or occupation in which there is repeated and abusive wage dumping.

Within the framework of the main collective labour agreements (CLAs), i. e. those covering at least 1500 persons, the social partners agreed on a nominal increase in real wages of 2.1% on average for 2024 (2023: 2.5%; 2022: 0.8%; 2020: 0.9%; 2019: 1.1%). The CLAs ensure a wage increase that is often higher than that observed in the rest of the working population.

For the year 2024, 5 cases of strike action were recorded, involving a total of 2694 workers. This corresponded to 3712 working days not worked.

Nominal wage growth in the secondary and tertiary sectors, 2019–2024



Note: Compared to the previous year

Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Wage agreements survey (WAS), Swiss wage index (SWI)

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Labour market in 1st quarter 2025 and short-term outlook

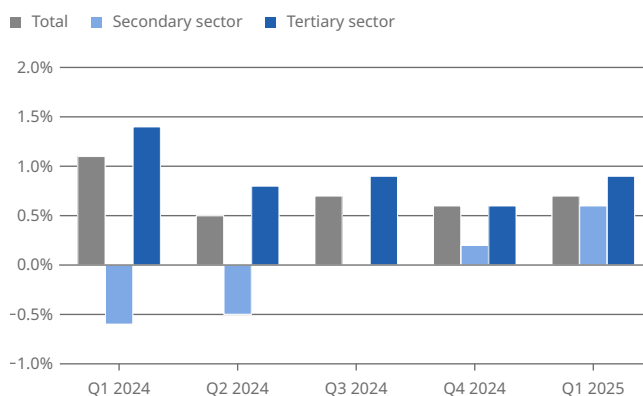
The number of employed persons increased in the 1st quarter of 2025 compared with the same quarter of the previous year. The unemployment rate as defined by both the ILO and SECO rose slightly. The employment outlook was also mixed at the end of the 1st quarter of 2025: the total economy offered 18 400 fewer vacancies than in the 1st quarter of 2024 (–16.4%), while the employment outlook indicator pointed to an increase in employment in the short term, but slightly lower than in the 1st quarter of 2024 (–0.5%, from 1.05 to 1.04²).

Rise in the number of employed persons and jobs

The number of employed persons rose by 39 000 or by 0.7% between the 1st quarters 2024 and 2025. This number increased both among men (+0.5% to 2.9 million) and women (+1.0% to 2.5 million). In addition, the number of employed Swiss nationals fell (–0.1% to 3.5 million), while the number of foreign nationals rose (+2.4% to 1.9 million). Among the latter, the number of employed persons rose mainly among holders of a residence permit (B or L permit) who had been in Switzerland for 12 months or more; (+4.9% to 563 000) and cross-border commuters (+2.2% to 405 000). The number of employed persons with a short-term residence permit (L permit, in Switzerland for less than 12 months) fell (–4.0% to 40 000).

Variation in the number of employed persons by economic sector

1st quarter 2024 to 1st quarter 2025



Note: Compared to the corresponding quarter in the previous year

Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Employment Statistics (ES)

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¹ A distinction should be made between "working from home" and "teleworking from home". The first term refers to any professional activity carried out at home, whereas the second is used specifically when the internet is used to exchange information with the employer or customers. In other words, "teleworking from home" is a form of "working from home".

² A value above 1.00 indicates that a majority of companies plan to increase their headcount over the next three months, while a value below this threshold indicates the opposite. A value of 1.00 means that no change is expected.

Between the 1st quarters of 2024 and 2025, the number of jobs in the secondary and tertiary sectors also rose (+0.6%)³. The number of jobs varies from one economic sector to another. The largest decrease was recorded in "Employment activities" (-14.4%) and "Publishing, audiovisual production and distribution activities" (-4.5%). In contrast, employment rose in "Real estate activities" (+4.2%) and "Human health activities" (+3.7%).

Increase in the number of unemployed persons

In the 1st quarter of 2025, 240 000 persons in Switzerland were unemployed as defined by the International Labour Office (ILO). These unemployed persons represented 4.7% of the economically active population, compared with 4.3% in the 1st quarter of 2024. According to SECO, the unemployment rate was 2.9% at the end of March 2025, 0.5 percentage points higher than at the end of March 2024. In absolute terms, this represented some 133 000 people registered as unemployed with a regional employment office at the end of the 1st quarter of 2025 and an increase of almost 24 000 people compared with 12 months earlier.

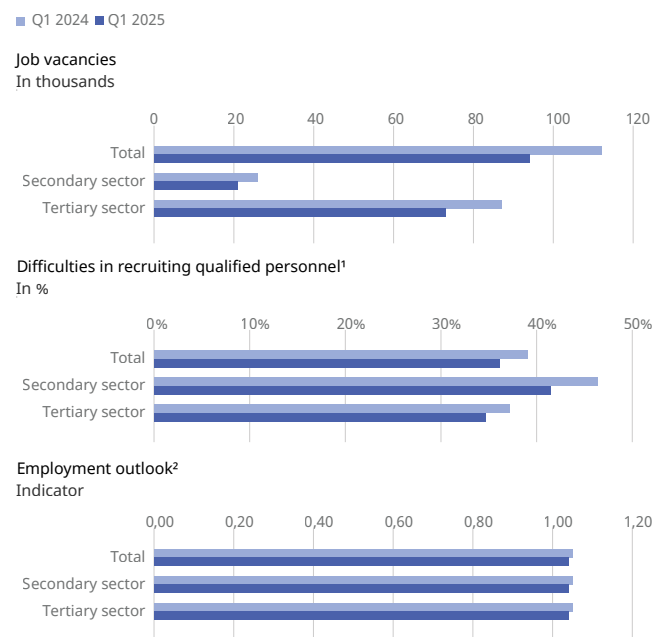
Fall in job vacancies

In the 1st quarter of 2025, 93 800 job vacancies were counted in the secondary and tertiary sectors, i. e. 18 400 fewer than in the same quarter of the previous year (-16.4%). This decrease applied equally to the secondary (-16.8%) and the tertiary sectors (-16.3%). The percentage of businesses experiencing difficulties in the recruitment of qualified personnel also decreased (-3.0 percentage points to 36.1%) compared with the 1st quarter of 2024.

Jobs: optimistic outlook at the end of 1st quarter 2025

The employment outlook indicator, which offers insight into the intention of secondary and tertiary sector businesses to hire new staff over the next three months, showed that the majority of companies wished to maintain or increase their headcount during the 2nd quarter of 2025. Nevertheless, there has been a slight decline compared with the 1st quarter of 2024 (1.05% to 1.04%). This slight decrease was observed in both the secondary and tertiary sectors (from 1.05% to 1.04% in both sectors). The sectors in which the projected figures have fallen the most are "Manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products, watches and clocks" (from 1.05 to 1.00) and "Manufacture of fabricated metal products" (from 1.03 to 0.99). In contrast, there has been a rise in the projected figures for "Public administration" (from 1.04 to 1.07) and in "Education" (from 0.99 to 1.02). Except in the "Manufacture of fabricated metal products", the indicator nonetheless remained above the threshold of 1.00 in all economic divisions, indicating that the majority of companies expect to maintain or increase their headcount.

Job vacancies, difficulties in recruiting qualified personnel and employment outlook indicator



¹ Weighted according to the number of jobs

² The scale ranges from 0.50 (decrease) to 1.00 (no change) to 1.50 (increase)

Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Job Statistics (JOBSTAT)

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³ The different trends in the number of employed persons (Employment Statistics (ES)) and in the number of jobs (Job Statistics (JOBSTAT)) may be due, amongst other things, to differences in the statistical universe (households for the former and companies for the latter), in the statistical unit (persons for the former and jobs for the latter) and in the reference period (quarterly average for the former and end of quarter for the latter). When the economic situation deteriorates, the ES tends to give a more positive picture than JOBSTAT, and a more negative one when the situation improves.

The Swiss labour market in international comparison

The Swiss labour market stands up well in international comparison. Both the activity rate and women's participation in the labour market are among the highest in Europe. Women's relatively high labour market participation can be explained by widespread part-time employment: the proportion of employed persons working part-time is markedly higher in Switzerland than in most European countries. Wages in Switzerland converted into Euros are higher than in EU countries. If the wages are converted into purchasing power standards to take into consideration the different price levels, the differences are less substantial.

High economic activity rate in Switzerland

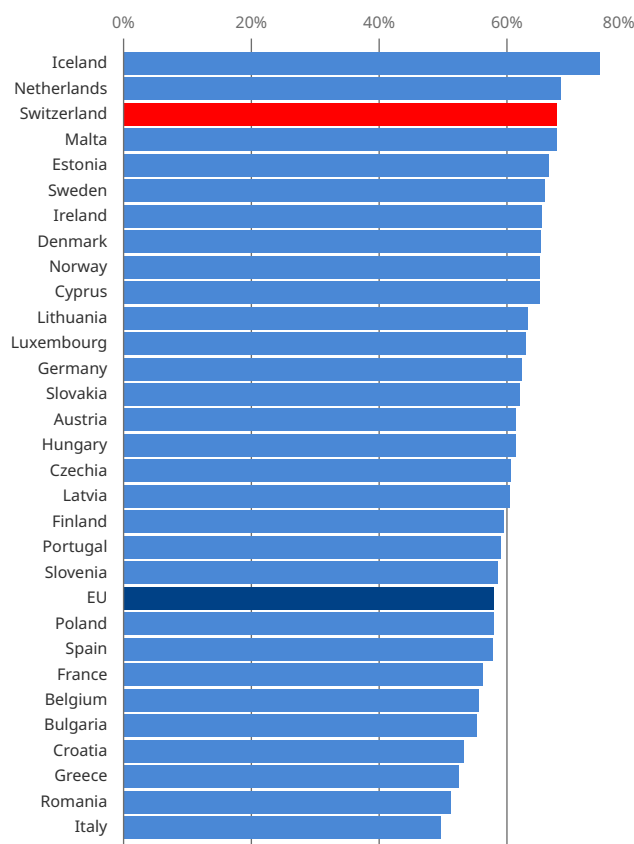
In the 4th quarter of 2024, the activity rate of the population aged 15 and over reached 67.8% in Switzerland, one of the highest rates in Europe. Only Iceland and the Netherlands had higher activity rates (74.5% and 68.4%), while Switzerland's neighbours had much lower rates (Germany: 62.3%; Austria: 61.4%; France: 56.3%; Italy: 49.6%). Italy recorded the lowest activity rate in Europe, just behind Romania (51.3%), Greece (52.5%) and Croatia (53.3%). The EU average was 58.0%.

Strong participation by women in the labour force in Switzerland and in North European countries

Women's labour force participation rates differ greatly from one country to another. In Romania (41.8%) and Italy (41.2%), two-fifths of women aged 15 and over were economically active in the 4th quarter of 2024, while the countries of Northern Europe had rates of over 60% (Iceland: 69.1%; the Netherlands: 64.2%; Sweden: 63.2%, Estonia: 62.6%; Norway: 62.1%; Denmark: 61.0%; Ireland: 60.6%). In Europe as a whole, one in two women was economically active (52.5%). With a labour force participation rate of 63.0%, Switzerland ranked fourth among European countries, while in neighbouring countries this percentage was considerably lower (Germany: 57.4%; Austria: 56.9%; France: 52.8%). The employment of women in Switzerland is certainly facilitated by substantial availability of part-time jobs. In our country, 42.0% of employed persons worked part-time (women: 63.3%). Only in the Netherlands was this percentage higher (43.5%; women: 63.9%). The proportion of part-time workers was particularly low in Bulgaria (18%; women: 2.0%) and Romania (3.3%; women: 2.8%).

In all of the countries examined, the male labour force participation rate was higher than that of women. The highest rate was found in Iceland (79.6%) which was followed by Malta (74.9%), the Netherlands and Switzerland (both 72.7%). It was considerably lower in Switzerland's neighbouring countries (German: 67.4%; Austria: 66.2, France: 60.2%; Italy: 58.5%). The EU average stood at 63.9%.

Standardised activity rate (age 15 and over) in Switzerland and in EU and EFTA states
4th quarter 2024



Data as on: 03.07.2025

Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS); EUROSTAT
(status: March 2025)

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Relatively low unemployment rate in Switzerland

In Switzerland, the unemployment rate based on the ILO definition rose by 4.0 points to 4.4% between the 4th quarter 2023 and the 4th quarter 2024. The EU average decreased during the same period (by 0.4 points to 5.7%). Compared with the EU member states, Switzerland was among the countries with low unemployment rates according to the ILO definition. In France (7.4%), Italy (6.1%) and Austria (5.2%) the unemployment rate was higher. In Germany, however, it was lower (3.3%). The lowest rates were recorded in Czechia (2.5), Poland (2.8%) and Malta (2.9%). In contrast, Greece and Spain were the European countries with the highest ILO unemployment rates, at 9.5% and 10.6%.

Wages in international comparison

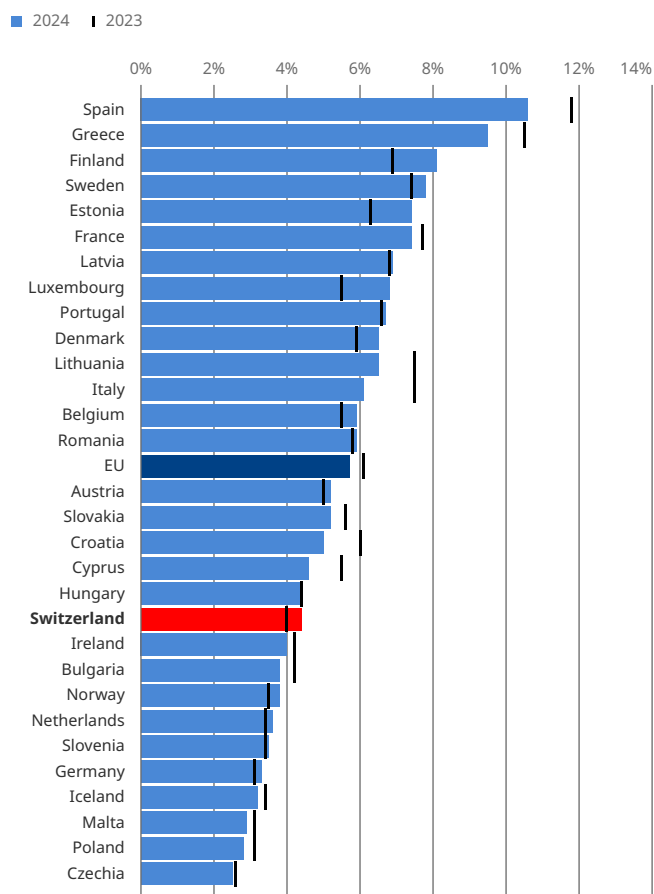
The comparison of average gross annual wages for employees working in industry and market services highlights the wage gap between the different EU countries. There were marked differences between countries in different geographical regions of Europe.

In 2022, wage differences between the countries of the 27-member European Union remained, particularly between northern, southern and eastern European countries. The highest average gross annual salaries were recorded in Luxembourg (EUR 74 542), Denmark (EUR 65 622) and Belgium (EUR 53 642), while the lowest were in Bulgaria (EUR 12 592), Hungary (EUR 16 563) and Romania (EUR 16 592). Countries such as Spain (EUR 31 186 euros), Greece (EUR 24 513 euros) and Portugal (EUR 23 112) were in the middle of the rankings. With an annual gross average wage of EUR 95 698, partly influenced by the strong Swiss franc, Switzerland occupied first place ahead of Luxembourg.

In order to depict the actual purchasing power of wages, they must be converted from their national currency to a collective, fictional currency, the purchasing power standard (PPS). If the different price levels of each country are taken into account, the extent of the wage divide between countries is altered. Expressed in euros, the wages paid in Switzerland were more than seven and a half times higher than those paid in Bulgaria (+760%), whereas the difference was almost three times smaller (+291%) when converted into PPS. Looking at Switzerland's neighbouring countries, expressed in euros, the annual wages paid in Switzerland were 82% higher than those paid in Austria, 87% higher than in Germany, 135% higher than in France and 161% higher than in Italy. This difference is reduced when the comparison on average gross wages is made in PPS. The gaps were then only +30% compared with Austria, +33% compared with Germany, +62% compared with France and +59% compared with Italy.

Unemployment rate as defined by ILO (age 15–74), in Switzerland and EU and EFTA states

4th quarter

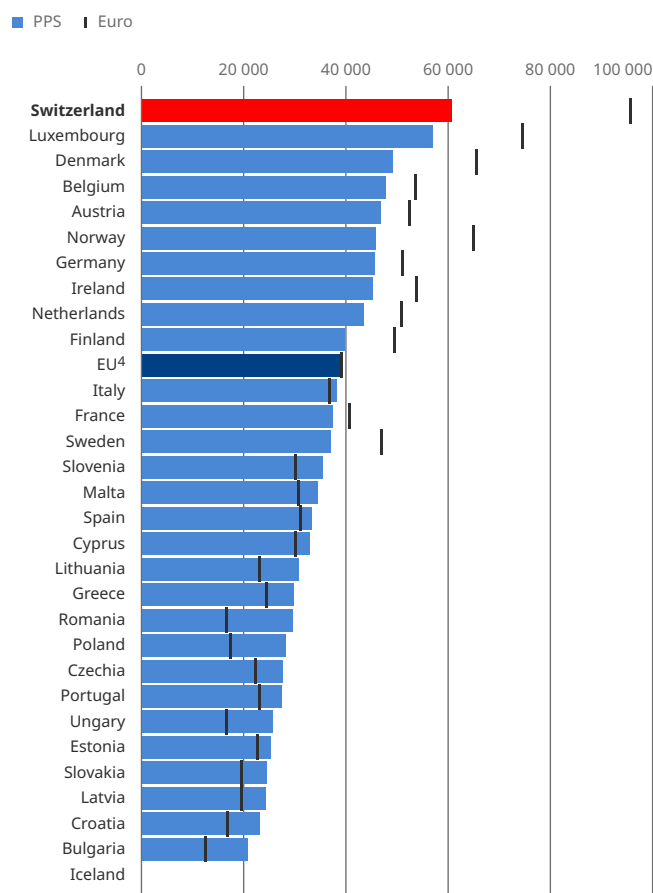


Data as on: 03.07.2025
Source: FSO – Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS); EUROSTAT
(status: March 2025)

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Gross annual average wage¹ (enterprises with 10 or more employees, industrial and market services²), in Switzerland and in EU and EFTA states

In PPS and in euros, 4th quarter 2022



¹ Amounts are calculated on the basis of wages of full-time and part-time employees (recalculated on the basis of an employment rate of 100%)

² Economic activities B to N (NACE Rev. 2)

³ Revenues expressed in PPS (Purchasing Power Standard) eliminate the effects of differences in national price levels

⁴ Composition of the EU in the 4th quarter 2022

Data as on: 10.12.2024

Source: FSO – Swiss Earnings Structure Survey (ESS);
EUROSTAT (status: 12.02.2025)

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