



# 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.

Published findings:

Labour market status, employment status, labour market participation rate, working hours, occupation according to CH-ISCO, professional position, economic activities according to NOGA, working conditions, level of education, unemployment, underemployment, unpaid work, etc.

Broken down by sex, age group, nationality and family type, and in some cases by major region.

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## Methodology

Methodology used:

Random sample survey of persons whose addresses were randomly selected from the FSO's sample register. This register contains data from the official communal and cantonal population registers.

The SLFS is conducted with the following sample size:

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

Since 2003, the SLFS sample has been supplemented with a sample of foreign nationals (15 000 until 2009, 21 000 between 2010 and 2017 and 20 000 as of 2018). This sample was selected solely 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 interviews 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.

Variables used:

- Employment (current or previous)
  - Reasons for economic inactivity (retirement, education or training, etc.)
  - Educational background and occupation
  - Place of work and volume of work
  - Working conditions: work schedule, night work, weekend work
  - Economic activity
  - Income from employment
  - Job seeking (unemployment, underemployment)
  - Professional and spatial mobility
  - Further education and training
  - Unpaid work: domestic and family workload, voluntary work, helping relatives, etc.
  - Migration
  - Social security
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Survey date:  
1991–2009: 2nd quarter; since 2010: continuous

Periodicity of publication:  
1991–2009: annual; since 2010: quarterly

Degree of regionalisation:  
Switzerland and major regions

Data linkages with:  
Population and Household Statistics (STATPOP), Business and Enterprise Register (BER), Building and Dwellings Statistics (BDS), New Pensions Statistics (NRS), social insurance registers (Central Compensation Office [CCO], OASI compensation offices and State Secretariat for Economic Affairs [SECO], and Statistics on social assistance recipients (SHS).

Quality of statistical information:  
The coefficient of variation is 0.35% for the total number of people in employment and 2.99% for the total number of unemployed based on ILO definition (1st quarter 2021). The respective variation coefficients are published quarterly in the "Swiss Labour Force Survey and derived statistics" press release.

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### Policy on revisions

Methodical revisions:  
Methodology is revised as necessary (e.g., revision of sources).

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### Legal bases

Ordinance of 30 April 2025 on Federal Statistics

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### Organisation

Federal Statistical Office (FSO) in cooperation with  
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