



FSO standpoint

Federal population censuses 2017 and fees

Neuchâtel, 22 January 2018 (FSO) – To obtain figures that are essential for a democracy to work, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) has carried out the population census once a year since 2010. To lessen the burden on the population, the FSO relies mainly on various registers and completes this information with sample surveys, including the structural survey.

A small portion of the population is randomly selected for interviews conducted either in writing or by telephone. For the 2017 structural survey, 270 000 persons were contacted in writing.

Participation in the federal census has been compulsory since 1860. Although the Census Act no longer imposes fines for those refusing to participate, it does allow a fee to be charged to cover the costs of the additional workload.

For the record, the purpose of the FSO is first to obtain data reflecting the realities of society and not to collect fees. To date the population has been entirely willing to participate as the majority reply straight away. To complete the census, it is usually enough to follow the procedure for reminders without having to charge a fee.

The structural survey conducted as part of the federal population census is the largest statistical survey on the structure of the population and households in Switzerland. The information it provides is essential to scientific, political and economic circles but also for the work of journalists. The census gives us, for example, information on religious affiliation, commuters, rents, the composition of families and households and many other areas of life in Switzerland.

More information:

- [The federal census](#)
- [The structural survey](#)
- [Frequently asked questions](#)
- [Completing the questionnaire online](#)