



**KEY FIGURES**



Sources: BFS/WEF/GfK Kaufkraft Europa, 2018; Deloitte, 2019

**JOB MARKET IN SWITZERLAND**

**AT A GLANCE**

Switzerland is attractive to employers, as it has some of the most liberal labor legislation in the world. Companies can employ and dismiss staff at short notice and with no difficulty, depending on their commercial requirements. The incidental wage costs are also comparatively low in Switzerland and the number of strikes that took place in the last ten years is lower than in any other European country. Switzerland is also very appealing to highly qualified employees, as it offers a very high quality of life and salaries are appropriate.

**Number of Strike Days**

European rankings (per 1,000 workers and year, 2010 – 2017)

Country	Days	Country	Days
Switzerland	1	Finland	40
Netherlands	13	Spain	50
Ireland	17	Denmark	54
Germany	17	Norway	66
United Kingdom	20	France	125

Source: European Trade Union Institute, 2019

**Attractiveness as a Location for Talent**

Level of attractiveness for recruiting talent to a country, 2019

Country	Ranking	Country	Ranking
Switzerland	1	Finland	6
Singapore	2	Sweden	7
USA	3	The Netherlands	8
Norway	4	United Kingdom	9
Denmark	5	Luxembourg	10

Source: INSEAD Global Talent Competitiveness Index, 2019

## BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

- As a result of the high quality of life and excellent working conditions, Switzerland is highly attractive for foreign qualified staff and managers. According to a survey conducted among “expatriates”, Switzerland is considered the most attractive destination for talented foreign workers.
- Switzerland is notable for its **high level of productivity**. This is particularly high in comparison with other countries in the pharmaceutical, insurance and financial sectors, as well as the mechanical and electrical engineering industries.
- The Swiss labor market is **considered extremely flexible as a result of the liberal legislation**. Companies can easily employ and dismiss employees according to their commercial requirements.
- A liberal attitude towards work is firmly rooted in Swiss culture – and this is repeatedly confirmed by its population. In the last decade, most initiatives and referendums calling for stronger regulation of the labor market have failed. This was also true of an initiative calling for a universal six weeks of holidays (2012).

## Flexibility of Companies in Hiring and Firing Employees

Switzerland compared to other countries

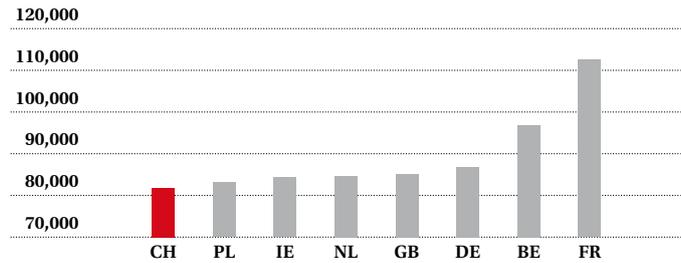
Country	Ranking
 Hong Kong	1
 Switzerland	2
 USA	3
 Singapore	4
 Iceland	5
 United Kingdom	6
 UAE	7
 Denmark	8
 Malaysia	9
 Qatar	10

Source: WEF Global Competitiveness Report, 2018

- In addition to the gross salary, employers also incur costs for social security when they take on an employee. These **social security costs are low** for employees in Switzerland. With the same gross salary, an employer in Switzerland incurs the third lowest cost compared to other European countries.

## Comparison of effective employer costs across Europe

for an employee with a gross salary of 75,000 Euro



Source: Deloitte, 2019

- The Swiss education system is characterized by its **high practical relevance**, which is ensured by the **dual education system** together with strong universities of applied sciences (see factsheet Vocational Training in Switzerland at [www.s-ge.com/education](http://www.s-ge.com/education)). The World Economic Forum (WEF) has awarded Switzerland top marks in an international comparison of continuing education and retraining of employees and also with regard to the level of education of its university graduates.

- Switzerland boasts an effective social partnership, with few conflicts between employees and employers, and virtually no strikes. The level of cooperation between employers and employees is unequalled in any other country.

### Quality of Cooperation between Employers and Employees

Switzerland compared to other countries

Country	Ranking
 Switzerland	1
 Singapore	2
 Denmark	4
 The Netherlands	5
 USA	6
 Norway	8
 Germany	19
 Ireland	22
 United Kingdom	28
 France	99

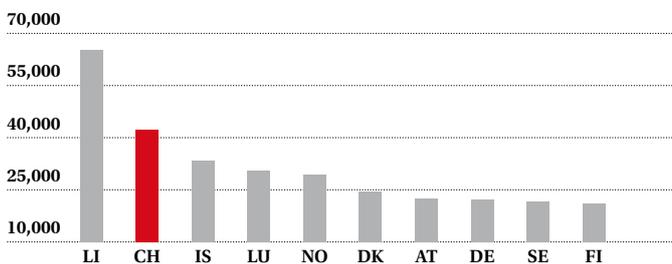
Source: WEF Global Competitiveness Report, 2018

### BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYEES

- Switzerland's **employment rate** is second only to Iceland. At the end of 2018, 84.6% of the working age population was in paid employment, well above the OECD average of 68.6%. At the same time, the unemployment rate in Switzerland is very low at 2.6% (2018).
- Swiss employees enjoy **high purchasing power**. Here, Switzerland ranked first in Europe in 2018 with an average disposable income of 40,456 euros, superseding both Iceland and Luxembourg.

### Top 10 purchasing power in European comparison

Average purchasing power of employees in euros in 2018



Source: GfK Kaufkraft Europa, 2018

- Switzerland is a magnet for middle management-level staff, as wages are higher than in other countries. After the deduction of tax, obligatory payments and other fixed costs (rent, etc.), wages are by far the highest, amounting to over 100,000 euros.

- In the OECD's "Better Life Index", Switzerland performs very well with regard to many **quality-of-life** variables. It scores above average in the areas of subjective well-being, employment, income and wealth, health, social relations, environment, education, work-life balance, housing and security.

### TAXES

#### Withholding tax

Many employees who are not Swiss nationals and who do not hold residence permits (identity document C) are subject to withholding tax in Switzerland. This is deducted directly from their wages by the employer and paid to tax authorities. If, as a non-Swiss employee with a tax domicile in Switzerland, one's income subject to withholding tax exceeds 120,000 Swiss francs, a subsequent statutory assessment will be carried out on all income and assets.

The income of people (Swiss and non-Swiss nationals) who are not tax residents in Switzerland (cross-border commuters, people who stay during the work week, people who work on advisory boards, artists, athletes, speakers) is also subject to taxation at source if it is earned in Switzerland. No subsequent tax assessment is carried out for these people, however, even if their income reaches a certain level.

## CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

- The Swiss economy has consistently benefited from the fact that companies have been able to recruit highly qualified specialists from abroad with relative ease. For various reasons, including the significant increase in immigration figures in recent years, in 2014 the Swiss electorate accepted the popular initiative “against mass immigration”, demanding a statutory limit on immigration into Switzerland. As a result, the state government has opted for a legal regulation that is compatible with the Swiss-EU Agreement on the free movement of persons. The corresponding measures have been in force since July 1, 2018 and are mainly aimed at better exploiting the potential of the domestic workforce. The total quotas for third-country workers and EU/EFTA service providers are back at 2014 levels, thus ensuring continuity and taking account of the economy’s interests.
- On 19 May 2019, the Swiss electorate adopted the Federal Law on Tax Reform and AHV Financing (TRAF) with a majority of 66.4%. The adoption of the TRAF means that **Swiss tax system has been modernized** and now offers companies an attractive tax environment in line with internationally established tax practices (see factsheet “Corporate Taxation” at [www.s-ge.com/corporate-taxation](http://www.s-ge.com/corporate-taxation)).
- The national government is committed to ensuring that the benefits of the dual vocational training system are better appreciated at an international level. The aims are to achieve improved recognition for vocational training qualifications and greater (international) mobility for the professionals involved. Switzerland therefore supports the EU’s Copenhagen Process, the aim of which is to enhance the efficiency, quality and appeal of vocational training.

## CONTACTS AND OTHER INFORMATION

### Authorities and regulators

State Secretariat for Education,  
Research and Innovation  
[www.sbf.admin.ch](http://www.sbf.admin.ch)

State Secretariat for Economic  
Affairs  
[www.seco.admin.ch](http://www.seco.admin.ch)

Deployment – Platform for em-  
ployment and pay conditions in  
Switzerland  
[www.entsendung.admin.ch](http://www.entsendung.admin.ch)

### Publications and tools

Better Life Index OECD  
[www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org](http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org)

Deloitte European Salary  
Survey 2018  
[www2.deloitte.com](http://www2.deloitte.com)

WEF Global Competitiveness  
Report  
[www.weforum.org](http://www.weforum.org)

National wage calculator  
[www.entsendung.admin.ch](http://www.entsendung.admin.ch)

KPMG Tax Rates Online  
[www.kpmg.com](http://www.kpmg.com)

Living and working in Switzerland  
2018 - a guide for foreign nationals  
relocating to Switzerland  
[www2.deloitte.com](http://www2.deloitte.com)

### Associations and networks

Employers’ association  
(in German, French and Italian)  
[www.arbeitgeber.ch](http://www.arbeitgeber.ch)

### S-GE resources

Handbook for Investors  
[www.s-ge.com/handbookforinvestors](http://www.s-ge.com/handbookforinvestors)

More fact sheets on  
Switzerland as a business location  
[www.s-ge.com/factsheets](http://www.s-ge.com/factsheets)

### WE OFFER FREE CONSULTATION

Are you expanding in Europe and considering Switzerland as a business location for your company? Here, you can get free advice and support throughout the entire settlement process: We will connect you unbureaucratically with the cantonal business promotion agencies and provide you with expert contacts for matters such as taxes, real estate, etc.

Get in touch with us: [www.s-ge.com/invest](http://www.s-ge.com/invest)