

03

Work and Income

363-1400

SLFS 2014 in Brief

The Swiss Labour Force Survey



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Since 1991, the Federal Statistical Office has conducted the SLFS on an annual basis at the behest of the Federal Council. This telephone survey of individuals provides representative data on the socio-economic structure of Switzerland's permanent resident population and on participation in the labour force. The SLFS is carried out on a representative sample based on around 125,000 annual interviews.

■ **A survey that meets international requirements**

Thanks to strict adherence to international definitions, the SLFS can be used to position Switzerland's unemployment and employment figures in the European and global context.

■ **Questions addressed**

The questions focus mainly on the situation on the labour market (present or past professional activity, unemployment, retirement, working conditions, occupation, household income and income from employment, job hunting, professional and geographical mobility), training/education (including continuing education), household composition and demographic characteristics (nationality, civil status, etc.).

■ Thematic modules

In addition to the basic questionnaire, the SLFS is supplemented each year by thematic modules. Topics covered include unpaid work, migration, social security, balancing work life and family life, young people's entry into the labour market, employment of persons with disabilities and the transition from working life to retirement.

■ Using data from the SLFS

The data collected through the SLFS are of great interest from the standpoint of social policy and labour market policies. The survey provides information on difficulties in finding employment, the professional reintegration of women, childcare, wage inequality, retirement behaviour and the integration of the foreign population. The SLFS is an essential survey for the Swiss statistical system. It is the main source for employment statistics and the work volume statistics used to calculate labour productivity, labour market accounts and labour force projections in the context of demographic scenarios.

■ When is the survey conducted?

Since 2010, the SLFS has been conducted continuously with the interviews distributed over the 52 weeks of the year (from 1991 to 2009, the SLFS was conducted during the 2nd quarter of each year). Persons participating in the survey are interviewed four times over a period of a year and a half.

■ **How have you been chosen?**

You have been randomly selected in the FSO's sample register. The FSO's sample register is primarily based on the official communal and cantonal population registers.

To facilitate initial contact, the sample is completed wherever possible by telephone numbers that telephone operators have to make available to the FSO in compliance with the Federal Statistics Act. This list also includes private landline numbers that are not found in the public telephone directory.

■ **Who conducts the interviews?**

The data are collected by call centres of the institute which is commissioned by the Federal Statistical Office to conduct the survey. Computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) are conducted by professional survey takers who are monitored by supervisors. The interviews are conducted in German, French, Italian and English.

■ **How is the interview conducted?**

The Federal Statistical Office informs the randomly selected individuals in writing about the aims of the SLFS and how it is carried out. The institute commissioned by the FSO then contacts the households by telephone to conduct the interview straight away or to make an appointment to do so. Only persons aged 15 or older are eligible to be selected for the survey.

■ What is the data protection situation?

- Data protection is guaranteed by the Federal Statistics Act (RS 431.01), the Ordinance on the Conduct of Statistical Surveys (RS 431.012.1) and the Data Protection Act (RS 235.1).
- FSO employees and the institute commissioned to conduct the survey are strictly bound to observe professional secrecy and are subject to the relevant secrecy laws.
- Telephone numbers are treated as confidential. Commercial or administrative use of them is absolutely excluded.
- The data collected during the survey are processed anonymously, i.e. they are aggregated and extrapolated and finally expressed in a general form that does not make it possible to identify the persons who participated in the survey.

■ Why is your participation important?

Participation in this survey is voluntary but your cooperation is essential for a survey that is relevant and of good quality. To achieve this objective we need to have a representative sample of the resident population in Switzerland. Your answers are therefore important to us regardless of your age, nationality or your employment situation (employed, unemployed, retired, at home, in education or training or otherwise economically inactive).

This publication provides only an overview of the findings from the Swiss Labour Force Survey (SLFS).

You will find many other findings from the SLFS on our website: [**www.slfs.bfs.admin.ch**](http://www.slfs.bfs.admin.ch)

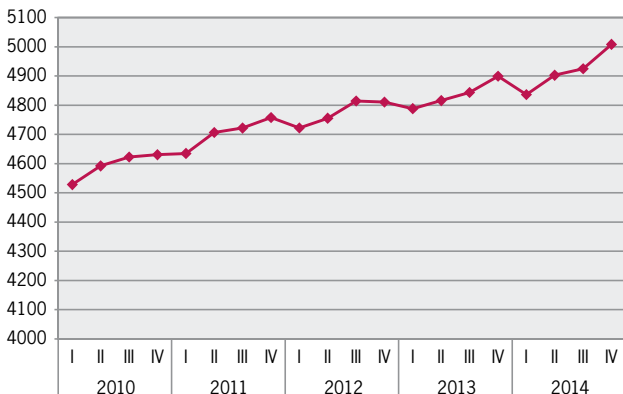
■ Employed population

In the 4th quarter 2014, there were 5,008 million persons in employment in Switzerland, i.e. 2.2% more than in the 4th quarter 2013. In one year, the number of men in employment rose by 1.4% and the number of women in employment by 3.2%. In terms of full-time equivalent jobs (FTE), growth reached +2.0% over the same period (men: +0.8%; women: +4.0%).

In contrast, the employed population of the European Union (EU28) and the euro zone (EZ17) increased in year-on-year comparison (+1.0% and 0.9% respectively).

Employed persons working in Switzerland

Domestic concept, in thousands, 2010–2014

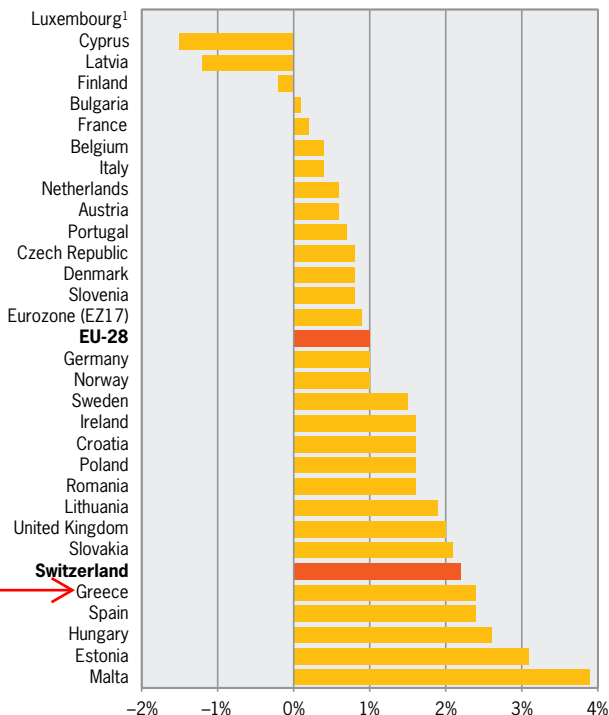


Source: ES

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Employed persons in international comparison

Domestic concept, change from 4th quarter 2013–4th quarter 2014



¹ not available

Source: ES – Eurostat

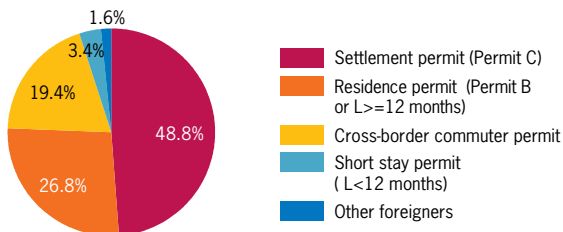
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■ Swiss and foreign labour force

Between the 4th quarter 2013 and the 4th quarter 2014, the number of foreign nationals in employment grew more strongly than the number of Swiss nationals in employment (foreign nationals: increase of +4.2% to 1,500 million; Swiss nationals: increase of +1.4% to 3,508 million). Foreign labour has shown the greatest increase among residence permit holders (Permit B or Permit L in Switzerland for over twelve months: +8.2%), followed by cross-border commuters (Permit G, +4.4%) and settlement permit holders (Permit C: +3.5%). On the other hand, the number of short-term residence permit holders has fallen (Permit L in Switzerland for less than 12 months: -8.9%).

Employed persons of foreign nationality by type of residence permit

Domestic concept, in %, 4th quarter 2014



Source: ES

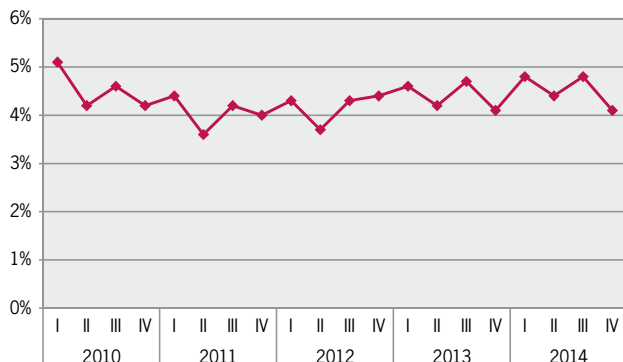
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■ Unemployment based on ILO definition in Switzerland and Europe

In the 4th quarter 2014, 197,000 persons were unemployed in Switzerland as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), i.e. 4,000 more than one year previously. These unemployed persons as defined by the ILO represented 4.1% of the economically active population, as in the 4th quarter 2013. The unemployment rate based on ILO definition has fallen both in the European Union (EU-28: from 10.7% to 9.9%) and the euro zone (EZ18: from 11.9% to 11.5%).

Unemployment rate as defined by ILO

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2010–2014

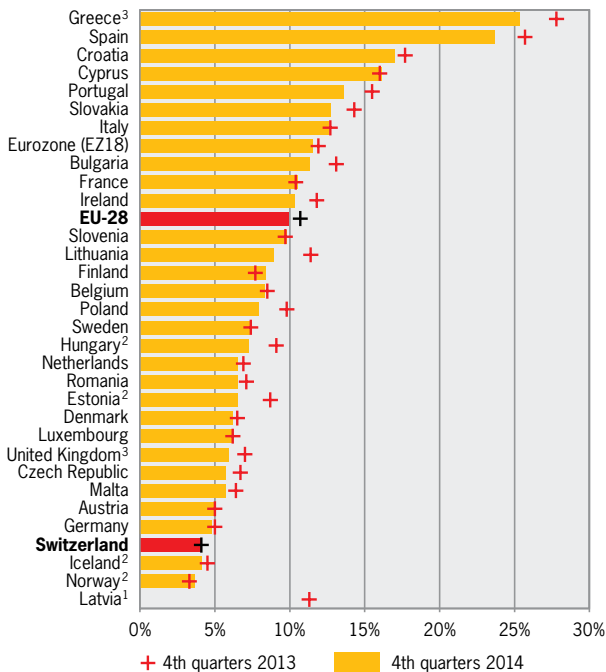


Source: SLFS

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Unemployment rate as defined by ILO in international comparison

Permanent resident population concept, in %,
at 4th quarters 2013 and 2014



¹ 4th quarters 2014 not available

³ Values for October 2014

² Average October/November 2014

Source: SLFS – Eurostat

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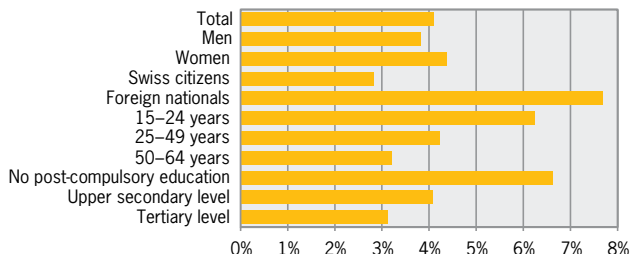
■ Unemployment as defined by the ILO by various characteristics

Between the 4th quarter 2013 and the 4th quarter 2014, the youth unemployment rate (15 to 24 year olds) as defined by the ILO decreased from 8.3% to 6.2% in Switzerland. There was a slight increase among 25-49 year olds (from 3.9% to 4.2%) and among 50-64 year olds (from 2.8% to 3.2%). A slight decrease was observed among men (from 3.9% to 3.8%) whereas a slight increase was registered among women (from 4.3% to 4.4%).

Stable among Swiss nationals (2.8%), the rate fell among foreign nationals (from 7.9% to 7.7%). Among non-EU member citizens, the rate increased from 12.8% to 13.2%, whereas it fell among EU28/EFTA nationals (from 5.8% to 5.4%).

Unemployment rate as defined by the ILO by various characteristics

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 4th quarter 2014



Source: SLFS

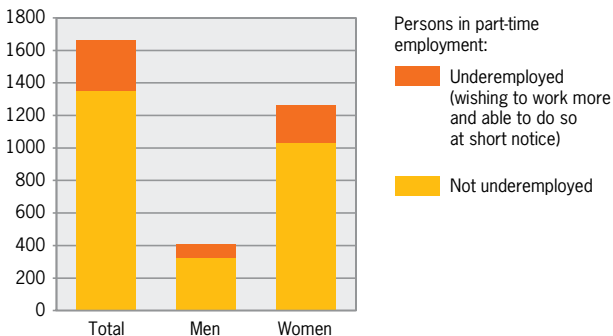
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■ Underemployed persons

In the 4th quarter 2014, the number of persons working part-time was 1,665 million (+81,000 compared with the 4th quarter 2013). Among these, 313,000 were underemployed, that is they would have liked to work more and were available to do so in the near future. The underemployment rate was 6.5% in the 4th quarter 2014, a slightly higher figure compared with the 4th quarter 2013 (6.4%).

Underemployed persons

Permanent resident population concept, in thousands,
4th quarter 2014



Source: SLFS

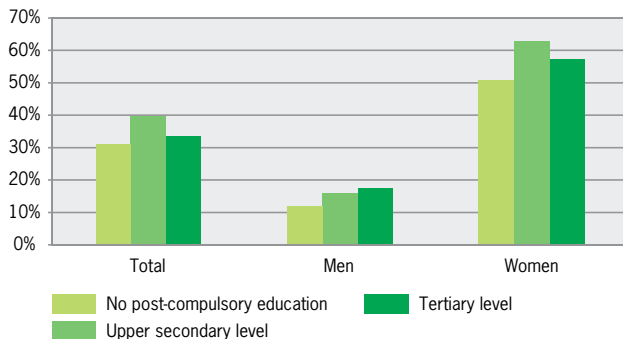
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■ Part-time work

The proportion of employed persons working part-time increased from 31.7% in 2004 to 36.0% in 2014. Among men, of which only 15.9% work part-time, education level only has little influence on work-time percentage. Women mainly work part-time (59.2%). This proportion is higher among those having completed upper secondary level education (Matura, apprenticeship) or tertiary level education (62.9% and 57.3% respectively) than among those whose highest level of education was lower secondary school (50.7%).

Percentage of employed persons working part-time by sex and level of education

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2014



Source: SLFS

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■ Flexible working time

In 2014, almost one in two salaried employees (44.6%) worked on a flexitime basis. The following models are considered flexitime: weekly or monthly working hours with or without blocked hours, annual working hours that are not subject to formal prescriptions. This type of model is more common among men (51.1%) than among women (37.6%). Salaried employees with tertiary level education (higher education institution, advanced professional education and training) work on a flexitime basis 3.5 times more often as those without post-compulsory training (62.3% and 17.9% respectively). Among men, this difference is particularly striking (tertiary level: 70.2% lower secondary level: 15.7%).

■ **Work on call**

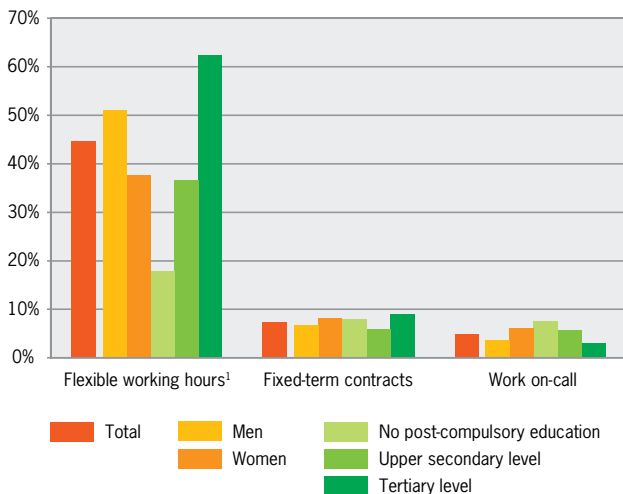
4.8% of salaried employees worked on call in 2014. This working model is far more common among women (6.1% compared with 3.7% for men) and among persons whose highest level of education was lower secondary level (7.6% compared with 3.1% for those with tertiary level education). In the first group (lower secondary education), women are almost twice as likely to work on call as men (9.9% and 5.0% respectively).

■ **Fixed-term contract**

In 2014, 7.4% of employees had a fixed-term contract; 2.4% had a contract for a duration of less than 6 months. While gender and educational level do not seem to play an important role in this area, women with tertiary level education most frequently have this type of contract (11.2%).

**Percentage of employees (excl. apprentices)
with flexible working hours, fixed-term contract and
who work on-call by sex and level of education**

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2014



¹ Weekly/monthly basis with/without hour blocks, annual basis, no formal provisions, other flexible model

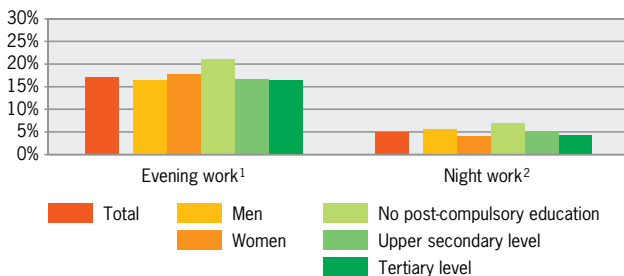
Source: SLFS

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■ Evening or night shifts

1 in 20 employed persons (5.0%) regularly worked nights in 2014 (women: 4.2%; men: 5.7%). Whereas among women educational level did not seem to have any influence, men whose highest level of education was lower secondary level were twice as likely to work nights than those having completed tertiary level education (10.0% compared with 4.3%). 17.1% of employed persons regularly worked evenings. Education level also plays a role here: persons with lower secondary level education, 21.2% work evenings more often than those with upper secondary level or tertiary level education (16.6% and 16.5% respectively).

Percentage of employed persons (excl. apprentices) who regularly work evenings or nights by sex and level of education Permanent resident population concept, in %, 2014



¹ between 19.00 and 24.00

² between 24.00 and 06.00

Source: SLFS

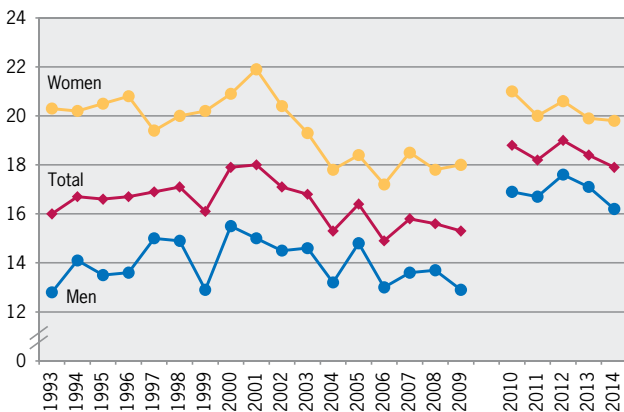
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Occupational mobility

In Switzerland, 17.9% of people who pursued a professional activity in 2013 left their job within one year. 7.9% changed enterprise, 2.9% changed jobs within the same enterprise, 2.0% were unemployed based on ILO definition and 5.1% left the labour force (retirement or cessation of professional activity for other reasons). A higher proportion of women leave their jobs (gross turnover rate of 19.8% in 2014; men: 16.2%).

Gross turnover rate

Permanent resident population concept, in %, 1993–2014



Until 2009, job changes within the enterprise are not included.

Source: SLFS

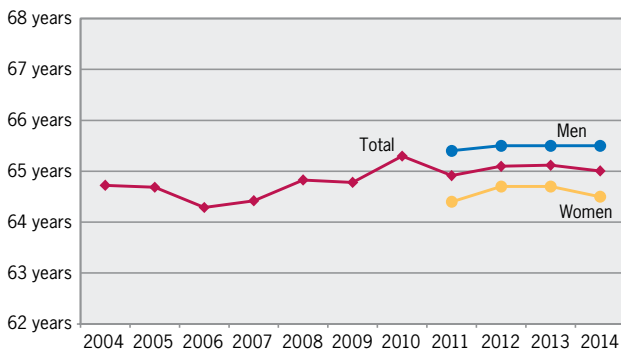
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■ Average age on leaving the labour force remains close to 65

In 2014, among persons aged 58 to 75, the average age on leaving the labour force was estimated to be 65.0. The age for leaving the labour market has not changed much (it was 64.7 in 2004). In 2014, a gap of one year could be observed between men (65.5 years) and women (64.5 years).

The average age on leaving the labour force (persons leaving aged between 58–75 years)

Permanent resident population concept, 2004–2014



Note: The distinction between men and women has been available since 2011

Source: SLFS

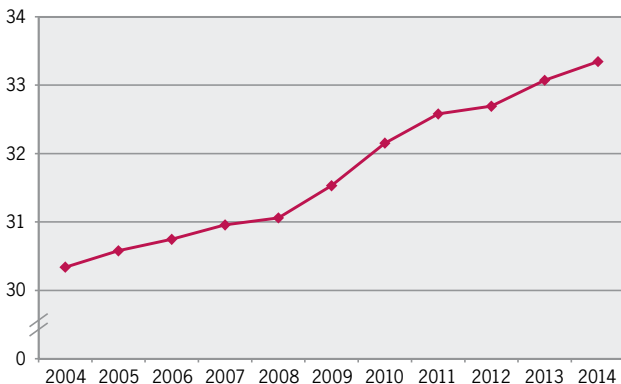
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■ Increase in the number of older persons per 100 economically active persons

Between 2013 and 2014, the number of persons aged 65 or more per 100 economically active persons aged 20 to 64 rose from 33.1 to 33.3. Over the past 10 years, demographic ageing has led to a rapid increase in this ratio in spite of the growing participation in the labour force: in 2004 there were only 30.3 persons aged 65 or older per 100 economically active persons aged 20 to 64.

Number of persons aged 65 and older per 100 economically active persons aged 20 to 64

Permanent resident population concept, 2004–2014



Source: SLFS

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■ Employed persons

The term “employed persons” refers to all persons aged 15 and over who, during the reference week:

- worked at least one hour for payment
- or who, although temporarily absent from their work (due to illness, holidays, maternity leave, military service, etc.) had a job either in an employed or self-employed capacity
- or who worked in the family business without payment.

■ Unemployed persons based on ILO definition

(ILO=International Labour Office)

The term “unemployed persons” based on ILO definition refers to people aged 15–74 who:

- were not employed during the reference week,
- were actively looking for work during the previous four weeks, and
- were available for work.

■ Economically active persons

The economically active population (economically active persons) is comprised of employed persons and unemployed persons based on ILO definition. It constitutes the “labour supply”.

■ **Underemployed persons**

The term “underemployed persons” refers to employed persons who:

- work less than 90% of the normal full-time workweek in businesses,
- wish to work more,
- are able to do so within the next three months at a higher work-time percentage.

■ **Full-time/part-time**

The term “full-time” refers to employed persons with a work-time percentage of 90% or more.

■ **Average age on leaving the labour force**

This indicator is calculated on the basis of a weighted average of the age on leaving the labour force. All persons changing from economically active to economically inactive between 2 SLFS interviews (interviews separated by one year) are considered as having left the labour force.

Only persons leaving the labour force between the ages of 58 and 75 are taken into account.

■ **Permanent resident population**

The term “permanent resident population” refers to all persons who reside in Switzerland for at least one year (Swiss citizens whose main residence is in Switzerland and foreign citizens residing in Switzerland for at least 12 months).

■ Domestic concept

Productive activity according to the domestic concept refers to activity carried out within the Swiss economic territory, both by residents or non-residents. Therefore, cross-border commuters and holders of a short-term resident permit who exercise gainful employment in Switzerland are two groups that are not part of the permanent resident population but which are included in the domestic concept.

■ Definitions of rates

Activity rate =	$\frac{\text{economically active persons}}{\text{reference population}} \times 100$
Unemployment rate according to ILO definition =	$\frac{\text{number of unemployed persons based on ILO definition}}{\text{economically active persons}} \times 100$
Underemployment rate =	$\frac{\text{number of under-employed persons}}{\text{economically active persons}} \times 100$

■ **Hotline for persons interviewed as part of the SLFS**

If you wish to notify us of a change of address, make an appointment for the interview or if you have questions regarding the conduct of the survey, please call us free of charge Monday to Friday from 10.00–11.30 and from 14.00–16.00 at **0800 00 25 26**.

■ **Any more questions?**

For additional information on the publications and results of the SLFS, please visit our website: www.slfs.bfs.admin.ch



Our information service is at your disposal for further information:

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