LIVING AND WORKING IN SWITZERLAND

"I didn’t plan to come to Switzerland. But I like the country and decided to stay."

Linda Uldry-Polme, teacher, Portugal

Important addresses

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)
Labour Directorate/EURES
Effingerstrasse 31
3003 Berne/Switzerland
info@eures.ch
www.eures.ch
www.job-area.ch
Hotline: +41 31 323 25 25

Federal Office for Migration (FOM)
EURES
Quellenweg 6
3003 Berne-Wabern/Switzerland
euresinfo@bfm.admin.ch
www.bfm.admin.ch
LIVING IN SWITZERLAND
The daily papers, television and also the radio, plus numerous Internet pages will help you to become familiar with life in Switzerland.

REGISTRATION
If you intend to stay in Switzerland for longer than three months and/or to take up gainful employment, you must report to the local authorities within 14 days of your arrival. In any case you must register before starting a job.

TRANSLOCATION GOODS
If you transfer your legal domicile to Switzerland, you are allowed to import household effects, pets, vehicles and personal belongings duty-free as so-called relocation goods.

On importation, you are to present form 18.44 (Declaration/Application for clearance of relocation goods) in duplicate at the customs office. You can download this form from the website of the Federal Customs Administration; it is also available at the Swiss representations abroad (embassies and consulates).

LIVING
The cost of living in Switzerland is very high. Zurich and Geneva are even among the most expensive cities in the world. Both apartments and food are very expensive here. The same applies to the compulsory health insurance; the premiums are not, however, directly deducted from salary.

ACCOMMODATION
The habitable surface of Switzerland is very small. The Swiss population has mainly settled in the central plateau, known as the Mittelland. For some years there has been an acute shortage of apartments in the larger cities and prices are correspondingly high (over 20% of the average salary). It can thus prove difficult to find suitable accommodation. The condition of rented apartments is generally good and the kitchens are mostly equipped with a refrigerator, a kitchen stove, etc.

If you are looking for an apartment, we recommend a visit to the specialised websites. Or contact the real estate agents operating in your chosen region.

LEISURE
In Switzerland there are many clubs and associations which play a very important role in the integration of foreign nationals. Ask your local authorities for a list. Cultural activities are above all varied in the large towns. In villages, cultural and sports activities are organised by the people living there. In addition to football, hiking and cycling are the most popular forms of exercise.

TAXES
Income tax is levied both by the federal government (Direct Federal Tax) as well as by the cantons and communes (Cantonal and Communal Taxes). As each of the 26 cantons has its own fiscal laws, the tax burden varies from one canton to another. In general, taxpayers have to complete a declaration every year, based upon which income and assets tax are calculated.

Taxes are directly deducted (taxation at source) from the salaries of foreign workers who are not in possession of a permanent residence permit C but have their
Working in Switzerland is great fun and the beautiful countryside is great for photography.

Mirko Teefs, chef de service, Germany
VALIDITY OF YOUR DRIVING LICENCE
During the first twelve months of your stay in Switzerland you may, without further formalities, drive a vehicle corresponding to the categories listed in your national driving licence, provided you have reached the minimum age (at least 18 for motorcycles, cars and lorries, 21 for buses). After this period you must exchange your foreign driving licence for a Swiss one (professional lorry drivers before the first journey).

You can exchange your driving licence at the road vehicle office in your canton. The following documents are required for your application:

– fully completed and signed application form
– passport or identity card
– initial or permanent residence permit
– original driving licence
– current passport photograph

TELEPHONING IN SWITZERLAND
The international code for calls from other countries to Switzerland is 41. Dial 0041 plus the telephone number without the zero: 0041 (0)31 XXX XX XX.

NEW COUNTRY HOME?
Do you need help with your change of domicile or anything else? Visit the Federal Office for Migration and Citizenship: www.bENTIC.ch
BEFORE YOU MOVE – DON’T FORGET
– Well prepared is half way there. This applies in particular when you move to another country. It also makes everyday life in a strange environment much easier.
– Remember the following documents: identity card or passport, driving licence, diplomas, work testimonials and curriculum vitae as well as passport photographs.

Complete form 18.44 (Declaration/Application for clearance of relocation goods) and submit it in duplicate to the customs authorities.

– Remember your health and accident insurance.

Should you bring your pet, make sure that it has been vaccinated against rabies in accordance with Swiss regulations and has been fitted with a microchip or tattoo.

– Don’t forget to obtain whichever PD U1, U2 or E-form is appropriate for your social situation (E111, E119, E301, E303, E101, E104). The forms PD U1, U2 are only valid for EU-citizens. For EFTA-citizens the E-forms must be used.

– Inform the authorities of your change of address!
– Make use of the Swiss daily papers, TV and radio as well as the many websites to find out more about life in Switzerland.

THINGS TO REMEMBER – AFTER YOUR MOVE
Report to the local authorities within 14 days of your arrival in Switzerland. Take along your passport or identity card, your employment contract as well as passport photographs.

“... I chose Switzerland because of the scenery here. It reminds me of my own country and then there are the mountains, too.”

Helena Sundberg-Arnone, physiotherapist, Sweden
Gordana Botalla, real estate administrator, Slovenia

“I came to Switzerland because I wanted to learn the language and stayed here because of love.”

— Register at the embassy of your native country based in Switzerland.

If you are an EU national and are looking for a job, you can stay in Switzerland for three months without a permit. Thereafter you have to report to the cantonal migration office/aliens police. If you are already registered as unemployed, you must enquire at your employment office before your departure to Switzerland. Bring along your complete application file and Form PD U2/E303 (Exportation of services).

CONCLUDE A HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS AND PRIVATE THIRD-PARTY INSURANCE POLICY
In some cantons certain insurances are compulsory.

RADIO/TV
Report your radio and TV to the Swiss collection office for radio and TV reception charges.

POST OFFICE OR BANK ACCOUNT
In Switzerland, as a rule, your salary is directly paid into an account. We therefore recommend you to open an account at a bank or the post office. You will need an identity card for this.

CARS
After entering Switzerland you must register your car for a technical test. Vehicles kept in Switzerland for longer than a year must have a Swiss vehicle card and number plate. Change your driving licence for a Swiss one within 12 months.