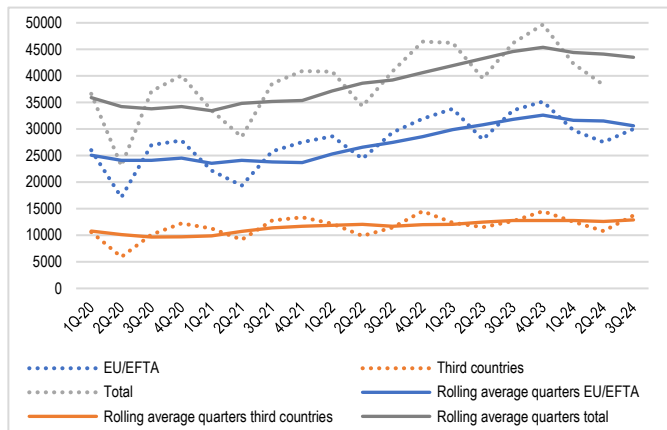


Factsheet on the uptake of quotas for third-country and UK nationals permitted to work in Switzerland and for service providers from EU/EFTA states

(Last updated: 30 September 2024)

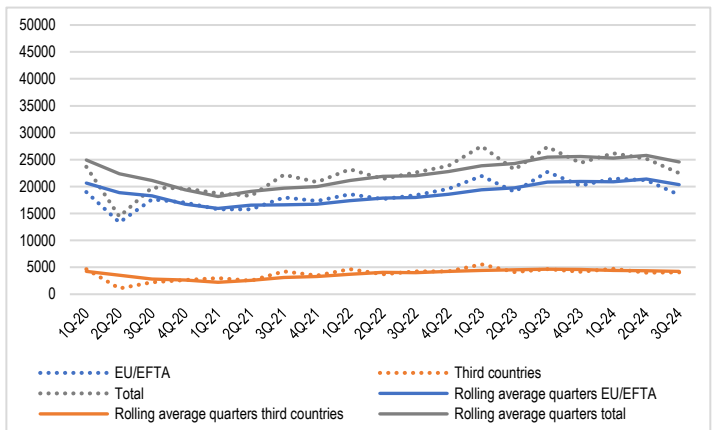
Total immigration 2020–2024

Permanent foreign resident population



Source: SEM/ZEMIS

Non-permanent foreign resident population

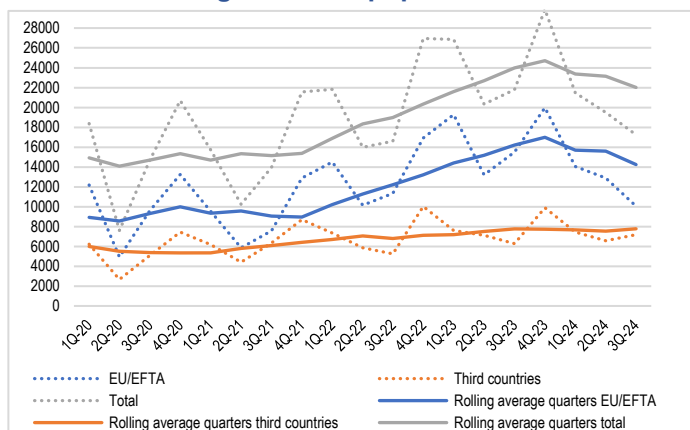


Source: SEM/ZEMIS

Immigration to the permanent resident population fell by 5.6% in the first nine months of 2024 compared to the same period in the previous year. The decline in immigration into the permanent resident population among EU/EFTA nationals is 8.4%. By contrast, immigration of third-country nationals has increased slightly by 1.5%. Immigration to the non-permanent resident population has decreased by 5.3% (-4.1% EU/EFTA; -11% third countries). In 2024, a weakening of economic activity can be observed and the main labour market indicators show economic growth at a slightly below average rate.

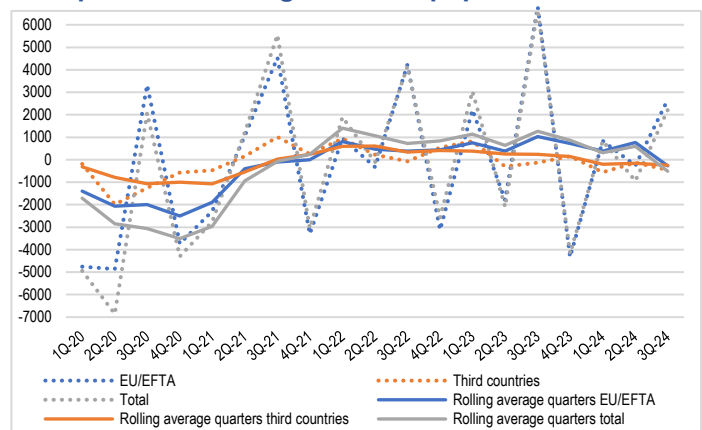
Net migration 2020–2024

Permanent foreign resident population



Source: SEM/ZEMIS

Non-permanent foreign resident population

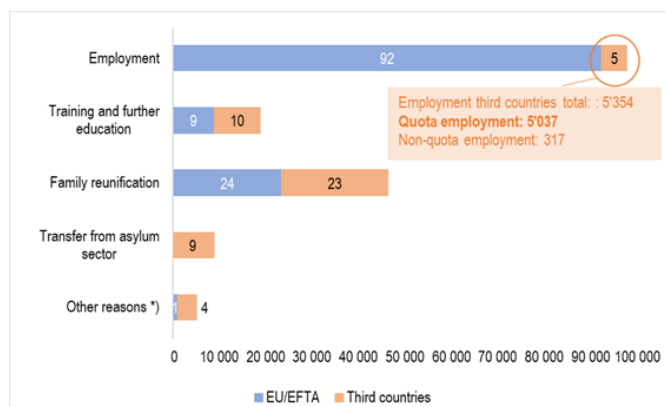


Source: SEM/ZEMIS

Compared with the period January–September 2023, emigration of EU/EFTA-nationals rose slightly over the same period in 2024. Among the permanent resident population, emigration rose by 4.2% (+ 2,428 persons), and among the non-permanent resident population, it rose by 3.4% (+ 1,563 persons). The net migration of EU/EFTA-nationals showed a decrease of 10,993 persons (- 22.9%, permanent resident population) and a decrease of - 3,989 persons (- 55.1%; non-permanent resident population) compared with the same period in the previous year. Among third-country nationals, emigration increased by 2.8% (+ 384 persons, permanent resident population) and decreased by 4.0% (- 411 persons, non-permanent resident population). Net migration of the permanent resident population from third countries recorded an increase of 1.1% (+ 228 persons), while net migration of third-country nationals in the non-permanent resident population fell by 387.3% (- 1,530 persons) compared with the same period in the previous year. UK nationals are counted as EU/EFTA nationals until 31.12.2020 and as third-country nationals from 1.1.2021.

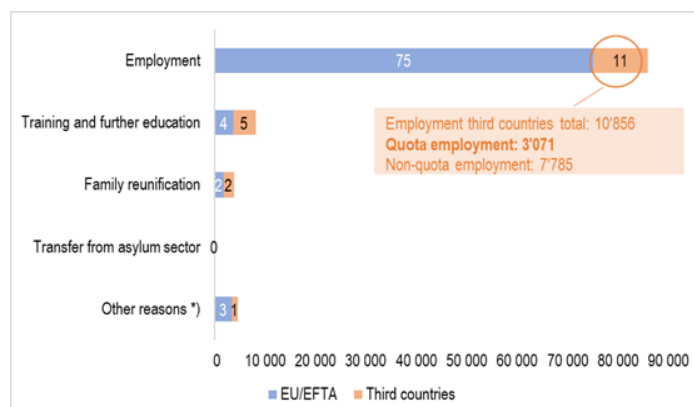
Immigration by reason of immigration in 2023

Permanent foreign resident population in 2023, in thousands



Source: SEM/ZEMIS

Non-permanent foreign resident population in 2023, in thousands



Source: SEM/ZEMIS

*) Other reasons for immigration, including immigration without gainful employment (e.g. pensioners)

The vast majority of immigrants entering the labour market come from the EU/EFTA: of the total of around 183,600 entries for the purpose of gainful employment in the permanent and non-permanent resident population in 2023, 91% (176,400) were EU/EFTA nationals, and only around 9% (16,200, of whom around 8,100 were subject to quotas and not subject to quotas) were from third countries. The vast majority of immigrants from EU/EFTA states are economic migrants: in 2023 around 92,400 EU/EFTA nationals entered Switzerland to take up gainful employment in the permanent resident population (non-permanent resident population: approx. 75,000 persons). The second most common reason for entry is family reunification (permanent resident population: almost 23,500 people; non-permanent resident population: 1,800 persons). Among third-country nationals, family reunification is the most common reason for immigration into the permanent resident population with 22,700 persons (non-permanent resident population: approx. 2,000 persons), followed by education and training with approx. 9,700 persons (non-permanent resident population: approx. 4,500 persons), the approx. 8,900 permits under immigration law following an asylum procedure and the 5,300 entries for the purpose of gainful employment. The ratios have remained constant over the years.

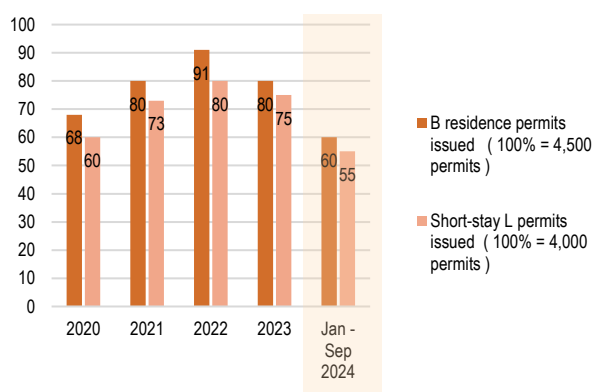
Stays by third-country nationals for the purpose of gainful employment that are not subject to quotas are generally of a very short duration, lasting for a maximum of four months or up to eight months for artists and circus performers. Work assignments lasting more than four or eight months are included in the maximum figures. The information in the rest of this document relates exclusively to immigration for the purpose of employment under the quotas set out in Annexes 1 and 2 of the [Ordinance on Admission, Period of Stay and Employment](#). (available in German, French and Italian). It also focuses on immigration for the purpose of employment of third-country nationals (excluding UK nationals; see red markings in the graphs above).

Uptake of quotas for workers from third countries, the United Kingdom (UK) and service providers from EU/EFTA states

Half of the annually available quotas for short-term residence permits and a little more than a quarter of the quotas for residence permits for workers from third countries are distributed among the cantons at the beginning of the year in accordance with a distribution key based on the full-time equivalents of the cantons (see [Annex 1, no 1 let. a and Annex 2, no 1 let. a](#) [available in German, French and Italian]). The remaining quotas are managed in the federal reserve. If additional demand arises, the cantons can apply to the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) for supplementary quotas, which are usually allocated to the applying canton within a few days. At the end of the year, unclaimed cantonal and federal quotas can be used in the following year if needed. The maximum number of workers from the UK and service providers from EU/EFTA states are released quarterly and can be used by the cantons on a first come, first served basis. There is no federal reserve for these types of quota.

Employed third-country nationals, 2020–2024

8,500 quotas/year (4,000 L permits / 4,500 B permits)



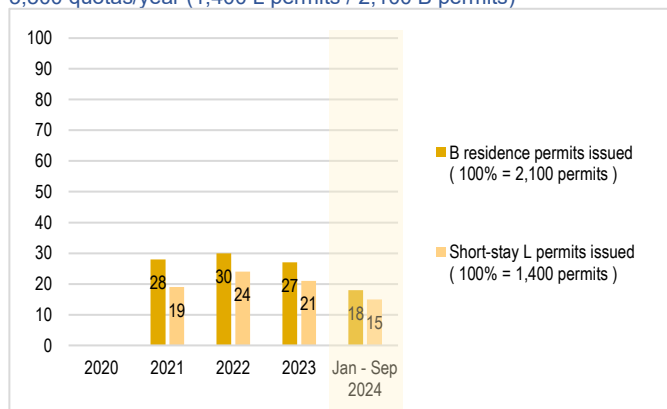
Source: SEM/ZEMIS

Last year, 80% (B permits) and 75% (L permits) of the available quotas for third-country nationals in gainful employment were issued. Demand for available quotas was higher than in 2020 and 2021, which were heavily influenced by the COVID pandemic. At the end of September 2024, the demand for quotas was 60% (B permits), and 55% (L permits); based on a linear trend, full use of quotas is not expected by the end of the year.

An additional quota of 884 B residence permits and 984 L short stay permits are available for the current year from the reserve for the previous year.

Employed UK nationals 2020–2024

3,500 quotas/year (1,400 L permits / 2,100 B permits)

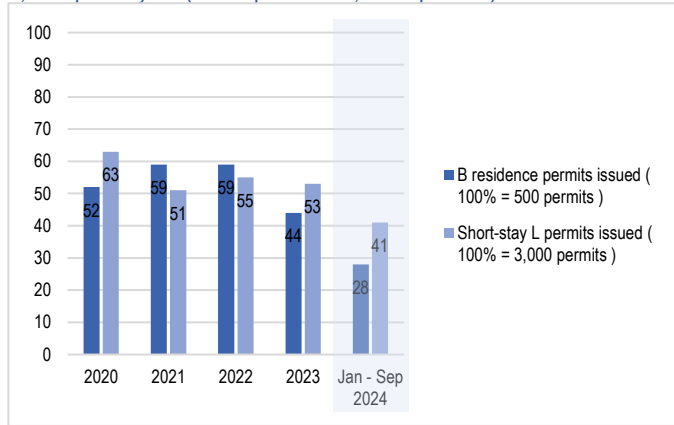


Source: SEM/ZEMIS

Since 2021, separate quotas have been available for employed UK nationals. Demand for the quotas has been low. By the end of September 2024, 374 B residence permits and 203 L short stay permits had been claimed, which corresponds to 18% and 15% of the available quotas respectively.

EU/EFTA service providers 2020–2024

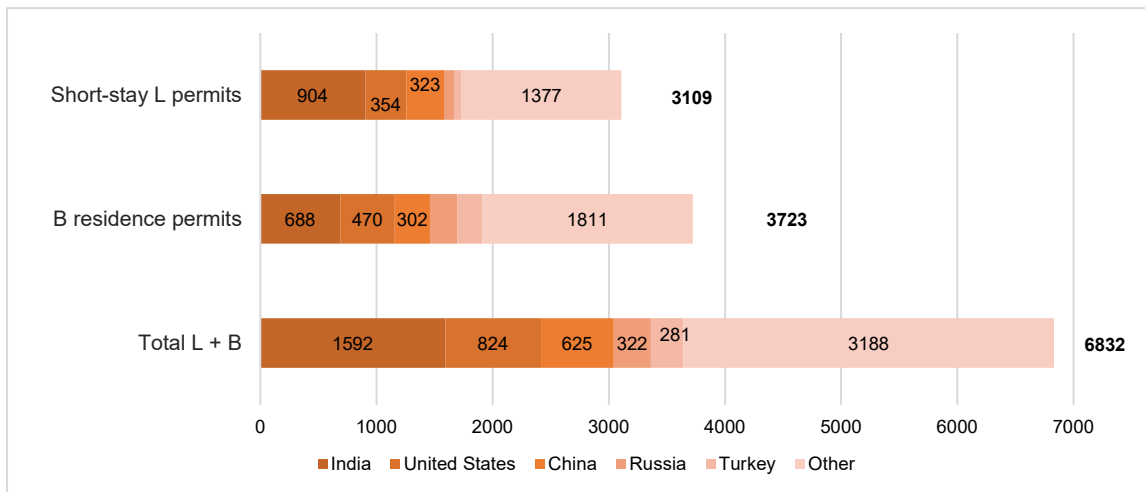
3,500 quotas/year (500 B permits / 3,000 L permits)



Source: SEM/ZEMIS

Of the available quotas for service providers from EU/EFTA states, 44% (B permits) and 53% (L permits) were issued last year. The uptake rates were below the levels seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand for quotas in 2024 also appears to be low: by 30 September 2024, 138 B permits (28% of the quota) and 1,217 L permits (41%) had been issued.

Number of permits granted by nationality in 2023

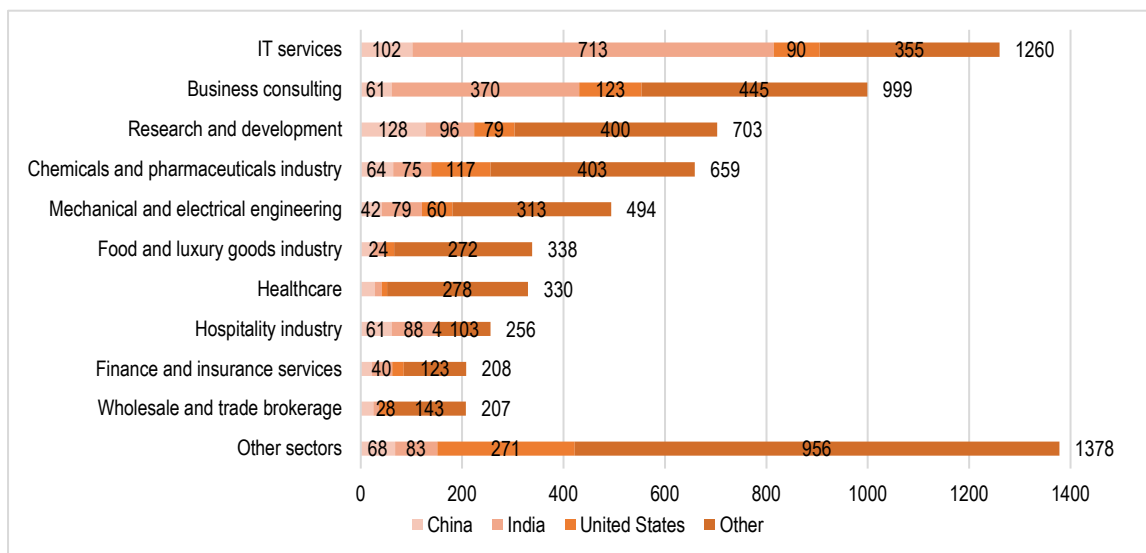


Source: SEM/ZEMIS

In 2022, India, the USA, China, Russia and Turkey were the most common third countries of origin for admission for the purpose of gainful employment. Employers in Switzerland who would like to hire workers from third countries must show the cantonal labour market authorities that they have not been able to find suitably qualified employees in Switzerland or in EU/EFTA countries. The legal requirement to give preference to domestic employees does not apply, however, if a foreign company sends an employee to Switzerland for a limited period of time, for example as part of a project contract with a Swiss company. In this case, there is no actual or permanent access to the Swiss labour market.

Service providers and posted employees (with employers based abroad) from India are employed in the field of IT services and business consulting on a project basis in the vast majority of cases. The share of the respective nationalities in total labour market admissions has hardly changed over the last few years.

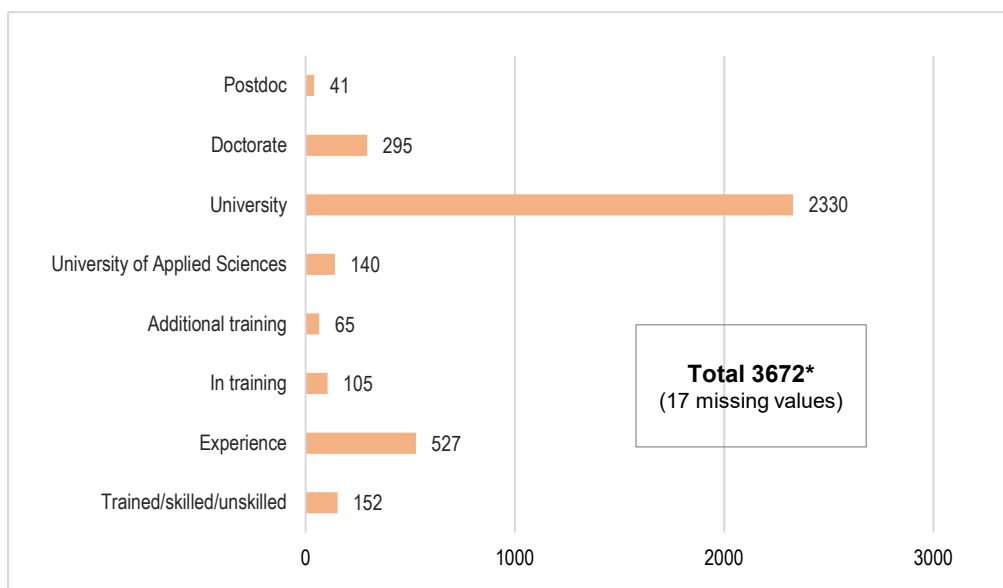
Number of permits granted by nationality and industry in 2023



Source: SEM/ZEMIS

In 2023 and in recent years, the demand for qualified specialists from third countries has been primarily high in information and communication services, business consultancy, the chemical and pharmaceutical industry and in research and development. However, permits can also be issued in other areas, such as healthcare (top 5 countries of origin: Tunisia, China, Kosovo, Canada, Lebanon), gastronomy (top 5: India, China, Thailand, Malaysia and Japan) and sports (top 5: USA, Canada, Argentina, Serbia and Brazil). In the healthcare sector, the requirements for labour market admission are typically met by specialist doctors and assistant doctors. In the hospitality industry, only chefs with specialist qualifications can be admitted. Professional athletes can be admitted at professional level in the top two leagues. Other areas of employment (other industries) include trade, private households (domestic workers, au pairs), education (especially international schools) and the cultural and entertainment industry. In these industries, nationals of the USA, Morocco, the Philippines, Brazil and Turkey are particularly well represented.

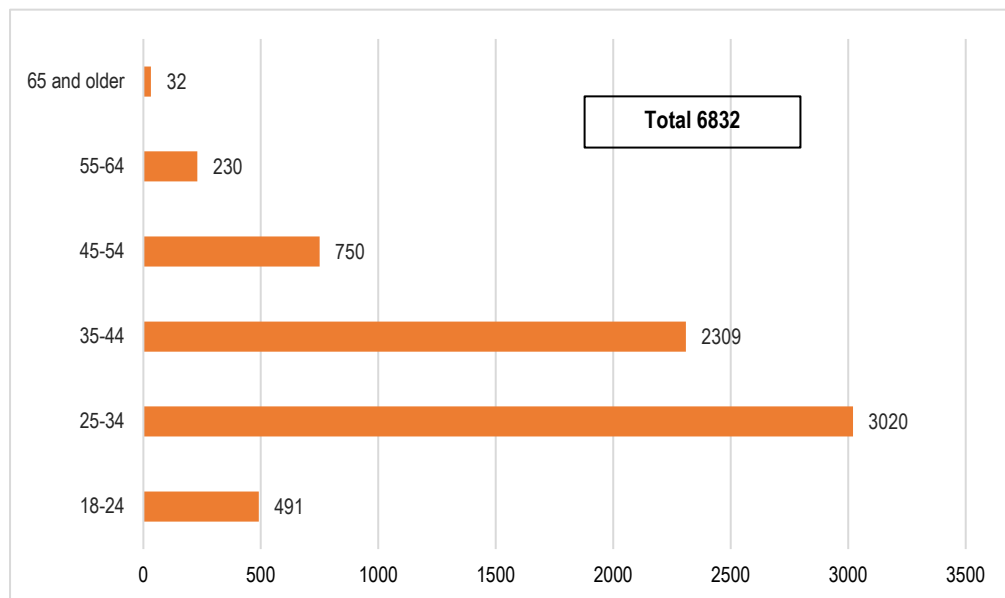
Number of permits granted by level of qualification and age in 2023



Source: SEM/ZEMIS

The vast majority of third-country nationals admitted for the purpose of gainful employment have a least a degree from a university or a university of applied sciences and professional experience. Permits can also be granted to people with special professional knowledge or particular abilities, even if they do not have a tertiary level education. In addition, the admitted third-country nationals include people who have many years of experience, for example in elite sports, or who are in education and training and are completing an internship or volunteering in an international youth exchange programme in Switzerland.

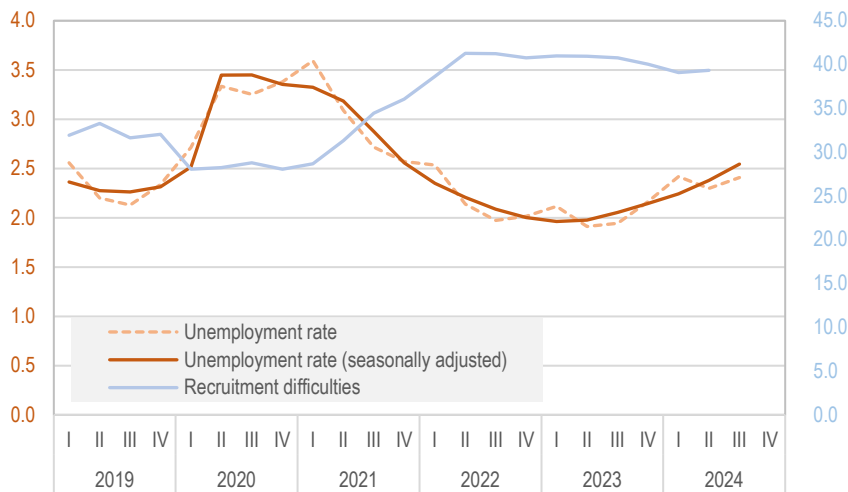
* Since 1 February 2023, the two-stage approval procedure between the cantons and the federal government for granting permits for gainful employment to third-country nationals has only applied to certain categories of persons and professions (partial waiver of the labour market approval procedure; see Art. 1 let. a and b of the [FDJP Ordinance on the Approval Procedure for Foreign Workers, AP-FDJP](#) [available in German, French and Italian]). Since then, detailed evaluations of the qualification structure have only been possible for those admissions that the cantons are required to submit to SEM for approval. However, the qualification structure has remained constant over the years. The statistical evaluations for the years prior to the introduction of the partial waiver show that around 87% of all admitted persons from third countries have at least a tertiary level education.



Indicators of the economic and labour market situation

Unemployment and recruitment difficulties

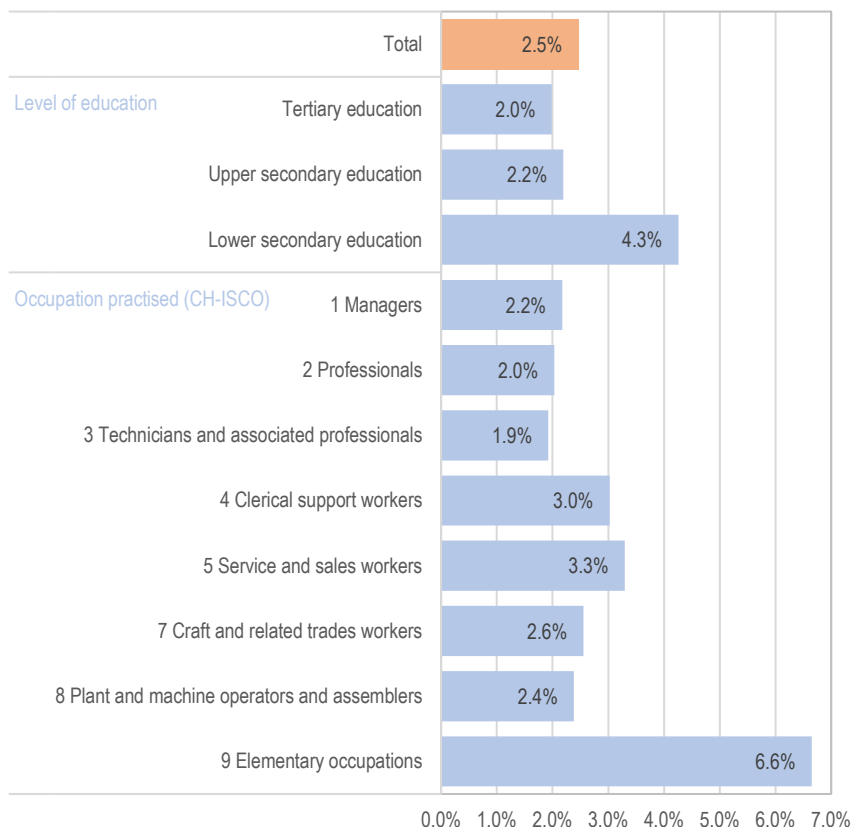
SECO unemployment rate in % (left-hand scale); recruitment difficulties (synthetic index) according to JOBSTAT in % (right-hand scale); September 2024



According to SECO, the unemployment rate reached its lowest level in more than 20 years at 1.9% in March 2023, but has since shown a slight upward trend. In September 2024, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 2.5%. This development was due to below-average economic growth, which also had a dampening effect on employment dynamics with a certain time lag. However, the unemployment rate remains well below its long-term average. In addition, companies continue to experience recruitment difficulties at an elevated level.

Source: SECO / Labour market statistics, FSO/JOBSTAT

SECO unemployment rate by level of education and main occupational group according to CH-ISCO-19 in September 2024



In September 2024, the unemployment rate for people with a tertiary level education was significantly lower, and the rate for people with a qualification from upper secondary education was slightly lower than the average of 2.5%. The unemployment rate for people without any post-compulsory education was significantly higher at 4.3%.

In the three main occupational groups with the highest qualification requirements (CH-ISCO-19 main groups 1-3), the unemployment rate was below average. At 6.6%, elementary occupations had by far the highest unemployment rate. The unemployment rate was also above average at 3.3% for service and sales workers, 3% for clerical support workers and 2.6% for craft and trades workers.

The low unemployment rates among people with tertiary education and in highly skilled occupations reflect the rapidly growing demand for well-qualified specialists in the Swiss economy. The main drivers of demand for skilled workers are structural trends such as digitalisation, demographic change and the specialisation of the Swiss export industry in goods with high value added.

Source: SECO / Labour market statistics

Economic outlook

Forecast dated 19/09/2024

	2022	2023	2024*	2025*
Gross domestic product (GDP), real, adjusted for sporting events	2.9	1.2	1.2 (1.2)	1.7 (1.6)
Labour market and prices				
Full-time equivalent employment	2.8	2.1	1.4 (1.2)	1.2 (1.1)
Unemployment rate in %	2.2	2.0	2.4 (2.4)	2.6 (2.6)
Swiss consumer price index	2.8	2.1	1.2 (1.4)	0.7 (1.1)

*) Forecasts by the Federal Government Expert Group on Business Cycles dated 17/06/2024. Prognose dated 19/03/2024 in parentheses.

The Expert Group on Business Cycles expects the Swiss economy to grow at a well below-average rate of 1.2% in 2024. With a gradual recovery of the world economy, growth should accelerate moderately in 2025 (1.6%, June forecast: 1.7%). Inflation is likely to continue to decline.

The below-average economic growth is also reflected in the labour market. The unemployment rate is expected to average 2.4% in 2024 and 2.6% in 2025.