

Switzerland

Following the peak in immigration flows prior to the economic downturn, national statistics recorded a decline in inflows from 157 000 in 2008 to 132 000 in 2009. The decline was particularly strong among nationals from the EU-15 who nevertheless continue to account for the vast majority (62%) of migration flows. This was mainly driven by a notable decline in immigration of Germans (from 46 000 to 34 000) who have been the main origin group in recent years, accounting for almost 30% of new arrivals.

Preliminary statistics for the first eight months of 2010 show that immigration in that year remained broadly at the 2009 level.

In February 2010, the Federal Council approved a number of measures aimed at limiting potential abuses in the framework of the freedom of movement with nationals from the EU/EEA. The measures include more control over the access to the welfare system for nationals from these countries thanks to a better exchange of data among authorities. Likewise, there will be a more stringent application of the conditions governing long-term admission; in particular regarding adequate housing and duration of the work contract. In addition, controls against wage and social dumping and against so-called “pseudo self-employment” have been reinforced. In light of these measures and the decline in immigration flows, the government decided in May 2010 not to invoke the safeguard clause to restrict immigration from the EU/EEA.

In 2009, the numbers of asylum seekers remained broadly at the 2008 level. A strong increase in asylum seekers from Nigeria, who are now the main origin group, compensated for significant declines in the numbers of asylum seekers from Eritrea and Somalia. Preliminary figures for 2010 indicate a slight decline in the number of requests in that year. Nigeria, Eritrea and Somalia remained the main origin countries, followed by asylum seekers from Serbia whose number increased significantly.

Readmission agreements were signed in 2010 with Kosovo, Kazakhstan, Moldavia and Benin. In November 2010, Nigeria and Switzerland concluded negotiations on a migration partnership which includes, among other issues, provisions on return assistance and readmission.

In November 2010, a popular initiative on the expulsion of foreign criminals has been adopted by a majority of the people and the cantons. It states that foreign nationals who have committed one of the criminal offenses stated in the text of the initiative should lose their right of residence and return to their country of origin. The initiative still has to be transformed into legislation.

A revision of the law on asylum is in preparation. The changes aim at making the asylum procedures quicker and more effective. Special attention is devoted to preventing abuses. In addition, if the law is adopted, the Federal Council will be entitled to define countries to which expulsion will generally be considered acceptable. It is also planned to establish a dispersal policy for temporarily admitted persons. Finally, the law envisages abolishing the current possibility to request asylum in Swiss embassies abroad.

Switzerland has a high proportion of international students in its universities. The labour market access of international graduates of Swiss universities was facilitated on 1 January 2011. Since then, the graduates can obtain a work permit if they have a job offer of preponderant scientific or economic interest. In addition, international graduates of Swiss universities can remain in Switzerland for up to six months after completion of their studies to seek and find work.

A comprehensive revision of the law on citizenship is in preparation. The planned new law aims at a harmonisation of the cantonal and local residence requirements and contains a number of procedural changes aimed at enhancing transparency and facilitating the administrative process. In addition, it is planned to reduce the current duration of residency requirements from currently twelve years – the longest in the OECD – to eight years.

Finally, in 2011, Switzerland will host the fourth Global Forum on Migration and Development.

For further information:

www.bfm.admin.ch/bfm/en/home.html

www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/en/index/themen/01/07.html

Recent trends in migrants' flows and stocks

SWITZERLAND

Migration flows (foreigners) National definition	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Inflows	12.2	12.7	20.6	17.1	13.2	16.5	132.4
Outflows	7.8	6.7	7.1	7.1	6.9	7.1	55.2
Migration inflows (foreigners) by type	Thousands		% distribution		Inflows of top 10 nationalities as a % of total inflows of foreigners		
Permit based statistics (standardised)	2008	2009	2008	2009			
Work	3.2	2.7	2.3	2.4			
Family (incl. accompanying family)	18.9	18.4	13.6	16.0			
Humanitarian	6.3	5.4	4.6	4.7			
Free movements	108.6	86.0	78.1	74.9			
Others	2.1	2.3	1.5	2.0			
Total	139.1	114.8	100.0	100.0			
Temporary migration	Thousands		Average				
	2005	2008	2009	2005-09			
<i>Thousands</i>							
International students	8.6	11.0	11.1	10.1			
Trainees	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1			
Working holiday makers	..	..	..	..
Seasonal workers	..	..	..	..
Intra-company transfers	..	..	..	..
Other temporary workers	101.6	91.6	86.5	99.0			
Inflows of asylum seekers	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
	2.5	1.4	2.2	2.1	2.7	1.7	16 005
Components of population growth	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Per 1 000 inhabitants</i>							
Total	5.5	5.9	14.2	10.5	7.0	9.7	81
Natural increase	2.2	1.6	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.8	16
Net migration	2.8	4.8	12.8	8.5	5.3	8.3	66
Stocks of immigrants	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level ('000)
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Percentage of the total population</i>							
Foreign-born population	21.9	23.8	25.8	26.3	22.7	25.0	2 038
Foreign population	19.3	20.3	21.4	21.7	19.8	20.9	1 680
Naturalisations	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Percentage of the foreign population</i>							
	2.1	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.3	2.7	43 440
Labour market outcomes	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Employment/population ratio</i>							
Native-born men	..	85.1	86.1	84.7	..	85.6	
Foreign-born men	..	80.5	83.6	84.1	..	82.6	
Native-born women	..	73.1	75.8	76.1	..	74.6	
Foreign-born women	..	63.0	67.5	67.8	..	65.3	
<i>Unemployment rate</i>							
Native-born men	..	2.7	2.1	2.9	..	2.4	
Foreign-born men	..	7.8	5.0	6.2	..	6.3	
Native-born women	..	3.7	2.7	3.4	..	3.2	
Foreign-born women	..	9.7	7.7	7.8	..	8.6	
Macroeconomic indicators	2000	2005	2008	2009	Average		Level
					2000-04	2005-09	2009
<i>Annual growth in %</i>							
Real GDP	3.6	2.6	1.9	-1.9	1.5	2.0	
GDP/capita (level in USD)	3.0	2.0	0.7	-3.0	0.7	1.1	33 473
Employment (level in thousands)	0.9	0.7	1.8	0.6	0.5	1.5	4 315
<i>Percentage of the labour force</i>							
Unemployment	2.6	4.4	3.5	4.4	3.4	4.0	

Notes and sources are at the end of the chapter.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932441135>