

Residence in Switzerland with taking up gainful activity by citizens of EU/EFTA-countries

According to the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (AFMP) between Switzerland and the EU, citizens of EU/EFTA member states have the right to enter, reside and take up gainful employment in Switzerland, provided that the conditions set forth in the AFMP are met.

Transitional conditions apply to Croatian nationals.

Gainful employment lasting up to three months

EU/EFTA citizens do not require a residence permit to take up employment with a company in Switzerland for a period of up to three months per calendar year. However, such employment requires the electronic notification of short-term stays. An online notification form must be submitted no later than the day before the first day of work.

Gainful employment lasting more than three months

For gainful employment lasting longer than three months per calendar year, a work permit must be issued. A Work permit is issued upon presentation of proof of employment (employment contract). These work permits are valid for all of Switzerland and the holder is entitled to change jobs and occupations. The validity period of work permits depends on the duration of employment.

For employment lasting between three months and one year, employees are entitled to a short-stay permit (L EU/EFTA), whose validity period coincides with the duration of the particular employment contract.

For employment lasting for one year, several years or for an unlimited duration, employees will be issued a residence/work permit (B EU/EFTA), which remains valid for a five years' time.

Citizens of EU/EFTA member states who wish to pursue self-employment in Switzerland will initially receive a B EU/EFTA permit valid for five years, if they can provide evidence of effective self-employment when submitting their application.

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Requirements for the issuance of a residence permit

According to the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (AFMP) between Switzerland and the EU, citizens of EU/EFTA member states have the right to enter and reside in Switzerland without taking up gainful employment (e.g. students, pensioners, other economically inactive people and family members). The conditions following must be met in order to obtain the right to live in Switzerland:

- Economically inactive people must have sufficient financial resources to ensure that they do not become dependent upon Swiss social security benefits (welfare) and therefore a burden on the host country;
- Economically inactive people must be fully covered by health insurance (all risks, incl. accident insurance)

Financial resources are deemed adequate if they exceed the welfare entitlement threshold established under Swiss law. In this context, the rates of the Swiss Conference for Social Welfare (SKOS guidelines) are authoritative. Pensions, benefits and allowances paid by other social insurance providers are also taken into account when calculating financial resources.

If economically inactive people are planning to stay in Switzerland for less than three months, no residence permit is required. If they wish to stay longer than three months, then the foreign nationals must register as an economically inactive person with the migration office of the canton in which she/he wishes to stay. A residence permit (B EU/EFTA) valid for five years will be issued upon presentation of a valid identity card or passport. This permit is valid for the whole of Switzerland and is automatically renewed by the authorities as long as the above-mentioned conditions continue to be met.