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Bundesamt für Migration BFM
Direktionsbereich Arbeit, Integration und Bürgerrecht AIB

Switzerland's Integration Policy

Statutory bases
Measures
Challenges

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Integration of foreigners has been a major element of Swiss migration policy since 1970. However, it was only when...

the new Aliens Act and the Asylum Act became effective in 2008...

that the scope and principles of integration became a firmly entrenched part of federal law (Art. 3 Aliens Act and Chapter 8).



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Integration means...



Objectives of integration policy (Art. 4 Aliens Act)

- **Coexistence** of the Swiss people and foreigners based on **constitutionally entrenched values, mutual respect and tolerance**.
- Inclusion in the social, economic, and cultural life, ensuring **equal opportunities**.
- Resident immigrants' willingness to become integrated and Swiss people's **broad-minded attitude** toward resident immigrants.
- **Familiarization** with Swiss ways and customs (particularly learning one of the **Swiss national languages**).

Integration takes place mostly in existing structures, touching all aspects and areas of society.



Equal opportunities

Integration is accomplished once immigrants are given the same opportunities regarding:

- school education and further training
- employment
- health care
- social security



Stocktaking: The 2006 Integration Report

On the whole, coexistence of the Swiss people and resident immigrants has proved satisfactory.

However:

- about 15% of the youthful immigrants do not manage to complete their vocational education within the usual delay;
- almost 40% of the people on welfare are of non-Swiss nationality;
- Non-Swiss citizens account for 50% of convicted criminal offenders;
- Only 20% of the recognized asylum seekers exercise gainful employment.

Integration works both ways: **making demands and encourage**



Factors conducive to successful integration:

- Respecting legal and social customs
- Speaking the local language
- Education and preparing for working life

Factors potentially leading to failed integration efforts:

- Inadequate or lack of information
- Discrimination and prejudice
- Legal obstacles



Encourage: *Integration takes place in existing structures*

A set of government measures:

45 measures implemented by 14 federal agencies.

Priority No. 1: Language, education, training, and employment.

Priority No. 2: Immigrants' social integration in their residential areas (urban projects).

...and: sports, anti-discrimination, statistics, etc.



Specific forms of incentives: Government-subsidized integration projects

Federal Department of Justice and Police Integration Project

Focus 1: Language, education, and training

Focus 2: Integration Competency Center

Focus 3: Innovative pilot projects

2008: 14 million Swiss francs

2009: 16 million Swiss francs

Lump-sum expenditure for provisionally accepted refugees:

6000 Swiss francs per person/36 million Swiss francs per year



The role of the federal government

- Setting strategic objectives
- Drafting legislation
- Giving incentives
- Coordinating projects
- Promoting financing plans together with the cantons
- Ensuring coordinated information policy



The role of the cantons

- Setting up cantonal integration services (close cooperation with the Federal Office for Migration).
- Allocating subsidies for individual projects.
- Coordinating measures initiated by cantonal and non-government institutions concerned with immigration.
- Designing cantonal standards in decision-making (degree of integration, integration agreements)
- Ensuring coordinated information policy
- Drafting laws, regulations, and cantonal decrees and directives.



The role of the communities

- A number of communities have established a service dealing with integration matters.
- Information
- Designing directives at the communal level

The Federal Office for Migration and the cantons involve the communities in the exchange of information and experiences.



Decision-making: Taking into account the degree of integration

- Permanent residence permit after 5 years (subject to the person being well integrated)
- Termination of temporary stay (possibility of applying for residence permit after staying in Switzerland for five years)
- Hardship cases after family disunion
- Temporary stay permit in hardship cases or for persons who are refused entry
- Naturalization
- **Integration agreements**



Integration agreements

- Cantonal responsibility
- Recommendations by the Federal Office for Migration on target groups (arrived in Switzerland for the purpose of family reunion; well-established immigrants whose behavior might result in their being refused a prolongation of stay)
- Persons charged with looking after people's spiritual and religious needs
- Cantonal pilot projects (BS, BL, SO, ZH / AG)
- Evaluation



The challenges we face:

- Get everyone involved
- Embed integration into existing structures
- Reinforce coordination in a federalist state
- Make available optimized information to foreigners and Swiss citizens
- Criteria for gauging successful integration
- Reconcile demands made by politicians with those of opposing parties (reaching a consensus)

A federal law? An program of action on integration?



Tripartite Agglomerationskonferenz (TAK): (Tripartite Conference on Conurbation)

Further Development of a Swiss Integration Policy

The Conference's Five Points Program (proposed)

- Expert group (under the direction of the Federal Office for Migration/Conference of Cantonal Governments)
- Political kickoff: representatives of the federal government, the cantons, and communities
- Regional hearings (4): Subjects: language, education, training, employment, social security, culture and religion, equal opportunities, discrimination, etc.
- Expert group's report: matters of principle, implementation measures, legal steps
- Recommendations (TAK).



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Chief objective:
**Peaceful coexistence of all people living
in Switzerland, regardless their origins.**



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Work permits in Switzerland

Admission of non-EU/EFTA-nationals

Federal Office for Migration FOM

Section

Workforce and Immigration



Admission policy and procedure

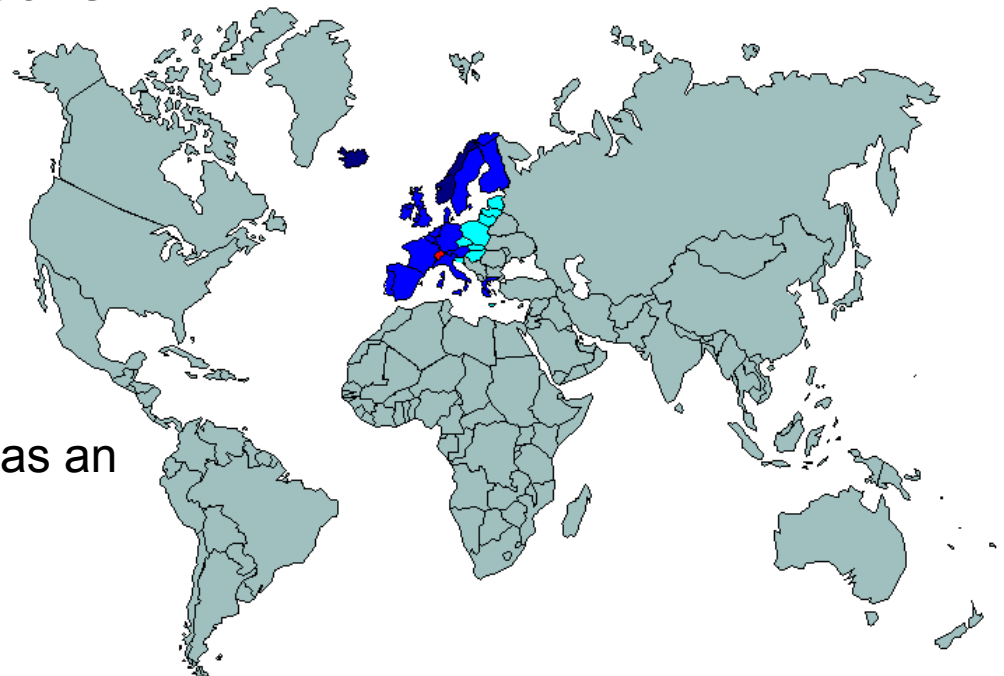
EU/EFTA-nationals - Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons

Legal claim

Priority on the labor market

Third state nationals

Admission complementary and as an
exception





Access to the Swiss Labor Market

Which criteria need to be fulfilled to receive a work permit?

Switzerland has a dual system for the admission of foreign workers. Gainfully employed nationals from EU/EFTA-states can benefit from agreements on the free movement of persons. Only a limited number of well qualified employees are admitted from all other countries.



Priority (Art. 21 AuG)

- ▶ Third state nationals may only be admitted if a person can not be recruited from the labor market of Switzerland or another EU/EFTA member state.
- ▶ Swiss citizens, foreign nationals with a longterm residence permit or a residence permit allowing employment and EU/EFTA-nationals are given priority.
- ▶ Employers must prove that they have not been able to recruit a suitable employee from this priority category, despite intensive efforts.



Salary and conditions of employment customary to region and trade (Art. 22 AuG)

- ▶ The salary, social security contributions and the terms of employment for foreign workers must be in accordance with conditions customary to the region and the particular sector.
- ▶ By examining the salary rates and terms of employment beforehand, the authorities can ensure that foreign workers are not exploited and that Swiss workers are protected against wage dumping.



Personal qualifications (Art. 23 AuG)

- ▶ Cadre, specialists and other qualified employees are being admitted.
- ▶ „Qualified employee“ means people with a degree from a university or institution of higher education as well as several years of professional experience. Depending on the profession or field of specialization, other people with special training and several years of professional work experience may also be admitted.



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Thank you for your attention.