

Immigration - Switzerland

Federal Council's hard-line approach to mass immigration initiative

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In early February 2015 the Federal Council decided to implement the mass immigration initiative consistently. The council's consultation paper outlines future immigration policy.

Quota system and maximal limitations

Quotas and quantitative limits will apply to all foreign nationals wishing to immigrate to Switzerland. The system will also be applicable to EU nationals, provided that it is compliant with the bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the European Union. The quota system will be applicable to all immigrants wishing to work in Switzerland for more than four months. Further, a quota system will be also applicable for commuters (G permit holders), family members, non-employed persons, refugees and temporarily admitted persons. Quota and limitations figures will be set annually by the Federal Council based on the country's needs.

As such a limitation and quota system contradicts the Free Movement Agreement between Switzerland and the European Union, negotiations with the European Union are required to adjust the agreement. The Federal Council has therefore received the mandate to negotiate with the European Union. The fixed aim is that it must be possible for Switzerland to control future immigration limitations, while preserving the country's overall economical interest. At the same time, the bilateral approach should be backed up.

National priority (priority of local workers)

The priority of local workers will remain. However, the Federal Council is willing to add some exceptions for professions with a recognised skills shortage on the local market.

Comment

In order to reduce immigration pressure and demonstrate goodwill, the Federal Council first wishes to implement local changes by promoting work for the unemployed and the integration of disabled people into the labour market. Further, the administrative burden for refugees and temporarily admitted persons for access to work will be reduced and simplified. Finally, companies wishing to hire new foreign nationals should pay a tax or create training places.

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