

Corporate Immigration - Switzerland

Work permit quotas will remain steady in 2013

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February 01 2013

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Introduction

The Federal Council has announced that the total number of work permits submitted to quotas for 2013 will remain at 12,000 – the same number as in 2012. Within the overall quota, B-permits for long-term assignments will be capped at 4,000 and L-permits for initial stays of up to one year at 8,000.

In order to stay innovative and internationally competitive, the Swiss economy is dependent on qualified specialists. Therefore, the Federal Council confirmed the dual system for the admission of foreign workers in its report on the impact of immigration from July 2012. In addition to the employment of EU and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) nationals based on the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons, the Federal Council allows the employment of specialists from non-EU/EFTA states.

Non-EU/EFTA nationals

In order to provide the Swiss economy with the requisite amount of permits in 2013, the Federal Council decided to allocate 8,500 permits (5,000 L-permits and 3,500 B-permits) for highly qualified non-EU/EFTA nationals (the same split as in 2012).

Service providers from EU/EFTA states

As in 2012, the Federal Council is reserving 3,000 L-permit quotas and 500 B-permit quotas for service providers of EU/EFTA member countries. In order to be eligible for these special permits, a worker must be seeking to provide services in Switzerland for more than 90 days in a calendar year and remain on the payroll of a foreign employer based abroad. Foreign nationals from the 27 EU member states do not require work permits to take up employment in Switzerland if they are hired locally.

Promoting Swiss employees sustainably

In its report on the impact of immigration, the Federal Council clearly stated that it will not increase the number of permits for non-EU/EFTA nationals – at least not for 2013 – as Switzerland's first priority is to employ Swiss and EU/EFTA citizens. Third-country nationals and service providers from EU/EFTA states can be admitted only additionally. Furthermore, the Federal Council emphasised that salary and working conditions for foreign applicants must be in line with country and industry standards in Switzerland.

Moreover, the Federal Council stated that in order to fill gaps for skilled workers within Switzerland, it will place more federal emphasis on training and qualifications in upcoming years.

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