



Global Immigration alert

November 2024

Switzerland

Swiss labor market to fully open for Croatian nationals in 2025

Executive summary

In 2025, Switzerland will fully open its labor market to Croatian nationals, marking the end of the temporary safeguard clause period under the Free Movement of Persons Agreement (FZA). As of 2025, Croatian nationals will no longer be subject to work permit quotas, and they will have unrestricted access to the Swiss labor market.

Background

Following Croatia's accession to the EU in 2013, Switzerland implemented a 10-year transitional period to regulate Croatian access to its labor market. This included the gradual opening of labor markets through the FZA. To manage high demand, the Swiss government has used a safeguard clause in recent years, imposing quotas on Croatian workers to balance labor market needs.

Key developments

In [2023](#), Switzerland allocated a total of 1,204 B permits (long-term work permits) and 1,053 L permits (short-term work permits) for Croatian nationals. By October 2023, the full quota of B permits was exhausted, and 76% of the allocated L permits were issued. The same quotas were applied in [2024](#), as the Swiss Federal Council decided to extend the safeguard clause due to continued high demand for Croatian workers.

Starting in 2025, full freedom of movement will be granted to Croatian nationals for at least 12 months, meaning they will no longer be subject to work permit quotas at least for calendar year 2025. During this period, they will have

unrestricted access to the Swiss labor market, and employers will no longer be limited by permit allocations.

Starting 2026, the Swiss Federal Council may re-introduce quotas for Croatia nationals for the last time. The transitional period regulating Croatia's labor market access will end on 31 December 2026, at which point Croatian nationals will have the same labor market rights as other EU nationals, and no more quotas can be re-introduced for these individuals.

Impact on employers

The removal of permit quotas in 2025 will provide Swiss employers with greater flexibility in hiring Croatian workers and will significantly ease recruitment, benefiting Swiss businesses through greater access to a broader pool of talent.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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