

Global Immigration alert

November 2025

Switzerland

Switzerland to retain work permit quotas for EEA, UK and third-country nationals in 2026

Executive summary

On 19 November 2025, the Federal Council announced that the annual quotas for nationals of the UK and European Economic Area (EEA) Member States and countries outside the EEA ("third-country nationals"), who seek to obtain short-term and long-term work permits (i.e., L and B permits) in 2026 will remain the same as those for 2025.

Background

EEA nationals and third-country nationals who are assigned to work in Switzerland are required to apply for work authorization and are subject to annual quotas. Third-country nationals who seek to work in Switzerland on a local contract also require work authorization, are subject to annual quotas, and must be highly skilled or qualified professionals who possess skills that are not easily found in the Swiss labor market. UK nationals are subject to the same requirements as third-country nationals but are subject to different quotas.

In recent years, including 2025, annual quotas have not been fully utilized due to several factors, including long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, current economic conditions and changes in companies' mobility strategies. As of the end of September 2025, only 52% of the available B and L permit quotas for third-country nationals had been used. The quota utilization rates for EEA nationals stood at 38% for B and L permits, while those for UK nationals were at 17% for the same permit categories.

Key developments

The government announced that the quotas for these three categories of individuals will remain unchanged in 2026. The following quotas will continue to apply:

- EEA nationals who are assigned to work in Switzerland for up to two years and require L permits will be subject to a quota of 3,000. Those who are assigned to work in Switzerland for longer durations (e.g., two to six years) and require B permits will be subject to a quota of 500.
- Non-EEA nationals who require L permits will be subject to a quota of 4,000, while those who require B permits will be subject to a quota of 4,500. Applications to renew B permits are not subject to quotas.
- UK nationals who require L permits will be subject to a quota of 1,400, while those who require B permits will be subject to a quota of 2,100.

Impact on employers

While the 2025 work permit quotas for EEA, UK and third-country nationals are not expected to be fully utilized, this may change in 2026 as hiring or travel volumes increase. Employers may consider the 2026 quotas for strategic workforce planning purposes.

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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