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# In 2018, more than one in ten Swiss nationals lived abroad

There were 760,200 Swiss living abroad at the end of 2018 – a slight increase on the previous year. Most are based in Europe, particularly in France. In some countries, the 65-plus age group accounts for over a quarter of Swiss living abroad.

In 2018, 760,200 Swiss were registered with a Swiss diplomatic or consular representation abroad. This represents 10.6% of all Swiss nationals and is a 1.1% increase on 2017. Europe is where their numbers have grown the most (+1.5%), while Africa is the only continent showing a slight decline (-0.5%) compared with 2017. According to the latest “Statistics on the Swiss Abroad” of the Federal Statistical Office (FSO), 567,800 Swiss Abroad (74.7%) also have at least one other nationality alongside their Swiss nationality.

## Retiring abroad

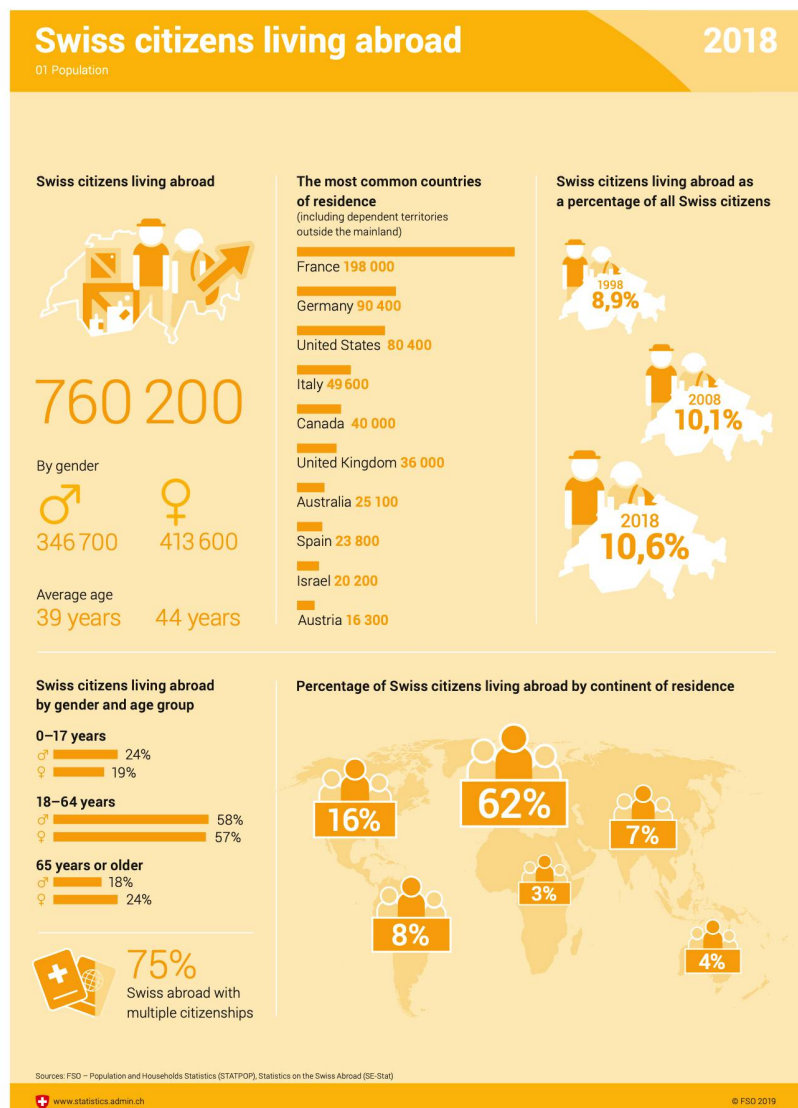
Some 21% of Swiss Abroad (162,500 people) are aged 65 or over. This age group accounts for over 25% of Swiss Abroad in some countries including Hungary (55%), Thailand (33%), Spain (32%), Portugal (28%) and South Africa (27%).

The gender ratio among older members of the Swiss community is balanced in Hungary, Portugal and South Africa, but tilted in favour of men in Thailand (26% compared to 7% women in the same age group) and women in Spain (20% compared to 12% men in the same age group).

People aged 80 or older make up 6% of all Swiss Abroad (45,700 people). The largest proportion of Swiss Abroad aged 80 or older live in the USA (8%) – followed by Italy, Canada and the UK (7% each). Women outnumber men in this age group in the above-mentioned countries of residence. Further information and relevant publications:

<https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/news/whats-new/gnpdetail.2019-0265.html>

[www.statistik.ch](http://www.statistik.ch)



Further general information on the Swiss Abroad and about living abroad is available on the FDFA website: [www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/living-abroad.html](http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/living-abroad.html)

## HELPLINE FDFA

☎ from Switzerland +41 800 24 7 365  
☎ from abroad +41 58 465 33 33  
E-Mail: [helpline@eda.admin.ch](mailto:helpline@eda.admin.ch)  
Skype: helpline-eda

## Travel advice

[www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise](http://www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise)  
☎ from Switzerland +41 800 24 7 365  
☎ from abroad +41 58 465 33 33  
[www.twitter.com/travel\\_edadfae](https://www.twitter.com/travel_edadfae)

## itineris

Online registration for Swiss citizens travelling abroad  
[www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris](http://www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris)



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## Federal votes

The Federal Council determines voting proposals at least four months before the voting date. National Council elections take place on 20 October 2019.

For information about the National Council elections, visit [www.ch.ch/en/elections2019](http://www.ch.ch/en/elections2019). Everything you need to know about voting proposals (voting pamphlets, committees, recommendations by Parliament and the Federal Council, electronic voting, etc.) is available at [www.admin.ch/votes](http://www.admin.ch/votes) or via the Federal Chancellery's VoteInfo app.

## Popular initiatives

The following federal popular initiatives have already been launched at the time of going to press (deadline for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- 'Keep health insurance premiums to no more than 10 % of income (Premium relief initiative)' (26.08.2020)
- 'Include the CH-sign on our vehicle number plates (Number plate initiative)' (05.09.2020)
- 'For a more secure and trustworthy democracy (E-voting moratorium)' (12.09.2020)
- 'For the future of our natural world and landscape (biodiversity initiative)' (26.09.2020)
- 'Against concreting over our countryside (country-side initiative)' (26.09.2020)

The list of pending popular initiatives is available in German at [www.bk.admin.ch](http://www.bk.admin.ch) > Politische Rechte > Volksinitiativen > Hängige Volksinitiativen



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## THE SWISS ABROAD ON INSTAGRAM



## “Being Swiss is an essential part of my identity”

*Even as a child, François Schwalb, who was born in South Africa, was interested in his father's homeland. Today the 30-year-old, who works in the fruit and vegetable industry, lives with his family and numerous animals.*

**My job:** I'm a qualified minister in the Dutch Reformed Church where I work part time. Full-time I work as a marketer and logistics coordinator within the fresh produce industry. We also export fruit to Europe, including avocados.

**My South Africa:** For the past five years we've been living in Mooketsi, Limpopo province. Interesting fact: in Limpopo less than 3 % of the population is of European descent. We live on a farm with open spaces and freedom, and we love to cycle and walk every day after work with the dogs. Life is exciting and diverse with daily surprises.

**My Switzerland:** We lived in Switzerland when I was 7–9 years old. We also visited in 2008 and again in 2018. It is very organised, clean, wealthy, respects tradition and is a leader in innovation and technology. I like the organised lifestyle, public transport, drinkable water almost anywhere, its rich history and its bright and secure future.

**My heart:** Being Swiss is an essential part of my identity, of how I see and understand myself, my parents and siblings. I'm very interested in many aspects of the country and read up a lot on a weekly basis – and the more I read, the more I love Switzerland.

The original interview was published on [swissinfo.ch](http://swissinfo.ch), the online service of the Swiss Broadcasting Company, which is available in ten languages. Do you live abroad too? Then tag your Instagram photos [#WeAreSwissAbroad](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/weareswissabroad/).