

Switzerland in figures : unhappy brewers, happy revenue officers

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Unhappy brewers, happy revenue officers

7680

Cook, bake, eat – put on weight. People in Switzerland have been eating more during the pandemic. The average Swiss household spent 7,680 francs on food and drink in 2020 – more than ever before and 11.3 per cent more than in 2019.

34 000 000

Beer consumption also increased, right? Wrong. It fell significantly, because no one could visit their local pub for months. The shortfall equates to 34 million fewer glasses of beer served compared to the previous year.

10

From civil servants to police officers to teachers – Switzerland's "bloated" public services are one of the things that pub regulars love to grumble about over a beer or three. Let's do a fact check. Ten per cent of employed people work in the public sector. The figure is 14 in Italy, 16 in the UK, 22 in France and as high as 29 in Sweden.

56

Sweden? Switzerland? People often confuse the two countries. Are our public-sector workers less happy in their jobs than Sweden's considerable contingent? Not at all. Only 21 per cent would like to change jobs. On the other hand, 56 per cent of Switzerland's private-sector workforce are unhappy in their current job.

7160 000 000

Revenue officers also belong to the public sector. Tax exiles certainly do not. Swiss companies and individuals have plenty of wealth squirrelled away abroad – amounting to 5.68 billion francs in lost tax revenue. Foreign tax exiles in Switzerland, on the other hand, provide our country with 12.84 billion francs in additional tax income. This gives a net profit of 7.16 billion francs.

FIGURES COMPILED BY MARC LETTAU

What about military service if I return to Switzerland?

I am a 19-year-old Swiss citizen who has grown up in Brazil. I am now thinking of doing a bachelor's degree in Switzerland after I leave school. But what about Swiss military service?

Essentially, every Swiss male aged 18 or over must do military service or, alternatively, civilian service until the end of the year in which he reaches the age of 36. If you return to Switzerland, you will therefore be required to fulfil your military service obligation – assuming that you are deemed fit for military service. You are liable for conscription until the end of the year in which you reach the age of 24. You must complete basic military training by the end of the following year, i.e. the year in which you turn 25.

If you wish to study in Switzerland and therefore intend to stay in Switzerland for a period of more than three months, you will be obliged to report to the relevant cantonal district command within 14 days of your arrival for the purpose of carrying out military service. If you come to Switzerland to study after you have turned 25, you will be exempt from military service due to your age. Hence, you will not have to complete basic military training, but you will have to pay military service exemption tax.

Some exceptions apply to dual nationals. If you hold dual nationality and have already carried out military service or civilian service in the other country of which you are a citizen, you no longer have to do military service in Switzerland. However, this does not release you from the obligation to provide notification of your arrival to the district command and pay the military service exemption tax. Only if you have done military service in Germany, France, Austria or Italy will you be exempt from paying the military service exemption tax, owing to agreements that Switzerland has concluded with these countries.

Incidentally, Swiss Abroad can also volunteer to do basic military training in Switzerland. Requests in such cases should be addressed to:

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