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Adecco Group Switzerland press release

Swiss job market stagnates at a record level – broad language skills significantly improve job prospects

Zurich, 13 April 2023 – Although there was a marginal decline in vacancies in Q1 2023 compared to Q4 2022 (-1%), the Swiss job market remains resilient. The Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index is also at a historic high in the current quarter. Employees with knowledge of different languages currently have excellent prospects on the job market. These are the findings of the Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index, a scientifically substantiated survey developed by the University of Zurich's Swiss Job Market Monitor.

Development Job Index vs. GDP



The Swiss job market began 2023 with a slight decline in the number of vacancies. The Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index is therefore stagnating at a record level. Compared with Q4 2022, there were 1% fewer job adverts in Q1 2023. However, compared to the same quarter last year (Q1 2022), the job index rose by 4%.

'The mild winter played a vital role in preventing a [potential energy crisis and associated economic downturn](#). As a result, demand for labour remained stable overall. This is also reflected in the unemployment figures, which as of February 2023 are still at a very low level.'

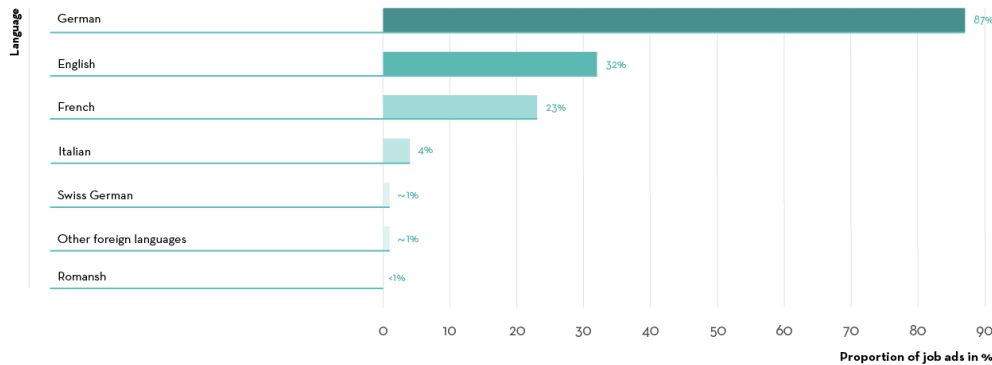
Yanik Kipfer, Swiss Job Market Monitor

Special focus: language skills on the Swiss job market

Switzerland is known for its cultural diversity, which is particularly evident from its four official languages – German, French, Italian and Romansh. This linguistic diversity highlights the importance of language skills as a crucial competitive advantage on the Swiss job market. Especially at a time when companies are becoming increasingly global and there is growing communication with customers and business partners from different countries. But which languages do employers actually require and how beneficial is it to be proficient in several languages? The University of Zurich's Job Market Monitor also examined job adverts in this regard. It specifically analysed the languages implicitly or explicitly mentioned in job adverts. An advert was therefore classified as 'mentions German' if it was written in German (implicit mention of the language) or if it included statements such as 'Knowledge of German desirable' (explicit mention of the language).

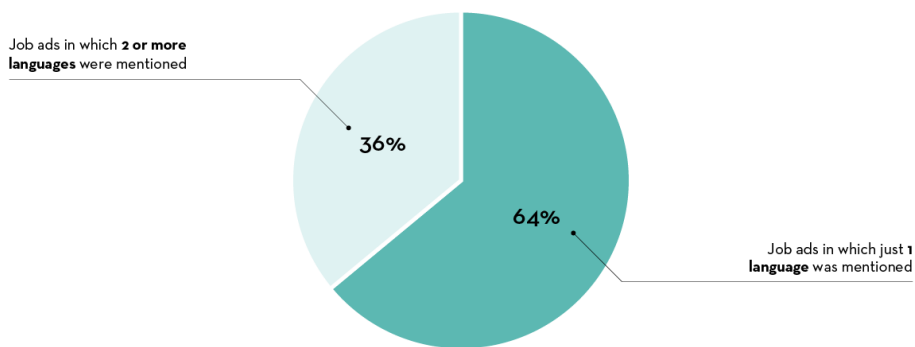


Languages mentioned in job ads



Example: «German» was mentioned in 87% of job ads.

Number of languages mentioned in job ads



Example: 2 or more languages were mentioned in 36% of all job ads.

An analysis of the demand for official languages shows that the vast majority of job adverts in Switzerland mentioned **knowledge of German (87%)**, followed by **French (23%)** and **Italian (4%)**. In addition, around 1% of job adverts mentioned knowledge of **Swiss German**, while this figure was less than 1% for **knowledge of Romansh**. The distribution of the demand for official languages therefore largely corresponds to the linguistic composition of Switzerland. According to the Federal Statistical Office, German was the first language of 62% of the population in 2021, followed by French (22.8%), Italian (7.9%) and Romansh (0.5%).

When it comes to foreign languages, **English (32%)** was the second most frequently mentioned language after German. Demand for knowledge of English therefore exceeded demand for the official languages of French, Italian and Romansh. Only a small percentage of job adverts published in the last nine years mentioned knowledge of **other foreign languages (~1%)**, with Portuguese and Spanish being mentioned most frequently.

Overall, it can be seen that **more than a third of adverts mentioned two or more languages**, with particular demand for employees with a knowledge of two languages. Frequently mentioned language combinations were **German and English** and **German and French**.



Regional differences: the linguistic rift

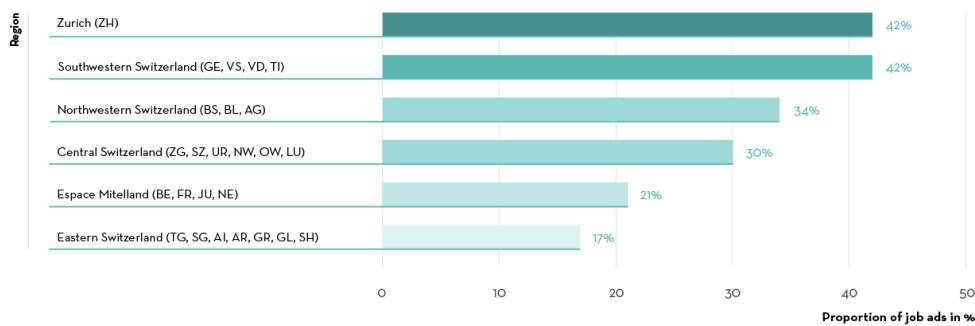
Analysing the demand for languages in the various major regions shows that **knowledge of German** was required in the vast majority of job adverts in the major German-speaking regions: Eastern Switzerland (99%), Zurich (95%), Central Switzerland (94%), Northwestern Switzerland (93%) and Espace Mittelland (90%). Nevertheless, over a third of job adverts in Southwestern Switzerland (37%) were looking for applicants with knowledge of German.

Knowledge of French was particularly important in Southwestern Switzerland (73%). In contrast to knowledge of German in Southwestern Switzerland, knowledge of French was less important in the major German-speaking regions, except for Espace Mittellands (32%), which includes both French and German-speaking cantons. Job adverts that mentioned knowledge of French never accounted for more than a sixth of all adverts in the individual major Swiss German regions.

Knowledge of English was primarily important in major regions with international financial centres, such as Zurich (42%), Southwestern Switzerland (42%), Northwestern Switzerland (34%) and Central Switzerland (30%). In these regions, companies and organisations often focus on global markets and have international business partners.

Knowledge of Italian played a lesser role compared to other languages. Even in Southwestern Switzerland, which includes the Canton of Ticino, only 7% of all adverts were looking for knowledge of Italian. In the remaining major regions, there was only marginal demand for knowledge of Italian.

Proportion of job ads in which the language «English» was mentioned (by region)

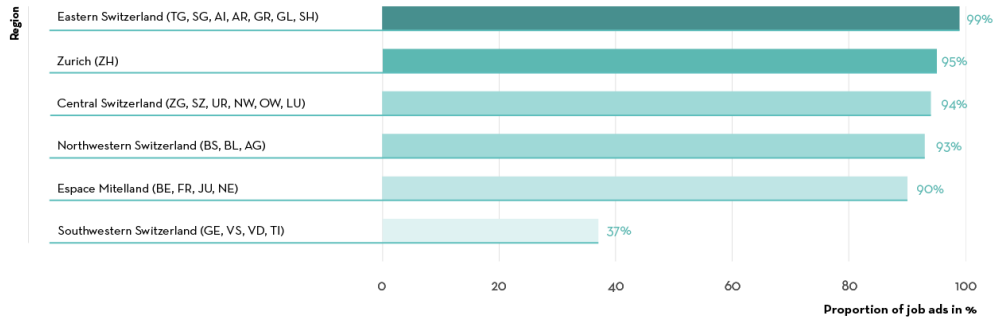


Example: «English» was mentioned in 42% of job ads in Zurich.



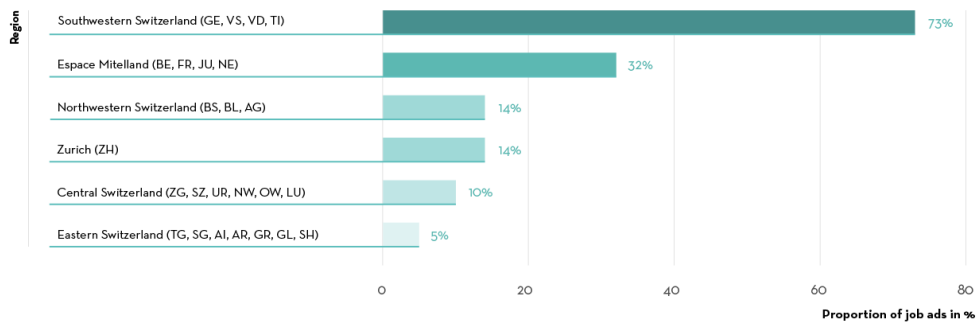
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Proportion of job ads in which the language «German» was mentioned (by region)



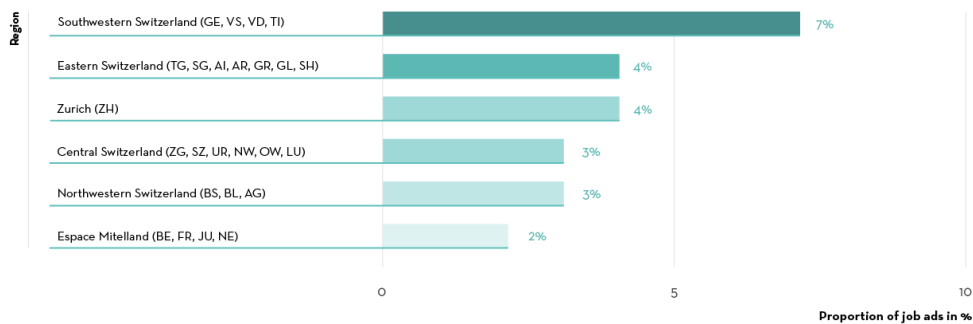
Example: the language «German» was mentioned in 90% of job ads in Espace Mittelland.

Proportion of job ads in which the language «French» was mentioned (by region)



Example: the language «French» was mentioned in 73% of job ads in South-West Switzerland.

Proportion of job ads in which the language «Italian» was mentioned (by region)



Example: «Italian» was mentioned in 7% of job ads in Southwestern Switzerland.



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Skilled office and administrative personnel: linguistic skills required!

Demand for languages also varied depending on the professional group and language region. In general, it can be said that the **main regional languages** (e.g., German in German-speaking Switzerland) are particularly beneficial for **manual occupations and service and sales jobs**. These professional groups often have direct contact with their customers and primarily serve regional markets.

A more detailed analysis of the data also reveals differences in the regional make-up of demand. For example, excellent **German** was more important in French and Italian-speaking Switzerland than **French** in German-speaking Switzerland, across all professional groups. It is striking that almost half of all job adverts in French and Italian-speaking Switzerland for **skilled technical staff (49%)** and **skilled office and administrative personnel (48%)** required knowledge of German. In comparison, the professional group with the highest demand for knowledge of French in German-speaking Switzerland – **skilled office and administrative personnel (30%)** – shows that knowledge of the other official language was more important in French and Italian-speaking Switzerland than in German-speaking Switzerland. This is attributable to the linguistic diversity of French and Italian-speaking Switzerland, in particular, which includes French and Italian-speaking cantons, as well as German and French-speaking cantons such as Valais and Fribourg.

In French and Italian-speaking Switzerland, **knowledge of English** was generally slightly more important than in German-speaking Switzerland. In both language regions, **managers** in particular are expected to have a good knowledge of English. Surprisingly, **managers** are also the professional group for which knowledge of the respective regional official languages is least required. Overall, it can be said that knowledge of English plays an important role in both language regions, especially for **professions requiring a university education and office/administrative personnel**.

When it comes to **knowledge of Italian** it is also evident that professional groups from Southwestern Switzerland were in greater demand than those from German-speaking Switzerland. In both language regions, however, knowledge of Italian was primarily mentioned in job adverts for **skilled office and administrative personnel**.

In general, it is clear that **knowledge of several languages is particularly important for skilled office and administrative personnel**. The likely reason for this is that customers served by these skilled employees often transcend linguistic and national borders, unlike customers of manual and sales staff.

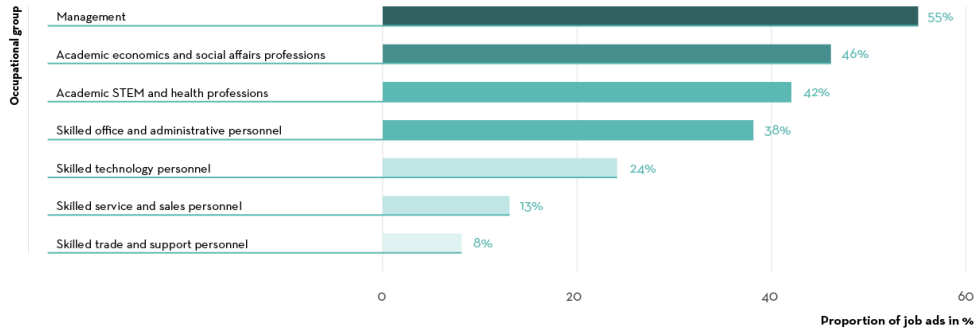
«The study highlights the fact that employees who are proficient in several languages have a significant competitive advantage. In particular, those who work in academic, administrative or management roles and also speak French and English in addition to German, have excellent opportunities on the job market in both language regions of Switzerland. For manual occupations and sales jobs, solid knowledge of the respective regional official language is paramount. »

Marcel Keller, Country President Adecco Group Switzerland



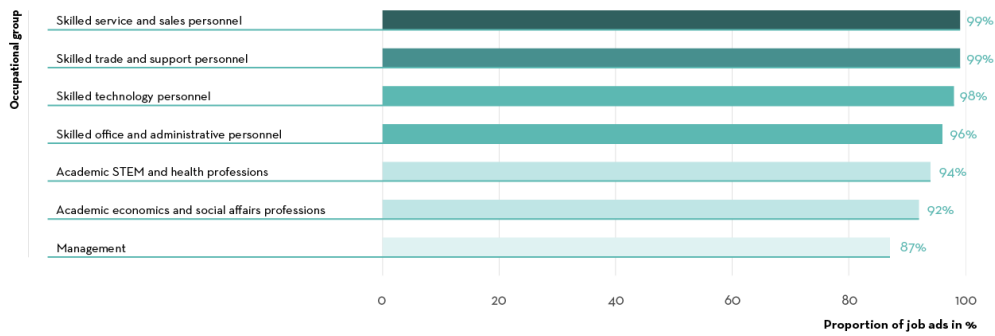
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Proportion of job ads in German-speaking Switzerland in which the language «English» was mentioned (by occupational group)



Example: The language «English» was mentioned in 55% of job ads for managers in German-speaking Switzerland.

Proportion of job ads in German-speaking Switzerland in which the language «German» was mentioned (by occupational group)

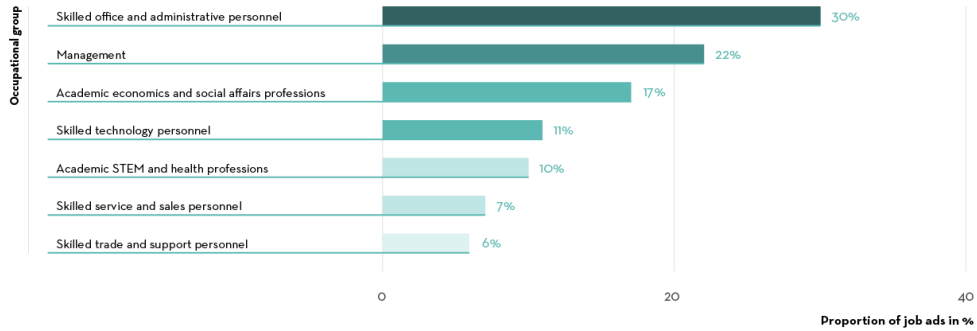


Example: The language «German» was mentioned in 99% of job ads for skilled service and sales personnel in German-speaking Switzerland.



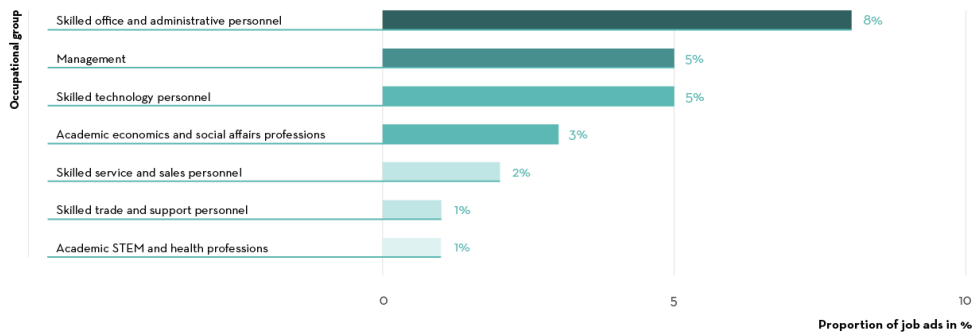
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Proportion of job ads in German-speaking Switzerland in which the language «French» was mentioned (by occupational group)



Example: The language "French" was mentioned in 30% of job ads for skilled office and administrative personnel in German-speaking Switzerland.

Proportion of job ads in German-speaking Switzerland in which the language «Italian» was mentioned (by occupational group)

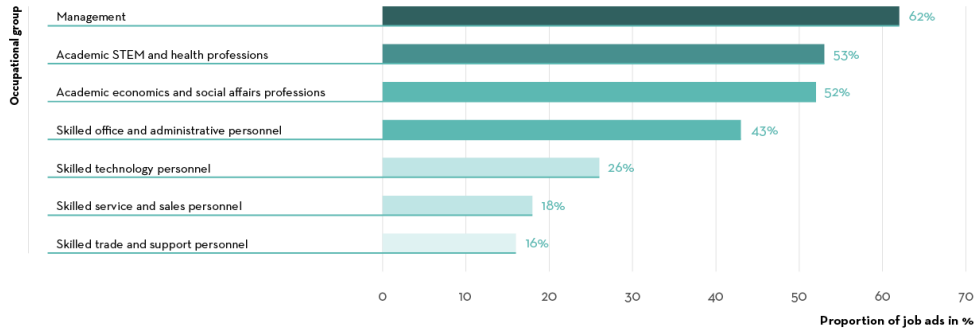


Example: The language "Italian" was mentioned in 8% of job ads for skilled office and administrative personnel in German-speaking Switzerland.



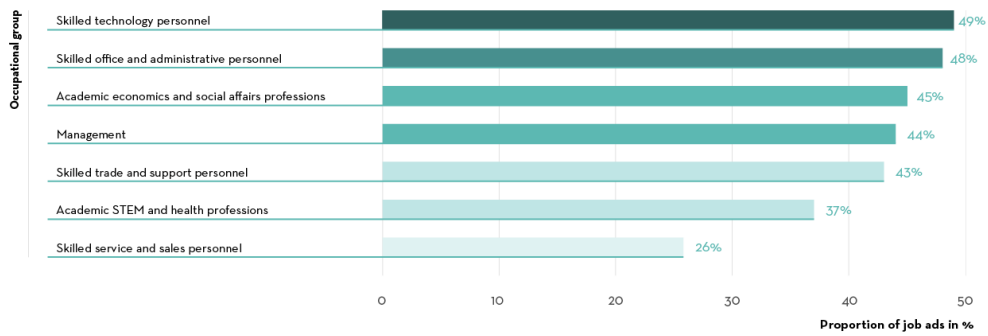
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Proportion of job ads in Latin Switzerland in which the language «English» was mentioned (by occupational group)



Example: The language «English» was mentioned in 62% of job ads for skilled technology personnel in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland.

Proportion of job ads in Latin Switzerland in which the language «German» was mentioned (by occupational group)

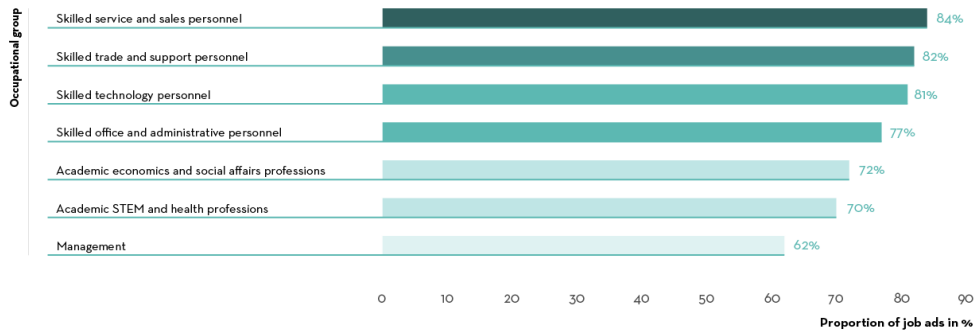


Example: The language «German» was mentioned in 49% of job ads for skilled technology personnel in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland.



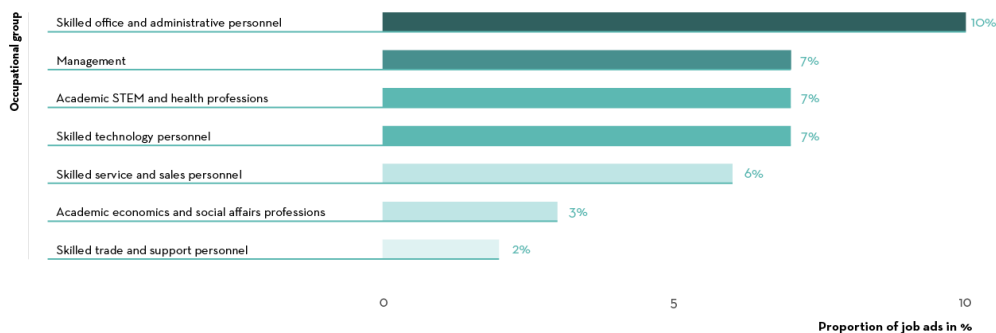
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Proportion of job ads in Latin Switzerland in which the language «French» was mentioned (by occupational group)



Example: The language "French" was mentioned in 84% of job ads for skilled service and sales personnel in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland.

Proportion of job ads in Latin Switzerland in which the language «Italian» was mentioned (by occupational group)



Example: The language "Italian" was mentioned in 10% of job ads for skilled office and administrative personnel in French- and Italian-speaking Switzerland.

Methods and data

In conjunction with Adecco Group Switzerland and as part of its latest Job Index publication, the Swiss Job Market Monitor of the Institute of Sociology at the University of Zurich examined which language skills companies require. Companies' job adverts provide information about the necessary and desirable personal attributes, skills and expertise for a position, with particular mention of any requirements that cannot (yet) be taken for granted.

The results presented here are based on the Job Index data (Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index) for the period from Q3 2014 to Q1 2023. This quarterly data includes data from the 12 largest Swiss employment portals. It is also based on job adverts from almost 1,500 company websites, which provide a representative random sample for Switzerland, structured by industry and company size. Information about language skills was extracted from adverts in German, French and Italian, as well as those in foreign languages, covering a period of nine years. These originated from both companies in German-speaking Switzerland and those in French or Italian-speaking Switzerland. The classification of the language skills mentioned in job adverts covers both the implicit – such as an advert written in German, which implicitly assumes that the job seeker has a knowledge of German – and explicit mention of language skills, such as "Knowledge of German desirable", for example.



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Allocation of major and language regions:

Eastern Switzerland: Thurgau, St. Gallen, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Graubünden, Glarus, Schaffhausen

Zurich: Zurich

Central Switzerland: Zug, Schwyz, Uri, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Lucerne

Northwestern Switzerland: Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Aargau

Espace Mittelland: Fribourg, Neuchâtel, Jura, Bern, Solothurn

Southwestern Switzerland: Geneva, Vaud, Valais, Ticino

German-speaking Switzerland: Thurgau, St. Gallen, Appenzell Innerrhoden, Appenzell Ausserrhoden, Graubünden, Glarus, Schaffhausen, Zurich, Zug, Schwyz, Uri, Nidwalden, Obwalden, Lucerne, Basel-Stadt, Basel-Landschaft, Aargau, Bern, Solothurn

French and Italian-speaking Switzerland: Geneva, Vaud, Valais, Ticino, Fribourg, Neuchâtel, Jura

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About the Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index (Job Index)

In cooperation with the Swiss Job Market Monitor (SMM) at the Sociological Institute of the University of Zurich, the Adecco Group Switzerland publishes the Adecco Group Swiss Job Market Index (Job Index) in January, April, July and October. The Job Index provides Switzerland with a scientifically substantiated and comprehensive measure of the development of job offers on online job portals and company websites. It is based on representative quarterly surveys of job offers in the press, on online job portals and on company websites.

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