SWITZERLAND GLOBAL ENTERPRISE

FRANCE

Business Travel Guide

Compiled by:

Swiss Business Hub France

Paris, August 2026

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

The Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (AFMP) signed between Switzerland and the EU also applies to mainland France and part of overseas France (Source: https://france-visas.gouv.fr/en/web/france-visas/). **Swiss nationals therefore have the fundamental right to reside and work freely on French territory**.

The right of residence of European citizens **beyond 3 months remains subject to certain conditions**, despite the principles of equal treatment and freedom of movement. Indeed, the Treaty establishing the European Union draws a distinction between those who are able to provide for themselves (salaried workers or self-employed) and those who are inactive, who must have sufficient financial means to avoid becoming a burden on the French social security system, and full health insurance. (Source in FR: Center for European and International Liaison on Social Security).

Citizens of a member state of the European Union, the European Economic Area or Switzerland can **work in France without a work permit** (Source: Welcome to France). The same applies to cross-border commuters. (see website: Work authorization of an employed foreigner in France / How do I hire a foreign employee? (in FR) > "Switzerland, Monaco, Andorra or San Marino")

European and Swiss nationals can work in any salaried or self-employed capacity, **without any special formalities**. The exercise of a regulated profession remains subject to the requirement to provide proof of the requisite qualifications, and to the authorization of the competent authority where applicable.

For further information: https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N105?lang=en

Transfer from the airport to the city center:

o Paris Charles de Gaulle airport: RER B takes you to the center of Paris (Châtelet) in about 40 minutes, for €13. For more information: https://www.parisaeroport.fr/passagers/acces/paris-charles-de-gaulle/transports-en-commun

o Paris Orly airport: line 14 takes you to the center of Paris in 25min, for €13. Other means of transport are also available (shuttle, RER, tramway and bus) : https: //www.parisaeroport.fr/en/passengers/access/paris-orly/public-transport

o Nice-Côte d'Azur airport: several tramway lines are available to reach the city center: https: //www.nice.aeroport.fr/acces/transports-en-commun

N.B: Flat-rate fares for trips from/to Nice Côte d'Azur airport are as follows:

- 85 € between Nice Côte d'Azur airport and Cannes;
- 95 € between Nice Côte d'Azur airport and Monaco;
- 32 € between Nice Côte d'Azur airport and Nice-centre ;
- 72 € between Nice Côte d'Azur airport and Cap d'Antibes / Juan-les-Pins.

o Lyon-Saint-Exupéry airport: the Rhônexpress tramway connects Lyon city center in 30min, and various buses are also available: https: //www.lyonaeroports.com/acces-transports/liaisons-aeroport-centre-ville

o Marseille-Provence airport: numerous buses and shuttles are available from nearby stations (Vitrolles, Aix - Gare TGV, Aix - Gare routière, Marseille Saint Charles): https: //www.marseille.aeroport.fr/parkings-et-acces/acces/bus

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory and recommended vaccinations: No vaccinations are required for tourist stays. However, the following vaccinations are recommended for everyone: BCG, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Poliomyelitis (DTP), Pertussis, Hepatitis B, Measles. For people living in France, vaccinations against diphtheria, tetanus, poliomyelitis, whooping cough, and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib) are compulsory. More information at https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N434 and https://vaccination-info-service.fr/.

Mandatory medical insurance: Health protection is a constitutional guarantee that protects everyone, regardless of age, state of health, income, education or place of residence. Equal access to health care also means affordability. In France, one of the distinctive features of the system for reimbursing medical expenses is that it is organized on two levels: the first is made up of the basic **compulsory health insurance schemes**, the second of the widely distributed **supplementary schemes** (mutuals, insurance companies, provident institutions). However, the two tiers on which the healthcare reimbursement system is based entail different mechanisms for covering individuals and different types of solidarity: The first - compulsory insurance schemes - is characterized by compulsory membership and contributions, as well as universal healthcare coverage (for all and for the same amount). It is therefore based on broad solidarity, with contributions based on income, and access to care defined according to need. The second - supplementary schemes - is based on solidarity restricted to the field of members, and offers variable coverage, defined by the type of contract taken out. Source: Vie-publique.fr / Centre des liaisons européennes et internationales de sécurité sociale More information at https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N19811

PUBLIC SECURITY / RECOMMENDED PRECAUTIONS

The country is stable. Demonstrations are nevertheless frequent in Paris and other major French cities. During demonstrations, violent clashes between demonstrators and security forces can occur. Property damage and arson may also occur. Avoid demonstrations of any kind and obey the instructions of local authorities (e.g. curfew).

Occasional strikes may cause disruption and delays to tourist traffic. Fuel supplies may also be disrupted.

The French authorities warn the population of the high risk of terrorist attacks.

Travel advice – France: https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/fr/dfae/representations-et-conseils-pour-les-voyages/france/conseils-pour-les-voyages-france.html#eda847117

TIME ZONE

Time difference between Switzerland and

Paris	Central European Time
Other cities	CET 0

The changeover to wintertime takes place on the last Sunday in October, and to summertime on the last Sunday in March.

Overseas territories: French Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion, Mayotte, Saint-Martin, Saint-Barthélemy, French Polynesia, Wallis and Futuna, Saint-Pierre-et-Miquelon all have different time zones.

BUSINESS HOURS

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Sundays and Nationals Holidays
Government Offices	Approx. 8.30-18.00	closed	closed
Banks	Approx. 8.30-17:00	9.00-12.00	closed
Shops	See on site	See on site	See on site

Business hours can vary greatly between major cities and the provinces, as well as between different stores, supermarkets, drugstores and so on.

The legal working week for full-time employees is:

- 35 hours per week
- 151.67 hours per month
- 1,607 hours per year

However, contractual or collective provisions (collective bargaining agreement, branch, company or establishment agreement applicable under labor law) may provide for a working week higher or lower than 35 hours, as they set out the obligations and rights of both employer and employee.

In addition, there are no maximum or minimum working hours for executives. To be considered an executive, you must meet all 3 criteria:

- You must be entrusted with responsibilities whose importance implies a high degree of independence in the organization of your work schedule.
- Be empowered to make largely autonomous decisions
- Be paid at one of the highest levels in the company's compensation system.

Finally, for employees or apprentices under the age of 18, working hours are governed by specific provisions.

For more information on working hours: https: //www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1911

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

	2026	2027
New Year's Day	January 1st	January 1st
Easter Monday	April 6th	March 29th
Labor Day	May 1st	May 1st
1945 Victory Day	May 8th	May 8th
Ascension Thursday	May 14th	May 6th
Whit Monday	May 25th	May 17th
National holiday	July 14th	July 14th
Assumption Day	August 15th	August 15th
All Saints' Day	November 1st	November 1st
Armistice	November 11th	November 11th
Christmas	December 25th	December 25th

There are other regional and local public holidays, such as Saint-Etienne's Day on December 26 in Alsace and Moselle.

July and August are traditionally vacation months. These are also the months when economic activity slows down and business relations are less favorable.

Metropolitan France is divided into three zones (A, B and C) for school vacations. For more information on school vacations by zone, visit the Education Nationale website.

NATIONAL TRADE FAIRS – A SELECTION

- **CHANGENOW** - Paris
  https://www.changenow.world/
- **EURO INDUSTRIES** – Mulhouse
  https://www.euroindustries.eu/

- **FORUM INCYBER** - Lille
  https://www.forum-fic.com/
- **GLOBAL INDUSTRIE** – Paris & Lyon
  https://www.global-industrie.com/fr/accueil-visiteur
- **JEC WORLD** - Paris
  https://www.jec-world.events/
- **MICRONORA** – Besançon
  https://micronora.com/
- **POLLUTEC** – Lyon
  https://www.pollutec.com/
- **SALON INTERNATIONAL DE L'AGRICULTURE** - Paris
  https://www.salon-agriculture.com/
- **SIAL** – Paris
  https://www.sialparis.fr/
- **SIRHA** - Lyon
  https://www.sirha-lyon.com/fr
- **VIVA TECHNOLOGY** - Paris
  https://vivatechnology.com/

More information on the Swiss pavilions: https://www.s-ge.com/export/en/services/trade-fair-services-swiss-pavilion

COMMUNICATION: TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

France's country code is: +33

Local SIM cards can be purchased at airports, tobacconists or from mobile operators such as Free, SFR, Bouygues and Orange.

Important phone numbers:

Police	17
Fire department	18
Medical emergency	15
EU emergency number	112

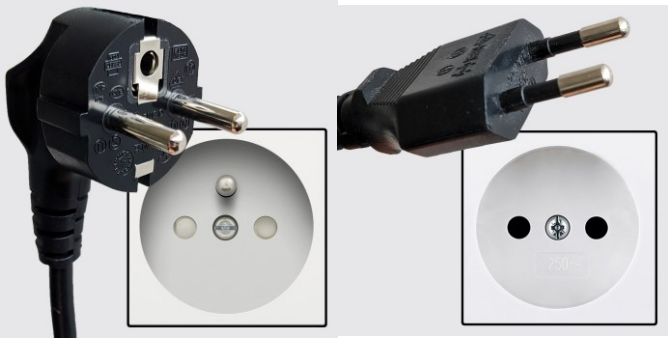
Switzerland is not part of the EU-Roaming for roaming surcharges.

France has universal 4G network coverage, although service may be limited in some remote mountainous regions of Central and Eastern France. The use of cell phones is forbidden at the wheel of a vehicle, even when fitted with an earpiece. Only systems with loudspeakers are authorized.

5G coverage is widely available across France, including all major cities, most towns, and a growing proportion of rural areas. Deployment continues to expand, although coverage remains less extensive in some sparsely populated and mountainous regions.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY

Electricity plugs and socket: Sockets in France are mainly type E.



The voltage in France is 230 V with a frequency of 50 Hz.

METHODS OF PAYMENT

National currency in France is the Euro €.

Exchange rate as of August 31, 2026: CHF 1 = EUR 1.06.

When entering or leaving the country with 10,000 EUR or more in cash or other monetary instruments, the money must be declared in writing to the custom office.

Failure to make a declaration, or making a false declaration, is punishable by a fine of up to 50% of the amount of the offence or attempted offence. The declaration can be made before (30 days before crossing the border) or at the latest when the funds are transferred (Source: French customs).

In general, leaving a tip is not required or expected in France. This also applies to deliveries, cabs, and restaurants.

Acceptance of methods of payment:

	everywhere	almost everywhere	limited	not accepted
Cash (national currency)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Cash (foreign currency)	☐	☐	☒	☐
MasterCard	☐	☒	☐	☐
Visa	☐	☒	☐	☐
American Express	☐	☒	☐	☐
Diners Club	☐	☐	☒	☐

Apple Pay	☐	☒	☐	☐
Google/Samsung Pay	☐	☒	☐	☐

DOMESTIC TRAVEL, LOCAL TRANSPORT

The most commonly used kind of public transport is the car. The quality of other means of transport is good. We usually recommend local public transport. Transportation is provided by bus, streetcar, commuter train and rail.

The minimum fare is €8 for all cabs (Parisian and non-Parisian). The cab fare comprises 3 elements:

- €4.48 maximum for picking up the customer
- up to €1.30 per kilometer travelled
- €42.15 maximum for the hourly rate if the customer has to wait or has difficulty getting around

Surcharges may apply in certain cases. See: https://entreprendre.service-public.fr/vosdroits/F22127

Main ride hailing apps: Uber, Bolt, G7.

Main method of payment for taxi and subways: Credit card and cash.

Car rental with/without a driver can be arranged at numerous companies:

- Hertz: https://www.hertz.fr/rentacar/reservation/
- Europcar: https://www.europcar.ch/en-ch
- Avis : https://www.avis.fr/
- Sixt: https://www.sixt.fr/

Air transport

Air transport in France is a highly competitive business. **Swiss**, **Air France** and **EasyJet** offer direct connections from Switzerland to major cities such as Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Nantes, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Nice and Ajaccio.

Rail travel

France's rail network is highly developed, especially the high-speed lines. Trains serve many destinations in Europe. The **TGV Lyria** connects a number of Swiss cities such as Basel, Zurich, Geneva and Lausanne with Paris, Strasbourg and Dijon, as well as Lyon, Marseille and Nice from Geneva during the summer months. Thanks to the Rhine-Rhone high-speed line, Zurich is only 4 hours from Paris. All these tickets can be purchased on the SBB or SNCF websites.

The Eurostar links Paris to London in 2h20 via the Channel Tunnel and also serves Brussels, Amsterdam and the Ruhr region of Germany.

N.B.: Passports are compulsory for all passengers travelling to the UK, including children. Additionally, due to UK government requirements, you must now provide Advance Passenger Information (API) before your trip to or from the UK for everyone on your booking. Furthermore, an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) is required to enter the UK. The ETA is a digital permission to travel, mandatory for short stays (up to six months) for tourism, visiting family or friends, business trips, or short-term study.

Road transport

France has one of the largest, most modern road networks in Europe. Domestic passenger transport is largely dominated by private vehicles (82% of passenger-kilometres). Rail transport (railways and

metros) accounts for 12% of passenger kilometers, more than public road transport, including tramways (5%). (Source: Chiffres clés des transports - Edition 2026).

The main routes to Paris and Switzerland are the A6, A5 and A4. From Geneva, the A40 and A41 connect to Lyon and Grenoble.

It's important not to underestimate the volume of traffic on French roads. Particularly during vacation departures and returns. (For more information: https: //www.bison-fute.gouv.fr/)

Port transport

The French seaport system comprises 66 commercial seaports, 12 of which are state-owned: 11 major seaports (GPM) and one port of national interest (St-Pierre et Miquelon).

In mainland France, there are six major ports:

- Dunkirk
- HAROPA Port (Le Havre / Rouen / Paris)
- Nantes Saint-Nazaire
- La Rochelle
- Bordeaux
- Marseille

Four major ports in French overseas territories:

- French Guiana
- Martinique
- Guadeloupe
- Port-Réunion

France's 66 commercial seaports handle about 350 million tonnes of freight and 32 million passengers. Port activities include trade, tourism, industry, logistics, passenger transport, and maritime services.

Metropolitan France's geographical location gives it a major advantage in terms of the multiple maritime openings it affords, on the one hand to the Mediterranean Sea, and on the other to the Atlantic Ocean, the English Channel and the North Sea. France's four maritime façades place it on the world's busiest shipping routes, while its overseas territories give it a privileged position in other parts of the world.

ACCOMMODATION, TEMPORARY OFFICE SPACE

Hotel room prices in Paris vary from district to district. For a single room in a three-star hotel within Paris, budget between EUR 150 and 250, depending on the location. Rooms should be booked in advance, especially for international trade fairs and major cultural and sporting events.

Hotels in the provinces are generally less expensive than in Paris. However, the principle of booking in advance remains valid, especially for major events.

For further information, visit

- https://www.expedia.fr
- http://www.booking.com

More information on temporary workspaces:

- https://www.multiburo.com/espaces-de-travail/france/france
- https://blog.hub-grade.com/les-meilleurs-espaces-de-travail-gratuits-a-paris/
- https://www.wework.com/
- https://colivys.com/blog/coworking-paris/

LANGUAGES USED FOR BUSINESS

The official language is French. Article L.1321-6 paragraph 2 of the French Labor Code requires employers to draw up in French any document containing obligations for employees, or provisions which they need to know in order to carry out their work.

However, the use of English is becoming increasingly common in companies that do business abroad.

BUSINESS PRACTICES

Tips for initiating business contacts

Fluency in French, or at least a good knowledge of it, is a prerequisite for success in France. Although English is the first foreign language, it is not as widely used as it is in Switzerland.

Scheduling Meetings:

It's customary to make an appointment in advance and present your business card. Business meetings are fairly formal and are usually interspersed with lunch (the equivalent of "dinner", between 1pm and 2pm). Business dinners (equivalent to "supper") are usually held in restaurants.

Working hours: in Paris and other major French cities, a typical working day begins around 9/9:30am and ends around 6/6:30pm. In the suburbs and rural areas, working hours tend to be 8:30am / 5:30pm. Lunch break is usually between 12 and 2pm.

Finally, the summer period (mid-July/mid-August) is not very conducive to business.

Business attire:

The prevailing style of dress for businessmen and women is rather conservative. It's advisable to wear a suit, even when you're invited to an informal meeting. For start-ups, entrepreneurs and techjobs, the trend is towards modern, comfortable, casual clothing.

Introducing yourself:

Identify the key person in the company, especially in large groups. Don't expect results from the first meeting, which is essentially an exchange of views. Don't be in a hurry: negotiations may drag on. When a French negotiator turns you down, it doesn't necessarily mean that the deal has failed. It may just be the beginning of the review process, and you should therefore expect to meet several times before an agreement is reached.

Building trust and personal relationships:

Avoid using aggressive sales methods, as the French attach great importance to human relations. In other words, people marketing must precede product marketing. Establishing relationships based on trust must be the primary objective. That's why you should set aside more time to initiate and build

business relationships. It's just as important to keep in touch and follow up regularly, but without being too pushy.

Offering and accepting gifts and invitations:

It's perfectly acceptable to organize business lunches or offer a gift (pen, bottle of wine, chocolate) to a speaker at an event, for example.

The AFA (French Anti-Corruption Agency) points out that gifts and invitations "are ordinary acts of business life and do not, as such, constitute acts of corruption". It admits that while the vast majority of gifts and invitations do not involve corruption, as they are offered or accepted as a courtesy or on a commercial basis (e.g. sporting and cultural hospitality), in certain circumstances - when their purpose is to determine the performance or non-performance of an act by a person, in disregard of his or her legal, contractual or professional obligations - they may constitute acts of corruption or influence peddling. It therefore encourages companies to put in place a policy on gifts and invitations in order to control these risks.

Find out more here:

Policy on gifts and invitations in companies, associations, and foundations.

Guide on gifts and invitations in companies.

Sensitive topics:

To avoid misunderstandings and apriorism, it's recommended to avoid talking about the following subjects: politics and elections, religion, ethnic origins and immigration, gender, sexuality, medical, and financial issues.

BUSINESS RISKS

According to the Global Corruption Index 2023, France ranks 17th among countries with the lowest level of corruption risk, with a score of 17.74 (very low level).

https://risk-indexes.com/global-corruption-index/

https://premium-simulator.serv-ch.com/premium-calculator/coverPractice/list?lang=en_US

Swiss Export Risk Insurance SERV insures political and *del credere* risks involved in exporting goods and services.

Products for exporters

Product for service providers

Products for financial institutions

The full range of services and products offered by SERV can be obtained at www.serv-ch.com.

IMPORT OF SAMPLES AND CATALOGUES

Exports of samples from Switzerland to France are governed by EC regulation 1186/89 (see mainly CHAPTER XXI Goods imported for the purposes of commercial prospection, articles 86 to 94):

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:324:0023:0057:fr:PDF

Exemption from duties and taxes can only be granted for samples imported by a professional for the purpose of prospecting a market.

A sample is defined as an article representative of a category of goods which can only be used to seek orders with a view to importing them into the Union and must be sent to a company. Samples must be marked (lacerated, perforated, visibly and indelibly marked, etc.) in such a way that the goods lose their commercial character. This marking must be carried out by the exporter or, where applicable, the declarant at the time of customs clearance.

The foreign trade control measures and proofs of origin required under these regulations do not apply to goods exported from Switzerland to France as samples, and which have been marked as such.

We invite you to contact the customs office where you will be clearing your goods for advice on marking your products.

https://www.douane.gouv.fr/sites/default/files/bod/src/dana/da_annexes/F2_15-065_2.pdf

USEFUL LOCAL WEBSITES, ADDRESSES, EMAIL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Business news	www.lesechos.fr	+33 1 70 37 61 36	serviceclients@lesechos.fr
Douanes françaises	https://www.douane.gouv.fr/services-aide/infos-douane-service	+33 1 72 40 78 50	ids@douane.finances.gouv.fr
Commissariats de police	https://lannuaire.service-public.fr/navigation/commissariat_police		
TGV Lyria	https://www.tgv-lyria.com/ch/fr	+41 848 44 66 88	https://www.tgv-lyria.com/ch/fr/contact-us
SNCF Connect	https://www.sncf-connect.com/fr-ch/	+33 1 84 94 36 25	relationclient@connect.sncf
Air France	https://wwws.airfrance.ch/fr/	+33 8 92 70 26 54	https://wwws.airfrance.ch/fr/contact

Please note that some telephone numbers may be surcharged.

ADDRESSES OF EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF SWITZERLAND

Embassy of Switzerland in France

142, rue de Grenelle – 75007 Paris – France

paris@eda.admin.ch

+33 1 49 55 67 00

https://www.schweiz-frankreich.eda.admin.ch/fr/ambassade-de-suisse-en-france

Opening times:

By appointment: Monday to Friday 9h00 – 12h00

Consulate General in Lyon

4, Place Charles Hernu – 69616 Villeurbanne – France

lyon@eda.admin.ch

+33 4 72 75 79 10

https://www.eda.admin.ch/lyon

Opening times:

By appointment: Monday to Friday 10h00 – 12h00

Consulate General in Marseille

7, rue d'Arcole – 13006 Marseille - France
marseille@eda.admin.ch
+33 4 96 10 14 10
https://www.eda.admin.ch/marseille

Opening times:

By appointment: Monday to Friday 9h00 – 11h30

Consulate General in Strasbourg

23, rue Herder – 67000 Strasbourg - France
strasbourg@eda.admin.ch
+33 3 88 35 00 70
https://www.eda.admin.ch/strasbourg

Opening times:

By appointment: Monday to Friday 8h30 – 11h45

ADDRESSES BILATERAL, NATIONAL AND LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Swiss Business Hub France

142, rue de Grenelle - 75007 - France
paris.sbhfrance@eda.admin.ch
+33 1 49 55 67 85
https://www.schweiz-frankreich.eda.admin.ch/fr/representation-swiss-business-hub
https://www.s-ge.com/export/fr/pays/france

Chambre de Commerce Suisse en France

17 rue de l'arcade - 75008 Paris - France
contact@ccsf.com
+33 9 72 17 88 57
https://www.ccsf.com/

Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie en France (national)

8-10 rue Pierre Brossolette - 92300 Levallois-Perret - France
+33 1 44 45 37 00
https://www.cci.fr/
Chambers of Commerce and Industry operate primarily at the local level (regions and departments).

Business France

77 boulevard Saint-Jacques - 75014 Paris - France
https://www.businessfrance.fr/contact
+33 1 40 73 34 00
https://www.businessfrance.fr/

ADDRESSES OF THE EMBASSY AND CONSULATES OF FRANCE IN OR FOR SWITZERLAND

Embassy of France in Switzerland

Schosshaldenstrasse 46 - 3006 Berne – Suisse

chancellerie.berne-amba@diplomatie.gouv.fr

+ 41 31 359 21 11

https://ch.ambafrance.org/Contacter-l-ambassade-par-e-mail

Opening times:

Monday to Friday 08:30-12:30 and 14:00-17:30

Consulate General of France in Zurich

Signaustrasse 1 - 8008 Zurich – Suisse

contact.zurich-cslt@diplomatie.gouv.fr

+41 43 547 80 41

https://ch.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/presence-francaise/consulat-general-de-france-zurich

Opening times:

Monday to Friday 08:30-13:00 and 14:00-16.30

Consulate General of France in Geneva

2, cours des Bastions - 1205 Genève - Suisse

https://geneve.consulfrance.org/Nous-contacter

+41 22 567 95 59

https://ch.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/presence-francaise/consulat-general-de-france-geneve

Opening times:

By appointment: Monday to Friday 08h30-12h00 and 13h00-16h30 (15h30 on Friday)

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