

## Invitation

WTI | Public Panel discussion

# Rights of migrants in restrictive systems of access to the labour market

Monday, 28 April 2014, 12.15 – 13.50

Von Roll Areal, University of Bern

Fabrikstrasse 6, 3012 Bern, Switzerland

Dear Madam / Dear Sir,

It is a pleasure to invite you to the Panel Discussion on “[Rights of migrants in restrictive systems of access to the labour market](#)” with Prof. Francois Crépeau, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants, Prof. Thomas Cottier, World Trade Institute and Prof. Alberto Achermann.

As honoured guests in the audience Swiss National Councillor Corrado Pardini and EU Ambassador Richard Jones will participate.

The public Panel Discussion will address certain questions raised by the vote of 9 February 2014 aimed at stopping mass immigration.

On 9 February, voters in Switzerland narrowly approved a rightwing proposal to curb immigration. The initiative was accepted by 50.3% of votes cast and by a majority of German-speaking cantons. It imposes limits on the number of foreigners allowed into Switzerland, and may mark the end of the country’s free movement accord with the European Union.

The majority of Swiss voters wanted to see the reintroduction of quotas, as well as a national preference when filling job vacancies and restrictions of immigrants’ rights to social benefits. The initiative calls for quotas to apply to all foreign nationals, including cross-border commuters and asylum seekers and is especially problematic for family reunification. Some politicians are even considering additional political initiatives to restrict foreigners’ access to the Swiss labour market. Some others are considering the introduction of a point system to control immigration, similar to that operating in Canada.

On the other hand, Switzerland faces problems with an ageing population and new needs of the labour market, which is highly dependent on labour force from abroad. Restricting the hiring of EU citizens could act as a brake on the Swiss economy, which enjoys virtually full employment but has an ageing population.

The result of this vote has far-reaching consequences in many different policy areas. The Panel Discussion aims to explore how to ensure the rights of migrants and migrant workers in a country where the immigration has to be subject to quotas and restricted.

More information related to the event can be found [here](#).

Participation is free of charge.

**Profiles**

Professor Alberto Achermann  
Professor François Crépeau  
Professor Thomas Cottier

Swiss National Councillor Corrado Pardini  
EU Ambassador Richard Jones  
Professor em. Jörg Paul Müller (tbc)

**Convener and Media Inquiries**

Rosa Maria Losada

**This public Panel Discussion is organised with the support of:**

University of Bern  
University of Neuchâtel, Center for Migration Law  
Swiss Center of Expertise in Human Rights (SCHR)  
McGill University (Canada), Hans & Tamar Oppenheimer Chair in Public International Law

Yours sincerely,

**Rosa Maria Losada**

**Doctoral research fellow**

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