Global wealth migration is growing steadily, with approximately 95,000 millionaires migrating in 2017—a significant rise from 82,000 in 2016 and 64,000 in 2015, according to the 2018 AfrAsia Bank Global Wealth Migration Review.

For high-net-worth individuals, the traditional parameters of wealth are no longer a guaranteed safeguard against the risks attached to the 21st century, and the need for greater mobility, agility, and choice is more pressing than ever. Many wealthy families are migrating to more favorable jurisdictions in order to access superior economic and educational opportunities, higher standards of living, and lasting safety and security for their families.

One vehicle by which the wealthy are moving to other countries is investment migration. The proliferation of residence- and citizenship-by-investment programs in recent years is a testament to the growing relevance of such programs and to the immense value they bring, both to host countries, which receive significant foreign direct investment as a result of these programs, and to individuals, who gain the assurance that comes with having an additional passport or residence permit.

For individuals who are looking into residence or citizenship in an alternative jurisdiction, Austria and Switzerland are undoubtedly two of the best countries to move to live and both countries have attractive investment migration options in place.
Relocating to Austria

Austria is located at the heart of the European continent and is famed for its Alpine peaks and spectacular scenery. It offers a high standard of living, and its capital, Vienna, is an international center for art, culture, and history that ranked 1st on this year’s Economist Intelligence Unit Global Livability Index. Vienna also ranked 1st on the 2018 Mercer Quality of Living Survey, for the ninth year in a row.

Austria as a whole claimed the 10th spot on this year’s Henley & Partners – Köchenov Quality of Nationality Index, a ranking of all the nationalities in the world according to the level of internal and external opportunity they provide to those who hold them. Austrians enjoy exceedingly high levels of peace and stability and human development; they are able to settle anywhere in the EU and travel almost anywhere in the world.

Indeed, ranked 5th on the 2018 Henley Passport Index, the Austrian passport provides visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 186 destinations, including Europe’s Schengen Area, the US, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, the UAE, and Australia. Vienna International Airport provides access to a dense network of European destinations as well as to strategic locations in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas.

With Austria being one of world’s wealthiest and most developed countries, and combining old-world charm with modern comfort and safety, it is no surprise that many people would choose to relocate permanently there. For those interested in relocation, the country offers both residence- and citizenship-by-investment options. Under the Austrian Residence Permit program, individuals of independent means, as well as those who qualify under the ‘Key Manager’ category, have the opportunity to become residents in this Schengen Area member country with minimal bureaucratic requirements.

A residence permit is initially issued for one year and can then be renewed without hassle. After 10 years of legal residence, and in certain circumstances after six years, it is possible to apply for Austrian citizenship.

Article 10 (6) of the Austrian Citizenship Act, moreover, states that the government can reward foreign persons with citizenship in the event of extraordinary merit. The latter may take various forms and can include capital contributions or other economic benefits brought to Austria, although citizenship is not granted on the basis of financial contribution alone. Foreign investors must make an exceptional contribution alongside their investment.
for example, bringing new technologies to the country or creating a substantial number of new jobs.

In the recently released Global Residence and Citizenship Programs: 2018–2019 report, Austria’s residence-by-investment program claimed the top spot in the residence category, while its citizenship-by-investment offering ranked 3rd in the citizenship category.

Relocating to Switzerland

Switzerland, a mountainous Central European country, is home to roughly 8.4 million people and has four national languages. It is a pleasant and peaceful European nation known for, among other things, its heritage of 26 cantons, which are the member states of the Swiss Confederacy. Historically, the nation has always maintained political neutrality, which has resulted in a highly stable socio-economic environment. The combination of the country’s rich cultural heritage and liberal social attitudes has given rise to one of the most independent and well-organized societies in the world.

A large number of international organizations — including the International Red Cross, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Labor Organization, and the World Health Organization — have their headquarters in Switzerland. Many leading international corporations are relocating their headquarters to Switzerland, too, as the country is business-friendly by tradition, and its 26 cantons offer companies a wide range of options and opportunities.

Switzerland is the unrivalled watchmaking capital of the world and is home to some of the finest, oldest, and most prestigious luxury watchmaking brands, among them Patek Philippe, Jaeger-LeCoultre, and Vacheron Constantin, which was founded in 1755. The country’s horological heritage was honored in 2009 with the declaration of the Alpine watch-making cities of La Chaux-de-Fonds and Le Locle as World Heritage sites.

In the 2018 Mercer Quality of Living Survey, three Swiss cities ranked among the top 15 in the world: Zurich (2nd place), Geneva (8th place), and Bern (14th place). On the 2018 Henley & Partners – Kochenov Quality of Nationality Index, Switzerland came in at 9th place, boasting a near-perfect score for human development.

The Swiss passport consistently performs well on the Henley Passport Index. Currently in 6th place globally, it has been in the top 10 since the index’s inception in 2006. Swiss passport-holders can access 185 destinations without a prior visa, including Europe’s Schengen Area, the US, Canada, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, the UAE, and Australia.

Switzerland offers a top-tier residence program that is highly sought after. There are different types of residence categories in Switzerland, and a distinction is made between European Union or European Free Trade Association (EU/EFTA) citizens and other foreign (non-EU/EFTA) citizens.

For EU/EFTA citizens wanting to become residents of Switzerland, the only requirements are to either have...
employment in Switzerland or be a person of independent financial means. Non-EU/EFTA citizens can obtain a residence permit through various means: on the basis of gainful employment, as retirees with pre-existing close ties to Switzerland, or as financially independent persons who, though not gainfully employed in Switzerland, pay considerable amounts in annual taxes.

**Your guide to Swiss and Austrian relocation**


The books cover a range of topics relevant to high-net-worth and entrepreneurial individuals interested in making the move to these remarkable countries, such as taxation, citizenship and residency, pension, banking and real estate. These relocation guides are intended as a ‘one-stop shop’ for wealthy and entrepreneurial individuals around the world, as well as for those who advise them, as they navigate the complex and multi-layered Swiss and Austrian relocation process.

Following seven decades of rapid globalization, there is today greater international connectivity and mobility than ever before. With this globalized community comes a new generation of global citizens, whose identities are dynamic and fluid, and whose horizons are expansive. The books are aimed at precisely such an audience.

**About Henley & Partners**

Henley & Partners is the global leader in residence and citizenship planning. Each year, hundreds of wealthy individuals and their advisors rely on the firm’s expertise and experience in this area. Henley & Partners also runs a highly successful government advisory practice that has raised more than USD 6 billion in foreign direct investment. The firm has been involved in strategic consulting and in the design, set-up, and operation of the world’s most successful residence and citizenship programs.

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