

Saudi Arabia: Changes of profession in private sector's companies agreed upon by MoL's labour offices (2009-2013)

	Changes of profession
2009	21,892
2010	16,238
2011	59,514
2012	358,004
2013	2,676,752

Source: Ministry of Labour

1. Definition

To the exception of certain categories of investors, all foreign residents in Saudi Arabia are under the responsibility of a local "sponsor", usually the employer.

The sponsor receives the agreement to bring a foreign employee upon certification that he / she will employ the labourer in a specific profession. The "Iqama" (residency card) mentions the profession of the worker, which also conditions certain rights (family reunion for instance). The Saudi Labour Law has provisions allowing the worker to change profession/ sponsor. However, the procedure was conditioned to obtaining a Non-Objection Certificate from the first sponsor.

Since the onset of the Nitaqat ("ranges", "zones") campaign of Saudisation of the work force in September 2011, which classifies private sector companies by "range" based on the

Saudisation performance, changes of profession/ sponsor have been made easier for the workers in companies displaying the highest saudisation performance' categories ("Green" and "Premium" or "Excellent").

Those in companies with poorest rates of Saudisation (classified in "red" and "yellow" categories) cannot change profession.

2013' figure is notably higher than previous ones as a result of the "correction campaign" or amnesty period run by the government from April 3 to November 3, 2013.

Ahead of a crackdown on irregular workers/ sojourners planned for November 4, 2013, the amnesty was meant to allow workers to sort out their administrative situation:

renew expired documents; register their current employer as their sponsor; register changes in profession and in activity sector, etc., or leave without paying a penalty.

2. Institution which provides data

Ministry of Labour

3. Data availability

The figures are published in the Ministry of Labour's 2013 Statistical Yearbook (in Arabic).

<http://portal.mol.gov.sa/ar/Statistics/Documents/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%83%D8%AA%D8%A7%D8%A8%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AD%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%202013.pdf>

Last date of access: 15 December 2014.