An aerial photograph showing a winding asphalt road that curves through a dense, lush green forest. The road is light grey and contrasts with the vibrant green of the trees. The forest appears to be a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees. The road starts from the left side of the frame and winds its way towards the bottom right corner. There are some patches of reddish-brown earth visible along the edges of the road, possibly from recent construction or erosion.

nccr →
on the move

**First Transnational
Ageing Survey**

**First Results
in Switzerland**

Survey presentation

There could be many reasons for international mobility such as, spending holidays abroad, meeting with family and friends, engaging in leisure activities, receiving health care, etc. Conversely, current technologies allow us to keep social contacts across the borders.

International mobility does not concern only young generations or people who decide to live in another country. Today, mobility is visible among people of all ages, regardless of their countries of origin or social class.

The quantitative survey about transnational ageing aims to highlight practices in international mobility and their causes among people 55 years or older who reside in Switzerland.

This flyer briefly presents a selection of results to our participants.

This survey was financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation, through the nccr – on the move research centre.

The survey at a glance



Objective: analyse international mobility

This survey studies international mobility among people of 55 years or older.



A focus on Switzerland

The survey focuses on the permanent resident population having their main place of residence in Switzerland.



3'772 people participated

Among the survey participants, 2'275 people have Swiss nationality and 1'497 have another nationality (French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, or other European or non-European nationality).

1. International mobility: is it a recent phenomenon ... or not?

Today, travelling abroad to spend holidays, study, learn another language or for professional reasons is a regular practice among young people. But what about the previous generations? Our study shows that international mobility was already common practice for people of 55 or older, who participated in our study. About half of our participants have indeed attended classes abroad, including language courses, internships or even further education. This international mobility has been a common denominator of 28 % of the interviewees who do not have a migration background.

International mobility between 30 and 50 years old

More than half of our participants travelled abroad at least once a year or more often when they were between 30 and 50 years old. The most visited destinations to spend holidays or for other personal reasons were Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Austria, and the United States.

We asked you:

In general, if you think about your international mobilities when you were between 30 and 50 years old... What were the two or three countries you visited most often for personal reasons (e.g. for holidays)?

Switzerland (if you did not live in Switzerland)

Italy Germany France Spain

Etc. (list of 11 pre-selected countries + free choice other to fill in)

Countries where the participants travelled to most frequently when they were between the ages of 30 and 50 for personal reasons



Sources: first transnational ageing survey, own computations

Current international mobilities

If the pandemic has put to a halt international mobilities since March 2020, 81% of our participants have regularly crossed borders to go to another country at the time of the survey (between January and July 2020).

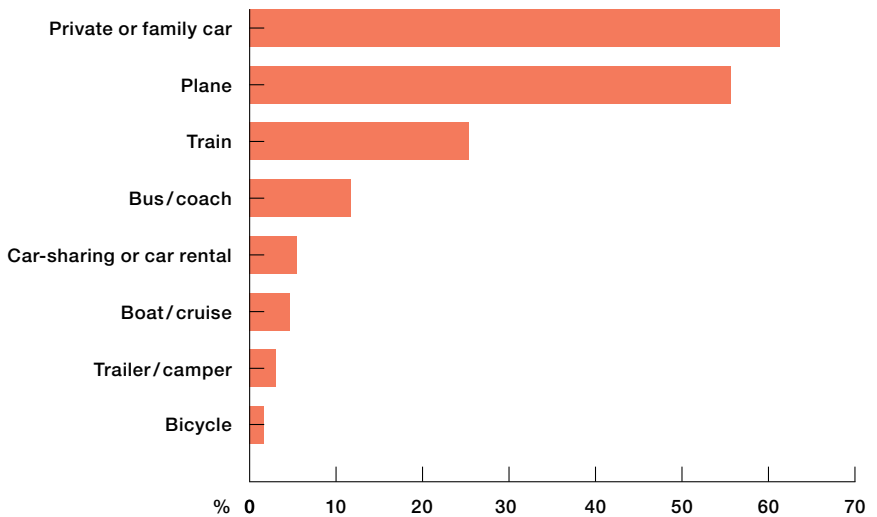
A private car and plane are the most used means of transportation to travel

A private car or plane are the most common means of transport when travelling abroad. Our data indicate that the train was used by a quarter of the respondents and that other options, like the bus, car-sharing, trailer/camper or bicycle are rarely used.

We have asked you:

When you travel abroad for more than one day, what are the two preferred means of transport that you use the most often?

Means of transportation to travel



Sources: first transnational ageing survey, own computations

2. To reach out to the world without crossing the border

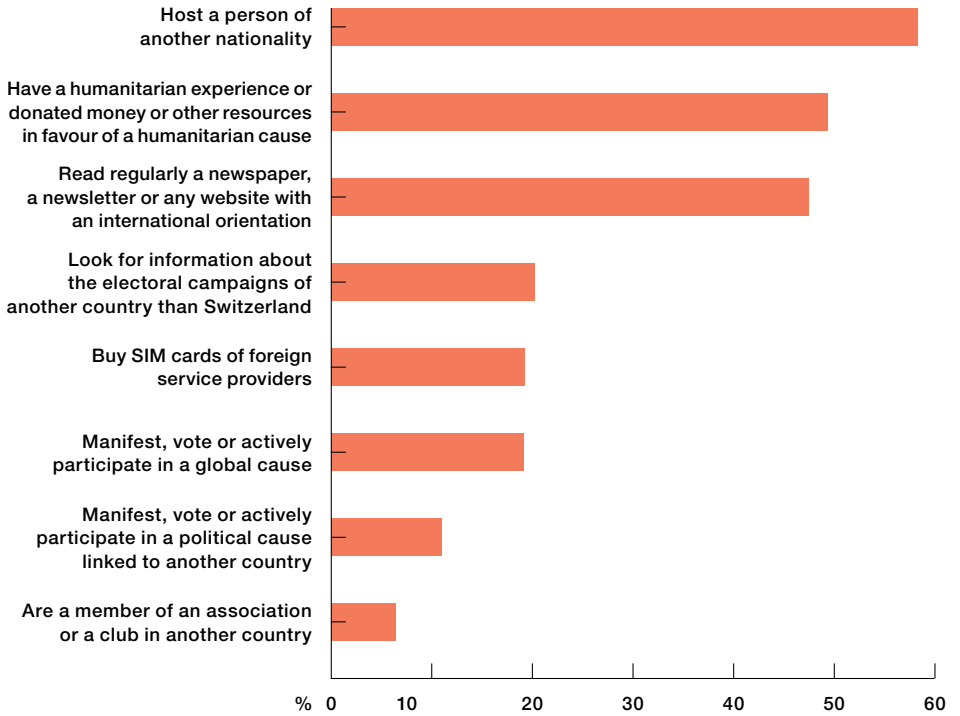
Our study shows that there are other means to reach out to the world or to keep contacts abroad.

We have for instance asked our participants if they regularly read an international newspaper, a newsletter or if they visit websites with an international orientation. We also enquired whether they owned a SIM card by a foreign mobile service provider. Without physically moving to another country, people can also have international practices such as, hosting people of another nationality, supporting a humanitarian causes and donating money, participating in a political cause or searching for information about an electoral campaign that takes place in another country than Switzerland. These are different ways of keeping contact with one or several other countries of the world.

Get informed, communicate, participate and help internationally

Our data indicate that more than half of our participants have already hosted a person of another nationality (58%), supported a humanitarian cause (49%) and browsed newspapers or websites with an international orientation (48%). These are other widespread practices among our participants. One-quarter of respondents actively seek information about electoral campaigns in another country (20%) and own a SIM card of another country (19%).

Travelling without crossing the borders



Sources: first transnational ageing survey, own computations

3. Where to spend retirement years?

Sometimes we see on the TV or in newspapers that some people go live in another country when they retire. We asked the participants of our survey to answer this question: In your case, if you could choose, in which country/countries would you like to spend (the rest of) your retirement years?

Only 38% of respondents would like to stay in Switzerland to spend their retirement years, while 26% indicate both Switzerland and another country and 34% would rather live only in another country than Switzerland.

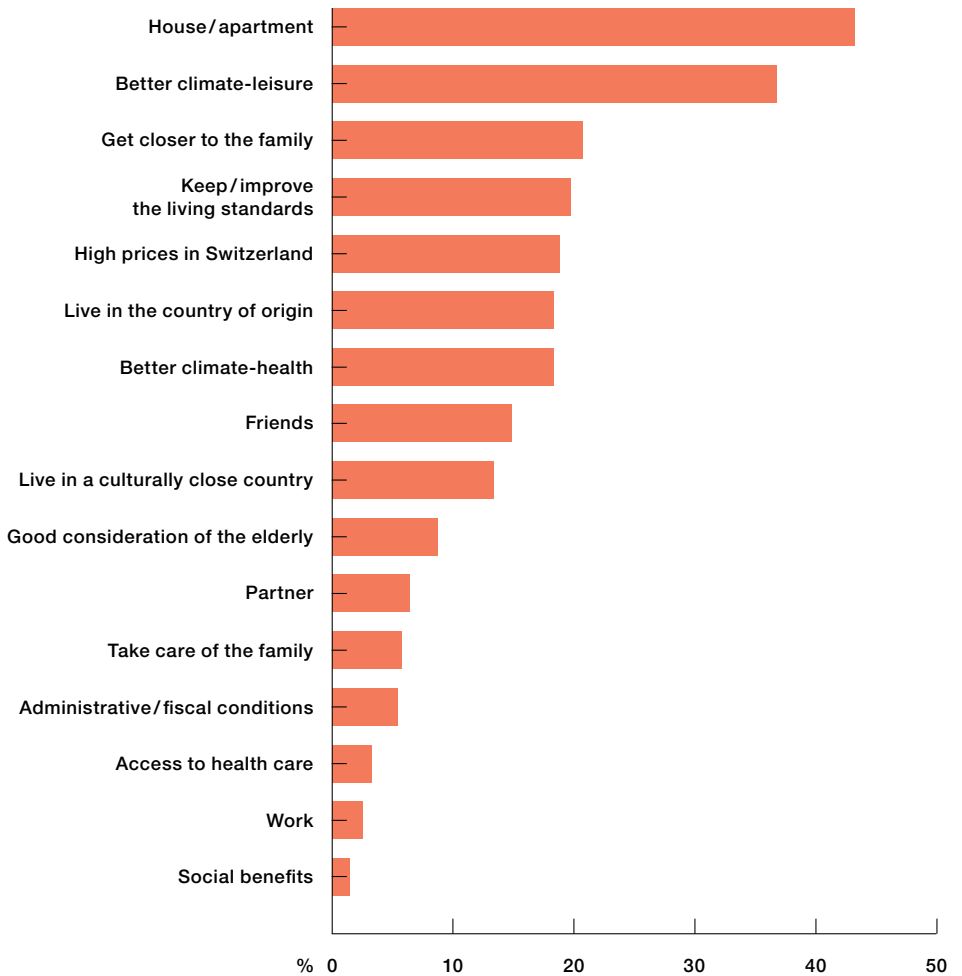
Residing in Switzerland while living part of the year abroad: a transnational lifestyle

Besides the intentions, 10% of the 55 years or older retirees residing in Switzerland currently live at least three months a year in another country, have already had this experience or have taken steps to do it. The main destinations are Italy, France, Germany, Spain and Portugal.

Different reasons motivate this transnational lifestyle. Owning a house or an apartment outside of Switzerland is one of the main reasons (43%).

Enjoying leisure in a country with a better climate was indicated by more than a third of people 55 years or older. Around 20% of participants are also driven by the desire to get closer to the family or to live in their country of origin. Economic reasons, namely the difficulty to live in Switzerland because of high prices and the desire to keep or improve one's living standards are important for almost one-quarter of the participants. Among other less important reasons, there are both the search for a better climate for health reasons and the presence of friends in another country and culture.

Reasons to live at least part of the year in another country



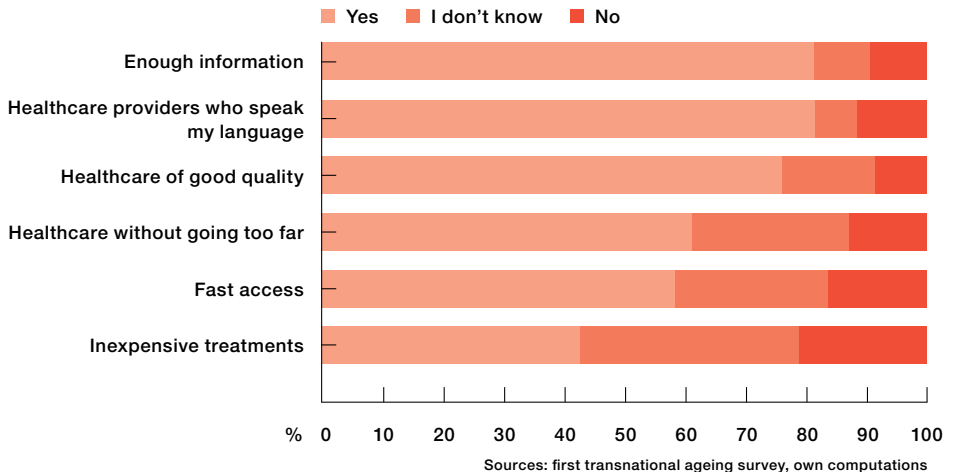
Sources: first transnational ageing survey, own computations

Health at the centre of the concerns

Our data show that more than half of the participants, that live at least three months a year in another country, would go back to Switzerland to receive healthcare in case of a severe illness or an accident. Their doubts are mainly about the prices of treatments during their stays abroad, a fast access without waiting too long or going too far. At the same time, most respondents believe they have enough information about the healthcare services in the countries where they go.

We have asked you:

In case of health problems during these stays, you think you could have ...



4. International mobility and transnational family

Regarding international travels abroad, also just for some hours, the second most important reason to go abroad after going on holiday is to visit family and friends. It is the case for almost half of the participants, and we note also that one person in four goes abroad to see their children or grandchildren.

Transnational families: families all over the world

Our data show that more than half of the participants (53 %) have a family member who currently lives or has lived abroad in the past. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Great Britain and the United States are the countries where the family members of the participants live or have most often lived for at least one year.

Regarding the household composition of the participants, a small minority of couples (9%) do not live in the same household all year long (2% live abroad). They have chosen not to live in the same household for different reasons, including professional reasons, education or care obligations towards children or grandchildren, parents or other family members.

More than one-third of respondents (38%) have grandchildren younger than 15 years and around 7% have grandchildren younger than 15 living outside of Switzerland.

We have asked you:

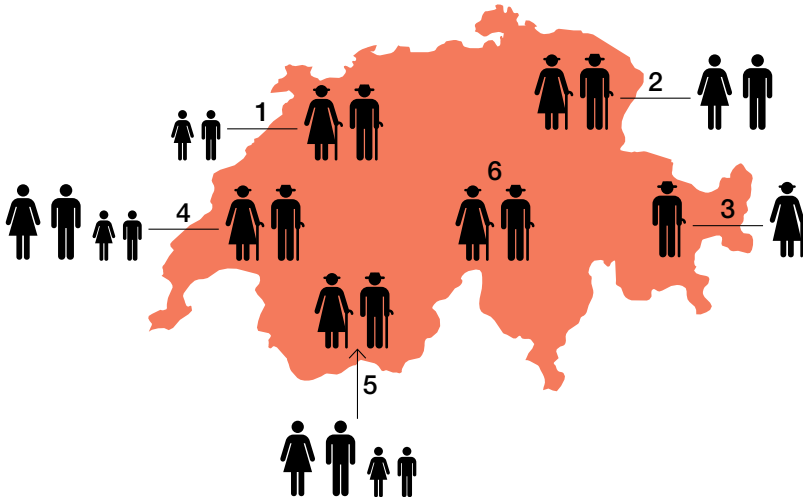
Could you name all the countries in which your family members live or lived for at least one year?

Multiple possible answers

Switzerland (if you did not live in Switzerland)

Italy Germany France Spain

Etc. (list of 11 pre-selected countries + free choice other to fill in)



Sources: first transnational ageing survey, own computations

- 1 Transnational grandparents: participants with grandchildren living outside of Switzerland: 7%
- 2 Transnational parents: participants with children living outside of Switzerland: 10%
- 3 Transnational partner: participants with a partner living part of the year in another accommodation abroad: 2%

- 4 Transnational families with other family members living abroad: participants with other family members living abroad (or outside of Switzerland), apart from the partner, children or grandchildren: 24%
- 5 Transnational families in the past: participants with family members who have lived abroad (or outside of Switzerland): 53%
- 6 Currently non-transnational families: participants without a family currently living abroad: 71%

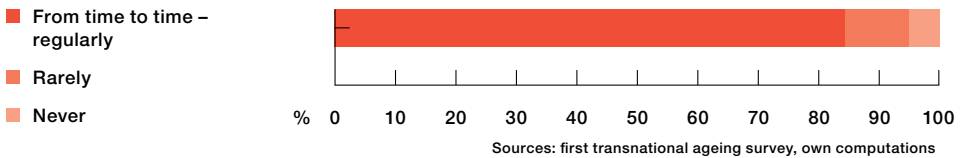
Helping each other across the borders: international and intergenerational solidarity

As shown in the graphs below, most respondents with little grandchildren younger than 15 take or took care of them, mainly in Switzerland, but also abroad.

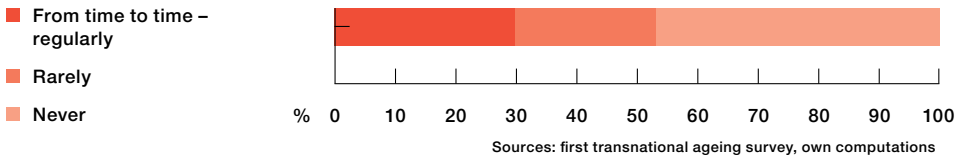
We have asked you:

Do you or have you in the past looked after or cared for your grandchildren?
(grandchildren who live in Switzerland (not with you) and grandchildren who live outside of Switzerland)

Taking care of grandchildren younger than 15 in Switzerland



Taking care of grandchildren younger than 15 outside of Switzerland



In addition to this, more than half of respondents (52%) have declared to support other family members in Switzerland or abroad. More specifically, they help emotionally or financially, with administrative work, house chores or personal care. Conversely, less than one-quarter of respondents (21%) have declared that in case they needed help, they would not have anyone in Switzerland, or abroad to help them.

5. Transnational lifestyle and communication: how to communicate remotely with the family?

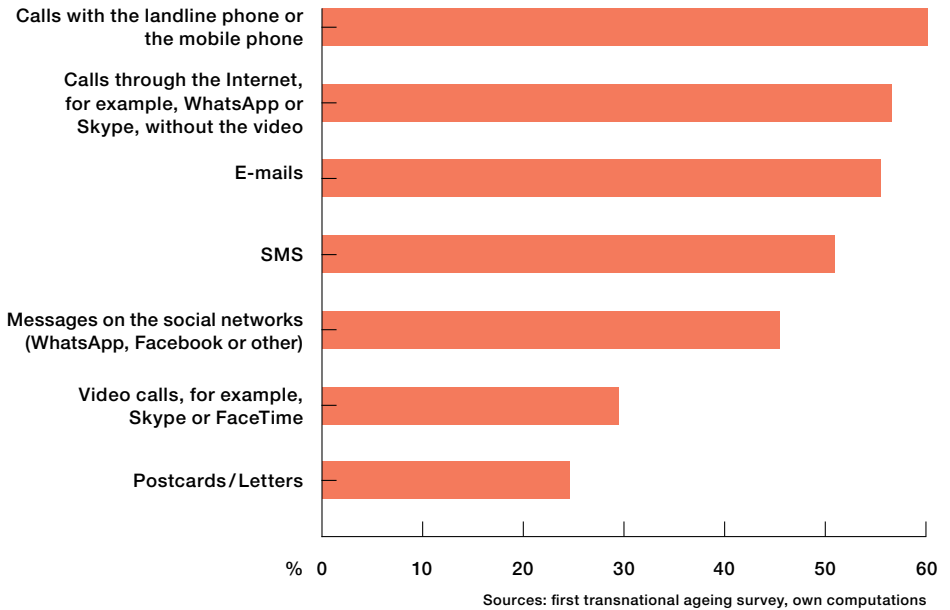
Apart from personal visits, we can keep in contact through different means of communication. More than one respondent out of two uses landline phones or mobile phones to communicate with their family abroad. However, other means of communication linked to the internet, such as applications that allow online calls, are equally importantly and used by approximately half of the participants. This indicates a good knowledge of recent technologies among respondents. Post-cards and letters are the least used means of communication.

We have asked you:

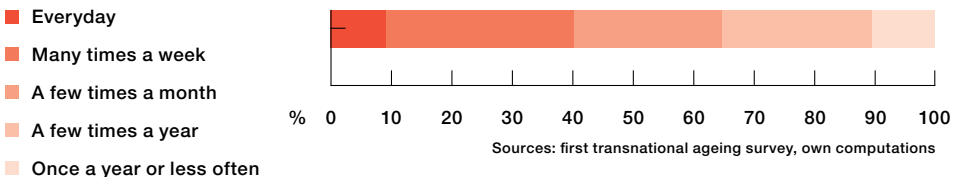
Which means of communication do you use to contact your family when you are not in the same country?

In addition to this, our respondents also use these means of communication with a relatively high frequency, usually several times per week (31%). In total, almost two-thirds of participants (64%) hold a conversation with their family at least several times a month (including a daily or weekly communication).

Means of communication used to contact the family when it is not in the same country as the participants



Frequency of use of means of communications to be in contact with the family when it is not in the same country as the participants



nccr on the move

National Center of Competence in Research –
The Migration-Mobility Nexus

nccr-onthemove.ch

We thank you very much for your effort and time taken to answer our survey!



Eric Crettaz, Mihaela Nedelcu, Livia Tomás, Eva Fernández G. G., Laura Ravazzini

For more information about the survey or the scientific contributions of the nccr – on the move, please visit our [website](#).



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