



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

The bilateral approach

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Historical overview

Free Trade Agreement (trade)

1972

Bilaterals I (economy)

1999

Bilaterals II (politics)

2004

Additional agreements

since 2004



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Historical overview



Bilateral relations since 1972
On the basis of over 100
agreements

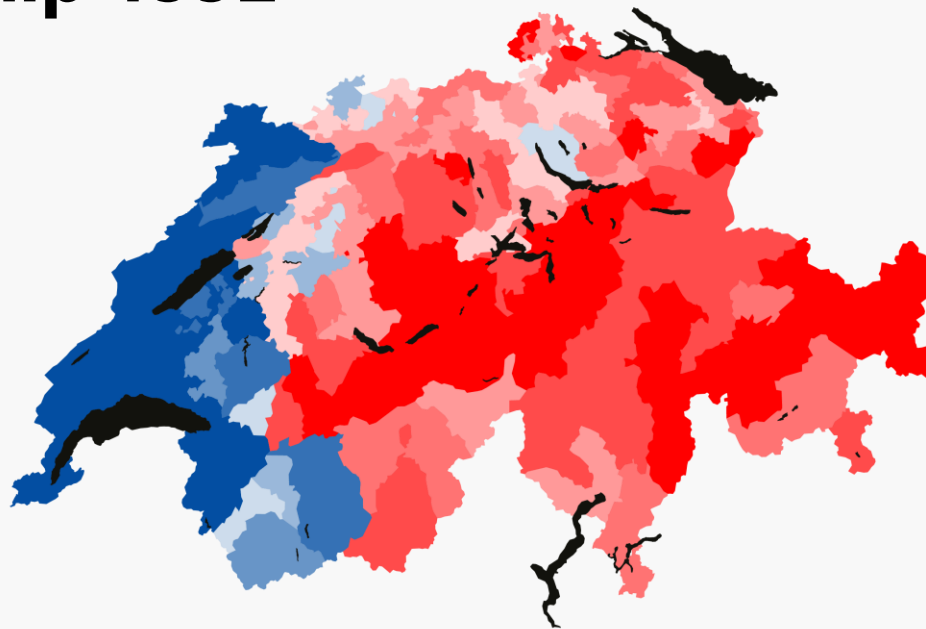
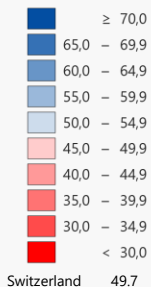




No to EEA membership 1992

Origins of the bilateral approach
on 6 December 1992

Yes vote percentage

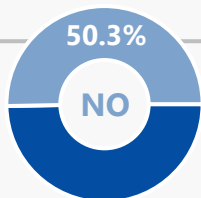




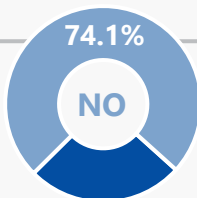
Key referendums

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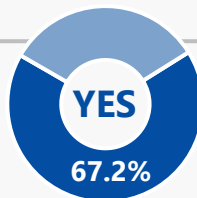
1992 European Economic Area (EEA)



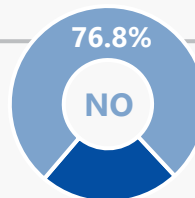
1997 'EU membership negotiations before the people' initiative



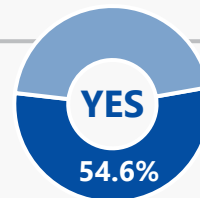
2000 Bilaterals I



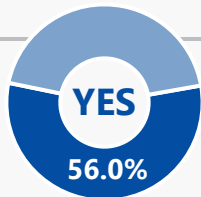
2001 'Yes to Europe!' initiative



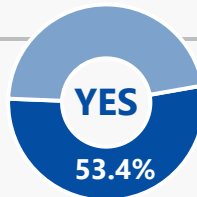
2005 Schengen/Dublin



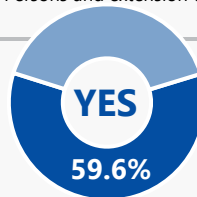
2005 Extension of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons



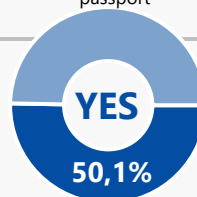
2006 Federal Act on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe



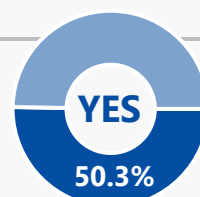
2009 Continuation of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons and extension to BG/RO



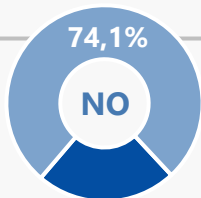
2009 introduction of electronically stored biometric data in the Swiss passport



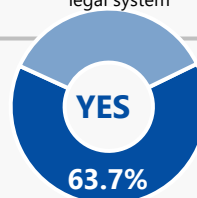
2014 'Stop Mass Immigration' initiative



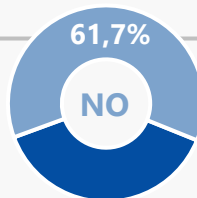
2014 Ecopop



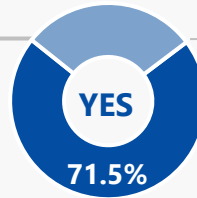
2019 Implementation of the EU firearms directive into the Swiss legal system



2020 'For moderate immigration (Limitation Initiative)'



2022 Frontex





Key elements of the bilateral approach



**Tailor-made
sectoral agreements**



Access to EU single market



A Swiss approach



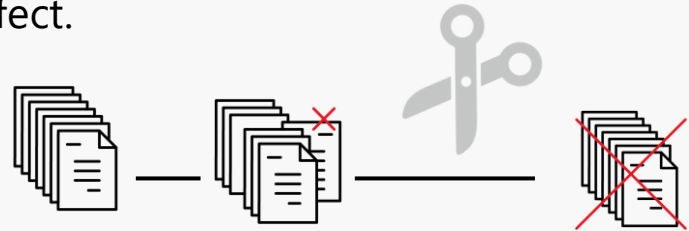
Guillotine clause – Bilaterals I

Principle of parallelism: the seven agreements were negotiated, signed and entered into force as a single package.

They were linked in legal terms by a **guillotine clause**. If one of the agreements is terminated, the others would also cease to have effect.

- Free movement of persons
- Technical barriers to trade (Mutual Recognition Agreement – MRA)
- Public procurement markets
- Agriculture
- Land transport
- Civil aviation
- Research*

*The 1999 research agreement expired at the end of 2002.

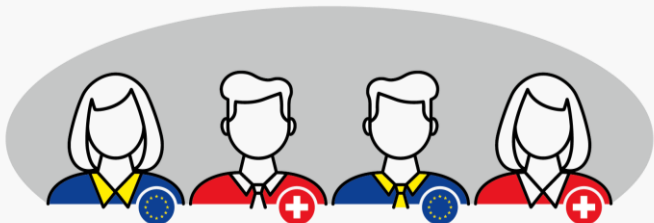


Summary

If an agreement is terminated, all the other agreements under Bilaterals I will lapse after a period of six months.



Joint committee



- 1 agreement = 1 joint committee (excluding automatic exchange of information in tax matters and pensions)
- Governs the implementation of the bilateral agreements: ensures that the arrangements function properly and adapt if necessary
- Comprised of Swiss and EU representatives
- Meet once a year



Cooperation with Europe





Security in Europe

Switzerland contributes to peace, stability and security in Europe:

- Participation in **EU peace-building missions**: EULEX Kosovo, EUFOR Althea Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUCAP Sahel Mali.
- Organisation of the **High-Level Conference on Peace in Ukraine** (Bürgenstock, 2024).
- Case-by-case examination of whether to join **EU sanctions**.
- Agreement between Switzerland and the **European Defence Agency** (EDA) on armaments cooperation (non-legally binding).
- Swiss participation in EU **election observation missions**.



Switzerland's commitment to **peace** and **security** is enshrined in the **Federal Constitution** and is a **priority** of Swiss foreign policy.





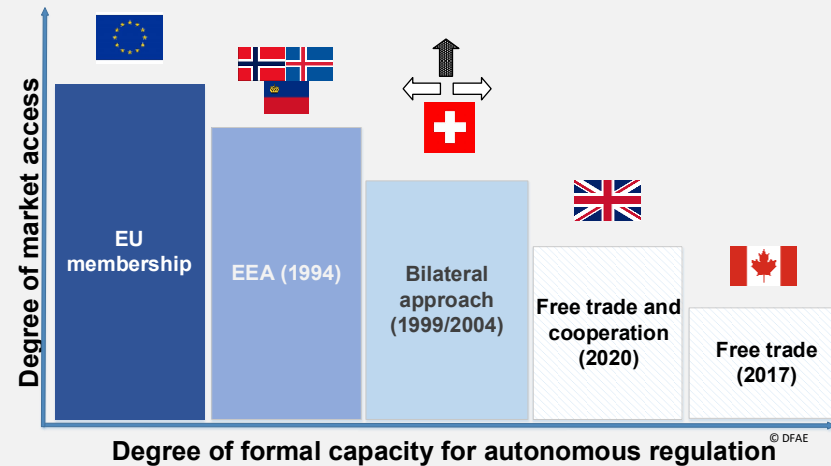
Advantages of the bilateral approach and alternatives

The **bilateral approach** has proven its worth:

- Balanced relationship between political room for manoeuvre and sectoral, tailor-made participation in the EU single market
- Basis for a mutually beneficial CH-EU partnership
- “Doing nothing” is not an option: EU law is evolving and Switzerland has interests that go beyond what already exists.

The Federal Council is committed to **stabilising** the bilateral path and **further developing** it where it is in Switzerland's interest.

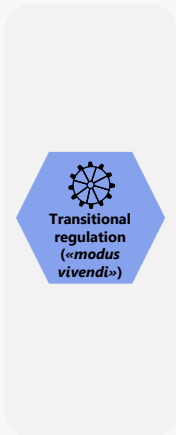
Different ways of being in a relationship with the EU EU membership, EEA, bilateral approach, FTAs



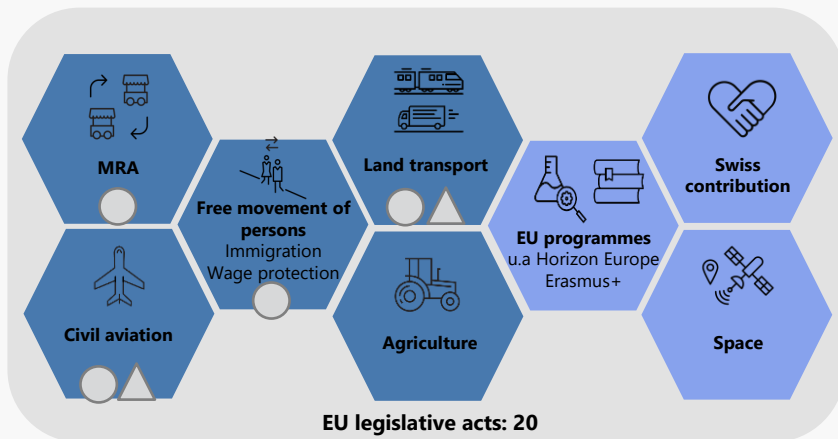


The Package Switzerland-EU

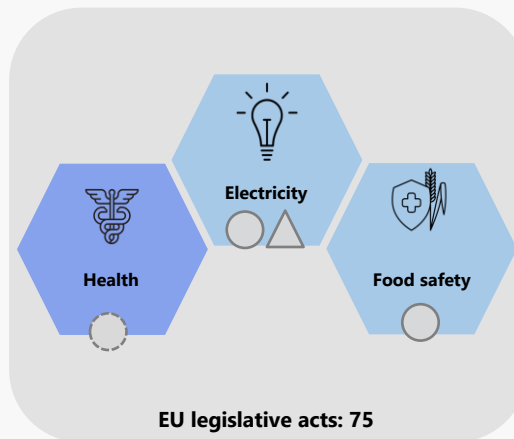
Transitional arrangement



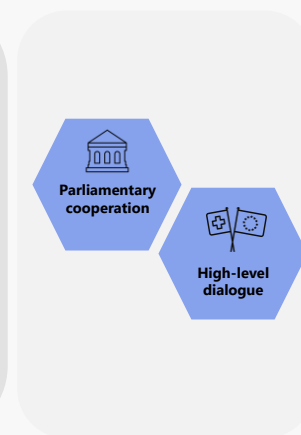
Stabilisation



Further development



Dialogue and cooperation



Existing single market agreements

Other agreements and areas of interest

New single market agreements

Institutional elements
Dynamic alignment,
dispute resolution

State aid

Implementing legislation

- 3 new laws
- 12 significant legislative amendments
- 20 minor legislative amendments



Switzerland has much in common with the EU and its member states

Besides economic aspects, we share values, languages, culture and geography.



In the international arena, we often advocate for the same goals and values such as peace, human rights and democracy.



The Federal Council therefore wants to **stabilise and further develop the bilateral path with the EU.**



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A close-up photograph of railway tracks curving to the right. The tracks are made of metal rails on wooden sleepers, set on a bed of gravel. The perspective is from a low angle, looking down the tracks.

Thank you for your attention

www.fdfa.admin.ch/europe_en

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