



Swiss contribution

Overview

With the Swiss contribution, Switzerland has been helping since 2007 to reduce economic and social disparities within the EU and to address the challenges facing the EU in the area of migration. The contribution also strengthens Switzerland's relations with selected countries within Europe.

To date, Switzerland has made two financial contributions – each in the amount of CHF 1.3 billion – known as the enlargement contribution (from 2007) and the second Swiss contribution (from 2019). The funds have been used to implement programmes and projects in the economically weaker EU member states.

The new mechanism to make Switzerland's contribution permanent from 2030 is an indispensable component of the Swiss–EU package (Bilaterals III). Switzerland's cooperation with the EU shall also be funded by an additional one-off financial commitment to bridge the period between end of 2024 and the date on which the new mechanism takes effect.

Key elements

The contribution agreement creates a legally binding mechanism for a regular Swiss contribution intended to reduce economic and social disparities in the EU. The contribution is divided into seven-year periods, with the first period running from 2030 to 2036. The specific terms applying to each contribution period, including the amount of the contribution and key areas of cooperation, will be set out each time in a memorandum of understanding with the EU. Alongside the main pillar of cohesion, aimed at the economically and socially weakest countries, important common challenges, such as those in the area of migration, will continue to be addressed.

The funds will not flow into the EU budget, but rather will be used directly in partner states for jointly agreed programmes. As in the past, Switzerland will conclude bilateral implementation agreements with its partner states for each future contribution.

In the event that corruption occurs during implementation of the Swiss contribution or if shared values, e.g. the rule of law, are violated, Switzerland may take effective action regarding the support measures concerned. In serious cases, this may involve suspending payments or terminating the given support measure.

CHF 350 million will be paid annually for the first contribution in the 2030–36 period. The contribution agreement defines a clear framework for determining the amount of the Swiss contribution for subsequent contribution periods. Each time, in addition to an adjustment for inflation, the given contribution can be increased or reduced by a maximum of 10% for political reasons – for example, on the basis of how relations between Switzerland and the EU have developed in the meantime.

Switzerland and the EU have also agreed to a one-off additional financial commitment covering the interim period between the end of 2024 and the commencement of the new mechanism. This amounts to CHF 130 million annually until the Swiss–EU package (Bilaterals III) enters into force. Once the package enters into force, the commitment will match the level of the first contribution, i.e. CHF 350 million each year until 2030. This reflects the fact that Swiss–EU cooperation will be strengthened considerably from this point on.

The funds from the first contribution and the additional financial commitment will only be disbursed and implemented once the Swiss–EU package takes effect and over a period of ten years, from 2030 to 2039.

Implementation in Switzerland

A new legal basis for a regular Swiss contribution needs to be established in Switzerland. The Federal Act on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe, which had previously served as the legal basis for the enlargement contribution and the cohesion element of the second Swiss contribution, was a temporary enactment that expired at the end of 2024. Switzerland's contribution will now be based on the contribution agreement with the EU. A new cohesion contribution act should complement the contribution agreement and govern the internal matters required to implement the contribution. Separate legislation should continue to govern contributions to address other important common challenges, for instance the Asylum Act in relation to migration matters.

Importance for Switzerland

The Swiss contribution has been an important part of the bilateral approach since 2007, allowing Switzerland to invest in stability and cohesion in Europe. These are essential prerequisites for a well-functioning EU single market to which Switzerland has access on a sector-by-sector basis.

The Swiss contribution deepens bilateral relations with partner states. It strengthens Switzerland's presence and visibility, enhancing its reputation as an innovative and reliable partner that demonstrates solidarity. Partner states will be the direct beneficiaries of the funds, which allows Switzerland to put forward its own thematic priorities. By working directly with the partner states, Switzerland can ensure that the funding is used in a targeted manner. In addition, Swiss project partners are to be involved to a greater extent in future, in specific areas.

This cooperation promotes new partnerships as well as the sharing of experience and transfer of knowledge. The Swiss economy also benefits from more attractive markets and investment opportunities created by improved economic performance in partner states. Addressing common challenges, such as in the area of migration, directly serves Switzerland's interests.

The agreement creates a clear, predictable framework for future Swiss contributions, creating greater legal certainty for Switzerland and allowing for better financial planning.

Specifics

- **Projects with clear added value:** the Swiss contribution improves stability and cohesion in Europe. Switzerland defines specific projects it will support in consultation with partner states. It ensures that any project selected delivers clear added value, with Switzerland able to contribute its expertise and experience. Examples from the current Swiss contribution show how this works:
 - **Joint research:** the Swiss–Polish innovation programme promotes joint projects between Swiss and Polish companies and supports researchers undertaking applied research. The objective is to boost Poland's capacity for innovation and build new networks between stakeholders. This also benefits Swiss companies, as it allows them to gain a stronger foothold in the Polish market. *Innosuisse*, the Swiss Innovation Agency, assists with implementation and networking.
 - **Vocational education and training:** the vocational education programme in Bulgaria aims to achieve better alignment between the skills taught and the needs of the job market. To this end, there should be closer cooperation with employers and the vocational training system should be anchored at the regional level. Drawing on Switzerland's experience with its dual vocational education and training system, the programme is creating new opportunities and prospects for local people.

- **Environment:** Switzerland supports an environmental programme in the Czech Republic that seeks to better preserve ecosystems in national parks and protected natural areas along with animal and plant habitats. Specific measures focus on sustainable tourism and protecting biodiversity, including managing visitor flows and restoring waterways. Another objective of the programme is fostering partnerships with Switzerland, with the Swiss Parks Network providing advice and facilitating contacts with partners in Switzerland.
- **Migration:** with regard to migration, Switzerland provides support for projects such as 'Emergency Accommodation Facilities (EAF), Phases I and II', on the Greek mainland. These facilities provide immediate accommodation and assistance for unaccompanied underage migrants living in difficult circumstances. Efficient structures and tailored services help improve future prospects for these persons and, where possible, facilitate their settlement in the country – an objective that is also in Switzerland's interest. In addition, an exchange between Swiss and Greek experts served as an opportunity to discuss best practice.