



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

A close-up photograph of two hands shaking, symbolizing an agreement or partnership. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with one hand slightly above the other. The background is dark, making the hands stand out. The text is overlaid on this image.

# The main bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU

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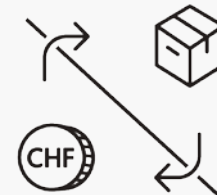


# Main bilateral agreements

1. Free trade
2. Insurance
3. Customs facilitation and security



**Benefit:** removing barriers to trade



# Free trade

## Contents

- Establishes a free trade area for industrial goods and also covers trade in processed agricultural products
- Abolishes customs duties and prohibits quantitative restrictions, i.e. quotas, and other measures having an equivalent effect for industrial products in Switzerland and the EU

## Relevance

- Crucial to the Swiss economy:  
52% of Swiss exports go to the EU (approx. CHF 121 bn.), while 70% of Swiss imports (approx. CHF 142 bn.) come from the EU

**Came into force 1973**



# Insurance

## Contents

- Ensures, on a reciprocal basis, freedom of establishment for agencies and branches of undertakings pursuing the activity of direct insurance other than life assurance (home contents, motor vehicle, travel, third party liability insurance, etc.), or the option to acquire such undertakings

## Relevance

- Important for insurance companies operating internationally
- Insurance industry is major component of the Swiss economy, employing 46,580 people in Switzerland and some 100,000 outside Switzerland

**Came into force 1993**



# Customs facilitation and security

## Contents

- Facilitates customs clearance for goods traded between Switzerland and the EU and coordinates cooperation at border posts
- Sets out the terms of cooperation on customs security and exempts Switzerland from measures applying to third countries, e.g. the prior declaration requirement in relation to imports

## Relevance

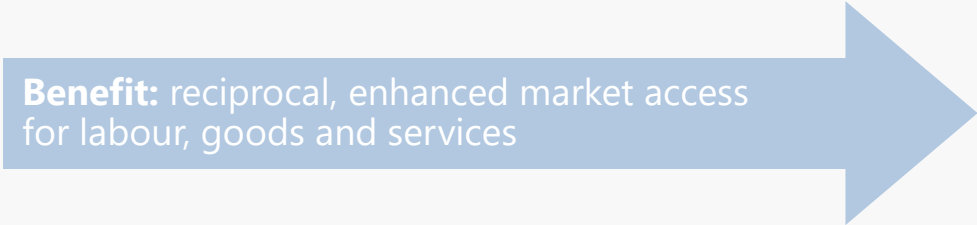
- Greatly facilitates customs clearance, e.g. for the 24,000 trucks crossing the Swiss border every day

**Came into force 2011**  
supersedes the 1991 agreement on goods transportation

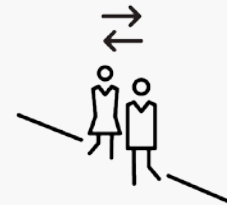


# Bilateral Agreements I (1999)

1. Free movement of persons
2. Technical barriers to trade (MRA)
3. Public procurement
4. Agriculture
5. Research
6. Air transport
7. Land transport



**Benefit:** reciprocal, enhanced market access  
for labour, goods and services



# Free movement of persons

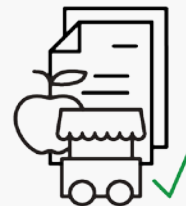
## Contents

- Gives Swiss and EU citizens the right to live and work in the territory of the contracting parties, subject to certain conditions
- Gradual and controlled opening up of markets thanks to transitional rules
- **Accompanying measures** introduced to protect workers (preservation of Swiss working conditions and wages)

## Relevance

- The Swiss economy relies on labour from outside Switzerland
- Swiss nationals have a better chance of finding work within the EU

**Came into force 2002**



# Technical barriers to trade (MRA)

## Contents

- Ensures mutual recognition in relation to conformity assessment for the majority of industrial products
- Regime for monitoring compliance with current rules for introducing products to Swiss and European markets

## Relevance

- Essentially means that Swiss manufacturers and their EU competitors have the same market access conditions
- Saves businesses time and money in bringing new products to the market: the Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) covers two-thirds of trade between Switzerland and the EU in respect of industrial products

**Came into force 2002**





# Public procurement

## Contents

- Sets out the basis for international competitive bidding for certain public contracts
- Extends the scope of the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement to procurement by regions and local authorities and to public and private sector entities operating e.g. in the rail transport, gas and heating supply sectors

## Relevance

- Competition generates potential savings for the Confederation, cantons and communes
- Gives Swiss companies equal access to the European single market worth billions

**Came into force 2002**



# Agriculture

## Contents

- Facilitates trade in agricultural products between Switzerland and the EU by:
  - eliminating **duties and quotas** for cheese and **non-tariff barriers to trade**, e.g. in respect of wine and spirits, organic farming, phytosanitary measures, animal feed and seeds
  - introducing **tariff concessions** in respect of fruit and vegetables, horticulture, dried meats and wine

## Relevance

- The EU is Switzerland's main trading partner for agricultural products (58% of Swiss exports, 75% of imports)
- Increased exports: 1.8% year-on-year increase for cheese between 2004 and 2018

### **Came into force** 2002

New appendix on mutual recognition of protected designations of origin (PDOs) and protected geographical indications (PGIs) added to agreement in 2011



# Research

## Contents

- Involvement of Swiss universities, companies and individual researchers in EU framework programmes for research
- Scientific, technology and economic contributions

## Relevance

- More effective coordination and consolidation of research, e.g. in relation to information and communication technologies, healthcare, energy, nanotechnology, space and the environment

## Status of negotiations

- Agreement signed in 2014 on Switzerland's **partial association** with **Horizon 2020** (framework programmes 2014–2020), applicable until end-2016
- **Full association** with the 8th Horizon 2020 framework programme for research since 2017 following Switzerland's ratification of Protocol III to the AFMP

### Horizon Europe 2021–27

Programme proposed by the European Commission in 2018. The terms of Switzerland's involvement have not yet been defined.



# Air transport

## Contents

- Reciprocal access to aviation markets for Swiss and EU air carriers
- Swiss air carriers can operate under virtually the same conditions as their European competitors (e.g. equal landing rights)

## Relevance

- Access to the valuable European aviation market is critical to the success of Swiss companies

### **Came into force 2002**

Negotiations on internal flights by foreign airlines within Switzerland and the EU (8th and 9th freedoms) have been under way since 2011



# Land transport

## Contents

- **Mobility:** opens up the market for the transport of persons and goods by road and rail between Switzerland and the EU
- **Environmental protection:** helps to shift transalpine freight traffic from road to rail
- Introduces a **heavy goods vehicle charge (HGVC)** and increases maximum truck weight to 40 tonnes

## Relevance

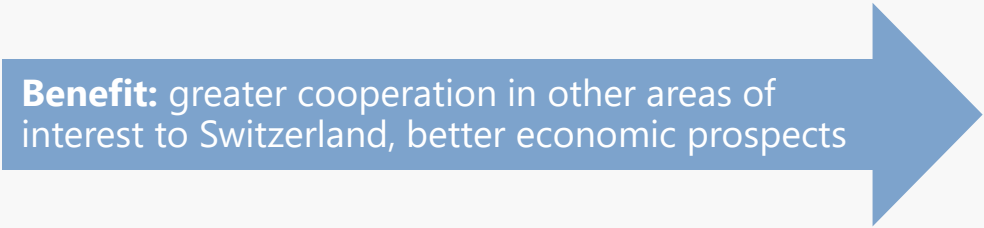
- 24,000 HGVs cross the Swiss border every day; 1 million HGVs cross the Swiss Alps each year
- More than 70% of transalpine freight transported by rail
- Revenues from heavy goods vehicle charge (CHF 1.6 bn.) used to improve rail infrastructure

**Came into force 2002**



# Bilateral Agreements II (2004)

1. Schengen/Dublin
2. Automatic exchange of information
3. Fight against fraud
4. Processed agricultural products
5. Creative Europe (MEDIA)
6. Environment
7. Statistics
8. Pensions
9. Education, vocational education and training, young people



**Benefit:** greater cooperation in other areas of interest to Switzerland, better economic prospects



# Schengen

## Contents

- Facilitates transnational mobility in the Schengen area both for Swiss citizens and tourists (Schengen visa)
- Schengen Information System (SIS) provides security by reinforcing external borders in the Schengen area and facilitates cooperation on law enforcement between Schengen countries

## Relevance

- Provides mobility within Europe and access to tools for fighting crime; benefits the tourist industry
- Abandoning the Schengen/Dublin association would lead to a decline in GDP of between 1.6% and 3.7% by 2030

### **Came into force 2008**

Concurrently with Dublin; since 2009, controls lifted on internal flights within Schengen at airports



# Dublin

## Contents

- Coordinates national responsibilities for processing asylum claims
- Provides access to the Eurodac fingerprint database, which enables countries to identify applicants making multiple or false claims

## Relevance

- Avoids the time-consuming and inefficient task of processing multiple asylum claims
- Eases pressure on the asylum system by spreading the burden
- Abandoning the Dublin association would involve additional asylum-related costs of up to CHF 270 million

**Came into force 2008**  
Concurrently with Schengen





# Automatic exchange of information

## Contents

- Based on the global standard on automatic exchange of information adopted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Financial account information has been collected since 2017, with Switzerland and the 28 EU member states exchanging that information on annual basis since 2018

## Relevance

- Important contribution to fighting tax evasion
- Abolition of withholding tax on dividends, interest and royalties between affiliated companies in Switzerland and the EU makes Switzerland more attractive to international companies

### **Came into force** 2017

Supersedes the 2005 agreement on the taxation of savings income



# Fight against fraud

## Contents

- Greater cooperation in the fight against smuggling and other offences relating to indirect taxation (customs duties, VAT, consumer taxes), subsidies and public procurement

## Relevance

- Reduces the risk of Switzerland being exploited as a hub for illegal trade

### **Not yet in force**

Early adoption by Switzerland along with EU member states that have also opted for early adoption



# Processed agricultural products

## Contents

- Agreement amending Protocol 2 to the 1972 Free Trade Agreement
- Sets out the terms of trade in relation to processed agricultural products, e.g. chocolate, biscuits, coffee, drinks, pasta products, etc.
- Creates tariff- and quota-free market access for the agrifood industry

## Relevance

- Increases the competitiveness of the Swiss agrifood industry
- Secures a number of jobs in the Swiss food industry
- Trade in processed agricultural products with the EU has increased 83% since 2005 (volume of trade was CHF 7.5 billion in 2018)

**Came into force 2005**



# Creative Europe (MEDIA)

## Contents

- Switzerland's participation in the EU Creative Europe programme, including the MEDIA programme for European cinema and the 2014–2020 cultural programme.

## Relevance

- Financial assistance for the Swiss film industry, better opportunities for the distribution of Swiss films in Europe, greater variety of films on offer in Switzerland
- Funding for Swiss artists, participation in cultural awards

## Status of negotiations

- Negotiations on Switzerland's participation in **Creative Europe** resumed in 2014. Switzerland was interested in an agreement on participation in the 2014–2020 cultural programme. Objective could not be met – implementation of compensatory measures at national level.

### **Creative Europe 2021–2027**

Programme proposed by the European Commission in 2018. The terms of Switzerland's involvement have not yet been defined.



# The environment

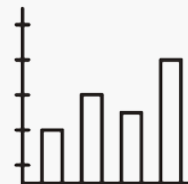
## Contents

- Participation in the **European Environment Agency** (EEA)
- The EEA gathers and analyses environmental data and verifies compliance with mandatory criteria, has established a European environment information and observation network (Eionet) and provides advice on environmental policy

## Relevance

- Involvement in projects and research activities
- Access to a range of European environmental data
- Allows Switzerland to compare and coordinate activities with neighbouring countries through the exchange of information

**Came into force 2006**



# Statistics

## Contents

- Aligns Switzerland's statistical data collection methods with those of Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union
- Provides access to pan-European statistical data on economic, policy and social issues

## Relevance

- Ensures the comparability of statistics between countries to facilitate research in and ongoing review of political solutions (e.g. socio-economic indicators, price movements)

**Came into force 2007**



# Pensions

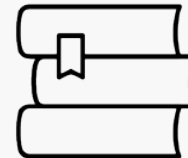
## Contents

- Prevents the double taxation of pensions of retired EU officials living in Switzerland

## Relevance

- Only applies to former officials of EU institutions (European Parliament, European Commission, Council of the EU, Court of Justice of the EU) who are now living in Switzerland

**Came into force 2005**



# Education, vocational education and training, young people

## Contents

- Participation in **Erasmus+**, the EU mobility programme for students and people in continuing education

## Relevance

- Improved access to and quality of education and easier integration into the labour market
- 12,400 study opportunities or training courses in Europe funded by Switzerland in the past year based on the Erasmus+ interim solution

## Status of negotiations

- **Negotiations** on Switzerland's participation in Erasmus+ (2014–2020) were **suspended** at the start of 2014. An **interim solution** is in place until the end of 2020

### Erasmus+ 2021–2027

Programme proposed by the European Commission in 2018. The terms of Switzerland's involvement have not yet been defined.





# Bilateral agreements entered into since 2004

1. Europol
2. Eurojust
3. Cooperation with the European Defence Agency (EDA)
4. Cooperation between competition authorities
5. Satellite navigation systems (Galileo, EGNOS)
6. European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
7. Linking of emissions trading schemes



**Benefit:** broadening of cooperation in other areas of interest to Switzerland



# Europol

## Contents

- Cooperation agreement with Europol, the EU's **law enforcement agency**
- Greater police cooperation in the prevention and fight against serious and organised crime at international level and terrorism
- Facilitates information sharing and cooperation
- Enables intelligence sharing, access to training and the provision of advice and assistance in investigations

## Relevance

- The volume of information exchanged is steadily increasing, with 16,391 operative notifications currently being issued each year

**Came into force 2006**  
Scope extended in 2008 and 2018



# Eurojust

## Contents

- Cooperation agreement with Eurojust, the EU's **judicial coordination and cooperation agency**
- Enhances international cooperation in the fight against serious crime
- Coordinates investigations and prosecutions between member states and helps clarify jurisdictional matters
- Facilitates information sharing and the execution of international mutual assistance and extradition requests

## Relevance

- The number of cases brought to Eurojust has been steadily increasing (3,317 in 2018, up 23% on 2017)

**Came into force 2011**



# Cooperation with the EDA

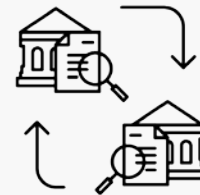
## Contents

- Non-legally binding armaments cooperation agreement with the **European Defence Agency (EDA)**
- Enables Switzerland to identify developments in armaments policy and access multilateral cooperation projects, primarily involving research and development and the acquisition and maintenance of armaments
- Switzerland may decide what information it wishes to exchange and the projects and programmes in which it wishes to participate

## Relevance

- The agreement is in Switzerland's economic, scientific research and technological interests

**Came into force 2012**



# Cooperation between competition authorities

## Contents

- Cooperation agreement to address obstacles to cross-border competition
- Facilitates the exchange of confidential information and cooperation between competition authorities and avoids duplication

## Relevance

- Essential given the close economic relations between Switzerland and the EU
- Makes the Swiss Competition Commission (COMCO) more effective, as it receives relevant information from the European Commission
- Achieves more consistent decisions

**Came into force 2014**



# Satellite navigation systems (Galileo, EGNOS)

## Contents

- Switzerland's participation in the European Galileo and EGNOS programmes, including specific participation rights
- **Galileo:** accurate and reliable satellite-based navigation system
- **EGNOS:** regional system used to improve the accuracy and reliability of global satellite signals

## Relevance

- Reduces dependency on the US GPS system and provides access to all signals in times of war and in peacetime
- Improves conditions for competitive tendering by the Swiss aerospace and service industries

### **Not yet in force**

Has applied provisionally since 2014; Switzerland ratified agreement in 2015 (EU ratification process under way)



# European Asylum Support Office (EASO)

## Contents

- Agreement on Switzerland's participation in the activities of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO)
- Facilitates, coordinates and strengthens cooperation on asylum between member states
- Supports member states whose asylum systems and reception facilities are under particular pressure

## Relevance

- Statement of interest by Switzerland
- Strengthens the Dublin system and contributes to a more efficient and fairer asylum system between member states
- Availability of expertise in other Schengen countries

**Came into force 2016**



# Linking of emissions trading schemes

## Contents

- Allows Switzerland to link its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions trading systems (ETS) to that of the European Union (EU) and facilitates the mutual recognition of emissions trading
- Creates a level playing field for the relevant Swiss sectors and European companies involved in emissions trading, thus preventing distortions of competition caused by climate policy

## Relevance

- Encourages cost-effective action to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Incorporating civil aviation emissions into the Swiss CO<sub>2</sub> emissions trading system

### **Not yet in force**

Agreement signed in 2017





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**The main bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU**

Title, date, speaker