



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
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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

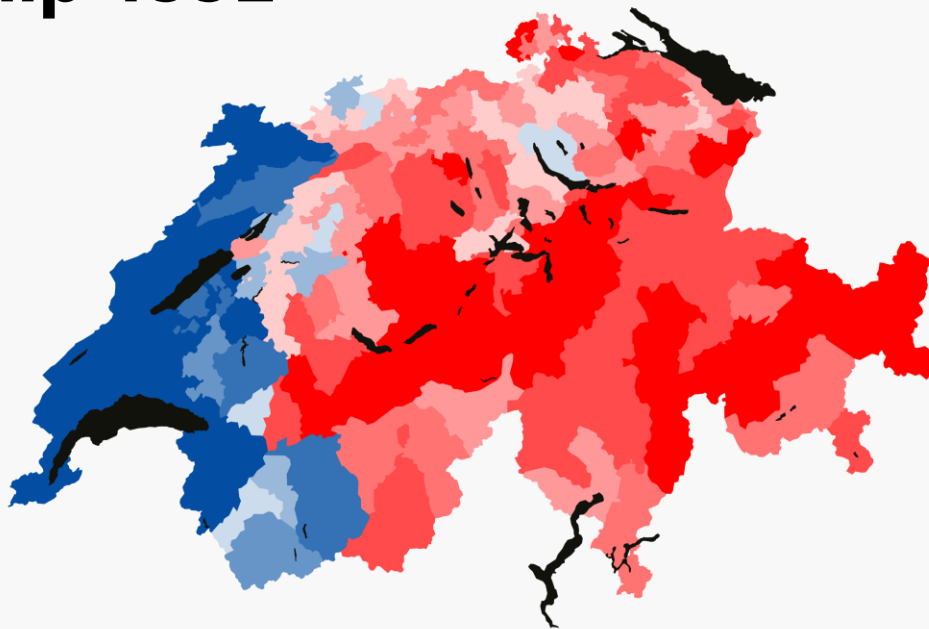
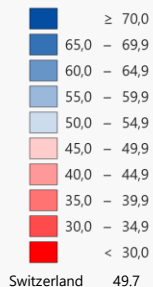




No to EEA membership 1992

Origins of the bilateral approach
on 6 December 1992

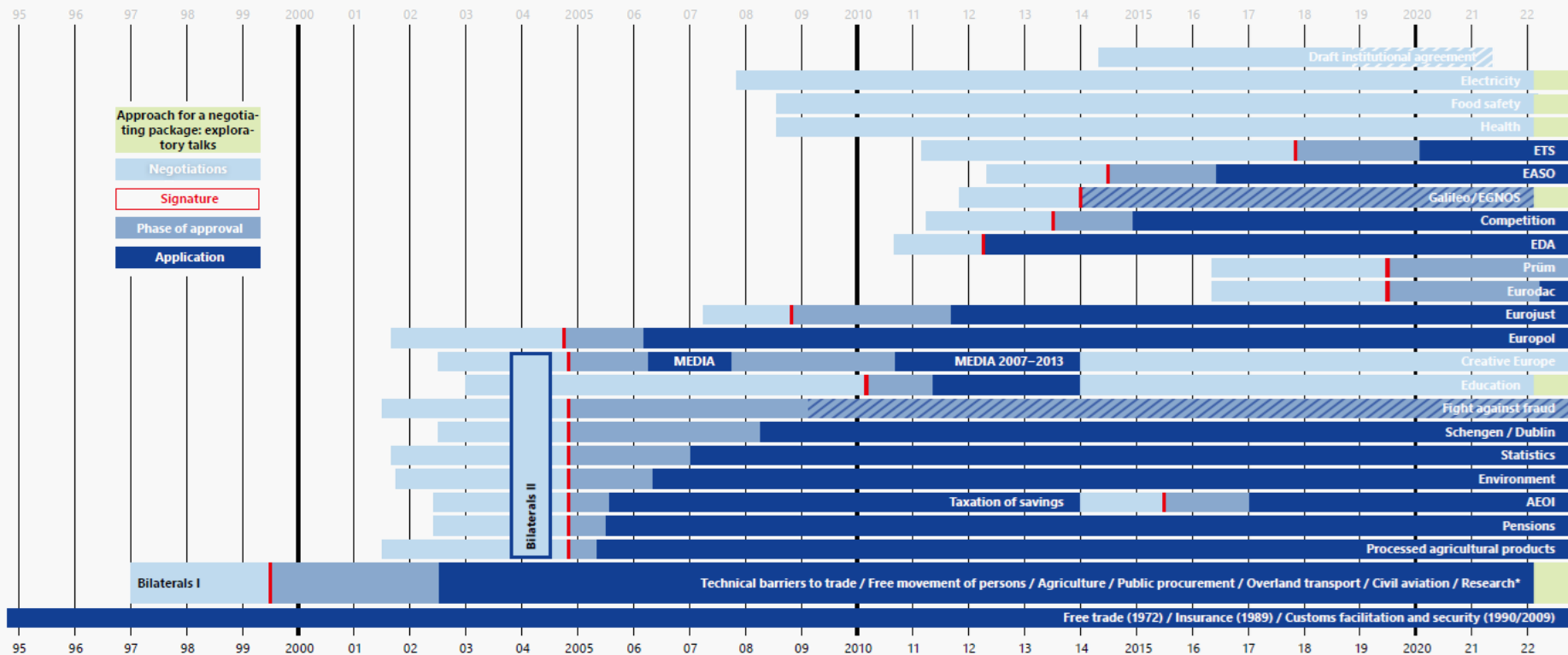
Yes vote percentage





Bilateral agreements Switzerland–EU

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The bilateral approach

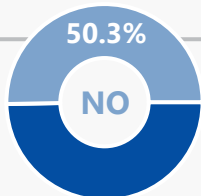
* Research: Due to the limited duration of the EU programmes, the research agreement must be renewed for each programme generation.



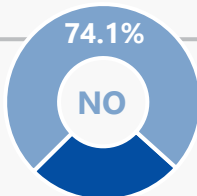
Key referendums

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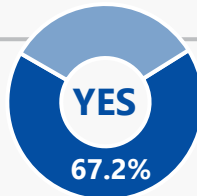
1992 European Economic Area (EEA)



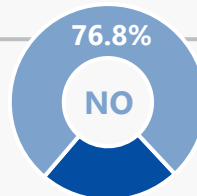
1997 'EU membership negotiations before the people' initiative



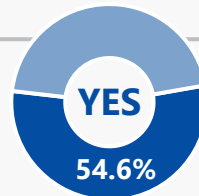
2000 Bilaterals I



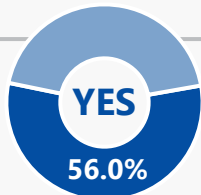
2001 'Yes to Europe!' initiative



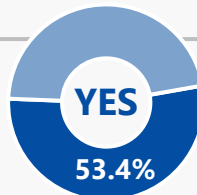
2005 Schengen/Dublin



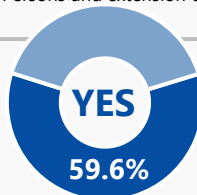
2005 Extension of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons



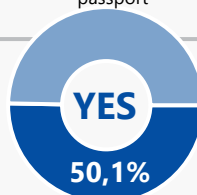
2006 Federal Act on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe



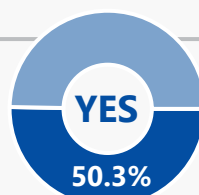
2009 Continuation of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons and extension to BG/RO



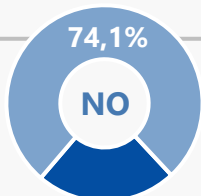
2009 introduction of electronically stored biometric data in the Swiss passport



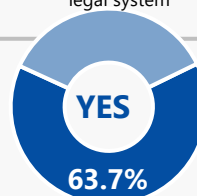
2014 'Stop Mass Immigration' initiative



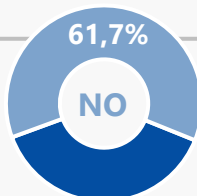
2014 Ecopop



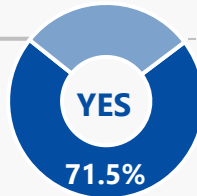
2019 Implementation of the EU firearms directive into the Swiss legal system



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*



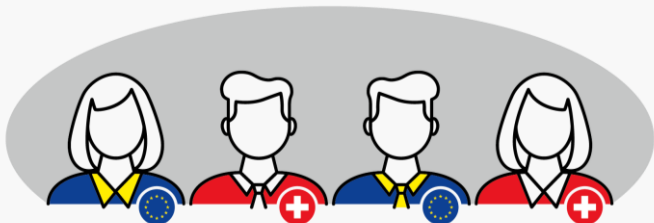
Summary

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

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



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

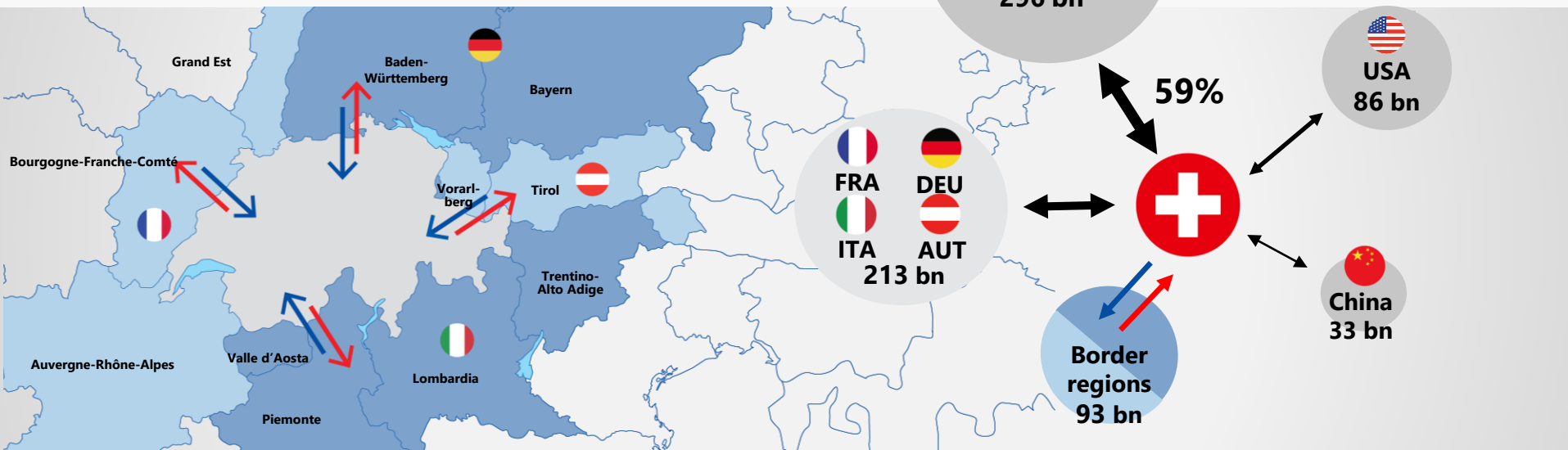


Cooperation with Europe





Swiss-EU trade





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.





Stabilisation and further development of the bilateral approach

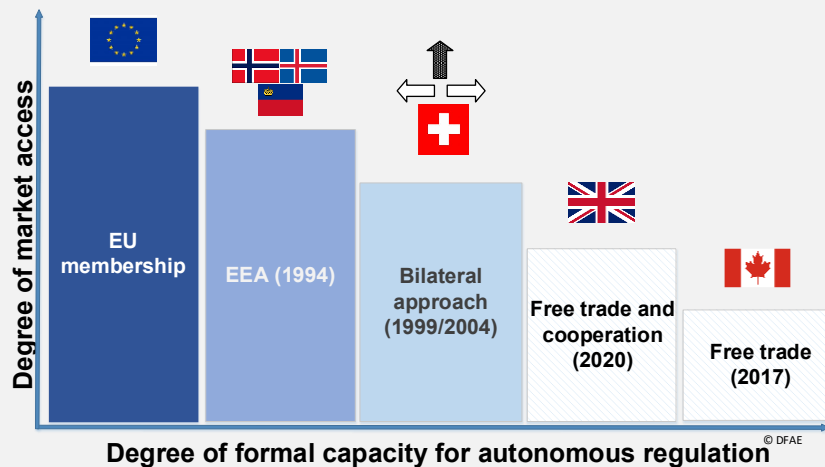
The bilateral path has proven its worth:

- 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
- Status quo 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.

On 20 December 2024, the Federal Council took note with satisfaction the **material conclusion of the negotiations** on the package approach.

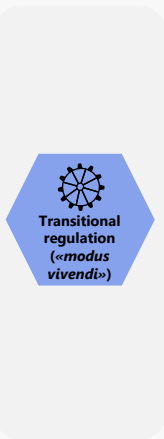
Different ways of being in a relationship with the EU
EU membership, EEA, bilateral approach, FTAs



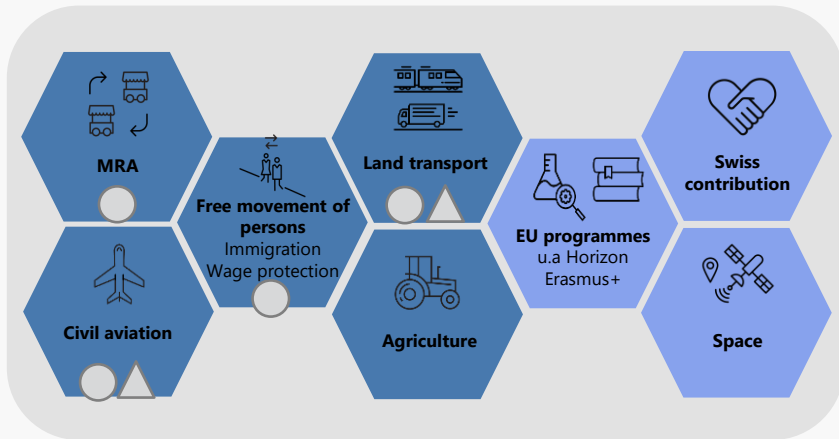


The bilateral approach CH-EU

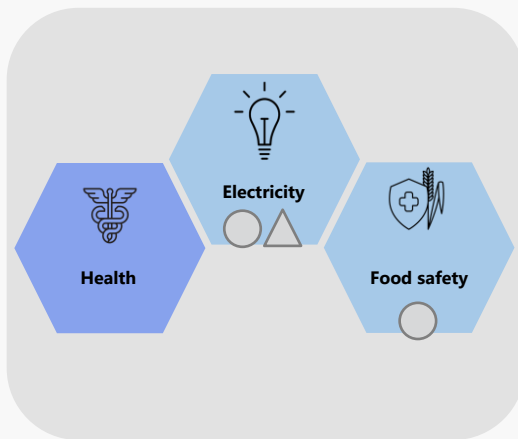
Normalisation



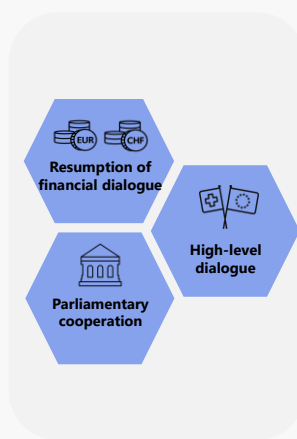
Stabilisation



Further development



Dialogues and cooperation



Existing single market agreements



Other agreements and areas of interest



New single market agreements



Institutional elements
Dynamic alignment,
dispute resolution



State aid

Process **domestic** / **foreign policy**



Bern, 20.12.24

Feb. 2022 – Nov. 2023	Exploratory talks
Dec. 2023 – Feb. 2024	Preparation and consultation of the negotiation mandate
March 2024	Definitive mandate and start of CH-EU negotiations
December 2024	The Federal Council takes note of the material conclusion of the negotiations
December 2024 - before the summer break 2025	«Legal scrubbing» and translation of the agreements into the Swiss national languages (German, French, Italian)
	Finalisation of domestic policy discussions with social partners, cantons and stakeholders
	Finalisation of internal implementation
	Initialling of the agreements (in EN), on the Swiss side by the chief negotiator and the person(s) responsible for the negotiations in each negotiation track
	Federal Council decision on the signature of the agreements
from the summer break 2025	Opening of the consultation
	Consultation of agreements with the EU and domestic implementing legislation
	Signature of the agreements
	Adoption of the message by the Federal Council and transmission to Parliament
	Parliamentary debate
	Public Vote



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 railroad tracks crossing each other. The tracks are made of metal rails on wooden sleepers, set against a background of gravel. The perspective is from a low angle, looking down the tracks as they intersect.

Thank you for your attention

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