



## Air transport

### What is it about?

Switzerland is a very well-connected country in the centre of Europe. Swiss airspace is very busy, so international coordination is very important. Switzerland needs competitive airlines that connect it with Europe and the entire world. These depend on good framework conditions.

The air transport agreement between Switzerland and the EU creates the best conditions for this. It regulates the mutual access of EU and Swiss airlines to the liberalised air transport market. This agreement means that Swiss airlines are generally on an equal footing with their EU competitors.

The air transport agreement also ensures a high level of safety and regulates Swiss participation in the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), which is crucial for international security regulations. The agreement also ensures Switzerland's participation in the Single European Sky, which aims to modernise the European air traffic control system.

The air transport agreement is currently the only internal market agreement that already contains state aid rules. The Competition Commission of Switzerland (COMCO) is responsible for monitoring these rules in Switzerland.

### Outcome of the negotiations

The outcome of the negotiations is based on the Federal Council's negotiating mandate and fulfils its requirements. The negotiating mandate included the implementation of cabotage (8th and 9th freedoms of the air) and participation in the SESAR 3 research programme. The research programme aims to modernise European air traffic control and promote new, pioneering technologies that are integrated into the market.

In the course of the negotiations, Switzerland succeeded in agreeing the exchange of cabotage rights. It was also possible to enable Swiss actors to participate in SESAR 3 through Switzerland's association with Horizon Europe.

In addition, the institutional rules and regulations on state aid in the air transport agreement were updated. This ensures that the air transport agreement remains up to date and that the rules in air transport are coherent.

The objectives of the negotiations were achieved.

### Importance for Switzerland

The exchange of cabotage rights (8th and 9th freedoms of the air) gives Swiss airlines the right to offer domestic flights within the EU member states. In return, EU airlines will in future be able to offer domestic flights in Switzerland. The exchange of cabotage rights completes the process of reciprocal allocation of traffic rights between Switzerland and the EU.

The participation of Swiss actors in SESAR 3 enables the aviation industry, in particular air traffic control providers, airports and airlines, to invest in developing innovative technologies and procedures via dedicated funding.

Thanks to the expansion of its co-determination rights, Switzerland can contribute its expertise at EU level and actively participate in decision shaping in the EU.

The positive outcome of the negotiations strengthens the air transport agreement. It also guarantees reciprocal market access under the same conditions and a high and coherent level of safety in the future.