

CATHERINE ASHTON

HIGH REPRESENTATIVE

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H.E. Didier Burkhalter  
President of the Swiss Confederation  
And Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

*Dear President,*

On 7 July, the EU received a formal request from the Swiss Federal Office for Migration for a revision of the EU-Swiss Agreement on the free movement of persons, following the amendment of the Swiss Constitution by the popular vote of 9 February. In view of the political importance of the matter, I am replying directly to you.

The principle of non-discrimination, including equal treatment of all EU Member States, the right to exercise an economic activity and reside on the territory of the other party and the standstill clause constitute the essential basis of the consent of the European Union to be bound by the agreement. Renegotiating these principles with the objective of introducing quantitative limits and quotas, combined with a preference for Swiss nationals would be in fundamental contradiction to the objective of the Agreement on the free movement of persons.

Following consultations with Member States, I regret that the EU is not in a position to agree with your request.

The Commission services and the European External Action Service remain however at your disposal for any discussion on practical problems related to the implementation of the Agreement.

*Sincerely,*



Catherine Ashton