

Switzerland in the foreign media: 4th quarter of 2024

Conclusion of negotiations between Switzerland and the EU

The conclusion of negotiations between Switzerland and the EU in December on the stabilisation and further development of bilateral relations met with a moderate and largely objective media response abroad. The media in neighbouring countries

«Même si le gouvernement accepte vendredi le texte, le plus difficile restera toutefois à suivre»

(*Le Figaro*, France)

in particular, as well as publications specialising in European politics, reported on the conclusion of the negotiations. In the run-up to the event, the media emphasised the economic benefits of the proposed package for

Switzerland, but also pointed out the political resistance to it within the country. The fact that the negotiations were successfully concluded received much positive coverage, and the agreement itself was sometimes referred to as historic. In neighbouring countries, several articles presented the result as advantageous and as an opportunity for Switzerland, partly because the EU had made concessions in key areas such as immigration and research. At the same time, it was pointed out that the agreement has yet to be ratified. Against this backdrop, numerous media outlets highlighted the domestic political situation in Switzerland and the arguments of the various groups opposed to the agreement. Coverage was generally pessimistic about the outcome of a possible referendum in Switzerland, suggesting that widespread EU scepticism in Switzerland would make it unlikely for the agreement to be approved in a vote.

«Die Schweiz blockiert sich ja am Ende immer auch gerne selbst... Nun hätten die Schweizer immerhin die Chance, den bilateralen Weg zu sichern. Sie sollten sie ergreifen.»

(*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Germany)



The flags of Switzerland and the EU at the Lohn estate in Kehrsatz on the occasion of the conclusion of negotiations between Switzerland and the EU. (© *Le Figaro*)



EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and President of the Swiss Confederation Viola Amherd at the media conference in Bern on 20 December 2024. (© *Euronews*)

Swiss financial centre: PInC-report and impact of CS crisis

The findings of the Parliamentary Investigation Committee (PInC / PUK) into the conduct of the authorities in the context of the Credit Suisse (CS) crisis, which were presented at the end of the year, attracted some attention in the foreign media. Coverage quoted at length the PInC's criticism of the Swiss authorities and supervisory bodies, accusing them of numerous failings. At the same time, reports emphasised that according to the PInC it was not the authorities but the management and board of directors of CS who were responsible for the collapse of the bank. Several foreign media

"In Switzerland's very deliberative political system, the clout a PUK carries has also proved powerful in influencing legislation"

(*Bloomberg*, United States)

outlets also reported that, following the PInC report, numerous other investors joined a class action lawsuit against Switzerland accusing the government of misconduct in connection with the AT1 write-downs as part of the emergency takeover of CS by UBS. CS and UBS – as its legal successor – also received coverage in the foreign media for other reasons. For example, a study by consulting firm Deloitte pointing to dwindling confidence in the Swiss financial centre following the CS takeover attracted considerable attention. Foreign reporting on FINMA's decision not to approve UBS's emergency plans and competitive pressure in the wealth management business also drew attention to current challenges facing the Swiss financial centre.

«Behörden haben vor Credit-Suisse-Kollaps gepatzt»

(*FAZ*, Germany)

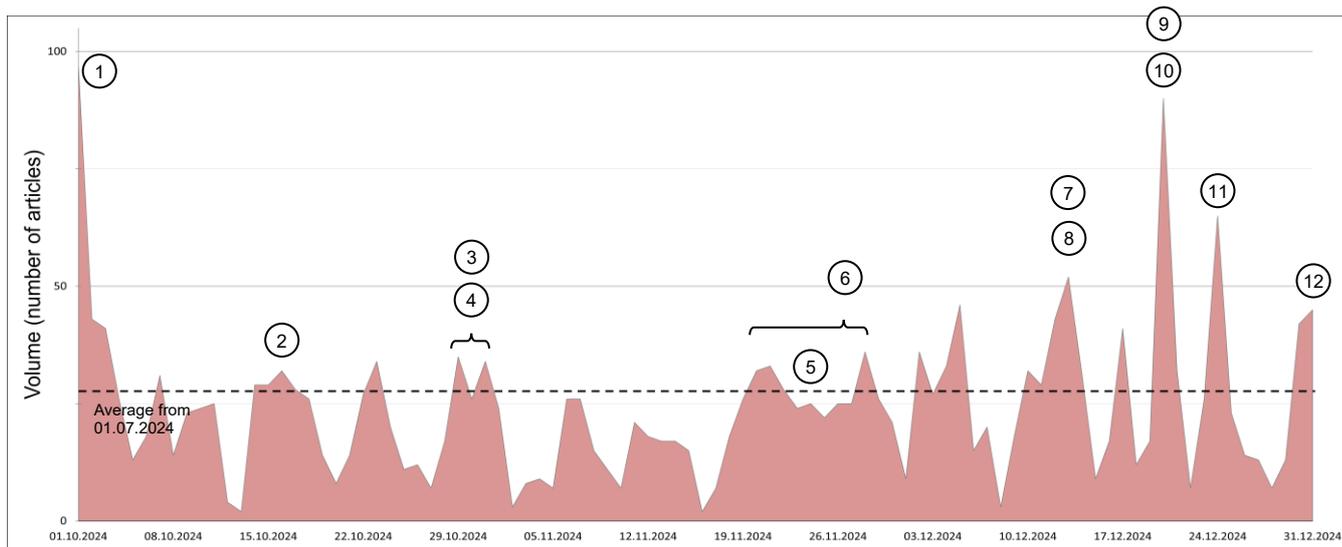


Following the AT1 write-downs ordered in the CS emergency merger, lawsuits against FINMA and Switzerland are piling up. (© *Financial Times*)



The members of the PInC present their final report on CS to the Swiss parliament. (© *FAZ*)

Quantitative trends in foreign media coverage related to Switzerland



Changes in the volume and tone of foreign media coverage related to Switzerland (volume = number of articles per day in the leading media analysed, 01.10.2024 – 31.12.2024). A spike can correspond to multiple events. The numbered events have been selected on the basis of their volume and significance.

(1) Glacier melt shifts border between Switzerland and Italy (2) FINMA calls for revision of UBS wind-down plan (3) Investigation into the use of the 'Sarco suicide capsule' (4) Referendum against the Eurovision Song Contest in Basel (5) Federal vote: expansion of motorway network, tenancy law bills, EFAS healthcare financing (6) AI art installation 'Deus in Machina' (7) Acquittal of a whistleblower in the 'cum-ex' affair by the Supreme Court of the Canton of Zurich (8) SNB lowers key interest rate (9) Presentation of PlnC report on the authorities' management of the CS emergency merger (10) Negotiations concluded between Switzerland and the EU (11) Swiss snowboard cross Olympian Sophie Hediger dies in avalanche (12) SWISS flight attendant dies after engine problems.

Focus: tightening of admission rules at ETH Zurich

The tightening of admission rules announced by ETH Zurich for students and job applicants from a total of 23 countries attracted attention in the foreign media. According to ETH Zurich, security screening aims to prevent the misuse of key technologies and

"In Switzerland, the fact that country's most prestigious university has taken this step has raised questions over whether others in the region will follow suit"

(Bloomberg, United States)

dual-use goods with military applications by sanctioned countries. In foreign media coverage, the topic was mainly covered from the angle of feared restrictions for students from

China. The decision was also hotly debated particularly in academic circles, and came in for some critical attention on social media. The reporting showed that the approach adopted by Swiss institutions is also being followed with interest abroad. In this context, the relevant question for many countries is how the outflow of key technologies and militarily relevant knowledge from research institutions can be prevented in the face of a changed geopolitical situation.

What criteria are used for security screening?

The following criteria are checked before admission, employment or an invitation is granted. If several criteria are met, ETH Zurich recommends rejecting the application. The process is not automatic: each application is examined individually and no single criterion leads to immediate exclusion.

1. **Previous education** at an institution with a security risk. Such institutions comprise military-related universities and institutions subject to sanctions. ETH takes sanctions lists of Switzerland, the EU, the US and the UK as the basis for this.
2. The **country of origin**, if it is subject to sanctions (see above) or export control provisions for dual-use goods apply. As well as nationality, a person's place of residence and biography are also taken into account here.
3. **Funding** through a scholarship from a sanctioned state, through a critical scholarship or exchange programme or from improper or questionable sources.
4. The **subject area or degree programme** if it counts as applied research (from TRL 4), is subject to increased official supervision (embargo), falls under applicable export control regulations for dual-use goods, or if the research topic falls into the category of critical research areas or uses critical technologies.

The new screening procedure at ETH Zurich takes into account not only the country of origin but also criteria such as previous education at institutions deemed to present a potential security risk, the sources of funding and the subject area of the research. Source: [ETH Zurich](#)

Monitoring the image of Switzerland in the foreign media covers all the reporting on Swiss-related topics in the leading media of 23 countries – Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, the UK and the US – as well as in the leading pan-Arab and EU media. Contact: FDFA, Presence Switzerland, Monitoring and Analysis, Bundesgasse 32, 3003 Bern, tel. +41 58 462 34 63, prs@eda.admin.ch, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/praesenzschweiz>