



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of
Foreign Affairs FDFA

Equal opportunities in the workplace: FDFA Action Plan 2028

Foreword



Switzerland's linguistic, cultural and political diversity are its core strengths.

At the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), we too would like to capitalise on these strengths. Equal opportunities in the workplace is a tool to this effect. It goes far beyond preventing discrimination, applying fixed quotas or integrating minorities. Essentially, it is about ensuring that all FDFA staff members start off their careers on an equal footing and are given the same development opportunities, thereby maximising the potential of our workforce.

To this end, a number of approaches and mechanisms can be employed. The most important prerequisite is a common understanding of equal opportunities in the workplace and the rules applicable at the FDFA. This is the main purpose of this Action Plan, which serves as a standard reference document for all staff in our Department. Priority fields of action, measurable and ambitious objectives, and concrete measures provide the framework for the Action Plan. I am counting on the support of all FDFA staff members – both at head office and in our external network – but above all on that of our management, in implementing this Action Plan.

Over the past ten years, joint efforts to ensure greater equality of opportunities within the FDFA have achieved considerable success. However, certain objectives have yet to be met. Women remain underrepresented in management positions and Italian speakers are underrepresented in the Department as a whole. The same applies to the share of people with disabilities. These issues will therefore continue to be relevant in the future.

The workplace has undergone further changes over the past years, some of which are connected with the challenges posed by COVID-19. Flexible working arrangements and the reconciliation of work and family life are key to making the FDFA a modern and adaptable employer, as too are critical thinking and a results-oriented approach. This way, we can continue to attract the best staff for the success of our foreign policy.

Switzerland's multilingualism and cultural diversity are also key assets in foreign policy, making Switzerland a competent bridge builder and mediator. We are only credible when we also apply and promote these values internally – values that include openness, independent thinking, trust and a constructive culture of error.

Diversity is only a source of enrichment when people receive equal recognition irrespective of their gender, origin, culture or language and when the potential of different opinions and points of view is recognised. This also calls for an inclusive approach. I therefore preface this FDFA Action Plan with the following motto:

"Diversity is our reality, **equal opportunity** our aspiration, **inclusion** our ambition."

I encourage you to make an active and creative contribution to the successful implementation of this Action Plan.

Many thanks for your commitment!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cassis', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

President of the Swiss Confederation Ignazio Cassis
Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA)

Contents

1	Background information	5
2	Assessment of 2010–2020	6
3	Fields of action 2022–2028	8
	3.1 Departmental culture	8
	3.2 Multilingualism	10
	3.3 Gender parity	11
	3.4 Management and processes	12
4	Implementation	14
	Appendices	15
	1. Results of the external evaluation of the Equal Opportunities Policy 2010–2020	15
	2. Action Plan monitoring cockpit	16
	3. Abbreviations	17
	4. Glossary	17

1 Background information

The FDFA's efforts to achieve equal opportunities in the workplace draw on the provisions of the **Federal Constitution** and the personnel policy of the Federal Administration based thereon. In accordance with the Federal Constitution (Cst.), the Confederation ensures "the greatest possible equality of opportunity among its citizens" (Cst. Art. 2 para. 3). The Constitution also bans discrimination and sets out equal rights; equality between men and women, both in law and in practice; the elimination of inequalities that affect persons with disabilities (Cst. Art. 8); and the national languages German, French, Italian, and Romansh (Cst. Art. 4), the first three of which are listed as official languages of the Confederation (Cst. Art. 70).

This Action Plan is also based on the relevant **core documents** of the Federal Council, namely the [Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–2023](#) , Switzerland's [2030 Sustainable Development Strategy](#) , and the recently adopted national [2030 Gender Equality Strategy](#) . Further points of reference include the [FDFA Guidelines on Human Rights 2021–2024](#) , and the [FDFA foreign policy Strategy on Gender equality and Women's rights](#) . The present Action Plan reflects the *internal* dimension of this subject. When it comes to promoting equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion, **coherence** between the foreign, domestic and institutional levels is necessary to ensure the credibility of Switzerland's actions in this area.

The Action Plan comes under the core FDFA documents that are relevant to staff (Transfer Policy, Accompanying Persons Policy, etc.). In addition, the FDFA's international orientation and presence require a situation-appropriate interpretation of the applicable staff guidelines of the Federal Office of Personnel (FOPER). Our personnel policy is shaped by different staff categories – a large part of our staff work in transferable careers. The FDFA has some 170 representations. More than half of our staff are local personnel, residing all over the world. In addition to the four national languages, over 50 languages are spoken worldwide within the FDFA. This **diversity** is unique within the Federal Administration.

What do we mean by **equal opportunities** in the workplace? The aim is to give all FDFA staff unimpeded access to opportunities and resources, professional development and career advancement prospects. This creates a level playing field for all staff members; everyone should have the same opportunity to reach their potential, regardless of gender, language, age, health situation or disability, way of life, family situation, origin or religion.

An institution as a whole can benefit from **inclusion** if employees are able to bring their views and talents to their working life irrespective of their personal characteristics. At the FDFA, we therefore value all of our staff members; nobody should be discriminated against or excluded.

The present Action Plan follows on from the **FDFA Equal Opportunities Policy 2010–2020**. It is the result of many years of experience, internal monitoring, an external evaluation and scientific input. It is also based on the feedback and needs of staff, management personnel at head office and in the external network, and interested associations. It was discussed on several occasions at Directors meetings, after which it was validated by the head of department. What has emerged is an ambitious Action Plan with four equal and complementary fields of action. Field of action 1 is to be understood as cross-cutting in nature.

- Field of action 1: departmental culture
- Field of action 2: multilingualism
- Field of action 3: gender parity
- Field of action 4: management and processes

For each field of action, objectives and measures are outlined. The attainment of objectives is reviewed on an annual basis by means of defined indicators. In order to promote a common understanding of the terms used, the Action Plan contains a glossary.

2 Assessment of 2010–2020

The FDFA Equal Opportunities Policy 2010–2020 defined six fields of action and set target values for three of them:

- › A future-oriented departmental culture
- › Organisation of career trajectories
- › Representation of women and men at management level (objective: parity up to salary class 29; 30% share of women in top management)
- › Forms of work and reconciliation (work/family) (objective: acceptance of flexible forms of employment)

- › Multilingualism and cultural diversity (objective: a representative share of the national language communities among employees)
- › Integration of people with disabilities (from 2011) (objective: share of people with disabilities between 1% and 2%; since 2020 between 1.5% and 2.5%)

The progress achieved with regard to the Equal Opportunities Policy 2010–2020 was monitored internally on an annual basis by the FDFA Section Equal Opportunities and Global Gender Issues.¹ After ten years, the results are as follows:

Indicator	Initial value 31.12.2009	Target value set for 2020	Value reached as of 31.12.2020	Evaluation
Proportion of women in the FDFA	46.9%	50%	52.1% (+ 5.2%)	achieved
Proportion of women in mid- and senior-level management	33.8%	50%	46.1% (+ 12.3%)	not achieved
Proportion of women in top management (salary classes 30–38)	11.9%	30%	26.9% (+ 15%)	not achieved
Proportion of women in management positions	24.5%	50%	35.6% (+ 11.1%)	not achieved
Flexible working forms (part-time, level of employment < 90)	women: 27.9% men: 3.9%	increased acceptance	women: 33.1% (+ 5.2%) men: 11.8% (+ 7.9%)	achieved
Proportion of German speakers	68% (30.06.2011) salary classes 30–38	maximum 68.5%–70%	66%	achieved
Proportion of German speakers, top management	62% (30.06.2011) salary classes 30–38	maximum 68.5%–70%	55.8% (salary classes 34–38)	achieved
Proportion of French speakers	25% (30.06.2011)	21.5%–23.5%	27.3%	achieved
Proportion of French speakers, top management	30% (30.06.2011) salary classes 30–38	21.5%–23.5%	33.6% (salary classes 34–38)	achieved
Proportion of Italian speakers	total 5.4% (30.06.2011)	6.5%–8.5%	6.0% (+ 0.6%)	not achieved
Proportion of Italian speakers, top management	6% (30.06.2011) salary classes 30–38	6.5%–8.5%	8.0% (salary classes 34–38)	achieved
Proportion of Romansh speakers	0.3% (30.06.2011)	0.5%–1.0%	0.7% (+ 0.4%)	achieved
Proportion of Romansh speakers, top management	0.8% (30.06.2011) salary classes 30–38	0.5%–1.0%	2.7% (salary classes 34–38)	achieved
Proportion of people with disabilities	2015–2018: 1.5% 2019: 1.3%	2011–2019 1%–2% 2020–2023: 1.5%–2.5%	0.6% (– 0.9%)	not achieved, in decline since 2019

¹ In the yearly monitoring of the Equal Opportunities Policy 2010–2020, the figures were obtained on 31 December each year. Future data collection in the context of this Action Plan will take the form of a cockpit and average annual values will be used according to the figures collected by the FOPER.

The Equal Opportunities Policy 2010–2020 was also evaluated externally by the Competence Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) of the University of St. Gallen in 2020. Consistent with the figures obtained internally, the results of this evaluation show that action is first required in those areas in which the target values were not reached. In addition, the study identified potential for development with regard to the reconciliation of work and other areas of life (for results see Appendix 1).

On the basis of the internal and external evaluation processes, key factors for a successful implementation of the FDFA Equal Opportunities Policy 2010–2020 were identified. These factors will be further reinforced in the new Action Plan:

- › Effective inclusion is part and parcel of the FDFA's departmental culture.
- › Further efforts are required to achieve equal opportunities in the workplace.
- › The commitment of the Department leadership and management personnel plays a decisive role.
- › Moreover, it is important to ensure an ongoing exchange with regard to the jointly defined objectives and measures. Possible tools include information and awareness-raising measures and concrete, positive examples, which should be highlighted.
- › Structured, transparent and competence-based staff processes are needed to ensure that equal opportunities are afforded.
- › Stereotypes have to be recognised and a clearer way for handling them should be established.
- › Flexible and innovative working models are being introduced and supported, ensuring that employment models no longer constitute a barrier to career development.

As it embarks on the new Action Plan 2028, the FDFA is starting off in a much stronger position in many areas. The Action Plan builds on these achievements.

3 Fields of action 2022–2028

The four fields of action outlined below pertain to the whole of the Department – both head office and the external network – and apply to all staff categories. Alongside the objectives and measures for each field of action, the responsibilities for implementation (lead) are established. The indicators for monitoring the extent to which the objectives have been achieved can be found in Appendix 3.

3.1 Departmental culture

The FDFA sees the diversity in the composition of its workforce as an added value and an opportunity. It walks the talk in leading a culture of inclusion, strives to strike a balance between work and family² life and does not tolerate any form of discrimination. The latter point is essential to the success of all efforts to guarantee equal opportunities.

Objectives and measures

A. The FDFA provides a respectful and inclusive working environment free from discrimination.

Measures	Lead
Using the Workplace Policy as a communication and management tool to ensure adherence to the FDFA code of conduct, guarantee non-discrimination and prevent sexual harassment in all organisational units and across all FDFA locations.	Management
Implementing regular information, awareness-raising and preventive measures and organising regular and further training on the subjects of discrimination, mobbing and sexual harassment.	GS
Effectively implementing the mechanisms for complaints, review and sanctions in the event of discrimination, mobbing or sexual harassment.	GS, DR
Elaborating a concept for the hiring and employment of and approach towards people with disabilities and for reintegrating employees following illness or an accident.	GS
Ensuring the absence of structural and digital barriers in consultation with the relevant federal offices (Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics, FOBL); providing support for people with disabilities, for example by adapting workspaces to meet individual needs.	DR
Offering a pilot job-sharing scheme for people with disabilities and employees who can best complement them.	DR, line management
In accordance with the Federal Personnel Ordinance (FPersO), communication with staff takes place in the three official languages. When addressing local staff, important messages on personnel-related matters are also made available in English and Spanish. With regard to gender-neutral language, the guidelines issued by the Federal Chancellery (available in German or French) apply in general.	DR, members of Department leadership

² In the context of this Action Plan, the term “family life” should be understood in a broad sense (see “reconciliation” under Glossary).

B. The FDFA seizes the opportunities offered by the diverse staff composition and promotes inclusion.

Measures	Lead
Promoting effective inclusion through events, campaigns, studies, workshops and working groups to raise awareness with regard to diversity and people with disabilities, and to address specific subjects in the area of diversity and critical thinking. Representations take into account the particular context and any cultural specificities. Harnessing the potential of new technologies (webinars etc.) to involve the external network.	GS
Fostering the potential of all staff at head office and within the external network regardless of their career path (transferable staff, general services, local staff, etc.) or their age. ³	DR, line management
Target group-oriented awareness raising among new staff members and apprentices on the subjects of equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion (e.g. stereotypes, sexual harassment) through workshops and webinars.	GS, DR

C. The FDFA supports staff members in reconciling work and family life and is considered as a modern and attractive employer.

Measures	Lead
Developing guidelines on the use of flexible and mobile working models at head office and in the external network and providing the technical conditions required for mobile and flexible working forms. Examining the use of workspaces in larger towns.	DR
Publishing of all vacancies at head office at an employment level of 80–100% maximum, thus promoting the acceptance of part-time employment, including for men and with regard to management positions. For 80–100% positions, the desired level of employment must not be a determining factor when selecting candidates.	DR, line management
Holding workshops on job-sharing and co-management and promoting this form of employment, both at home and abroad, as a possibility for part-time work.	GS
Guaranteeing systematic replacements during maternity leave and long periods of military service.	DR, line management
Making people aware of the possibility for staff members within the Federal Administration to reduce their employment level by 20% in the event of parenthood and then bring the level back up again within three years.	DR
Enabling flexible career paths (mosaic careers, re-entry into employment, arc careers at the end of a career trajectory) which take into account the demands of different stages of life cycle (caring for children and family members, personal capacities, etc.).	DR, GS
Introducing pilot projects to improve the family compatibility of transferable careers, despite limiting conditions such as the basic non-entitlement to part-time work in the external network.	DR, line management
Improving conditions to support the gainful employment of accompanying persons (e.g. increasing the number of bilateral agreements, showing consideration when determining transfers, promoting employment at the representations as well as occupations that are not tied to a specific location) and implementing the role of those responsible for accompanying persons at the representations.	DR

³ The FDFA Local Staff Guidelines (2021) set out specific regulations, obligations and rights that apply to local staff.

3.2 Multilingualism

The FDFA nurtures the cultural and linguistic diversity of its staff and recognises the added value that multilingualism represents for Switzerland's domestic and foreign policy. The four national language communities are represented at the FDFA according to the share of speakers among the population. All staff members can express themselves in their first official language, with the aim of instilling a trilingual departmental culture.

Objectives and measures

D. Within the FDFA, the four language communities are proportionately⁴ represented, whereby the share of Italian-speaking staff shall be at least 7%.

Measures	Lead
Promoting minority languages – particularly Italian – for example through increased personnel marketing to attract Italian-speaking staff, especially in salary classes 12–23, career information events, academic internships and the 'piccolo Erasmus' exchange programme.	DR, GS
Ensuring that the application process can take place in each candidate's first official language and making sure that HR advisers and approved psychologists with a good command of the relevant language are on hand.	DR
Actively participating in the strategic and operational working group of the Federal Delegate for Plurilingualism and in the Delegate's evaluation report on plurilingualism in the Federal Administration; participating in the organisation of the European Day of Languages.	GS, DR
Recording the language skills of local staff; recording the biggest language groups as part of monitoring.	DR

E. Passive and active language skills are increasing among FDFA personnel.

Measures	Lead
Evaluating staff members' language skills in accordance with the FPersO. Data is collected every four years by the FOPER using the ECL system.	GS
Perfecting written expression in the official languages during writing workshops.	GS, DR
Promoting the language skills of staff and supervisors in accordance with the Languages Ordinance, including in the external network, by offering internal introductory and conversational courses (in physical and digital format) in three official languages, particularly Italian. Language skills are part of the management by objectives (MbO) evaluation.	GS, DR, line management
Advocating multilingualism also in the external network, by means of physical and virtual products for language weeks (<i>Settimana della lingua italiana nel mondo</i> , <i>Emna rumantscha</i> , <i>Wochen der deutschen Sprache</i> , <i>Semaine de la francophonie</i>).	GS

⁴ According to the ranges set by the Federal Council, the following distribution of the national language groups in the Federal Administration is considered representative: German: maximum 68.5–70%; French: minimum 21.5–23.5%, Italian: minimum 6.5–8.5%, Romansh: minimum 0.5–1%.

3.3 Gender parity

Gender parity at all hierarchical levels brings an added value to the FDFA. Mixed-gender teams obtain better results and their decisions are more widely accepted. In putting gender parity into practice as one of its core values, Switzerland also sends an important foreign policy signal. The FDFA therefore ensures a balanced gender ratio in all functions and at all levels in its hierarchy. Each gender should fall within the range of 45% to 55% for its representation to be considered equal.

Objective and measures

F. In the FDFA, there is equal gender representation (45–55%) across all functions, staff categories and hierarchical levels.

Measures	Lead
Conducting systematic monitoring to ensure that personnel processes are gender-neutral and integration of awareness raising on stereotypes and their elimination.	DR
Increasing the proportion of women (particularly in top management and as heads of mission): systematically supporting junior staff members (utilising demographic trends, retirement of 'baby boomers'); promoting knowledge transfer and the exchange of experiences between generations; and supporting gainful employment for accompanying persons.	DR, line management
Ensuring that shortlists at all hierarchical levels are as equally balanced as possible in terms of gender. Undertaking to inform suitable candidates about vacancy notices in good time.	DR, line management
Ensuring a gender balance as far as possible when organising the composition of events, panels and delegations.	Line management
Conducting workshops and training modules on stereotypes and a clear method for handling such cases. Systematically addressing the subject in management training sessions (e.g. Development Program ONE EDA).	GS, DR

3.4 Management and processes

The FDFA's leadership and all managers in the Department actively promote equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion and strive to lead by example. These subjects are an integral part of all managerial functions; in the external network, the specific context is taken into account. The Department fosters a culture of responsibility and accountability with respect to these subjects.

Objectives and measures

G. Management personnel at the FDFA assume their responsibilities seriously by promoting equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion.

Measures	Lead
Strengthening the communication skills of management personnel to add to their teams' collective intelligence and to build a culture of openness and critical thinking in which diversity and inclusion are valued.	Line management
Promoting an agile management approach by offering different types of workshops and further training (Development Program ONE EDA, FDFA and FOPER leadership courses, etc.). Formulating clear objectives and expectations so that teams and staff members can assume greater individual responsibility.	Line management
Fostering a constructive culture of error and feedback which concerns both staff and their supervisors.	Line management
Setting an annual target for each directorate (see Chapter 4 'Implementation').	Directors
All management staff at head office and in the external network are to set two to three annual targets (including the target of their directorate) and establish corresponding measures to promote and/or improve equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion in their organisational units (see Chapter 4 'Implementation').	Line management

H. Transparent personnel processes ensure a fair and equal starting point for all (future) employees.

Measures	Lead
Regular monitoring of the processes to ensure they are non-discriminatory. Decisions regarding personnel (e.g. recruitment via concours, salary classification, appraisals, transfers, hearings for top management positions) will be taken on the basis of competence and within the framework of transparent, structured processes, and in the case of concours and hearings, by commissions with a diverse membership composition.	GS, DR
A balanced representation of gender and language groups is taken into consideration in career development counselling, in the selection of participants in leadership seminars, and in the shortlisting process for and access to top management Assessment Centres.	DR

I. The FDFA invests in a learning and agile organisation and actively promotes the exchange of experiences and knowledge transfer between staff members.

Measures	Lead
From a presence culture to a results-driven culture: building a culture focused on results and trust in light of increasingly flexible and mobile working models. Providing regular information (worksmart@eda) through the DR in order to support managers and staff members.	DR, line management
Promoting institutionalised opportunities for mutual learning, networking, exchange of experiences and knowledge transfer (intergenerational mentoring, networking events and women's networking events).	DR, GS
Regularly publicising and evaluating the mentoring programme, which is already widely used, and complementing it with reverse mentoring (older staff members learning from younger staff members and digital natives, and vice versa).	DR
Organising and supporting internal events and networking activities, also involving subjects ranging from economics, politics and science, about equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion.	GS
Intensify exchanges between head office and the representations with regard to equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion. Strengthening support when challenges arise and prioritising them (through existing and new channels).	Line management, GS

4 Implementation

The FDFA's inclusive departmental culture has the broadest impact if it is supported by all staff members. The objectives and measures included in this Action Plan will therefore be addressed systematically and regularly in the relevant bodies and meetings at all hierarchical levels. Annual target setting and review of their achievement are both **management duties**:

- › **Annual bilateral discussions at directorate level** with the Section Equal Opportunities: at the beginning of the year, the parties involved come together to analyse the latest monitoring results and to discuss barriers and challenges. They examine whether the previous year's target has been achieved and set a new annual target.
- › **Directors' meeting**: at least once a year a Directors' meeting is held on the agreed targets, the implementation of the measures and the achievement of objectives.
- › **Targets in the individual organisational units**: each directorate is free to choose at which level (division, section, etc.) these targets are defined. Existing processes (Ambassadors' Conference, internal audits, etc.) are used to review the implementation of measures and the achievement of the targets.
- › **Personnel processes**: the defined targets are integrated into the management's personnel-related processes (recruitment interviews, MbOs, pre-deployment briefings, etc.).

The **overall coordination** of the implementation of this Action Plan is the responsibility of the FDFA Section Equal Opportunities, integrated within the General Secretariat. The following central processes and instruments are used for this purpose:

- › **Systematic monitoring** across the FDFA using a standardised data cockpit aligned with data from the FOPER, including data on local staff (indicators for each action field in Appendix 2).
- › **Contact point** for all organisational units in the FDFA to support them in the relevant processes.
- › Creation of a representative **advisory group** composed of representatives from all areas of the Department across all hierarchical levels, language groups, career paths and geographical regions (external network) to exchange on the implementation of the Action Plan.

An interim **evaluation** of the Action Plan will be performed in 2025, at the end of the first four years, and a final evaluation will be carried out at the end of the Action Plan.

Appendices

1. Results of the external evaluation of the Equal Opportunities Policy 2010–2020

The FDFA Equal Opportunities Policy 2010–2020 was evaluated externally in 2020 by the Competence Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) of the University of St. Gallen. The results were as follows:

Progress and strengths

Equal opportunities from a general perspective

- › Equal opportunities, related initiatives and the continual efforts in this area have become a part of the departmental culture. The different formats used to raise awareness, such as events, networking activities and campaigns, and further training (webinars and language courses), as well as the monitoring used to measure progress were well received within FDFA and gave the subject tangible content.
- › The Department's leadership is committed to equal opportunities in terms of gender issues, to multilingualism and to the integration of people with disabilities.

Gender parity

- › Generally speaking, gender parity was achieved within the FDFA.
- › In management positions, an increase in the share of women can be observed.
- › In comparison with the rest of the Federal Administration, the FDFA has the highest proportion of women in management positions at 40.4%.
- › Since 2020, four out of the six FDFA directorates have been led by women.
- › With a wage gap of 1.1% to the disadvantage of women, equal pay is almost achieved.

Multilingualism

- › The FDFA has the highest share of Italian-speaking management personnel in the Federal Administration. Language minorities are proportionally very well represented in top management.
- › An ambitious set of measures was drawn up to promote the Italian and Romansh languages at all hierarchical levels. Concrete actions included the Italian language learning campaign and the first edition of "Emna Rumantscha".

People with disabilities

- › A working group was created for people with disabilities and other staff members interested in these issues, with the aim of highlighting and articulating the concerns of this group of staff. In a Bulletin series, portraits of FDFA staff members gave a face to people with disabilities and their extraordinary achievements and brought visibility to the subject.

Potential for development and need for action

Equal opportunities from a general perspective

- › In the area of equal opportunities, the directorates require concrete support in the form of specialist expertise, monitoring, guidance and realistic agreed targets.
- › Measures for recognising, eliminating and handling stereotypes should be reinforced.
- › At head office, too often, part-time employment remains a stumbling block in employees' careers.
- › The transfer regime and obligation for staff abroad to work full-time make conciliation and living arrangements based on partnerships more difficult.

- › The teams need rules and arrangements with regard to working from home and mobile working.
- › It is important to have consistent and transparent processes to respond rapidly and effectively to sexual harassment.

Gender parity

- › Despite the increase in the proportion of women at all hierarchical levels, the target values were not met. The share of women from the upper management level onwards, particularly in leadership positions, in top management and as head of missions, must be increased.
- › Job-sharing and co-management should be encouraged.

Multilingualism

- › The share of Italian-speaking staff members should be increased in the general services in particular.
- › In order to ensure a truly trilingual culture, informal obstacles to using the Italian language in day-to-day administration within the FDFA must be removed.

People with disabilities

- › A concept is needed to establish how to facilitate the formal employment and inclusion of people with disabilities following a successfully completed integration work placement.
- › Structural and digital barriers must be removed.

2. Action Plan monitoring cockpit

The achievement of objectives in the four fields of action will be evaluated against the following indicators in the monitoring cockpit:

Departmental culture

- › Appraisal of the importance of diversity in one's own working environment
- › Incidents of sexual harassment, mobbing and abuse of power
- › Age pyramid
- › Reasons for staff turnover
- › Equal pay
- › Inclusion of people with disabilities
- › Feedback from the working group for people with disabilities in the FDFA
- › Use of the mentoring programme according to gender
- › Proportion of female and male FDFA staff working part-time at head office
- › Use of homeworking/mobile working at head office and in the external network (where possible)
- › Number of job-sharing and co-management positions
- › Staff satisfaction with reconciliation of work and family life at the FDFA, both at home and abroad

Multilingualism

- › Representation of the national language groups among the FDFA workforce
- › Representation of the language groups at all hierarchical levels, in the different career paths, in leadership positions, and among ambassadors, heads of mission and directors
- › Distribution of language groups in the recruitment of personnel
- › Employees' language skills (FPersO) in the official languages (ECL)
- › Number of participants in the various language courses
- › Survey on the language proficiency of the entire staff, including local staff, as part of the FDFA's cultural wealth
- › Specific evaluation of the satisfaction survey for Italian-speaking FDFA staff members

Gender parity

- › Gender balance across the entire workforce: staff subject to the Federal Personnel Ordinance and local staff
- › Balanced representation of men and women at all levels of hierarchy, in the different career paths, in leadership positions, and among ambassadors, heads of mission and directors
- › Gender distribution of performance appraisal results and performance-related bonuses
- › Promotions index
- › Gender percentages in the recruitment of personnel
- › Use of the ONE EDA development programme by women and men

Management and processes

- › Satisfaction with line managers (and their leadership)
- › Cases of complaints regarding personnel-related matters (appointments, transfers, etc.) brought to the DR and the Compliance Office
- › Feedback from further training, management seminars and awareness-raising events
- › Staff turnover figures (early transfers, resignation, etc.) per directorate/division

3. Abbreviations

BV:	Federal Constitution
DR:	Directorate for Resources
ECL:	<i>Evaluation Compétences Linguistiques</i> (linguistic skills assessment)
FDFA:	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FOPER:	Federal Office of Personnel
FPersO:	Federal Personnel Ordinance
GS:	General Secretariat
MbO:	Management by objectives
SDC:	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

4. Glossary

2030 Agenda: the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provide a global frame of reference for the three inextricably linked fields of society, the economy and the environment. Switzerland recognises the 2030 Agenda as an important guiding framework. Although it is not legally binding, it provides a mechanism for setting objectives and forming opinions in both domestic and foreign policy.

Arc careers: the term ‘arc careers’ is a result of reflections on work and age. An arc career is where employees in a late stage in their careers – particularly in management – decide to take a step back and hand over responsibility. This allows them to use their skills in other areas, particularly where extensive experience and assurance are of great importance. In the last stage of their career trajectory they can, for example, work in an advisory capacity, as a mentor for junior staff or take on entirely new tasks. New challenges and areas of employment such as these bring renewed motivation to employees towards the end of their careers while valuing their knowledge and experience.

Coherence: this term denotes the greatest possible consistency and coordination between a country’s different policy areas.

Co-management: Personnel of all salary classes with managerial functions sharing a managerial position. The model is independent of the total employment level, and the job descriptions may vary. Here, too, the personal relationship between the post holders is irrelevant. The positions are categorised as individual roles, and so the division of tasks and responsibilities may have an impact on classification.

Cultural diversity: the existence of diverse identities and cultures within and among groups of people and societies. Cultural diversity is a form of diversity and is part of the very essence of Switzerland. The national languages are German, French, Italian, and Romansh.

Discrimination and prohibition of discrimination: human rights apply to all individuals, regardless of their recognition as a person before the law. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 states: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” Moreover, Article 8 paragraph 1 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation states: “Every person is equal before the law.” Every person therefore has a right to be treated equally and not discriminated against. Unequal treatment is considered discriminatory if it is based on personal characteristics that a person cannot change, such as gender, age, disability, language, origin, sexual orientation and identity, and religion. Discrimination is qualified as a form of unequal treatment when three elements are fulfilled: 1) an unequal treatment of people in comparable situations, 2) connected to a group-specific characteristic and 3) involving a disadvantage and/or disparagement.

Diversity: the term denotes variety, difference. In the Action Plan, the term is used in the sense of *diversity management* – a concept whereby diversity is seen as an opportunity for the lasting success of an organisation or company. Individual differences among staff members are not simply tolerated – they are highlighted as a positive asset and utilised for the success of the company. Individual differences refer, inter alia, to characteristics such as gender, language, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion. With its integrated *diversity management approach*, the FDFA fulfils the legal requirement of non-discrimination, lives up to the aspiration of serving as a role model in the Swiss labour market and exploits the potential of the diversity present in all organisational units.

Equality: in the broad sense of the term, equality refers to measures for harmonising the status of population groups that are in principle equal and heterogeneous (e.g. equal rights of men and women). Article 8 paragraph 3 of the Federal Constitution states: “Men and women have equal rights. The law shall ensure their equality, both in law and in practice, most particularly in the family, in education, and in the workplace. Men and women have the right to equal pay for work of equal value.”

Equal Opportunities: a society based on equal opportunities ensures that all its members have unimpeded, equal access to educational, career and other opportunities, especially at the beginning of their lives, and are able to reach their full potential. No person may be discriminated against, in particular on grounds of origin, race, gender, age, language, social position, way of life, religious, ideological, or political convictions, or because of a physical, mental or psychological disability (Art. 8 para. 2 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation).

Error culture: the way in which societies, cultures and social systems handle mistakes as well as the risks and consequences of error. A constructive culture of error deals with mistakes openly and without attributing blame and uses mistakes as an opportunity for an organisation to learn and improve.

External network: Switzerland’s external network comprises around 170 representations abroad (embassies, permanent missions to the UN/international organisations, general consulates, cooperation offices and other representations) and roughly 200 honorary representations (as at December 2020). The external network focuses on the principles of universality, coherence and effectiveness. It is an important instrument for safeguarding Switzerland’s interests.

Flexible and mobile working: flexible forms of work refer primarily to work performed without the constraints of time or location. Thanks to technological developments in work tools, many tasks can be completed remotely, either from a location outside of the office or from home. Different working time models and/or part-time work give employees more flexibility. The organisational units in the FDFA can determine the extent to which mobile working is used according to their needs and particular circumstances. What remains essential is that work is carried out to the highest possible standard. There is no entitlement to flexible forms of working.

Glass ceiling: the term is a metaphor for the phenomenon whereby people belonging to a certain population group do not advance to executive positions, despite equivalent skills. The term usually refers to women.

Head office: this term refers to all FDFA units in Bern. The FDFA head office comprises the General Secretariat, State Secretariat and four directorates: the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Directorate of International Law (DIL), the Consular Directorate (CD) and the Directorate for Resources (DR).

Human rights: human rights are inherent and inalienable rights to which all people are entitled, without distinction, by virtue of their being human. They are crucial to the protection of physical and psychological integrity and human dignity, and are an important foundation for the development of every individual. They are guarantors of a society based on the obligation to respect the rights of the individual. They apply in both international relations and national politics. Human rights are universal, indivisible and closely interrelated. Every state is obliged to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

Inclusion: inclusion means that everyone has their place, regardless of their appearance, what language they speak or whether they have a disability. In this Action Plan, inclusion is understood both as a principle of action and a goal of a departmental culture free of discrimination.

Job-sharing: personnel of all salary classes without managerial functions sharing a position. The total level of employment may not exceed 120%. The personal relationship between the post holders is irrelevant, the job descriptions are identical and there is no impact on classification.

Local staff: staff category for employees of Swiss representations employed under local contracts. Local staff refers to national, Swiss personnel employed under local law or personnel from third countries at the representations (see external network), whereby the authority to employ local staff of all representations of other departments is delegated to the FDFA.

Mosaic careers: mosaic careers allow individuals to change between tasks and functions, between assignments as manager or skilled worker, or between projects, depending on which stage of life they find themselves in. These career moves may be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. As well as offering more flexibility to employees, this model gives companies greater scope for action in terms of staff deployment. The various experiences acquired in this way fit together like a mosaic. Personal development is the central aspect of this career form (see also arc careers).

Multilingualism: a person's ability to speak or understand more than one language. With regard to a family, social group, culture, society, area or country, multilingualism (or plurilingualism) means the recognition and widespread or common use of several languages in parallel by the people or institutions concerned.

Parity: equality; equivalence (in terms of numbers). The FDFA endeavours to ensure parity between women and men in all functions and at all hierarchical levels. For pragmatic reasons, the Department aims for a division ranging between 45% and 55% for each gender.

People with disabilities: under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, this term designates people who "have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others". Disability is thus understood as a consequence of an interaction between an individual and their environment that does not adapt to the individual differences. People with disabilities continue to face prejudice and barriers that hinder their participation in society.

Reconciliation: the "reconciliation of work and family life" refers to the possibility of adults of working age to combine their job and career on the one hand and their family life and the care of children and dependents on the other. The Federal Council follows the definition of the Federal Commission for Family Affairs (FCFA): The concept of 'family' refers to those forms of living which are founded on the relationships between parents and children in a multigenerational network and which are recognised by society.

When the intended meaning includes other facets of life, such as friendships and hobbies, we refer more generally to the "reconciliation of career, private and family life". The gender equality strategy adopted by the Federal Council on 28 April 2021 includes the following goal with regard to the reconciliation of work and family life: women and men benefit from framework conditions that are conducive to the reconciliation of private, family and professional life and the balanced distribution of paid employment and unpaid domestic and family work. The term *work-life balance* refers to a general balance that is aspired to. It is used primarily with regard to organisational aspects, such as family-friendly working hours, and opportunities to improve individual balance.

Women's rights: Human rights and freedoms which women enjoy or claim as members of society. In principle, human rights and women's rights are one and the same. Worldwide, women and girls suffer human rights abuses simply because of their gender. Moreover, there are many human rights abuses which affect women and girls either exclusively or disproportionately (e.g. gender-based violence, forced prostitution, forced marriage, and genital mutilation). This is why we speak explicitly of women's rights.

Imprint

Editor:

Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
General Secretariat SG-FDFA
3003 Bern
www.fdfa.admin.ch

Design:

Audiovisual service, FDFA Communication

Specialist contact:

Section Equal Opportunities, SG-FDFA
chancengleichheit@eda.admin.ch

This publication is also available in German, French and Italian. It can be downloaded from www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/foreign-policy/implementing-foreign-policy/betriebsdokumente.html