



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

A high-angle, close-up photograph of railway tracks. The tracks are made of metal rails on wooden sleepers, set on a bed of gravel. The tracks curve and cross each other, creating a complex geometric pattern. The lighting is bright, casting shadows that emphasize the texture of the gravel and the metallic sheen of the rails.

# 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**

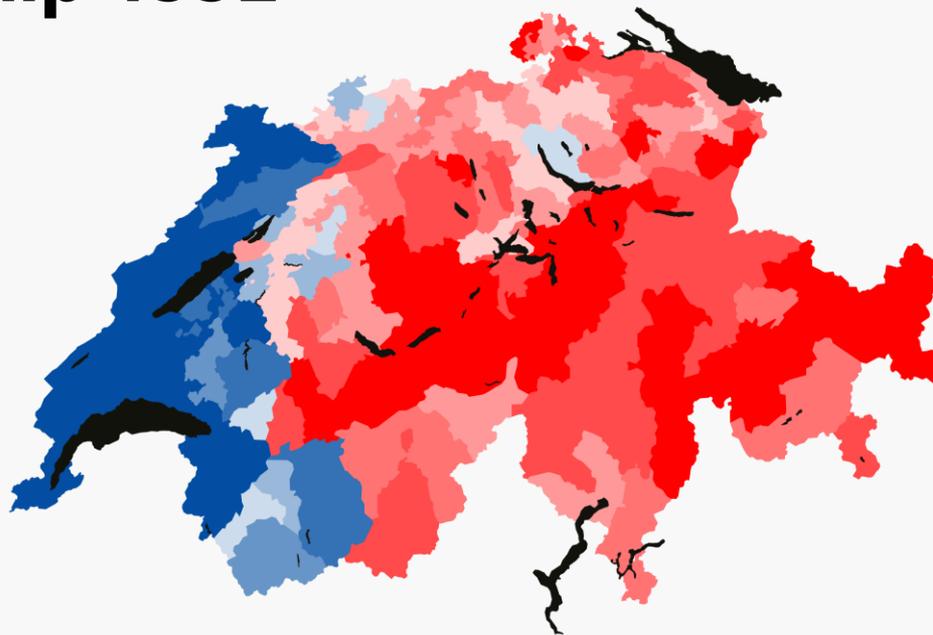
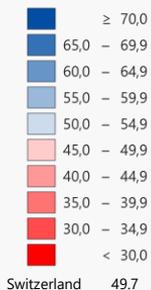




# No to EEA membership 1992

Origins of the bilateral approach  
on 6 December 1992

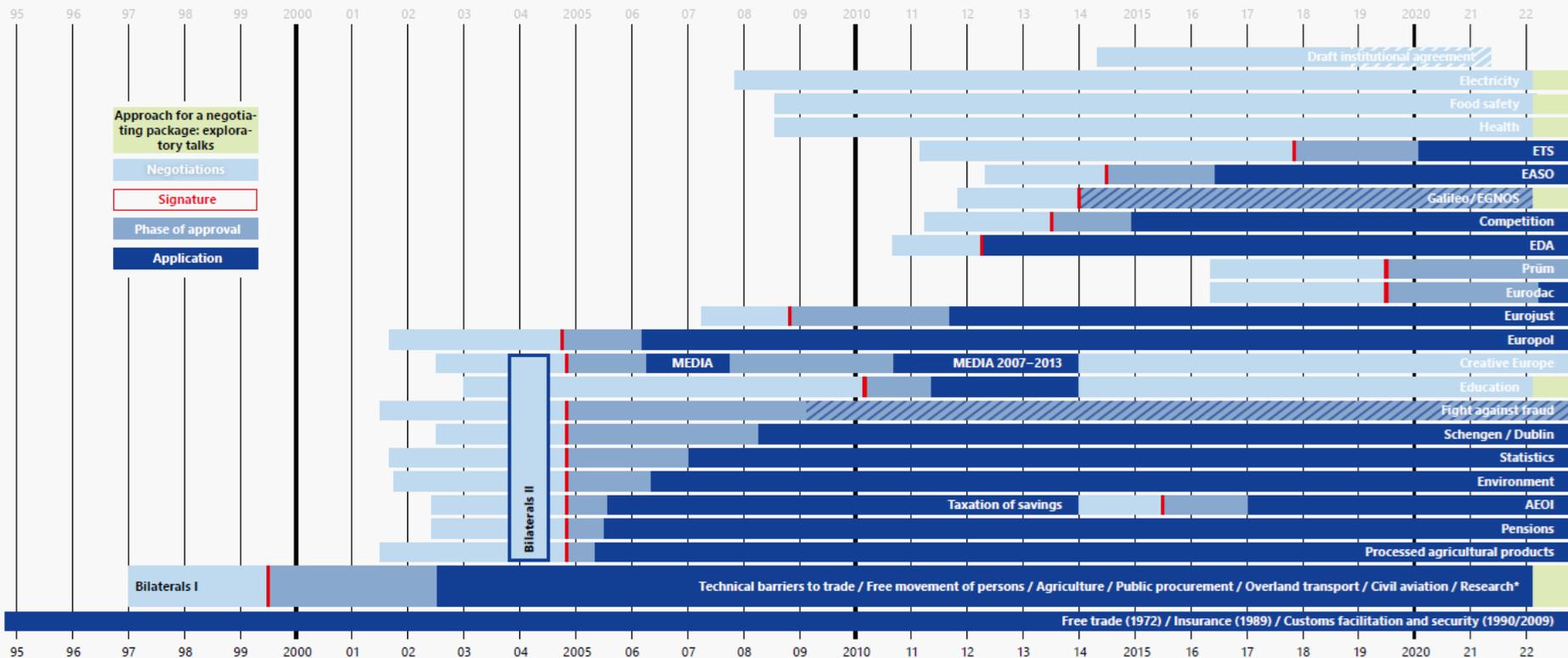
Yes vote percentage





# 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.



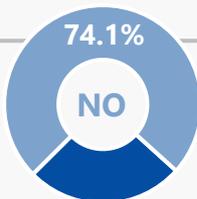
# Key referendums

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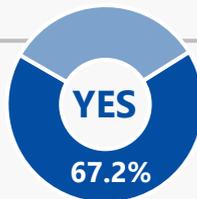
**1992** European Economic Area (EEA)



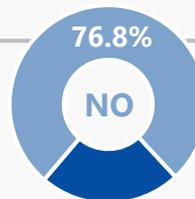
**1997** 'EU membership negotiations before the people' initiative



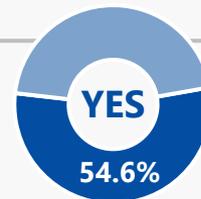
**2000** Bilaterals I



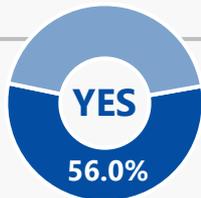
**2001** 'Yes to Europe!' initiative



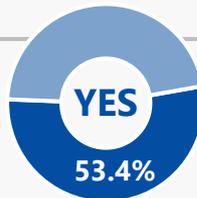
**2005** Schengen/Dublin



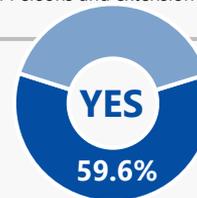
**2005** Extension of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons



**2006** Federal Act on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe



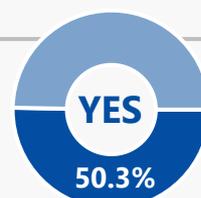
**2009** Continuation of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons and extension to BG/RO



**2009** introduction of electronically stored biometric data in the Swiss passport



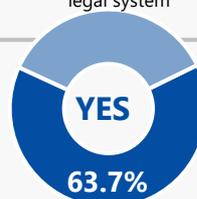
**2014** 'Stop Mass Immigration' initiative



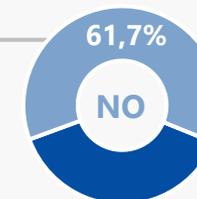
**2014** Ecopop



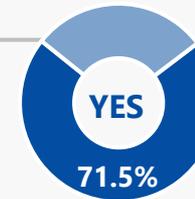
**2019** Implementation of the EU firearms directive into the Swiss legal system



**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**



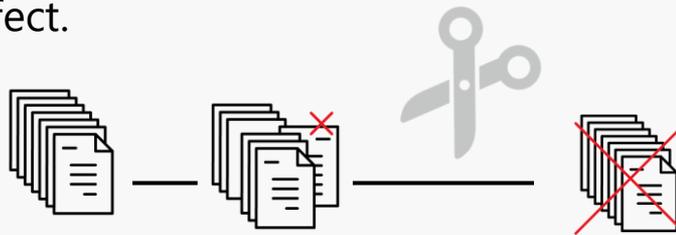
# Guillotine clause – Bilaterals I

**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\*

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

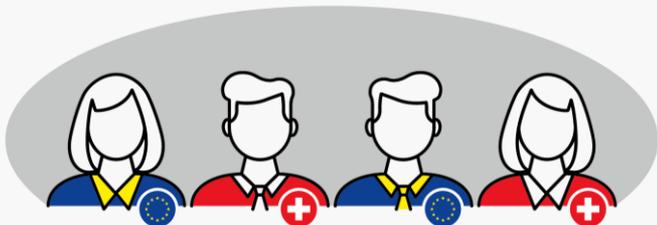


## Summary

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



# 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

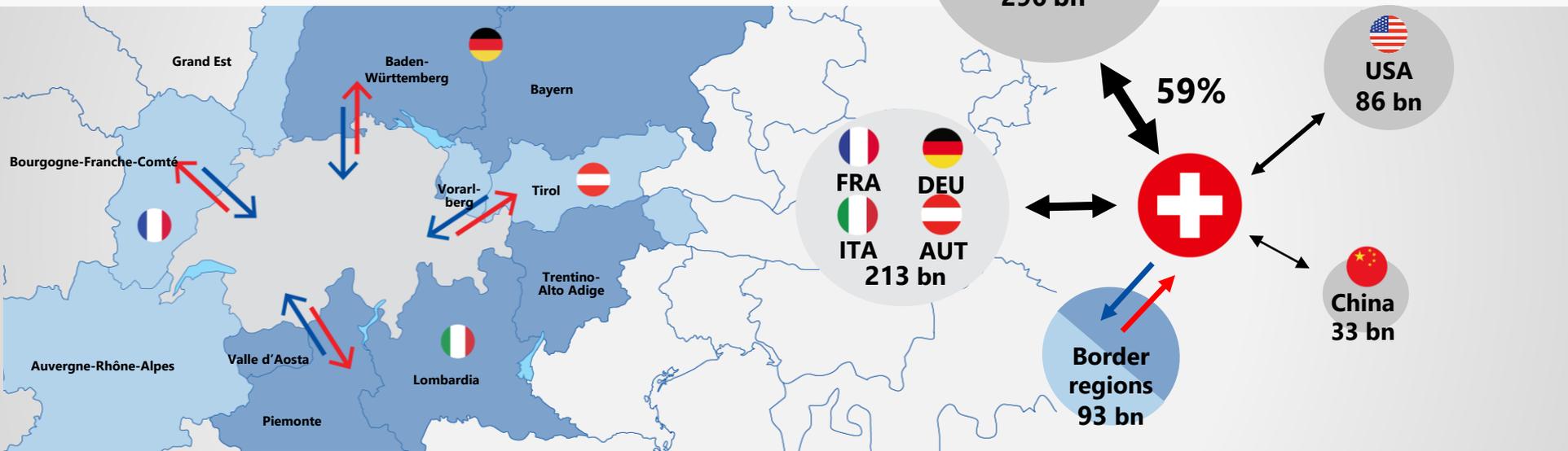


# Cooperation with Europe





# 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

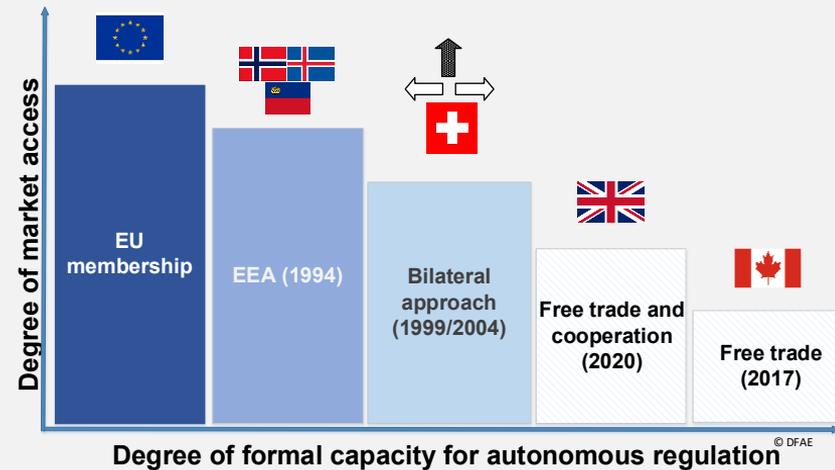
The **bilateral path** has proven its worth:

- 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



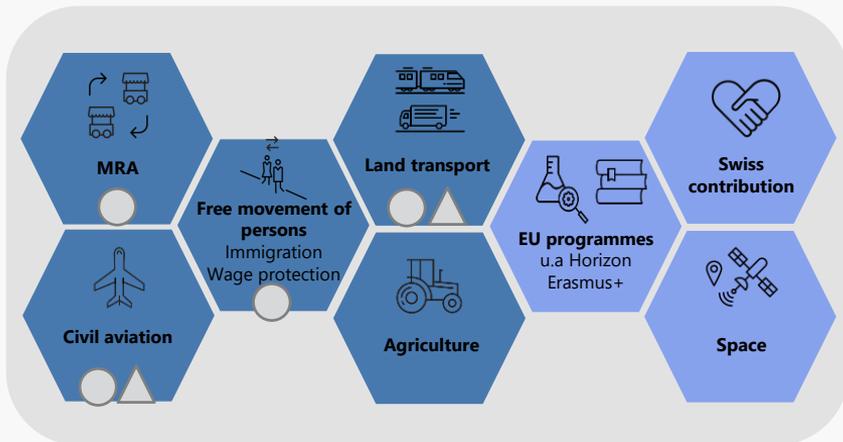


# The bilateral approach CH-EU

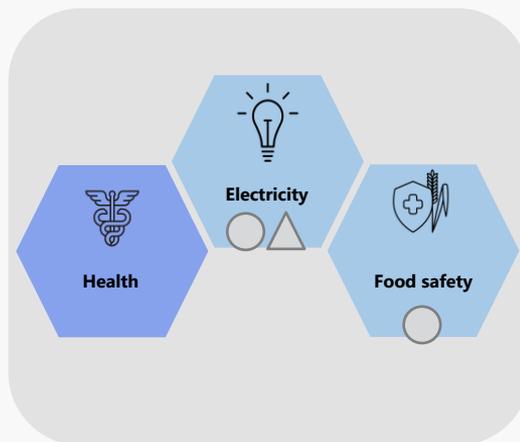
## Normalisation



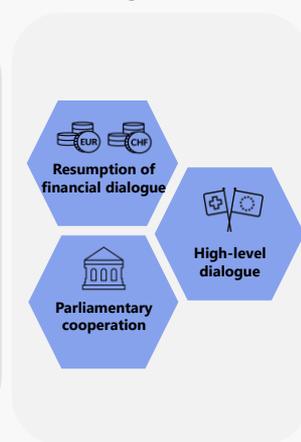
## Stabilisation



## 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 railway tracks curving to the right. The tracks are made of metal rails on wooden sleepers, with gravel ballast underneath. The perspective is from a low angle, looking down the tracks.

# Thank you for your attention

[www.fdfa.admin.ch/europe\\_en](http://www.fdfa.admin.ch/europe_en)

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