



Info sheet – Parameters

June 2023

The parameters for a negotiating mandate form the basis for the continuation and completion of the discussions with the EU with a view to opening formal negotiations. They set out the guidelines for a future negotiating mandate, including Switzerland's general objectives and the areas that need to be covered, as well as specific objectives for each area. The Federal Council approved the parameters on 21 June 2023.

Current status

The Federal Council is seeking to stabilise and further develop the bilateral approach with the EU. In February 2022, it decided to address the outstanding issues in overall relations with the EU on the basis of a new, broad package approach.

What the negotiating package would include has been the subject of exploratory talks with the EU. The parameters adopted by the Federal Council in June 2023 form the basis for a possible negotiating mandate.

Background

Over the last 12 months, Switzerland and the EU have held numerous exploratory talks at technical, diplomatic and political levels on the various components of the package. In August 2022, the Federal Council established a project structure led by the head of the FDFA to strengthen the coordination of foreign and domestic policy and content within the new approach. This structure comprises a steering group, and a sounding board with representatives from the cantons, social partners and the business community.

At the end of March 2023, the Federal Council issued instructions to set out the parameters for a future negotiating mandate.

Switzerland and the EU have agreed to take a bottom-up approach which centres on technical discussions. These discussions have clarified many topics with regard to the free movement of persons (immigration and wage protection), state aid and institutional elements.

There are still outstanding issues in these areas which require further discussion.

Furthermore, the intensive domestic political discussions carried out with social partners and the cantons have provided a deeper understanding of the situation on the ground with regard to wage protection and state aid.

Content

Key parameters:

- *Switzerland will seek to stabilise and further customise the existing bilateral approach with the aim of ensuring predictability and legal certainty in its relations with the EU and EU member states.*
- *In addition to ensuring barrier-free access to the EU's single market in existing sectors (land and air transport, economic relations [Mutual Recognition Agreements – MRA], free movement of persons, agriculture), Switzerland seeks to add new agreements on electricity and food safety.*
- *The electricity agreement is important for grid stability and security of supply. It will create new opportunities for trade and help capitalise on the potential of Swiss hydropower.*
- *A food safety agreement would give Switzerland access to the EU's early warning and risk assessment systems, reduce trade barriers and improve consumer protections.*
- *Switzerland will also seek to secure the bilateral approach through cooperation. A health agreement with the EU would enable joint responses to epidemics and other health risks.*
- *Furthermore, Switzerland seeks to resolve the impasse regarding its participation in the major Horizon Europe research package for the 2021–27 period and*

- *to have systematic participation in programmes in the areas of research and innovation (Horizon and follow-up programmes), education (Erasmus+) and space (including Copernicus).*
- *With regard to the rules on state aid, Switzerland is prepared to adopt the EU's rules on state aid in specific sectors on the basis of individual single market agreements.*
- *Finally, Switzerland is open to negotiations on a regular solidarity-based contribution to European cohesion.*

Importance

The adoption of these parameters is part of the Federal Council's European policy strategy. The parameters will be the basis for the talks with the EU and serve to create a common understanding with a view to the possible opening of negotiations.