



EU-Switzerland hold first structured Security and Defence Dialogue and mediation talks

On 27 November 2023, the European Union and Switzerland held their first structured Security and Defence Dialogue as well as their first comprehensive talks on mediation in Bern. These exchanges were announced last week during the bilateral meeting between State Secretary Alexandre Fasel and the Secretary General of the European External Action Service Stefano Sannino.

The launch of these consultations builds on the good and long-standing cooperation between the EU and Switzerland on peace, security and defence matters.

Security and Defence Dialogue

The first Security and Defence Dialogue covered a range of issues, including the implementation of strategic documents on security and defence of both the EU and Switzerland and the opportunities for enhanced cooperation. The delegations also exchanged views on Switzerland's participation in EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations, the excellent cooperation under the Framework for Cooperation with the European Defence Agency (EDA), as well as topics such as cyber and disinformation. The EU and Switzerland agreed to hold this Dialogue on an annual basis.

The Dialogue was co-chaired by Benedikta von Seherr-Thoss, Managing Director for Peace, Security and Defence at the European External Action Service, as well as Ambassador Gabriel Lüchinger, Head of the International Security Division in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland and Ambassador Pálvi Pulli, Head of Security Policy in the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport of Switzerland.

Talks on Peace Mediation and Dialogue

The first high-level official talks between the EU and Switzerland on peace mediation and dialogue allowed both sides to discuss their respective approaches and explore areas for future cooperation and coordination. The exchanges highlighted the importance of mediation and dialogue as instruments of EU and Swiss foreign policy and focused in particular on support to peace processes in the extended European Neighbourhood, the Middle East and Africa. The EU and Switzerland agreed to follow-up on these exchanges with additional expert-level talks and to foster closer cooperation on selected peace and dialogue processes where both Switzerland and the EU are engaged. The mediation talks were hosted by Ambassador Simon Geissbühler, Head of the Peace and Human Rights Division in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.