



FACT SHEET

# INSTRUMENTS OF SWISS FOREIGN POLICY

## External network and citizen-oriented services

Switzerland has 170 representations worldwide with approximately 4,000 employees. These cover a broad range of tasks across the entire spectrum of diplomacy, international cooperation, support for Swiss companies abroad and assistance for Swiss nationals living abroad. Additionally, the representations assist Swiss citizens who need help and support in emergency situations abroad.

## Diplomacy

Diplomacy is at the heart of foreign policy. It aims to promote relations between states in a peaceful manner. It makes it possible to maintain and develop intergovernmental relations, to reach political agreements and to negotiate legal settlements and monitor their implementation. Diplomacy represents Swiss interests bilaterally, in a multilateral framework and towards non-state actors. The Swiss diplomatic service has around 380 transferable diplomats, including 240 abroad.

## International cooperation

The Confederation's international cooperation comprises humanitarian aid, development cooperation and civilian peace promotion. Humanitarian aid is rather short-term in nature. It saves lives, helps to protect civilians and relieves the suffering of populations who are worst hit by disasters, crises and conflicts. Development cooperation is oriented towards the longer term. It aims to strengthen institutions and improve the living conditions in the priority countries. To achieve this, the Confederation operates bilateral programmes, works within the framework of multilateral institutions (e.g. UN organisations, development banks) and runs global programmes. Its civilian peace promotion aims to prevent and resolve violent conflicts by deploying its expertise in confidence-building.

## Good offices

The good offices of Switzerland have a long-standing tradition and will continue to form an integral aspect of its foreign policy profile. The term 'good offices' refers to three areas: Switzerland's protecting power mandates, its function as a host state, and its mediation and dialogue facilitation efforts. Switzerland makes its good offices available when its interests are affected, it can be effective and they are requested.

## Communication

Inside Switzerland, communication helps to anchor foreign policy domestically and to form public opinion. Within Switzerland's political system, communication and exchanges on foreign policy issues between all stakeholders are of particular importance, as evidenced by the Switzerland–EU dossier. Abroad, Switzerland's communication promotes recognition and understanding of its positions, interests and values.

## Neutrality

Neutrality is both an instrument and part of Switzerland's foreign policy identity. Its basis has always been the law of neutrality, which is international law going back to the Hague Convention of 1907. The law of neutrality only imposes obligations in the military arena. Outside this rather narrow area, Switzerland is free to position itself with respect to belligerent states. It thus has considerable scope for action in security and foreign policy. Aside from the obligations under the law of neutrality, neutrality does not prevent Switzerland from showing solidarity with Ukraine and its population through concrete action and support, nor does it stand in the way of a cooperative foreign and security policy to foster European security.

