



Info sheet – Package approach

June 2023

On 23 February 2022, the Federal Council decided to address the outstanding issues in overall relations with the EU on the basis of a broad package approach. This should pave the way for the establishment of a regulated relationship with the EU and its member states. Sectoral participation in the EU's single market is important for Switzerland, as is the integrity of the single market for the EU (level playing field). This balance can be achieved with the package approach.

Aim and contents of the package approach

The interests of the two parties are bundled into a negotiating package with the aim of gaining greater leeway in resolving the outstanding issues.

With the package approach, Switzerland aims to ensure barrier-free single market participation in the areas of land and air transport, agriculture, electricity, food safety and in all sections of the Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA).

New agreements: Two new single market agreements are to be concluded on electricity and food safety. In addition, a new cooperation agreement is to be concluded on health.

An electricity agreement would be an important contribution to grid stability and security of supply. A food safety agreement would remove further barriers to trade and strengthen cooperation along the entire food chain to better protect consumers. In the area of health, cooperation with the EU would ensure access to the EU's mechanism against cross-border health risks.

EU programmes: Furthermore, Switzerland seeks to resolve the impasse regarding its participation in the major Horizon Europe research package for the 2021–27 period and, going forward, to have systematic participation in programmes in the areas of research and innovation (Horizon and follow-up programmes), education (Erasmus+) and space (including Copernicus).

Institutional issues: In order to increase legal certainty, Switzerland is extending a hand to resolve the institutional issues concerning existing (land transport, air transport, agriculture, free movement of persons and MRAs/technical barriers to trade) and future single market agreements.

Of the four institutional issues, legal interpretation and monitoring will be resolved according to the two-pillar model (the EU and Switzerland retaining their independent responsibilities), while adoption of EU law developments and dispute settlement will be resolved jointly.

Both in the dynamic adoption of legislation and in dispute settlement, exceptions and principles will ensure that in the case of immigration, Swiss social welfare is not abused, current wage levels in Switzerland are protected and the Federal Constitution is respected.

State aid: Switzerland is discussing with the EU the adoption of EU state aid schemes in specific single market agreements as part of the package approach. Public services are not affected.

Cohesion: Switzerland is also examining how it can continue to contribute to cohesion, stability and peace within the EU in the future.

With the package approach, the Federal Council aims to stabilise and further develop the bilateral path while safeguarding Switzerland's strategic and essential interests.