



EU programmes

What is this about?

The EU has funding programmes for research, innovation, education, vocational training, youth, sport, culture and other fields. Non-EU member states like Switzerland can take part in these programmes under certain conditions.

As the negotiations to stabilise Swiss–EU relations have not yet been concluded, since 2021 Switzerland has been precluded from associating to key cooperation programmes in education, research and innovation (ERI) such as the Horizon package and Erasmus+ 2021–27. In March 2024, Switzerland and the EU started negotiating the overall package, which includes access to EU funding programmes. In the process of developing the bilateral approach, Switzerland should be able to regain full association to these EU programmes in future.

Outcome of exploratory talks and ongoing negotiations

During the exploratory talks, Switzerland was able to break the deadlock on the EU programmes, particularly in the areas of education, research and innovation.

The following transitional arrangements were agreed: firstly, researchers in Switzerland should be allowed to participate in the 2024 European Research Council (ERC) call for proposals once negotiations on the overall package have commenced. Secondly, researchers should be allowed to participate in Horizon Europe and Eurotom calls for proposals for the 2025 programme year once Switzerland and the EU have initialled an agreement to this effect.¹

The first transitional arrangement took effect in March 2024 when negotiations got under way. This means that researchers in Switzerland may now submit applications for the 2024 ERC Advanced Grant. Once the second transitional arrangement was activated in early July 2024, the EU extended access to three further ERC calls: the 2025 Starting Grant, 2025 Synergy Grant and 2025 Consolidator Grant.

Switzerland is aiming for re-association to such EU programmes as Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ as soon as possible. The Federal Assembly has already approved the financial framework for Horizon Europe. With regard to Erasmus+, the main parameters of Switzerland's participation first need to be clarified with the EU before a funding proposal can be submitted to Parliament.

¹ Initialling is a preliminary step before the final signing of an agreement.