

**Switzerland  
in the world  
in 2028**





**AVIS28 at a glance**  
**– a foreign policy vision for Switzerland**

What choices will we have ...  
What opportunities will there be ...  
What roles will be played ...  
in 10 years' time ?

## Introduction

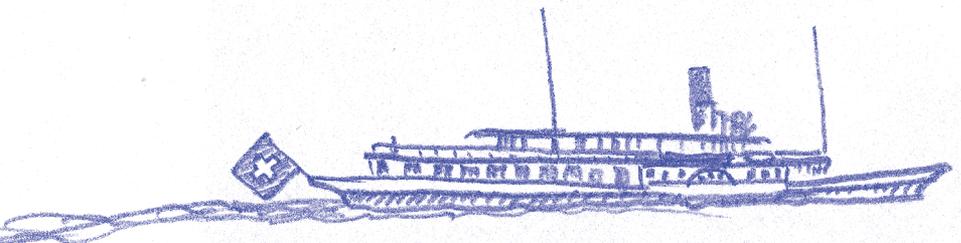
This brochure summarises the report ‘Die Schweiz in der Welt 2028’ (*Switzerland in the world in 2028*) released on 2 July 2019. The report is available in German, French and Italian on the FDFA website ([www.eda.admin.ch/AVIS28-EN](http://www.eda.admin.ch/AVIS28-EN)).

The report is the product of a working group appointed by Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis. The main objective was to examine the opportunities, challenges and interests of Swiss foreign policy from a medium-term perspective. At several meetings between October 2018 and May 2019, the working group developed a ‘Foreign Policy Vision Switzerland 2028’ (in German: *Aussenpolitische Vision Schweiz 2028*, AVIS28).

The purpose of AVIS28 is to provide inspiration for the future direction of Swiss foreign policy.

AVIS28 is also intended to open a wider discussion on Swiss foreign policy and on what lies ahead in the coming years for the country. The report lays out a vision in six points for the year 2028. It defines a set of priorities and proposes measures with which the vision can be realised.

→ 2028



## According to this vision, by 2028 ...

### ... Switzerland's interests and priorities are clearly defined

Although Switzerland is not a major power, it does have its weight, especially in economic terms. It is a solution-oriented and innovative country open to the world and committed to its compass of values.

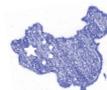
Security, welfare and independence provide a stable constitutional frame within which to define the periodic Swiss foreign policy strategies.

In the world of tomorrow, Switzerland must act in a more interest-driven manner. This presupposes greater awareness of what its interests are than in the past. The key to success is an intelligent combination of preserving independence and acting through networks and partnerships. Swiss foreign policy must be perceived in broad terms: By contributing to better global economic and security conditions, foreign policy helps Swiss companies open up new markets. The success of Switzerland's export industry in turn contributes to Switzerland's prosperity and to safeguarding our social welfare system.

It will be necessary to establish thematic and regional priorities. The Federal Council must define strategies for priority countries and key regions and implement them coherently. Closer and structured cooperation with like-minded countries is also an essential way forward.

*What France should Switzerland take in the world of tomorrow?*

*Which is likely to prevail: the 'Chinese dream' or 'America First'?*



## ... Swiss foreign and domestic policy are closely intertwined

In Switzerland, perhaps more than in other parts of the world, citizens trust their country's institutions. But there is a sense of unease among Swiss people, too. Decisions taken and rules laid down by international bodies now have a greater impact on Swiss legislation than in the past. It is essential to anchor Swiss foreign policy more firmly within domestic policy, so that there is nothing "foreign" about it as far as the Swiss people are concerned.



How can foreign policy be anchored more firmly in the population?

Beyond the current culture of **dialogue**, we need a Whole-of-Switzerland approach in foreign policy involving all national actors. In 2028, the Federal Council, parliament, cantons, the scientific community and think tanks, international Geneva, the private sector, NGOs and the wider population all have their roles and contributions to make in shaping or implementing foreign policy. Such an approach strengthens domestic confidence in foreign policy and allows the government to make optimum use of Switzerland's broad - and widely dispersed - expertise in international matters.

How Switzerland is perceived abroad influences its options for action. All available channels should be used to strengthen the image of our country and disseminate factual information. Such information is also indispensable to enable citizens to exercise their rights in the age of digitisation.

### ... Swiss foreign policy puts greater focus on services for citizens and the economy

Swiss people are travelling more and more. The number of Swiss nationals living abroad now exceeds 760,000. Over half of Swiss GDP is generated outside Switzerland. Two-thirds of SMEs also operate abroad in addition to multinationals. The export industry contributes significantly to Switzerland's prosperity.

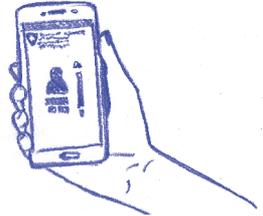
The services available to Swiss nationals abroad will increasingly be delivered through digital platforms in future. However, embassies and consulates will continue to provide assistance and support to Swiss travellers, expatriates and businesses. In future, Switzerland's foreign representations will be conceived as innovative platforms open to a wide range of actors from politics, business, the media, science and culture, for example, and offering them a bridge to the host country.

In 2028, Switzerland attaches great importance to the promotion of economic interests, research and its innovation centres. Foreign and trade policy are closely linked. Promoting legal certainty and investment protection for companies is an important component of foreign policy. Conversely, the private sector is an active partner of the authorities, particularly with regard to Agenda 2030, climate protection and respect for human rights. The FDFA plays a central role in ensuring coherence.

One franc out of two earned thanks to our exports.



What sort of help would the FDFA provide if I ever needed it?



## ... Switzerland use its soft power to build a more peaceful and stable world

There are solid foundations here: humanitarian aid, sustainable development, good offices, promotion of democracy and human rights. Swiss expertise is well recognised, its role as a neutral and credible bridge-builder is valued internationally. Switzerland can make useful contributions to greater security and stability and **benefits in turn from a more peaceful world.**

*How should the challenges of migration be addressed?*

In 2028, Swiss development cooperation is focused and broadly supported domestically. With its bilateral aid, Switzerland concentrates on clearly defined priority regions. Thematic priorities include economic development and the promotion of local entrepreneurship as well as governance, education and environmental issues (**Agenda2030**). Strategic importance is attached to addressing the causes of migration.

Demand for discreet negotiations in Switzerland remains high. However, for Switzerland to assert itself as a mediator on the international market, attractive packages of good offices and great political commitment are indispensable. Swiss experience and know-how in how to build a state and peace from the bottom up will gain in importance. As far as good offices are concerned, they could be extended to conflicts in trade and techno-



logy matters. Given its reliability and strong multilateral engagement, Switzerland should also take a prominent role in supporting reforms towards results-based multilateralism.

### **... technology is an established pillar of Swiss foreign policy**

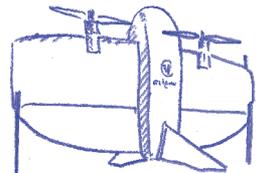
Switzerland is at the cutting edge of technological developments, thanks to the work of its universities and the many Swiss-based companies operating in this field. International organisations, NGOs and forums such as the WEF, are also addressing the wide-ranging issues presented by new technologies.

These technologies are changing the world. Swiss foreign policy therefore should venture into tech diplomacy. In 2028, international Geneva will be an innovative ecosystem of actors addressing issues of the future. It will be a key location for debate and regulation in the fields of digital transformation and biotechnology. The militarisation of outer space, killer robots, the protection of privacy in the digital era, and the fourth industrial revolution will all be topics on the diplomatic agenda.

While the risks should not be underestimated, it is essential to seize the opportunities presented by new technologies. Big data analytics, for example, can help

*What reforms are needed to make the multilateral system more effective?*

*#SwissTech*



*With artificial intelligence put us all out of work?*



GESPA?

(Geneva  
Science and  
Diplomacy  
Anticipator)

identify conflict situations or humanitarian disasters. The digital transformation can facilitate implementation of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals. Switzerland could ultimately become a digital safe haven, providing the highest levels of data security. This would be a new kind of good offices.

... **Switzerland acts as a fully-fledged partner in shaping Europe, even as non-member of the EU**

Switzerland is a European country both in cultural and geographical terms. Access to the EU single market is crucial to the Swiss economy. Switzerland's relationship with the EU is based on sectoral bilateral agreements. Current efforts to further develop this approach are raising major issues such as Switzerland's understanding of sovereignty, peace, economic interests, the further opening of the market, wage protection, but also Switzerland's role and position in Europe.



By 2028, the bilateral path with the EU is consolidated. Relations with the EU are based on an **optimal balance between extensive market access and maintaining the greatest possible political independence**. The institutional issues have been resolved and Parliament and the Swiss cantons are being actively involved in discussing and shaping EU legislation. Relations are more symmetrical, stable and predictable than they are today.

Where is the EU heading - more or less Europe?

Even as a non-member state, Switzerland maintains a close partnership with the EU. Cooperation, which already covers numerous areas (including security, peacekeeping, asylum, the reduction of economic and social disparities, research and culture), is proceeding constructively. The European framework is becoming increasingly important for safeguarding Switzerland's global interests. Switzerland acts self-confidently with and vis-à-vis the EU.

*Will political  
polarisation  
prevent domestic  
consensus-building?*



## **Conclusion**

Foreign policy represents an alignment of priorities for conducting relations with other countries and the world. With a view to 2028, Switzerland should strive for a foreign policy that is more targeted, more interconnected and more responsive.

In a world that is becoming more unstable and more fragmented, Switzerland needs to articulate its interests with greater precision. It must act from a clearly defined position anchored in domestic policy, building on its strengths and values.

By 2028, coherent geographical and thematic priorities guide Swiss foreign policy. Switzerland contributes to overcoming ecological challenges and shaping technological developments for the benefit of the people. By forming a more effective foreign policy, Switzerland ultimately contributes to international stability and therefore its own security.

## Report of the AVIS28 working group

You will find the full report «Switzerland in the world in 2028» (available only in German, French and Italian) on the FDFA website or by scanning the QR code below:



[www.fdfa.admin.ch/avis28-en](http://www.fdfa.admin.ch/avis28-en)

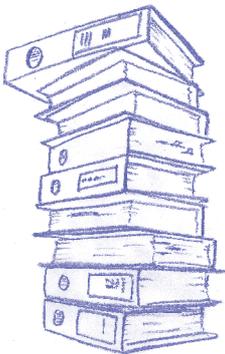
*The AVIS28 working group was composed of senior staff at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), the President of the Conference of the Cantonal Governments of Switzerland and experts with scientific, economic and civil society backgrounds. The experts were appointed in a personal capacity by Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis to provide an outside perspective on global affairs and Swiss foreign policy and complement the internal views put forward within the FDFA.*

*Members of the AVIS28 working group :*

- Philipp Aerni, director of the Center for Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability at the University of Zurich*
- Pascale Baeriswyl, State Secretary, head of the Directorate of Political Affairs, FDFA*
- Roberto Balzaretto, State Secretary, head of the Directorate for European Affairs, FDFA*
- Alenka Bonnard, director and co-founder of staatslabor*
- Manuel Sager, ambassador, Director General of the SDC, FDFA*
- Markus Seiler, FDFA Secretary General (head of the working group)*
- Peter R. Voser, Chairman of the Board of Directors, ABB*
- Thomas Wellauer, Group Chief Operating Officer, Swiss Re*
- Benedikt Würth, Cantonal Councillor, President of the Conference of the Cantonal Governments of Switzerland*

*Secretary : Daniel Mückli, policy adviser, General Secretariat of the FDFA*

*The report ‘Die Schweiz in der Welt 2028’ reflects the opinions of the working group and should not be construed as an FDFA or Federal Council report.*





« If there is no vision in life to strive for [...] then there is no motive for making any effort. »

— Erich Fromm