Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

The bilateral approach

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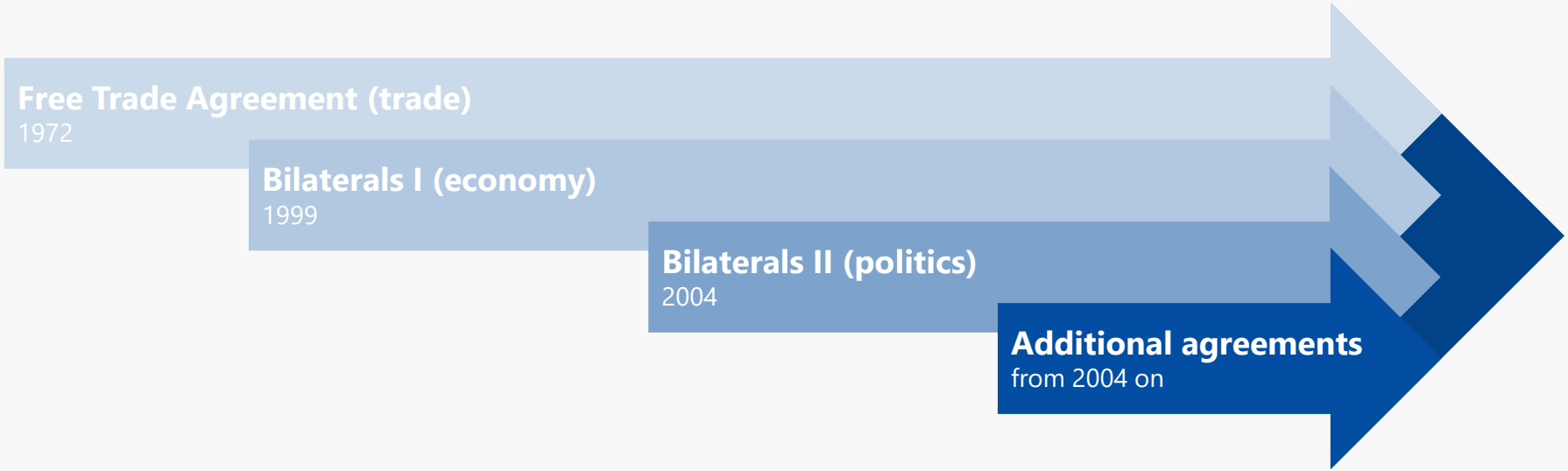
Historical overview



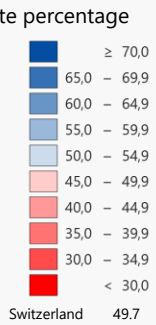
Historical overview

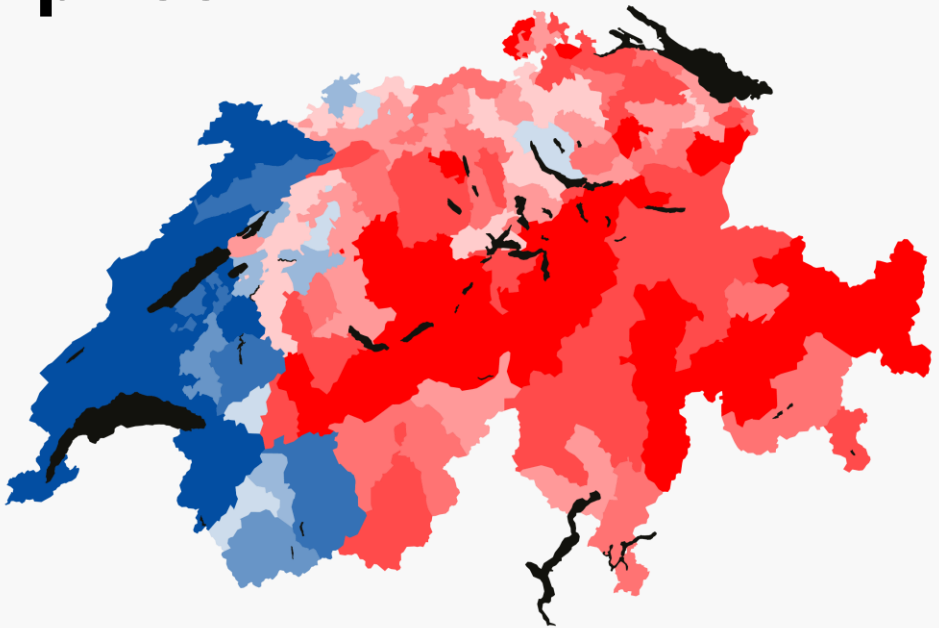
Bilateral relations since 1972

On the basis of over 100 agreements

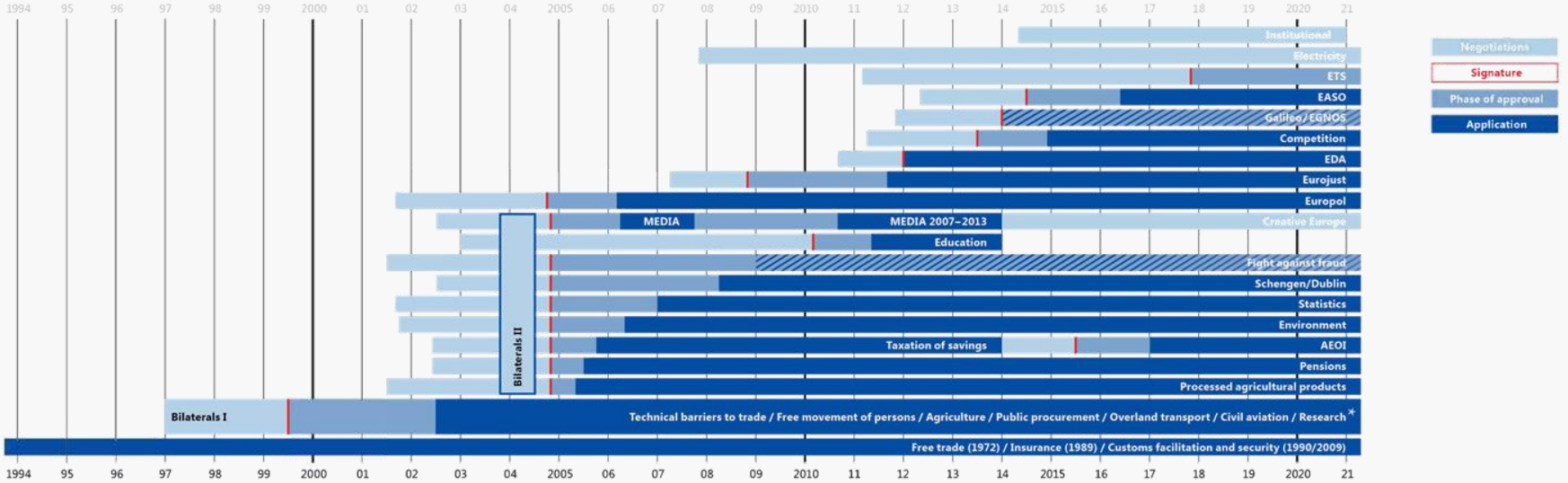
No to EEA membership 1992

Origins of the bilateral approach
on 6 December 1992





Bilateral agreements Switzerland–EU



* Research: expired on 31.12.2002, as it was limited to the duration of the EU's 5th Framework Programme for Research.

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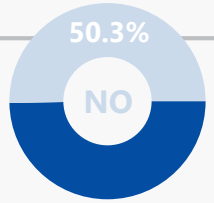
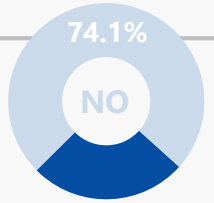
Key referendums

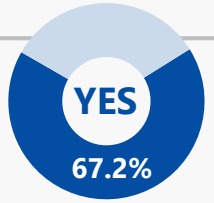
1992 European Economic Area (EEA)



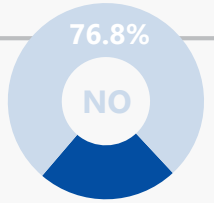
1997 'EU membership negotiations before the people' initiative



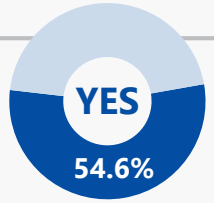
2000 Bilaterals I



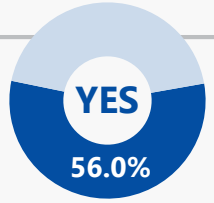
2001 'Yes to Europe!' initiative



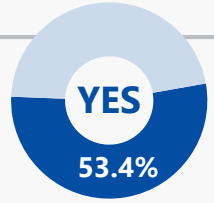
2005 Schengen/Dublin



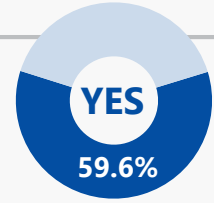
2005 Extension of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons



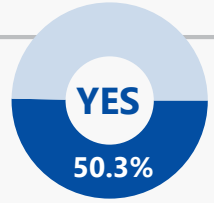
2006 Federal Act on Cooperation with the States of Eastern Europe



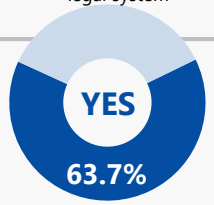
2009 Continuation of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons and extension to BG/RO



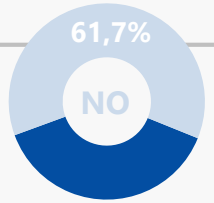
2014 'Stop Mass Immigration' initiative



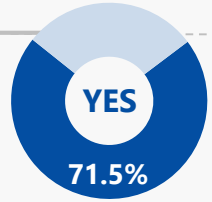
2019 Implementation of the EU firearms directive into the Swiss legal system



2020 'For moderate immigration (Limitation Initiative)'

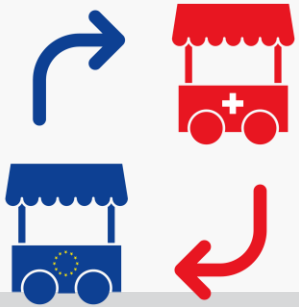


2022 Frontex



Key elements of the bilateral approach

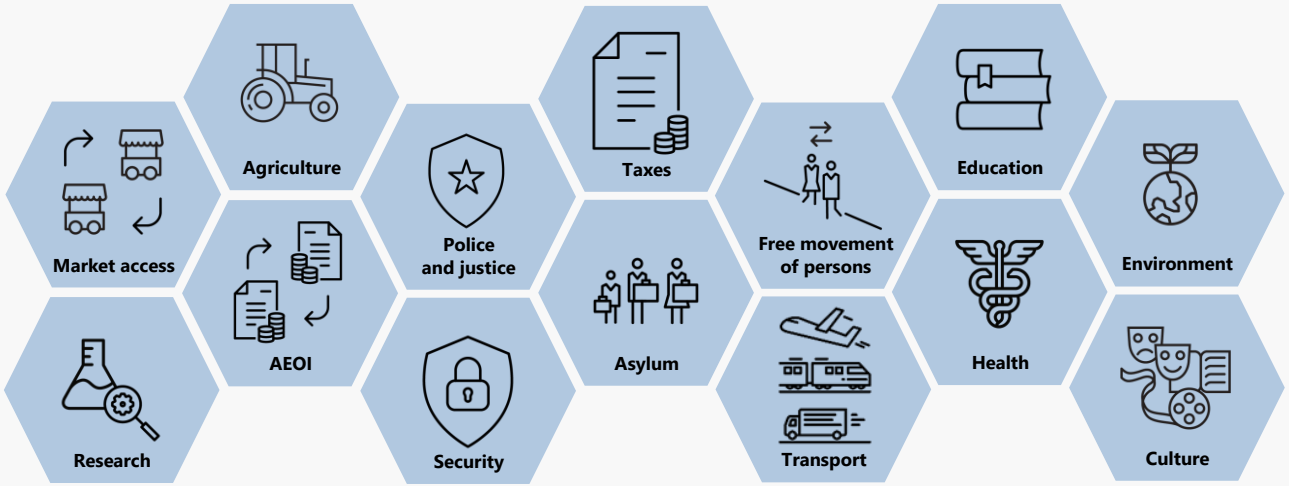
Tailor-made sectoral agreements



Access to EU single market

A Swiss approach

Cooperation with Europe



Guillotine clause

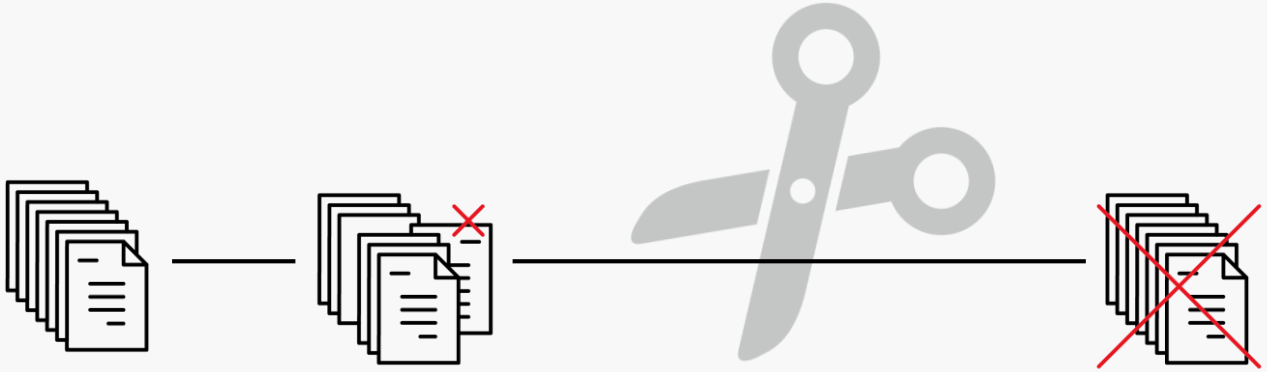
- **Principle of parallelism:** the seven agreements were negotiated, signed and entered into force as a single package.
- **Bilaterals I:** free movement of persons; technical barriers to trade; public procurement; agriculture; overland transport; civil aviation; research.*
- The agreements were linked in legal terms by a **guillotine clause**. This means that if one of the agreements is terminated, all seven are annulled.

*The 1999 research agreement expired at the end of 2002.

Summary

If the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons is terminated, all other agreements under Bilaterals I will lapse after a period of six months.

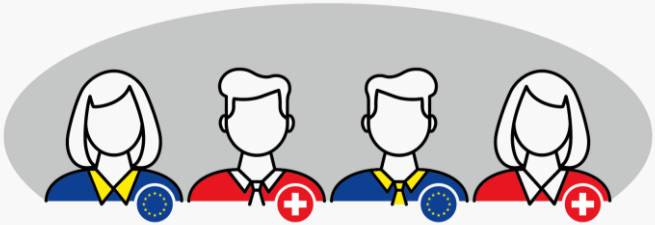
Guillotine clause



Summary

If the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons is terminated, all the other agreements under Bilaterals I will lapse after a period of six months.

Joint committee

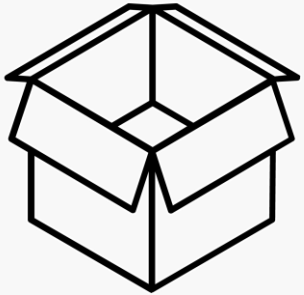


- 1 agreement = 1 joint committee (excluding automatic exchange of information in tax matters and pensions)
- Governs the implementation of the bilateral agreements:
  - ensures that the arrangements function properly and adapt if necessary;
  - conducts exchanges.
- Comprised of Swiss and EU representatives
- Meet once a year

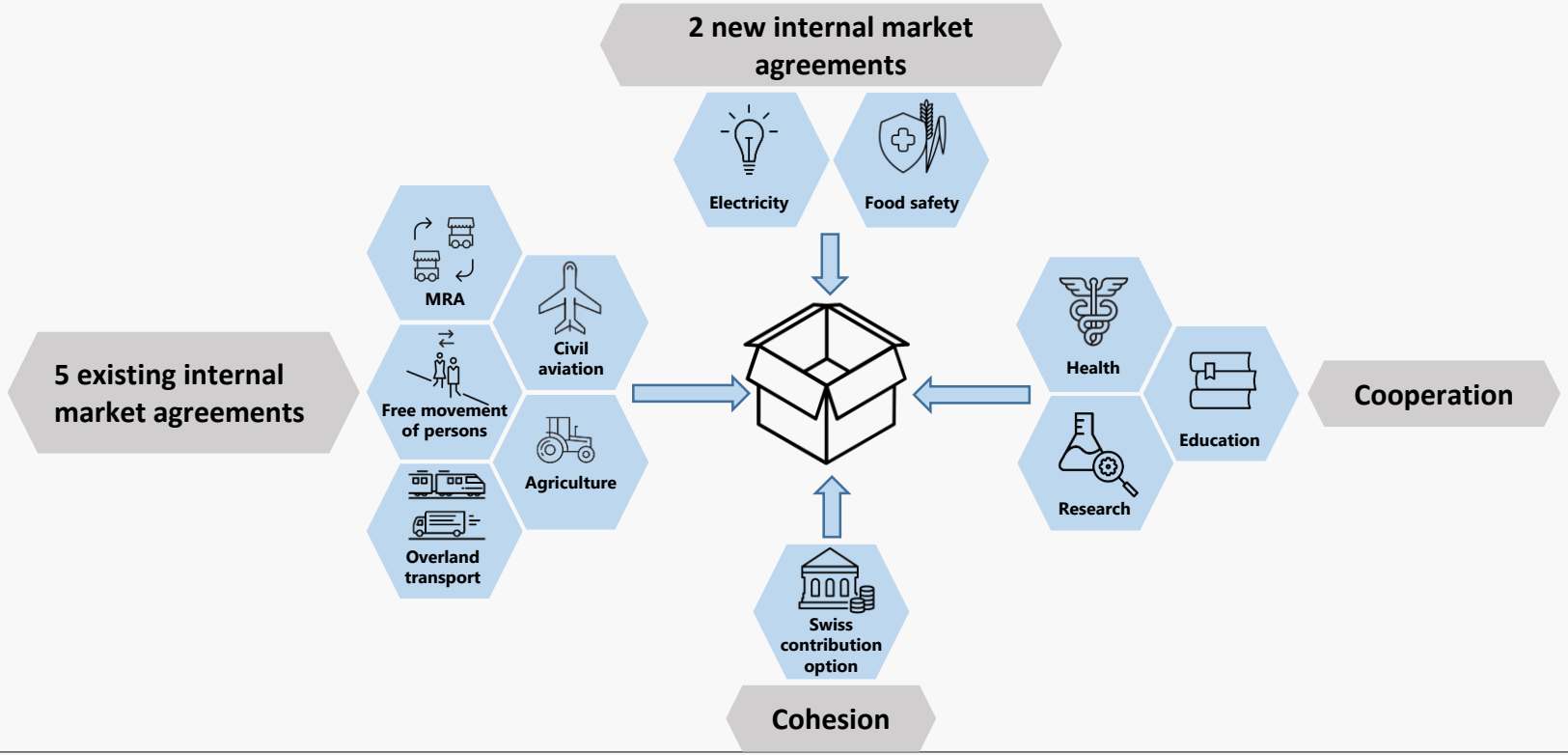
The Federal Council intends to stabilise and further develop the bilateral approach

- Robust and well-regulated relations between Switzerland and the EU are in the interest of both sides.

- On 23 February 2022, the Federal Council set the direction for a comprehensive **negotiating package**.



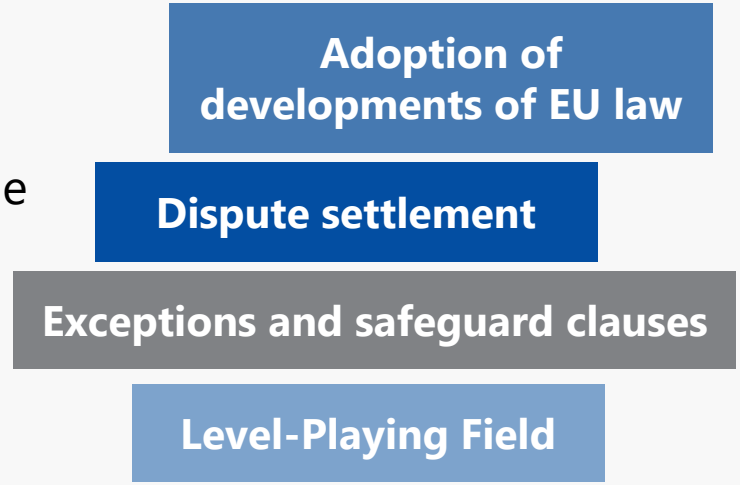
Further development of the bilateral approach



Further development of the bilateral approach

The Federal Council decided on an approach in which the institutional elements shall be anchored in each individual single market agreement. Their resolution is part of the package approach.

→ Incorporating these elements into the individual single market agreements enables a balancing of interests.



Switzerland has much in common with the EU and its member states

Besides economic aspects, we share values, languages, culture and geography.

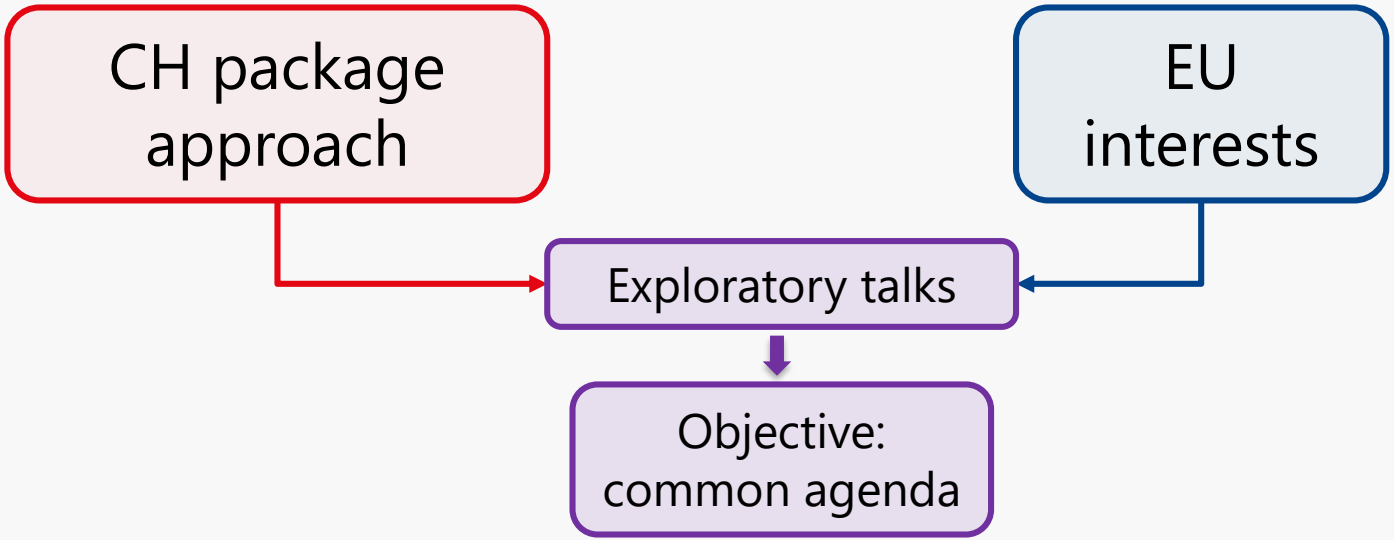
In the international arena, we often advocate for the same goals and values such as peace, human rights and democracy.

Switzerland–EU: broad cooperation for peace and security in Europe

- Agreement between Switzerland and the **European Defence Agency** (EDA) on armaments cooperation (non-legally binding).
- Opportunities for cooperation with the EU in relation to **the EU's common foreign, security and defence Policy** (e.g. Swiss participation in peacekeeping missions such as EULEX Kosovo and EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina).
- EU **sanctions**: Switzerland decides on a case-by-case basis whether it wishes to adopt them and can thereby enhance their effect.
- Switzerland also participates in EU **election observation missions**.

Switzerland's commitment to **peace** and **security** is enshrined in the **Federal Constitution** and is a **priority** of Swiss foreign policy.

Further development of the proven bilateral approach



Thank you for your attention

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