

## The package of agreements

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After 2021 both sides searched for a new approach. The Federal Council chose a package method, which combined the institutional questions with new agreements and Swiss participation in Union programmes, so that the concessions demanded from Switzerland could be weighed against tangible gains. Exploratory talks lasted from 2022 to 2023, the Federal Council adopted a negotiating mandate in March 2024 and formal negotiations began on 18 March 2024.<sup>1</sup> On 20 December 2024 the President of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the President of the Swiss Confederation, Viola Amherd, announced the material conclusion of the negotiations in Bern.<sup>2</sup>

The Swiss authorities call the result the "package to stabilise and develop the bilateral path", while public debate in Switzerland has widely adopted the name Bilaterals III. The Federal Council decided on 30 April 2025 to submit the package to an optional referendum before publishing the texts of the agreements together with the draft implementing legislation in June 2025 for a consultation that lasted until the autumn of 2025.<sup>3</sup> After the agreements had been signed on 2 March 2026, the Federal Council adopted its dispatch to Parliament on 13 March 2026.<sup>4</sup> According to the Federal Council, the implementation requires amendments to about three dozen federal acts and the adoption of several new ones.<sup>5</sup>

The package is broad. It updates five existing market access agreements, namely free movement of persons, air transport, land transport, the Mutual Recognition Agreement and agriculture, by adding institutional elements. It contains three new agreements, on electricity, health and food safety, the last of which is integrated into the agricultural agreement as a common food safety area. It also provides for Swiss participation in Union programmes, a permanent Swiss cohesion contribution, rules on state aid in specific sectors and a high-level political dialogue.<sup>6</sup> Financial services are absent from the package, a point to which this chapter returns.

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### 1 Notes

1. On the exploratory talks (2022–2023), the negotiating mandate adopted by the Federal Council on 8 March 2024 and the opening of negotiations on 18 March 2024, see the communications of the Federal Council and the FDFA. To be verified. ↩
2. Joint announcement of 20 December 2024 on the material conclusion of the negotiations on the package of agreements between Switzerland and the EU; see the press releases of the Federal Council and the European Commission of that date. To be verified. ↩
3. Decision of the Federal Council of 30 April 2025 on the type of referendum (optional referendum); opening of the consultation on 13 June 2025 with publication of the texts of the agreements. Status to be verified. ↩
4. Signature of the agreements on 2 March 2026 and adoption of the dispatch by the Federal Council on 13 March 2026, according to the FDFA's page "Dispatch on the Switzerland–EU package". Status to be verified. ↩
5. According to the FDFA, the package requires amendments to 36 existing federal acts (of which 15 substantially) and three new federal acts, together with four commitment credits. Figures to be verified. ↩
6. On the components of the package (institutional elements in five internal market agreements, state aid rules, new agreements on electricity, health and food safety, programme participation, cohesion contribution, high-level dialogue), see the dispatch of 13 March 2026 and the FDFA's explanatory fact sheets. To be verified. ↩

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