

International cooperation: mutual legal assistance and the exchange of information

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Since the fight against money laundering is international by nature, the Geneva financial centre depends on the cooperation of foreign authorities as much as on its own. The Money Laundering Reporting Office exchanges information with its counterparts in the Egmont Group, and the prosecuting authorities make use of mutual legal assistance, of which Switzerland is one of the world's principal providers in matters of money laundering and corruption. FINMA, for its part, cooperates with foreign supervisory authorities in respect of cross-border groups.¹ Almost all the affairs described in this chapter and in Part I have a foreign origin: an investigation in Brazil, Nigeria, the United States or France reveals flows that passed through Geneva, which Swiss mutual assistance then makes it possible to document and to block.

This dependence has a counterpart: the Geneva financial centre is judged abroad on the speed and quality of its mutual assistance, and the criticisms of the 1990s and 2000s bore precisely on its slowness. The reforms of mutual assistance, the practice of rapid freezing and the restitution agreements described in Part I have improved that reputation. The mutual evaluation report of the Financial Action Task Force, whose next cycle will examine Switzerland at the turn of the decade, will be the measure of it.²

1 Notes

1. Federal Office of Justice, “Entraide judiciaire internationale en matière pénale” (International mutual legal assistance in criminal matters) (bj.admin.ch): annual activity reports of the International Mutual Legal Assistance directorate (2024 report published on 1 May 2025, 2025 statistics published on 3 March 2026); MROS, Rapport annuel 2024: 780 requests received from 96 foreign financial intelligence units, 751 spontaneous disclosures received from 45 countries, 239 requests sent

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to 56 FIUs; Rapport annuel 2025: 932 spontaneous disclosures received (+24.1 per cent) and 223 sent to 53 FIUs. ↩

2. SIF, “Groupe d’action financière (GAFI)” (Financial Action Task Force (FATF)) (sif.admin.ch): fourth evaluation of Switzerland in 2016, fourth follow-up report published on 19 October 2023; fifth round of evaluations opened in October 2024, first reports (Malaysia, Belgium) discussed at the plenary of October 2025; “Switzerland will undergo its fifth country review by the FATF in 2026–2027”. ↩

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