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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO



SECO

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs

A Portrait

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SECO is the federal government's centre of excellence for all core issues relating to economic and labour market policy.

A thriving economy benefits everyone.



Editorial

Dear Reader,

I am glad that you are interested in the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, SECO. The SECO is responsible for all core matters relating to Switzerland's economic policy. Our staff is committed to preserving the current and future wellbeing in our country. This portrait provides you with an insight to the diversity of our tasks and the challenges facing us.

The SECO was created by the Swiss Parliament in 1999 in order to concentrate the strengths and to avoid duplication in various departments. In an initial step, in 1998, the previous Federal Department for Industry, Commerce and Employment, ElGA and the Federal Department for Economic Affairs was amalgamated to create the new Federal Department for Industry and Employment (BWA) at that time. The increasing international integration is leading to greater harmonisation between the domestic and export-led economies. Consequently, in the following year the Swiss Parliament decided to merge the BWA with the BAWI (Federal Department for Exports) to create the current SECO.

The economy plays a supporting role in preserving our wellbeing. The aim of SECO is to promote sustainable economic growth through its activities. The key tasks are to preserve and expand Switzerland's economic competitiveness. Our efforts in this context are based on strengthening Switzerland as an economic location, on developing and consolidating the economic policy relationships with the EU and other non-European countries, as well as on the strategic labour market policy and its supervision. To this end we utilise our in-depth knowledge of economic affairs and foster our national and international contacts.

In the area of conflict between state, economy and diplomacy, I would like to set out the challenges facing us, together with expert and committed employees. Take a look at our organisation and learn more about the SECO! I hope you find this publication interesting and informative.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'M. Ineichen-Fleisch' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Marie-Gabrielle Ineichen-Fleisch
Director of SECO and State Secretary

It is our aim to contribute to sustained economic growth, high employment and fair working conditions, by creating the necessary regulatory, economic and foreign policy framework.

The focus is on the following aims:

Promoting Switzerland's appeal as a location for business
Gearing economic and labour market policy towards a healthy employment situation
Maintaining the rules of competition within the framework of targeted regulatory and competition policy, structural policy and labour market policy
Promoting fair competition as well as market and pricing transparency
Administrative relief particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises
Gearing the labour market policy towards fair working conditions, certainty and health and safety at work
(Re) integrating jobseekers into the labour market as well as an appropriate replacement for supplementary income for the unemployed
Granting appropriate employee protection in open labour markets following the introduction of the free movement of persons
Providing optimised access to foreign markets that is as unobstructed and non-discriminating as possible
Actively participating in shaping a market-orientated world economic order which is open, sustainable and based on legal certainty
Supporting the integration of developing countries and Eastern European transition countries into the world economy and the elimination of the economic and social inequalities in the expanded EU
Coordinating the relationships between Switzerland and the Work Bank Group, the economic development banks and the economic organisations of the United Nations
Accrediting private and public inspection and conformity assessment bodies in Switzerland in accordance with internationally recognised standards

SWITZERLAND
SE SCHWEIZ SVI

Economic Policy

Directorate

We monitor and comment on national and international economic development, identify the need for economic policy action and analyse federal legislation relevant to the economy as a whole. Our analyses and forecasts provide an important basis for the orientation of Switzerland's economic policy.

Economic Policy Directorate

Observations – analyses – forecasts

Switzerland's economic actors are involved in a diverse range of economic relationships at local, national and international level. The country as a whole must increasingly hold its own in global competition. A well-functioning economy should benefit all of those involved, i.e. businesses, workers and consumers. It is therefore essential that the orientation of economic policy be based on reliable findings. In a continually changing environment, this orientation needs to be constantly monitored and adjusted.

That calls for an active policy committed to progress not the status quo. The Economic Policy Directorate prepares the necessary groundwork by monitoring national and international economic development, identifying the need for economic policy action and analysing federal legislation relevant to the whole economy. It also prepares analyses and forecasts on specific issues, such as the functioning of the labour market. It pursues the aim of making factually justified contributions to support the federal government in important economic policy decisions.

Growth and Competition Policy

Our main task is to analyse the supply side of the whole economy, focussing on, among other things, long-term economic development, i.e. trend growth, productivity and innovation capabilities. We are also responsible for the economy's competition policy framework, which involves the ongoing development of the Cartel Act, the Internal Market Act, government assistance and administered prices as well as determining the appropriateness of new rules in sectors where the state establishes statutory market regulations. In terms of foreign economic policy, our work involves providing the basis for decision-making in the form of analyses of global economic integration and representing Switzerland's position in the OECD's economic policy committees.

Short Term Economic Analyses

We analyse and report on Switzerland's short-term economic development. Our work is of both a quantitative (determining GDP) and qualitative nature (publication on short term economic trends). Furthermore, we are actively involved in the expert group responsible for generating the official GDP forecasts and communicate its findings. In addition, we comment four times a year on the consumer confidence survey. Another of our ongoing tasks is the analysis of traditional and new transmission channels for stimulating the economy.

Labour Market & Social Policy Analyses

We prepare recommendations and bases for decisions regarding labour policy and the overlap with social and economic policy. The issues vary according to existing or emerging problems. They include fields such as migration, youth unemployment, atypical labour relations and education policy issues. We also evaluate the effectiveness of public job placement and active labour market measures at regular intervals. In relation to work-life balance, our activities focus on information campaigns to promote best practices. Last but not least, we are also responsible for the implementation of the tax-deductible job creation reserves.

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Economic Policy Directorate:

Growth and competition policy

Short term economic analyses and policy

Labour market & social policy analyses

Environment & energy policy

Regulations analyses

Publication of the "Die Volkswirtschaft" and Swiss Official Gazette of Commerce (SOGC)



Technology, Environment & Energy Policy

We introduce economic outlooks and analyses into Switzerland's national and international environment and energy policies with the aim of implementing national and international measures in an economically efficient way. We deal at great length with measures particularly relevant to the overall economy in the environment and energy sector. In the environmental field, this includes the implementation of the Convention on Climate Change, the Air Purity Ordinance and soil and water protection provisions. In the field of energy, the focus is on energy markets and our joint responsibility for foreign economic policy in respect of energy (in particular the International Energy Agency and the Energy Charter Treaty).

Regulations Analyses

We assist the relevant offices in their analysis of the economic effects of new legislation as part of the regulation impact assessments that feature in Federal Council dispatches. In addition we are responsible for the analysis and the planning of regulatory instruments and measures to improve them (examples: simplified licensing procedures and administrative relief).

Publications

We assume editorial responsibility for two of the EAER's most important publications: the monthly economic policy magazine "Die Volkswirtschaft" (www.dievolkswirtschaft.ch) (available in German and French) and the daily Swiss Official Gazette of Commerce (www.shab.ch). As part of the ongoing development of the electronic version of the SOGC, we are responsible for developing a central e-Government application.



Labour Directorate

The labour market policy covers a broad area. Its aim is to enable as many people as possible of working age to be engaged in gainful employment, to earn salaries that enable them to live a dignified life and under conditions that are not detrimental to their health. The Labour Directorate works in close collaboration with the social partners and the cantons to ensure clear rules regarding employee protection, unemployment insurance and job placement as well as for opening up the labour market following the introduction of the free movement of persons. We also represent Switzerland in the International Labour Organisation and are permitted to promoting a social dimension of globalisation.

Labour Directorate

Working Conditions

Creating healthy working conditions

Stiff competition and social developments continually pose new challenges to commercial companies. This also places greater demands on employees. In order to be able to maintain a healthy balance, the flexibility required by the economy must therefore be continually reconciled with the legitimate needs of employees for health and safety at work.

Health and safety at work is extremely important in terms of healthcare, social and economic policy. Embedded in the labour legislation it creates the requirement for an optimum performance by employees and maintaining them in the work process. Satisfied and healthy employees safeguard the social peace in the country and make a contribution towards a prosperous economy. The workplace has also become one of the key areas of action for public health.

Work-related detrimental effects on health, such as for example back pain and burnout, cost several billion Swiss francs a year in our country. Some of this money could be saved by taking appropriate measures.

Deficiencies in the organisation of labour, working time models, work structure or in management attitudes can also have a negative effect on health at the workplace just as much as poor air, lighting or noise conditions. Our Working Conditions Division is responsible for matters relating to all aspects of employee health and safety at work. We work for the continual adaptation of statutory regulations to scientific and technical bases and issue recommendations for measures to combat detrimental effect on health at the workplace.

Employee protection

We primarily deal with lawmaking and supervision in relation to working hours and rest periods. We also act as a licensing authority for regular night work, work on Sundays and shift work throughout Switzerland. On a day-to-day basis we also in particular answer legal questions such as those relating to pregnant employees and young workers. We ensure the uniform application of the regulations relating to working hours and rest periods in the Employment Act. We provide technical further training and advice on the abovementioned areas to representatives of cantonal supervisory authorities

Federal Labour Inspectorate

We supervise and coordinate the implementation of the Employment Act as well as the Accident Insurance Act by the cantons. To this end we analyse the implementation data, make decisions on implementation questions on health and safety at the workplace for all cantons and determine which activities are to be the focus in the implementation by the cantons. As part of the overall supervision we ensure that laws are applied on a standardised basis throughout Switzerland. To this end on the one side we draw up guidelines for the cantons and on the other conduct regular audits of the cantonal Labour Inspectorates.

In addition to the education and further training services that we offer, we provide support and advice to the cantonal labour inspectors on technical and fundamental matters. We directly monitor the local implementation of the Employment Act and the Accident Insurance Act both in the federal government administration and establishments. We also maintain cooperation with international employee protection organisations as well as foreign partner authorities.

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Working Conditions Division:

Approvals for working hours and rest periods

Identification and monitoring of health risks at the workplace

Formulation of bases relating to the prevention of working conditions which are detrimental to health

Monitoring and coordination of the implementation of the Employment Act and Accident Prevention Act by the cantons

Coordination of the implementation of the Product Safety Act

Safe handling of chemicals at the workplace



Bases of Labour and Health

We deal with the scientific evaluation of workplace health impacts. In this context the identification of new risks and monitoring of known health risks are key tasks in the various sectors and for special risk groups. We publish regular reports on the risks to health at the workplace. We also issue recommendations relating to the implementation of the Employment Act. Furthermore, our specialists in occupational medicine, occupational hygiene, ergonomics and occupational psychology are involved in providing training and advice to representatives of the implementation bodies of the Employment Act.



Product Safety

Together with other partners we coordinate the implementation of the Federal Act on Product Safety. The aim is to ensure that only safe products which are not detrimental to health can be sold on the Swiss market and used by both consumers as well as employees. In order to ensure a free flow of goods the various provisions are harmonised with those of our country's key trading partners.

Our other tasks also include analysing European product regulations and implementing these into Swiss law.



Chemicals and Work

As one of the various assessment bodies under the Chemicals Act we are responsible for protecting employees. Together with other federal departments we handle the dossier on the registration of new materials, licensing of both pesticides and biocide products. We assess whether the anticipated exposure to these chemicals can have a detrimental effect on the health of the employee. We also check whether all the required workplace safety measures are correctly set out in the operating instructions and safety data sheets for the chemicals and whether the companies are able to comprehend and implement these. We are also involved in the market monitoring for chemicals.

Labour Directorate

Labour Market and Unemployment Insurance

Focus on employment

Unemployment is directly linked to the economic cycle and no-one can forecast this will evolve in the long term. It is therefore important to have effective instruments ready for the good times and the bad so as to be able to provide efficient support to those affected at all times.

The Labour Market/Unemployment Insurance Division is responsible for the Unemployment Insurance Act. The partners who assist in carrying out these tasks are the cantonal offices (KAST), regional employment centres (RAV) and the logistics offices for labour market measures (LAM) in the cantons, as well as public and private unemployment insurance funds. In cooperation with these partners and other labour market institutions, unemployment insurance offers unemployed persons an adequate compensatory income and helps jobseekers achieve quick and lasting reintegration into the labour market. The division also represents Switzerland in international matters. In addition, it manages the unemployment fund's resources and operates an IT centre to support the implementing agencies in the Labour Market/Unemployment Insurance Division. The Division represents Switzerland on matters relating to the international labour market.

Lawmaking and implementation

Our core tasks include lawmaking and the processing of legal questions concerning the labour market and unemployment insurance. We ensure the uniform application of the Unemployment Insurance Act by issuing instructions to the various implementing agencies, and by advising and monitoring cantonal offices and unemployment insurance funds.

Management of the implementing offices

Our core tasks also include management of the cantonal implementing offices, i.e. the cantonal offices (KAST), regional employment centres (RAV) and logistics offices for labour market measures (LAM) and of public and private unemployment insurance funds. RAV/LAM/KAST are managed using measurable, result-oriented objectives. These are set out in an agreement between the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research and the cantonal governments.

IT support

Unemployment insurance is managed using two main electronic information systems: a system for activities relating to job placement (AVAM) and another for unemployment payments (ASAL). The data from both these systems are compiled in SECO's information system for labour market data analysis (LAMDA) and made available to the cantons for the purposes of controlling. We also support the cantons in terms of quality assurance, organisation and training.

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Labour Market and Unemployment Insurance Division:

Lawmaking and enforcement

Inspectorate

Management of implementing offices and unemployment insurance funds

Labour market measures

Public employment services

IT services for placement and payment systems

Labour market statistics

Administration of the unemployment insurance fund

Our aim: work and income for all.



Compensation

Unemployment insurance provides compensatory income in the form of unemployment benefits to those concerned as compensation for loss of income. Short-time work compensation is designed to prevent the loss of jobs in the event of a temporary lack of work due to the economic situation. The same aim is pursued with bad weather compensation, which can be paid in certain sectors (e.g. construction), when it is impossible to continue work due to adverse weather conditions. If an employer is unable to pay, the employees' loss of income for work performed is compensated for a limited period in the form of insolvency payments.

Labour market measures

We use specific instruments to support the rapid and lasting integration of jobseekers in the labour market. These instruments include courses and programmes for temporary employment, but also training businesses, practical work experience, motivation semesters as well as job orientation and training subsidies.

Preventive measures

Preventive measures can be helpful to those affected by imminent collective redundancies. The regional employment centres (RAV) assist the persons concerned by providing advice and mediation services. These preventive measures primarily involve clarification and qualification measures and the provision of services within the company to help staff look for alternative employment.

Labour Directorate

Free Movement of Persons and Labour Relations

Nationals from EU and EFTA states benefit from the free movement of persons. Employees from these countries thereby enjoy the same rights and benefits as Swiss nationals on the Swiss labour market.

The Free Movement of Persons and Labour Relations Division (PA) makes an important contribution to the implementation of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons by supervising the accompanying measures against wage and social dumping and by monitoring the labour market. In this regard, the accompanying measures, the Declaration of General Applicability of Collective Agreements, the supervision of private employment agencies and the fight against illegal employment are particularly important.

Accompanying measures against wage and social dumping

The accompanying measures serve to protect employees against wage and social dumping, which could occur with the free movement of persons. As a specialised unit of the federal government we monitor the implementation of the instruments of the accompanying measures by the cantons and the social partners. The accompanying measures are used to check whether domestic and foreign employers are adhering to the standard wages and working conditions applicable for the corresponding area and sector, as well as to the minimum wage and working conditions stipulated in collective agreements for which a Declaration of General Applicability has been issued. The accompanying measures essentially comprise the following:

- The federal act on employees posted to Switzerland (Posted Workers Act) imposes an obligation on foreign employers who send employees to work in Switzerland to comply with the minimum wage and working conditions applicable in Switzerland.
- The simplified General Applicability of Collective Agreements and Standard Employment Agreements can be used to introduce binding minimum wages in the event of abusive undercutting of standard wage and working conditions applicable for the area and the sector.

The accompanying measures came into force on 1 January 2004. To date the accompanying measures have been reinforced twice in line with the expansion of the EU through the addition of new Member States

We provide the general public with all the relevant information on the accompanying measures, thereby ensuring the necessary transparency. For example, the Internet platform www.entsendung.admin.ch contains all the necessary information on Swiss wage and working conditions. This is to the benefit of both the employees as well as employers in Switzerland and abroad. We also ensure that these are implemented on an equal basis in the cantons. In this context significant importance is attached to the further training that we offer the cantonal implementation agencies.

Illegal employment

As a technical agency we inform the general public about and raise its awareness of the negative consequences of illegal employment and monitor the implementation of the Federal Act on Measures to Combat Illegal Employment which came into force on 1 January 2008.

The aim of the new act is to combat illegal employment in an efficient and pragmatic way. Simplified administrative procedures for paying social insurance and taxes are intended to offer employers an incentive to declare their employees' wages even for smaller activities, such as household tasks.

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Free Movement of Persons and Labour Relations Division:

Supervision of the accompanying measures against the abusive undercutting of wage and working conditions

Monitoring of the labour market

Declaration of General Applicability of Collective Agreements

Combating illegal employment

Supervision of private employment agencies and recruitment services

Economic and international matters/migration



In addition, cantonal control authorities were established with the act, these authorities employing inspectors. The act also provides for the exchange of data between the participating authorities.

We are creating the basis for proper cooperation among the authorities, thereby providing the guarantee for a coordinated approach to conducting systematic and efficient checks.

Declaration of General Applicability of Collective Wage Agreements

Our division is also responsible for the implementation of the procedure relating to the Declaration of General Applicability of Collective Wage Agreements. We check whether the statutory requirements for the declaration of general applicability have been met and maintain close contact with the social partners who are responsible for concluding the general wage agreements. With the Declaration of General Applicability, the provisions of a general works agreement apply to all companies within a sector. Some provisions (e.g. relating to minimum wages and working hours) also apply to companies who have registered offices abroad and who send employees to work in Switzerland. The collective agreements for which a Declaration of General Applicability has been issued are therefore of significant importance for the accompanying measures.



Federal Mediation Board for resolving collective labour disputes

We also manage the Secretariat of the Federal Mediation Board for the Resolution of Collective Labour Disputes. The Federal Mediation Board is a government mediation body which is consulted only at the express wish of the parties involved and only if all attempts to reach agreement between the parties (employer or employer organisations and trade unions) through direct negotiation have been unsuccessful.

Private employment agencies and recruitment services

As a specialist unit of the federal government we are responsible for monitoring private employment agencies and recruitment services within the framework of the Recruitment and Hiring of Services Act. We grant federal placement and hiring permits to companies that provide cross-border services. We also manage the directory of authorised employment agencies and recruitment services. We work in close cooperation with the cantonal offices to enforce this Act.

We work to ensure the uniform enforcement of the Recruitment and Hiring of Services Act and to protect the employees who use the services of private employment agencies or recruitment services.

Economic and international matters

We are the centre of excellence for immigration in the SECO. We deal with matters relating to immigration and emigration – in particular in connection with the treaty on the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the EU. We also deal with matters relating to the Aliens Act (citizens of third party states) as well as the policy on asylum. We are also responsible for the immigration network within the SECO.

Labour Directorate

International Labour Affairs

Social stability, social dialogue and improved sharing of the opportunities offered by globalisation

Open markets and societies are essential for ensuring prosperity and democracy. Globalisation brings change, creating situations where not all are able to benefit from greater prosperity. That is why social protection is needed to allow all sections of society to make the most of the opportunities offered by globalisation. Supporting the social dimension of globalisation at international level is the task of the International Labour Affairs Unit.

We represent Switzerland in the International Labour Organization (ILO), the only tripartite institution of the United Nations. The ILO is therefore entrusted with the task of promoting social justice and preserving human rights in the world of work. Its primary tasks are to promote labour rights, support the creation of dignity in work, further develop social protection and to encourage social dialogue in the search for solutions to deal with the problems of the world of work. We draw up the reports relating to the legal and practical implementation of the ILO treaties which have been ratified by Switzerland and organise the work of the tripartite federal commission on ILO affairs.

In terms of a coherent foreign policy, we promote compliance with the fundamental labour standards – on the one side within other international organisations (e.g. the UN, Bretton-Woods institutions, the WTO) and on the other side through the introduction of the new model provisions on “trade and sustainable development” formulated by the EFTA within the framework of bilateral and regional trade agreements. Through economic development cooperation programmes we have a global commitment to dignity in work. The aim of these programmes is to make a contribution towards respecting employee rights, promoting sustainable enterprises, growth in employment and reducing poverty by gradually developing a base for social protection.

We monitor the compliance with the criteria for socially acceptable manufacturing conditions; for example, under the corresponding act, fuels from renewable resources in particular are exempt from the duty on mineral oil. Last but not least, we are responsible for reporting on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN Covenant I).

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the International Labour Affairs Unit:

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International labour standards (including core labour standards)

The social dimension of globalisation

Economic and social rights (UN Covenant I)

The economy and human rights



Internal Audit SECO

Brief overview of the spheres of auditing activity of the Internal Audit Unit:

Management and business processes

Annual accounts

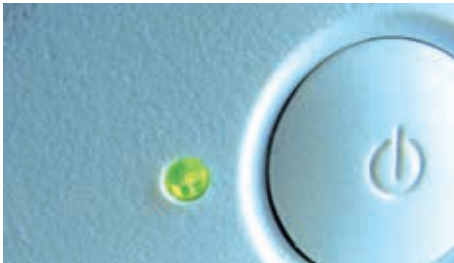
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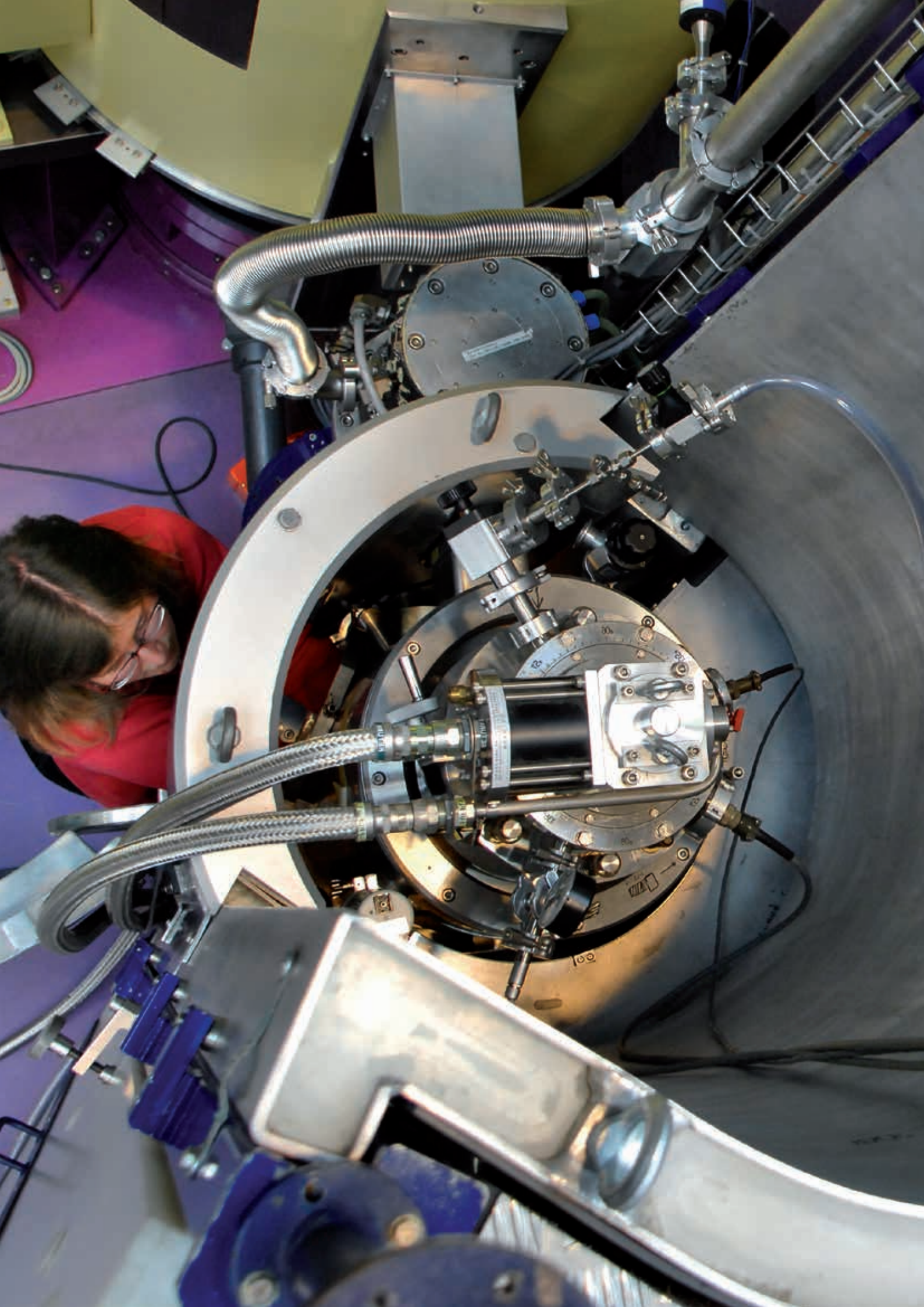
Projects

Risk management process

Auditing, advising and creating added value

We provide independent and objective auditing and advisory services that are specifically intended to generate added value and improve business processes. We support SECO in achieving its goals by using a risk-oriented, systematic and targeted approach to evaluate and help improve the effectiveness of risk management, inspections and management and supervision processes (ICS).





Promotion Activities

Directorate

We fulfil the important task of positioning and strengthening Switzerland as a location for business against the backdrop of globalisation. We support initiatives aimed at helping the economy to adapt to structural change, to improve the export capabilities of SMEs and encourage foreign firms to set up business in Switzerland.

Promotion Activities Directorate

Towards sustainable economic growth

The Swiss economy competes in a global market. Global economic structural change also requires our companies to adapt to constantly evolving challenges. The Promotion Activities Directorate provides Switzerland as a business location with targeted help in this adjustment process, thereby contributing towards a sustainable increase in the value added of the Swiss economy. The directorate's priorities focus on the promotion in other countries of Switzerland as a location for business, on export promotion and export risk insurance, regional and spatial planning policy, the improvement of general conditions for SMEs and on tourism.

The founding or resettlement of leading technology companies broadens the spectrum of our economy. Stakeholders who are at a disadvantage in the adjustment process due to their size or structure benefit from the Promotion Activities Directorate's SME policy, particularly in the shape of information flows or the creation of platforms intended to encourage cooperation. The regions receive support for their own, long-term independent economic development beyond cantonal and national borders. We strive to ensure that our economic policy measures include adequate incentive mechanisms.

SME Policy

Over 99 per cent of private sector companies in Switzerland are SMEs. In all they employ two thirds of the working population. Compared with large firms, SMEs are more heavily affected by administrative burdens and financing issues. We act as an intermediary between businesses and the federal administration, concentrating on two main tasks: Firstly, on reducing administrative hurdles for the companies, for example in the form of the SME compatibility test which is applied to test the compatibility of new laws with the needs of SMEs, or through practical and comprehensive information for existing SMEs and start-ups – for example via a specially created Internet portal for SMEs (www.kmu.admin.ch). The second area of emphasis is on corporate financing, e.g. by supporting the system of business-orientated loans for SMEs.

Export and Investment Promotion

We ensure a diverse range of services for export-orientated Swiss companies. The Osec Business Network Switzerland carries out operational export promotion on behalf of the federal government. Osec provides detailed information on foreign markets, helps the SME to find business opportunities abroad and lends support e.g. for attendance at key trade fairs. The Swiss Export Risk Insurance (SERV) provides Swiss companies with insurance against economic and political risks for their export business.

In terms of promoting the location, potential investors are given information and advice on all the important facts about Switzerland as a location for business and research. The federal government's location promotion activities are conducted by Osec and coordinated with those of the cantons.

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Promotion Activities Directorate:

SME policy

Export promotion, export risk insurance and location promotion

Regional and spatial planning policy

Tourism





Regional and Spatial Planning Policy

With the help of regional policy instruments we support the efforts of rural areas as well as mountain and border regions to introduce structural change and improve their competitiveness. We aim to improve the quality of the regions as a location for business through direct promotion in the form of contributions and loans for infrastructure investments, in particular incentives for cross-border collaboration in functional economic areas. By coordinating our activities with other, similarly-orientated federal tasks, we also strive to create synergies for projects in the assisted regions.

Tourism

As the federal government's centre of excellence for tourism we strive to ensure advantageous conditions for companies in the tourism sector. Within the framework of the Federal Act on Innovation Promotion, Cooperation and Knowledge Building in Tourism, Innotour (www.inno-tour.ch) and the Federal Act on the Promotion of the Hospitality Industry, we support the innovation and investment activities as well as cooperation and knowledge building in Swiss tourism. We also provide support for marketing Switzerland as a travel destination and represent our country in international tourism organisations.



Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate

We are committed to an open Swiss economy and safeguard the interests of our economy abroad by promoting free and fair world trade. In particular, we are responsible for:

the international movement of goods, non-tariff measures, trade in services, international investments and matters relating to international economic law,

participation in shaping free and fair world trade by taking part in the negotiations under the auspices of the WTO and by concluding free trade agreements,

the representation of Switzerland in multilateral economic organisations such as the WTO, EFTA, the World Bank and the OECD,

economic and trade policy measures in support of developing and transition countries and the new EU member states,

Switzerland's bilateral economic relations with countries around the globe,

export controls and sanctions.

Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate

Special Foreign Economic Services

Structuring negotiations and creating framework conditions

The Special Foreign Economic Services Division of the Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate is the federal government's centre of excellence for the international movement of goods, non-tariff measures, trade in services, international investments and multinational enterprises, as well as international economic law. It represents the interests of Switzerland as a business location in these fields and is responsible for the early recognition of new developments. In order to obtain access to markets abroad and establishing an economic order in Switzerland conducive to competition, it participates in shaping international conditions. It is responsible for the negotiation of international agreements to safeguard the interests of the Swiss economy in various negotiations (e.g. in the context of the WTO and EFTA, with the EU, and on free trade and other bilateral trade agreements). It also represents Switzerland's technical fields in the relevant international organisations (WTO, OECD, EFTA, UNCTAD, etc.). The Special Foreign Economic Services Division also ensures that the outcome of negotiations is transposed into Swiss law and monitors the conformity of domestic regulations with Switzerland's international obligations providing the appropriate support where necessary.

International Economic Law

Our tasks as SECO's centre of excellence for matters of international economic law include the negotiation of international economic agreements and representing Switzerland in international organisations. The focus being on competition law, corporate governance, as well as on institutional provisions, protective trade policy measures and the resolution of disputes. We represent Switzerland in the OECD and UNCTAD specialist committees. In cooperation with the specialised services, we ensure the coherence of the agreements in terms of rules on trade, services, investment and other rules within and between the various agreements concluded by Switzerland.

International Movement of Goods

Our section is the point of contact for autonomous, bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral matters regarding international trade in goods. With regard to the movement of goods we, along with the section responsible for non-tariff measures, form the centre of excellence for issues relating to market access for agricultural and industrial goods in Switzerland and abroad. One of our central fields of activity involves shaping general policies on customs, customs tariffs and rules of origin, including conducting negotiations on international agreements in particular with the EU (amongst others the 1972 free trade agreements including Protocol 2 for processed agricultural products, negotiations on agriculture, food safety and health) and free trade agreements with non-EU countries. Our aim is to lower customs duties and fees, and to simplify procedures at the border. We are also responsible (in collaboration with the Senior Customs Directorate and the Federal Department for Agriculture) for the implementation of the federal act on the import and export of goods made from agricultural products (so-called "Schoggi Act").

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Special Foreign Economic Services

Division:

International economic law

International movement of goods

Non-tariff measures

International services

International investment and multinational enterprises

We are responsible for technical questions in relation to foreign trade policy and global economic activity.



Non-Tariff Measures

We are working towards achieving internationally harmonised or compatible product regulations and the mutual recognition of tests, certifications, conformity evaluations, inspections and approvals. Our aim is to provide Swiss businesses with access to foreign markets that is as unrestricted possible and to give Switzerland a competitive edge as a location for business through the international recognition or harmonisation of regulations and standards. We are responsible for the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and negotiate agreements on mutual recognition with the EU. We negotiate agreements on mutual recognition (including negotiations with the EU on agriculture, food safety and health as well as on REACH). We are also responsible for the implementation of the Federal Act on Technical Barriers to Trade and the formulation of the principles of Swiss policy on the elimination of non-tariff barriers to trade.

Services

Our task is to improve access to the markets and to eliminate discrimination in trading in services. Within the framework of the GATS/WTO agreement on services and free trade agreements, we endeavour to safeguard and improve market access for Swiss service providers and to ensure the non-discriminatory treatment on foreign markets. We pursue these aims in the various services sectors such as the financial sector, telecommunications, retail and wholesale, corporate services, freelance occupations, transport and logistics, tourism, construction, audiovisual services, postal and courier services, education and healthcare services and in the area of e-commerce. In addition, we handle issues relating to national legislation in the services sector, in particular, with the aim of ensuring compatibility with Switzerland's international obligations and European legal standards.

International Investment and Multinational Enterprises

We are responsible for international rules and agreements on international investments, including Switzerland's roughly 120 bilateral agreements on the promotion and protection of investments and the investment provisions in free trade agreements. We represent Switzerland in the specialist committees of international organisations (namely the OECD and UNCTAD). We also work towards improving the conditions for international investments and the contribution made by multinational enterprises to sustainable development. This includes helping to shape basic principles for responsible actions on the part of international companies (Corporate Responsibility), amongst other things within the framework of the OECD guidelines on what constitutes responsible behaviour on the part of business. We also focus on fighting bribery in international business transactions. We represent Switzerland in the relevant OECD committee where we aim, among other things, to prevent distortions to competition on international markets resulting from corruption.

Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate

World Trade

A commitment to open foreign markets

Open foreign markets are of crucial importance to the Swiss economy. In addition to the bilateral agreements with the European Union, Switzerland's foreign economic policy also relies on additional pillars. One of the Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate's core tasks in the field of world trade is to help shape the world economic framework and, together with the special services concerned, to represent Switzerland's economic interests in important multilateral organisations, particularly the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

World Trade Organization (WTO)

Switzerland's high share of foreign trade indicates just how close Switzerland's ties are with other countries. Reliable international rules for international trade are particularly important. Our active membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO), one of the most important platforms for trade and commerce, is therefore a key element of our foreign economic policy. We participate in the negotiations in the WTO rounds and in WTO bodies (the Ministerial Conference, councils, committees, working groups, etc.). Through our commitment to the dismantling of trade barriers, including the improvement of access to public procurement markets, we contribute to increasing market opportunities for the Swiss export industry and to the strengthening of the domestic market over the longer term. The WTO's dispute settlement rules, which prevent unilateral rulings and retaliatory measures and which promote overall stability, legal certainty and legal equality among members as well as the monitoring of the trade policy measures in order to combat potential protectionist trends at an early stage, are also very much in Switzerland's interests. In the framework of the WTO, we are working towards the shaping of a coherent balance between trade and other areas of policy, such as environmental protection and health, the safeguarding of basic labour standards and consumer protection.

Free trade agreements/European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

Even though EFTA currently consists only of three states (Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway) in addition to Switzerland, it has demonstrated for decades that it is capable of establishing a functioning and dynamic free trade area among its members and with other partner states. Furthermore, EFTA membership provides Switzerland with a useful observer status in the bodies of the European Economic Area (EEA). EFTA is, however, of particular importance to Switzerland as a forum for the negotiation of free trade agreements with non-EU partners. The conclusion of free trade agreements, for the most part within EFTA but also on a bilateral basis, is essentially aimed at guaranteeing Swiss companies conditions for economic cooperation that has legal certainty and is as predictable, free of obstacles and non-discriminatory as possible. These conditions include, in particular, at least the same level of access to international markets as that of Switzerland's key foreign competitors. At present – in addition to the EFTA convention and the free trade agreement with the EU – Switzerland has a network of 26 free trade agreements with 35 partners outside the European Union. Negotiations are being conducted or planned with numerous other partners. While traditional agreements are restricted mainly to the movement of goods, i.e. first and foremost, to the elimination of customs duties and to the protection of intellectual property rights and competition regulations, more recent agreements also contain substantial provisions relating to public procurement, services, investment and sus-

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the World Trade Division:

World Trade Organization (WTO)

Free trade agreements / EFTA

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) + G20





tainability. These negotiations require collaboration between SECO's various special foreign economic services with whom we are working to ensure that the interests of the Swiss economy are represented as best as possible.

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

The OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) currently comprises 34 member states. It offers the government representatives of these countries a permanent platform for multilateral economic cooperation covering all economic, social and environmental areas, with the exception of defence and cultural policy. The OECD prepares legally binding decisions, politically binding recommendations or country specific evaluations and analyses, for example on economic growth, unemployment, education, trade, development cooperation, SMEs, sustainability, green growth, biotechnology, healthcare, competition, investment, corruption, research and innovation, etc. We monitor the work of the OECD and coordinate the relevant federal offices and special services to represent Switzerland in the OECD's varied work.

G20

The basis for a new, global economic governance was created with the establishment of the "Group of 20" (G20) at the Summit of Heads of State and Government in Washington in 2008. Following the initial urgent decisions which had to be taken during the economic and financial crisis, the G20 has since established a structured method of working. As such, Switzerland saw itself faced with a new starting basis but remained convinced at all times of the importance of convergence towards the G20. It consequently reorganised its approach in order to actively defend its commercial and financial interests and to make a contribution towards resolving international problems. With this in mind it passed a strategy that provides for Switzerland to take a proactive position with regard to the central points of the G20 agenda and a stronger position within the international organisations appointed by the G20. Together with the State Secretariat for International Financial Affairs, SIF, and representatives of other departments, the SECO chairs the interdepartmental working group on the implementation of this strategy.

Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate

Economic Cooperation and Development

Improving living conditions, creating market access and opening up new horizons

Our division draws up the concept for the economic cooperation with selected, more advanced developing countries such as Indonesia and Peru, transition countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and the new EU member states (enlargement contribution). The main objective in this context is to promote economic, environmental and socially sustainable growth which creates new jobs, facilitates increased productivity and helps to reduce poverty and disparities. This is done by integrating these countries into the global economy and strengthening the competitiveness of their domestic economies. This work focuses on support measures for those countries who have committed themselves to a serious process of reforms geared towards performance. In this context, good government and equality between the sexes are seen as cross-sectoral themes. We work closely together with the World Bank group, the regional development banks and the trade organisations of the United Nations and represent the interests of Switzerland in these institutions.

Our division is organised along specialist lines and our work is focused on the five topic areas set out below for which the SECO is for the most part also responsible on the national level.

Strengthening economic and financial policy

Stable economic framework conditions and functioning institutions are essential for sustainable economic development. Our support is aimed at creating a stable monetary policy, a balanced financial budget and a strong financial sector. We provide help to our partner countries to create economic reforms which are favourable to generating growth, that contribute to greater budgetary stability, mobilise internal resources, create more efficient public services and improve governmental accountability. In the financial sector we provide support for the regulation and supervision of the financial markets, promote a healthy financial policy environment and the development of local capital markets.

Developing urban infrastructures and utility supplies

We provide support to ensure reliable and affordable energy and water supplies, to prove transport and traffic and to ensure the disposal of waste water and waste, all of which are essential for sustainable development. The aim is to establish basic public institutions and to make the operational and financial capacities of utility companies more professional. Another task is to promote the framework conditions to ensure that operating costs are placed on a sound financial basis. In this context particular attention must be placed on integrated urban development in order to increase the attraction of medium-sized city centres as a place to live and work and so that they can better fulfil their central role in generating economic growth. This will also promote social harmony and reduce the pressure on migration.

Support for the private sector and enterprise

A dynamic private sector built on a strong spirit of enterprise creates jobs, helps to increase tax revenues and, through the exchange of goods and services, plays a key role in economic integration. We are helping to improve the business environment for SMEs and to enable them to access outside financing. We contribute towards improving the efficiency of local financial markets and establishing a sustainable spirit of enterprise. Last but not least, we promote a range of measures which are aimed at

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Economic Cooperation and Development Division:

Strengthening economic and financial policy

Developing urban infrastructure and utility supplies

Supporting the private sector and private enterprise

Promoting sustainable trade

Providing for climate-friendly growth

Developing multilateral cooperation

Promoting programme and project quality



We strive to improve living conditions in developing countries.



prompting both domestic and foreign investment and in this way we are making a contribution towards the transfer of capital, know-how and technology to both developing countries and countries in transition.

Promoting sustainable trade

Opening up trade in a way which is geared towards rules and is non-discriminatory, creates new opportunities for all the market participants. The task is to utilise the existing locational advantages for economic development. We support measures that set out and improve the framework conditions for trade which is both socially and environmentally acceptable and which strengthen the international competitiveness of manufacturers and SMEs in the partner countries. We also smooth the way for the import of sustainably-manufactured goods and services into European markets in particular by promoting the application of quality standards as well as environmental and social criteria in the developing countries and those in transition. Last but not least, we are responsible for the system of preferential customs tariffs for imports from developing countries.

Paving the way for climate-friendly growth

The successes achieved over recent decades in combating poverty are being jeopardised by the consequences of climate change. We are helping to combat the causes of climate warming – often the result of inefficient industrial processes – and to enable the partner countries to achieve climate-friendly growth. We are concentrating on the areas of energy efficiency and renewable energies, the sustainable use of natural resources and on strengthening market and financing mechanisms in terms of climate protection. This work focuses on favourable and stable framework conditions, such as appropriate energy tariffs and standards, investment certainty, market access and protection for intellectual property.

Developing multilateral cooperation

We are responsible for the relationships between Switzerland and the World Bank group, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development as well as with the regional development banks for Africa, Asia and Latin America. In conjunction with the Development and Cooperation Directorate DEZA, we also define Switzerland's approach and strategy on the decision-making committees of these institutions and as co-stakeholder we exercise the rights and obligations. These institutions provide financial resources and technical support as a way of contributing towards sustainable development and for reducing poverty in the developing countries and countries in transition. They are strategic partners in the implementation of the SECO's bilateral support measures. The OECD, in particular the Development Aid Committee of the OECD (DAC) is another key partner.

Promoting programme and project quality

We develop quality standards and instruments for control, evaluation, risk management and financial controls and for implementing the corresponding measures. The aim is to guarantee the effectiveness of our measures and to minimise the risks involved. With the help of knowledge management, training, taking account of internationally recognised basic principles and proven methods, we promote an ongoing learning process on various levels (effectiveness, harmonisation of the assistance, fighting corruption, reducing poverty, political coherence, migration, the gender dimension). Other key instruments of accountability include the activity with regard to information and the organisation of events.

Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate

Bilateral Economic Relations

On behalf of Switzerland's foreign economic policy

Switzerland is a small, open economy. It benefits from international trade in goods and services and from investment abroad. Good economic policy relations with the various countries of the world are essential. The Bilateral Economic Relations Division promotes these relations and represents Switzerland's economic and trade policy interests abroad. In so doing, the Division adheres to the strategic orientation of Swiss foreign economic policy set out by the Federal Council in 2004.

In addition, the Bilateral Economic Relations Division is responsible for controlling exports of war materiel and so-called dual-use goods, i.e. goods that can be used for both military and civilian purposes. The Division is also responsible for decreeing coercive measures to implement sanctions imposed by the UN, the OSCE or our key trading partners.

Bilateral Services for Countries

The aim of our work is to further develop and consolidate Switzerland's well-established network of foreign economic policy contacts. In order to do this we have divided the world into four regions: America; Europe and Central Asia; the Middle East and Africa; and Asia-Pacific. We serve as an intermediary and coordination office within SECO and regularly liaise with a number of government agencies, Swiss diplomatic representations abroad and foreign representations in Switzerland. We bring Swiss and foreign administration experts together to discuss technical concerns.

Foreign economic policy is also a special interest policy because it influences the framework conditions under which Swiss firms are able to benefit from foreign markets. Liaising with business associations, chambers of commerce and Swiss firms in Switzerland and abroad is important. In addition, we gather country and region-specific information and prepare measures to strengthen the competitiveness of the Swiss economy on important foreign markets. However, we also take into account individual concerns relating to specific countries. If a Swiss firm informs us about a specific problem with a foreign government, we support and advise the firm in cooperation with our diplomatic representation on-site.

The head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER and the director of SECO travel abroad on official missions and regularly receive representatives of foreign governments in Switzerland. Our core tasks also include preparing for and attending these meetings and coordinating the meeting agenda in Switzerland and abroad. Swiss business representatives are often invited to these meetings or included in trade missions. In this respect, we act as a direct liaison for the Swiss economy. Important concerns on the part of Swiss business are thereby given the opportunity to be heard on a political level abroad and can be registered at an institutional level, for example, in the form of bilateral economic agreements.

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Bilateral Economic Relations Division:

Switzerland's bilateral foreign economic policy relations

Export control policy

Sanctions



Export Controls

The supervision of the production, trade, brokerage and transfer (import, export, transit) of war materiel and weapons technology ensures compliance with Switzerland's international obligations and the protection of its foreign policy principles. When evaluating applications for export, controlling authorities take into account the preservation of peace, international security and regional stability, but also respect for human rights and Swiss development cooperation efforts. The position of other countries involved in implementing export control measures is also taken into account. Export controls are only effective if they are coordinated as extensively as possible at international level. The War Material Act forms the basis for these controls.

Due to its highly developed industry, Switzerland is a major exporter of dual-use goods, which in addition to precision machine tools, also include chemicals and laboratory equipment. Appropriate controls should prevent such goods from being misused to produce weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems or to help a state to build up its conventional weapons to the extent that it would represent a threat to global or regional security. The Goods Control Act forms the basis for the implementation of decisions regarding international agreements (e.g. the Chemical Weapons Convention) or optional international control regimes, in which Switzerland participates. In terms of this act, armaments that are not covered by the War Material Act, such as military training aircraft and simulators, are also controlled.

Sanctions

Sanctions are increasingly imposed in conflict situations to implement international law and fundamental human rights. Non-military coercive measures approved by the UN Security Council, such as financial and trade restrictions, are binding on Switzerland. In addition, the Federal Council decides whether Switzerland wishes to adopt the sanctions of its key trade partners (in particular the EU) or the OSCE. It is our duty to implement these sanctions in Switzerland. The Embargo Act provides the legal basis for the adoption and implementation of sanctions. Examples of the implementation of UN sanctions can be seen in the ordinances on measures against al-Qaeda and the Taliban and against the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Ordinance on Measures against Myanmar provides an example of the independent imposition of sanctions based on the EU model.

Foreign Economic Affairs Directorate

Swiss Permanent Mission at the WTO and EFTA

Proactively representing Switzerland's interests

The task of the Swiss Permanent Mission at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is to monitor and help shape the work of the economic international organisations in Geneva. In addition to the WTO and EFTA these include the bodies of the United Nations (UN) that deal with economic matters such as e.g. the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE) and the International Trade Centre of the UNCTAD and the WTO (ITC).

Through its presence in the WTO and EFTA the Swiss Permanent Mission "proactively" represents the country's priorities and interests in the field of international and economic relations. In coordination with the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research EAER, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO and other departments, within the WTO the Swiss Permanent Mission is involved in a round of Doha negotiations that not only broadens access to the markets but also improves existing regulations and creates new ones where necessary. It also increases the cohesion between the multilateral trading systems and other policy areas such as the environment, finance and development.

The World Trade Organisation WTO

The WTO is the key international organisation for defining and monitoring the rules on trade and the only international institution to define the standards for international trading between nations on a global level. The WTO treaty negotiated and ratified by the members provides the basis for the organisation. The aim of this treaty is to promote the economic development of all member states through rules which ensure that global trading in goods and services is able to operate as freely as possible, unhindered and without any discrimination. Another aim is to ensure appropriate protection for intellectual property rights. The WTO's primary tasks are to manage existing trade agreements, monitor their implementation within international law, provide a framework for conducting negotiations on these treaties, mediating in trade disputes as well as offering technical assistance and training for developing countries. The WTO works in close cooperation with other international organisations to make it more cohesive. Last but not least, the Secretariat of the WTO organises a biannual Conference of Ministers which represents the organisation's supreme body for all member states.

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Swiss Permanent Mission at the WTO and EFTA:

Representation of Switzerland's interests

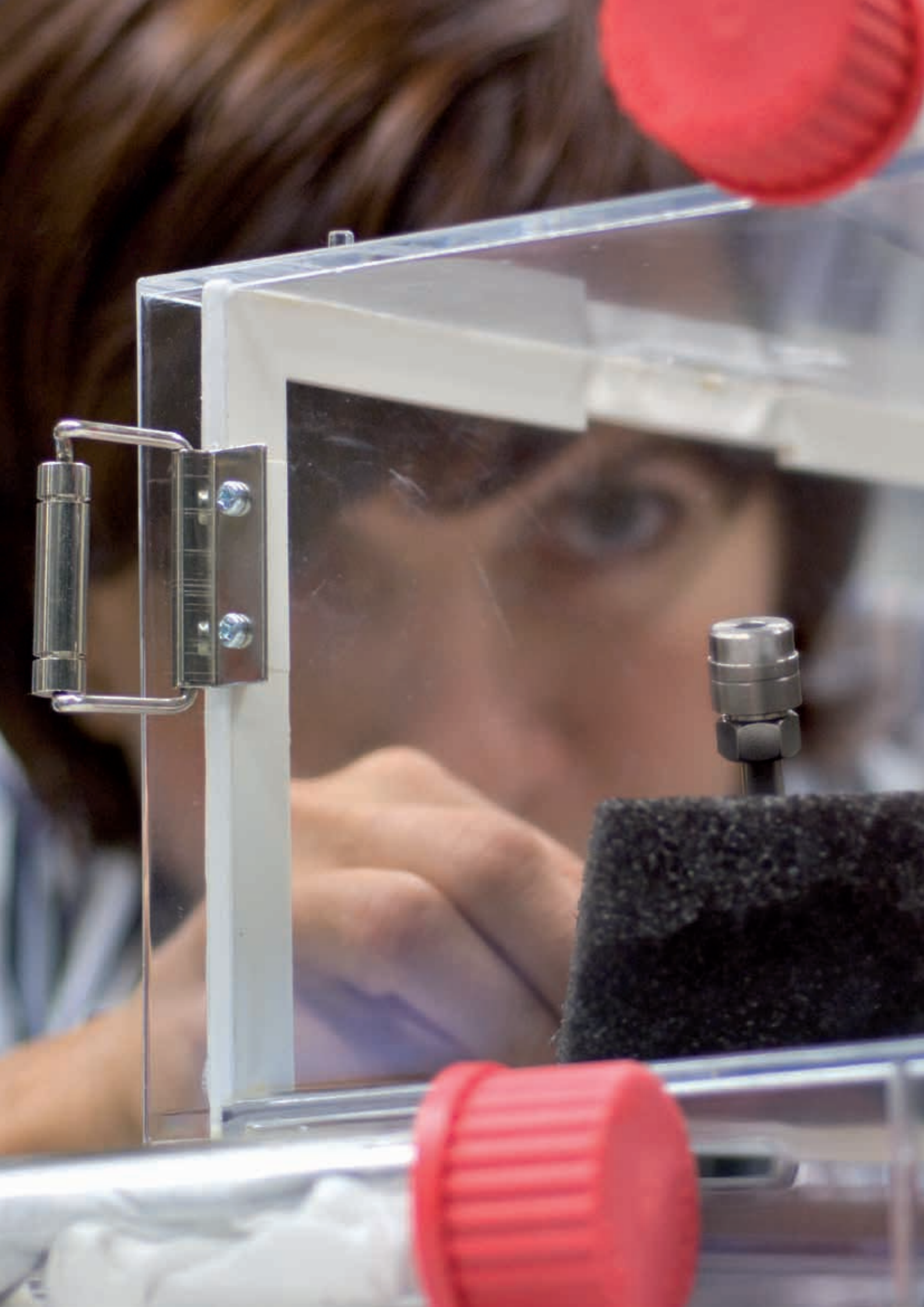
Co-decision making

Monitoring



EFTA

The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is an intergovernmental organisation that promotes free trade between its members. Since 1995 these have been Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. The organisation is entrusted with three main tasks: to monitor the EFTA Treaty, the EEA (which includes Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein and integrates these three EFTA states within the EU single market) as well as to negotiate and maintain free trade agreements with non-treaty countries. The EFTA has concluded an important network of free trade agreements with its four member states. To-date 22 of the 24 Swiss free trade agreements have been negotiated with non-EU partners within the framework of the EFTA.



Organisation, Law & Accreditation

Through our internal services we ensure that the SECO has the resources and structures required in order to successfully fulfil its economic policy mandate. In addition, we assume numerous legal duties and run the Swiss Accreditation Service SAS, which accredits laboratories, and inspection and accreditation agencies in accordance with internationally agreed criteria, providing an important infrastructure for Switzerland as a business location.

Organisation, Law & Accreditation Directorate

Organisation, provision of resources and structures for a successful SECO

Although the internal services that ensure the efficient operation of the SECO's business maintain a low public profile, their commitment ensures that the SECO is able to fulfil its economic policy mandate. For example, the Business Control section coordinates several thousand departmental transactions every year. It ensures that the numerous business transactions of the SECO on behalf of the Federal Government and Parliament are processed smoothly and that within the framework of consultations with the various departments the SECO is able to adopt a timely position in terms of economic policy on the business transactions of other federal departments. Our Human Resources section looks after roughly 650 staff in Switzerland and abroad and through its services and HR measures plays an active role in enabling the SECO to be viewed as an attractive employer in the competition to recruit the best talent. In the finance area we manage an annual budget of approx. 1 billion Swiss francs and process around 20,000 financial records and documents. The IT and Infomanagement section ensures that the staff are provided with IT services and runs the information management side, including documentation and internal mail. For its part, the Logistics section ensures that the employees are supplied with appropriate office equipment to enable them to carry out their work efficiently and in pleasant surroundings. We are also responsible for subjects such as controlling, risk management and contract management.

Law

We provide traditional legal services covering numerous relevant areas of Swiss and foreign trade legislation. In addition we exercise the federal government's right to take legal action in accordance with the Unfair Competition Act, monitor the cantonal implementation of the Price Indication Ordinance and process licence applications for carrying out pre-shipment inspections in Switzerland. We coordinate the cantonal measures and the licensing procedures for travelling trades, fairgrounds and circuses. We also represent Switzerland's interests within the ICPEN, the international network to combat trans-boundary unfair business practices, particularly internet fraud, and provide the general public with relevant recommendations and advice.

Brief overview of the spheres of activity of the Organisation, Law & Accreditation Directorate:

Business management and development

Human resources

IT and infomanagement

Finance

Logistics

Law

Swiss Accreditation Office SAS

We make sure that everything is in order.

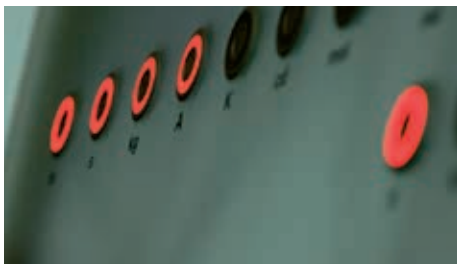


Swiss Accreditation Service SAS

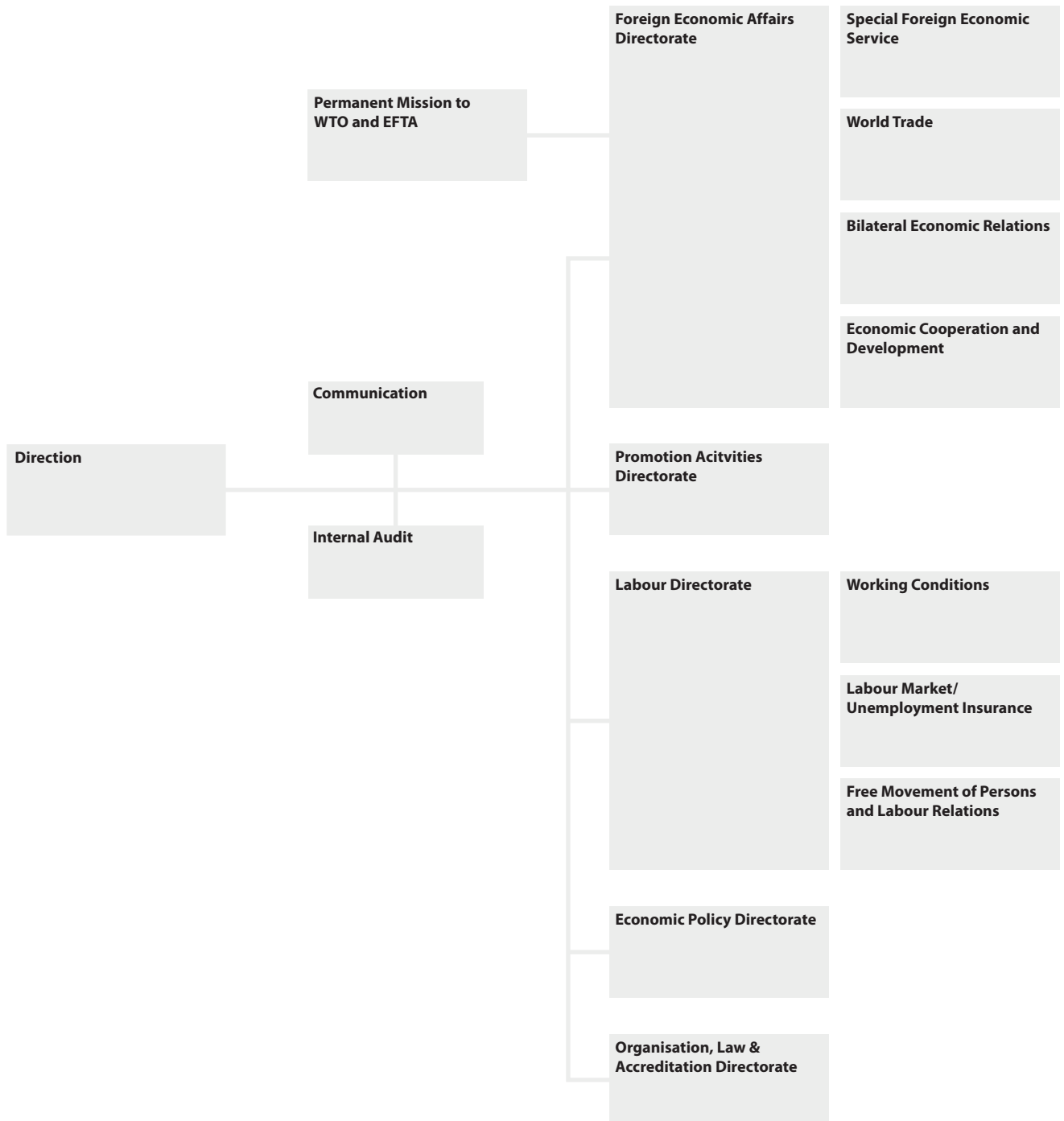
Accreditation denotes the formal acknowledgement and recognition of the professional and organisational excellence of conformity assessment bodies to carry out a specific task in a specific field of application. Clients nationwide include more than 770 laboratories, and inspection and accreditation agencies in various sectors.

In Switzerland, the Swiss Accreditation Service is responsible for the accreditation of public and private auditing and conformity assessment bodies in accordance with internationally recognised standards. In cooperation with the interested parties in Switzerland our highly qualified experts apply the international standards in the various specialised fields. In addition, we represent Switzerland's interests in international organisations dealing with accreditation, inspection and conformity assessment.

Compared to other countries, Switzerland has a remarkable infrastructure in terms of competent calibration, auditing, inspection and accreditation agencies. This has led to a high demand for new accreditations and the expansion of existing accreditations. Accreditation has also grown in importance through the creation of the single market. As a confidence-building measure, accreditation is an important requirement world-wide for the reduction of technical barriers to trade.



Organisation and contacts



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