

Media release

Bilateral Agreements III ensure long-term stability of economic relations

Zurich, 10 July 2025. scienceindustries, the business association of Switzerland's chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industries, supports the package of agreements aimed at stabilising and developing the relationship between Switzerland and the European Union. Ensuring a stable long-term relationship with Switzerland's most important trading partner significantly enhances planning security, competitiveness and the preservation of prosperity. Considering growing global uncertainty, reliable trade relations are essential.

scienceindustries notes that the core concerns of the chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industries are largely addressed in the package of agreements between Switzerland and the European Union (EU). Considering geopolitical risks, the formation of global blocs and increasing regulatory dynamics, the agreement offers the best possible balance between security, participation and flexibility. It provides legal certainty and predictability with Switzerland's key trading partner in an increasingly volatile international environment.

The EU is Switzerland's most important trading partner

Switzerland is a globally connected export nation with an annual trade surplus of around 60 billion Swiss francs. Over 90% of the output of the chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industries is exported – with more than half going to the EU market. Conversely, over 75% of the chemical and pharmaceutical products imported into Switzerland originate from the EU. This strong interdependence highlights the critical importance of barrier-free and reliable market access and stable framework conditions for Switzerland as a business location.

Package approach ensures stability and progress

With the rejection of accession to the EEA (European Economic Area) in 1992, Switzerland decided against an institutional framework for its relationship with the EU single market. Since then, cooperation with the EU has been based on static bilateral agreements without institutional mechanisms. At the end of 2024, Switzerland and the EU concluded substantive negotiations on a new package approach, which the Federal Council submitted for consultation on 13 June 2025: several internal market and cooperation agreements are to be bundled, and each provided with tailor-made institutional solutions.

Without this agreement package, key elements of the so-called Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) for the export industry would lapse, resulting in significant trade barriers. Access to EU research and innovation programmes, as well as the recruitment of skilled workers from the EU, would also be at risk without this stabilisation framework. A detailed assessment of the agreement texts and the national legislative adjustments will be provided by scienceindustries by the end of the consultation period on 31 October 2025.

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About scienceindustries:

scienceindustries, the Swiss business association for the chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industries, is committed to creating internationally outstanding framework conditions for its approximately 250 member companies. Around 80,000 people are employed in the chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industry in Switzerland. As Switzerland's largest export industry, it makes a significant contribution to Swiss prosperity.