

Joint declaration

by

Andreas SCHWAB, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Northern Cooperation and for relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee (DEEA Delegation)

and

Hans-Peter PORTMANN, Chair of the Swiss Federal Assembly Delegation to the EFTA Parliamentary Committee and for Relations with the European Parliament (EFTA/EU Delegation)

and the

**undersigned Members of the European Parliament and the Swiss Federal Assembly
on the Draft Institutional Framework Agreement (IFA) between Switzerland and the EU
on the occasion of the 38th inter-parliamentary meeting between Switzerland and the EU
on 27th and 28th November 2019 in Strasbourg**

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The chairs of the DEEA Delegation and the EFTA/EU Delegation and individual Members of these delegations,

- having regard to the European Parliament Recommendation of 26 March 2019 to the Council, Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the Institutional Framework Agreement between the European Union and the Swiss Confederation;
- having regard to the Council conclusions on EU relations with the Swiss Confederation of 19 February 2019;
- having regard to the letter from the Swiss Federal Council to Commission President Juncker dated 7 June 2019, in which the Federal Council confirmed its intention to enter into the Institutional Agreement with the EU provided clarification can be achieved of three aspects; having regard to the letter from President Juncker in response dated 11 June 2019;

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- reaffirming the major importance they give to the broad and comprehensive partnership between Switzerland and the EU; mindful of the fact that Switzerland and the EU share a common cultural space, common values and a European identity;
- in the awareness that Switzerland and the EU are key economic partners, that 320,000 cross-border commuters come to Switzerland from the EU to work every day, that 450,000 Swiss citizens live in the EU and 1.4m EU citizens in Switzerland;
- whereas the bilateral approach to relations between Switzerland and the EU depends on numerous agreements that must be developed, updated and secured for the long-term;

- with the aim of securing Switzerland's participation in the EU internal market and cooperation with the EU in specific sectors, while respecting the political autonomy of both parties and that of their institutions; with the aim of ensuring the homogeneity of the EU internal market and legal certainty for economic operators participating in the bilateral relations;
- convinced that the present text of the Agreement constitutes a balanced outcome of the negotiations
- in the awareness that the Institutional Framework Agreement in the course of the domestic approval process in Switzerland will in all probability be the subject of a popular vote;
- recognising the particularities of the Swiss labour market and the need for measures to sustain employment and good wage conditions in Switzerland and the European Union;

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Declare the following:

Stress that the Institutional Framework Agreement between Switzerland and the EU represents a necessary consolidation and development of proven, mutually beneficial bilateral relations; that it also represents a precondition for the EU for the conclusion of future agreements on Swiss participation in the EU's internal market, as stated by the 19 February 2019 Council conclusions on EU relations with the Swiss Confederation;

Highlight the fact that any failure of the Agreement to pass through the domestic approval process will undermine the bilateral arrangements between Switzerland and the EU, lead to a likely erosion of bilateral relations and could therefore compromise legal certainty and economic dynamism for years;

Acknowledge the Swiss Federal Council letter of 7 June 2019 and President Juncker's letter in response of 11 June; and encourage Switzerland's and the EU's negotiating teams to come up with clarifications within the scope of the negotiated text and the negotiation mandates;

Note that in the course of the consultation process in Switzerland on the Institutional Framework Agreement (January to May 2019) numerous reservations were successfully cleared;

Welcome that in connection with the Institutional Framework Agreement an intense debate on cooperation with the EU is taking place in Switzerland; praise in particular the EU-Swiss cooperation in areas such as reciprocal market access for industrial goods, insurance, customs facilitation and security, free movement of persons, technical barriers to trade, public procurement, agriculture, research, civil aviation, overland transport, judicial and police cooperation, Schengen/Dublin, processed agricultural goods, environment, statistics, pensions, education, vocational training and youth, satellite navigation;

Are concerned by the threat of a downward spiral in bilateral relations and invite both parties to a consensual approach;

Agree that clarifications sought in the Federal Council letter mentioned would help to secure popular acceptance and majority support for the agreement in Switzerland;

Invite the Swiss Federal Council and the European Commission to begin discussions on clarifying the outstanding aspects as soon as possible;

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Take note of the principle of the “equal pay for equal work in the same place”;

Reaffirm the intention expressed in the European Parliament Recommendation of 26 March 2019 to organise as soon as possible an inter-parliamentary meeting of legislators from both the EU and Switzerland in order to discuss all matters related to the agreement.

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And propose the following steps:

Call on the Swiss Federal Assembly to seek a positive decision on the Swiss financial contribution to cohesion within the EU without further delay;

Call on the European Commission to reconsider the decision taken not to renew the equivalence of Swiss trading venues;

Request the Swiss Federal Council and the European Commission to define the outstanding open issues, with the aim of agreeing on clarifications in the next few months in order to adopt the Institutional Framework Agreement as soon as possible;

Express the hope that, following more than four years of negotiations and 32 formal negotiation rounds, the Institutional Framework Agreement including its annex, protocols, declarations, the draft resolution and the supplementary declarations on the outstanding open issues can be signed as soon as possible.

Strasbourg, 27 November 2019

Co-signatories

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