

# AGREEMENTS

## Environment

### Key data

Date of signing: 26 October 2004 (in the framework of Bilaterals II)

Date effective: 1 April 2006

**Environmental and climate protection is one of the greatest challenges. Meeting this challenge effectively requires international cooperation. For this reason Switzerland is a member of the European Environment Agency (EEA).**

Individual countries can send signals and play a pioneering role through strict environmental protection measures. However, such measures are considerably more effective if they are coordinated internationally, and developed and implemented jointly with other states. An important institution in European cooperation on environmental policy is the European Environment Agency (EEA) and, under its control, the European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET).

In what ways is environmental pollution developing? Where is there a need for action and which measures can help? Statistical data collected, for example, on climate change, air and water pollution, soil contamination, waste disposal or biodiversity, provide answers to these questions. The data is collected on a regular basis by the individual EU states and five further countries (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Turkey) and forwarded to the EEA. It evaluates the material collected and makes the scientific bases and results available to all countries. As an advisory and expert body, the EEA also supports political decision makers.

Swiss membership of the EEA costs approximately 2 million francs per year. However, it also enables Swiss universities or private companies and organisations to participate in EEA research programmes and to apply for support through EU subsidies.

### Switzerland has its say

Switzerland is a member of the EEA and can influence the setting of priorities. The main subject areas of the EEA are climate change, biodiversity and appreciation of natural habitats, the protection of human health and quality of life as well as the use of natural resources and waste management. The objectives of the EEA are:

- Provision of selected, relevant and reliable data for political decision makers and the public
- Support for sustainable development
- Improved environmental protection.