



Agreements

Statistics

Key data

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

Date effective: 1 January 2007

How well is Switzerland positioned as a business location compared with its European competitors? How are wages and unemployment levels or traffic volumes developing compared with other European countries? The Bilateral Statistics Agreement enables a broad-based comparison of data from Switzerland and the EU.

Until recently – from a statistical point of view – Switzerland was hardly visible in Europe. It was not until the Statistics Agreement that data collection was harmonised with the EU and comparability of the data improved. This gives Switzerland access to pan-European figures and means that Switzerland now appears in Europe-wide statistics. This visibility is important. A concern, for example, wishing to locate in Europe uses information on the various countries as a basis for its decisions. Today, analyses based on statistical evaluations are also indispensable for making well-founded political and economic decisions. This is of relevance in the following areas, among others:

Transport: Data on traffic flows enables a more precise orientation of Swiss transport policy. For example, given the aim of transferring freight traffic from the roads to the railways, precise information on the type of heavy goods vehicles on Swiss roads is important to determine the heavy goods vehicle tax (HGV tax).

Socio-economic statistics: Level, structure and development of employment, unemployment and poverty can be compared on a Europe-wide basis. Such comparisons help in the search for political solutions.

The collection of national data is still the responsibility of the statistics offices in the individual countries. They verify and analyze the statistics before forwarding them to Eurostat in Luxembourg. Eurostat cooperates with the 27 EU member states, with Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein as well as with various Mediterranean countries and some other partner nations.

Switzerland contributes approximately 5 million francs a year to the costs of Eurostat; in return, Swiss data is also published. Switzerland also receives access to the entire statistical material of the EU. In addition, Switzerland is able to participate in the training programme for European statisticians, and universities as well as the Federal Statistical Office can take part in European research programmes.