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Federal Council approves 2010 Foreign Policy Report

At its session on 10 December 2010, the Federal Council approved the 2010 Foreign Policy Report, which gives a complete overview of Switzerland's foreign policy. In particular, the report shows how Switzerland can exercise influence in today's globalised world and the instruments it has at its disposal to do so. In addition, this comprehensive document outlines Switzerland's most important foreign policy activities between mid-2009 and mid-2010.

The global trends and challenges described by the Federal Council in last year's Foreign Policy Report have been confirmed, in particular the shift in economic and political influence towards Asia, the complexity and interdependencies of global crises, and global climate change. Switzerland has responded to these developments, fulfilling its role in the international community and consolidating its network of influence. The country has worked to resolve problems in various regions of the world and thus reinforced its foreign policy commitment, which is based on a policy of bilateral and multilateral protection of interests and a desire to enhance its influence.

Situated at the heart of Europe, Switzerland is closely linked to European developments. The 2010 Foreign Policy Report affirms that, in future, relations with non-European countries will also become more important as the result of new balances of power in the international community and the growing influence of emerging nations.

Today, most foreign policy problems exceed the capabilities of a single state and must therefore be tackled jointly with other countries and be the subject of collective consideration within the international community. The report presents the challenges facing Swiss foreign policy and the solutions it puts forward, particularly in the fields of international financial and economic policy, human security and migration, and development cooperation.

The reconciliation of national autonomy and the need to cooperate with other states is, according to the report, one of the key challenges that our foreign policy must address. The Federal Council believes that it is possible to uphold national sovereignty while exercising influence in the international arena. International cooperation, far from being synonymous with dependence and loss of sovereignty, presents an opportunity to defend one's own interests in a responsible manner. The 2010 Foreign Policy Report therefore concludes that it is vital for Switzerland to do everything in its power, through its international activities, to extend its influence in the international community.

Penal code, civil code and code of obligations now available in English

The Federal Chancellery has published English translations of the Swiss penal code, civil code and code of obligations. The translations will be added to the collection of legislative texts already available in English, which amounts to some 90 acts and ordinances. The texts are available online at: www.admin.ch.

The English language service of the Federal Chancellery has translated the Swiss penal code and updated the existing translations of the civil code and the code of obligations. The three documents are now available online.

The new translations supplement the collection of legislative texts translated into English, which amounts to some 90 acts and ordinances covering a whole range of topics as diverse as political rights, the monitoring of financial markets, the protection of the environment, human genetic analysis and professional training.

Although there are no plans to translate the whole body of Swiss law, the collection of legislative texts in English will continue to grow with the addition of certain acts of international significance. As part

of this process, the code of penal procedure and the code of civil procedure will be added to the collection during the course of 2011.

The texts are being published using the structure of the Classified Compilation of Federal Legislation, which allows users to switch easily between the English version of the text and the other official language versions. The texts can be viewed in HTML or PDF format.

The English translations of Federal legislation are available at: www.admin.ch/ch/e/rs/rs.html. Please note that, since English is not an official language of the Swiss Confederation, English translations of Swiss legislation are provided for information purposes only and have no legal force.



Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey with President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, the representative of one of the most important foreign policy partners



Federal Council 2011 – photo and objectives

For 2011, the Federal Council has defined 17 objectives in the following areas: to reinforce Switzerland's economic role, to guarantee security, to promote social cohesion, to utilise resources with due regard for sustainable development, and to consolidate Switzerland's position in a globalised world.

For more information, visit: www.admin.ch/br

- Objectives of the Federal Council 2011 (in German)



The members of the Federal Council (from left to right): Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann, Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, President of the Confederation Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf (Vice-President), Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer, Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga, Chancellor of the Confederation Corina Casanova

Publications

Please note that you can order free copies of publications in the following areas:

- A foreign policy of dialogue
- Publications relating to Swiss foreign policy
- Diplomacy
- International organisations
- Europe
- Peace and security
- Development cooperation and humanitarian aid
- Public international law
- Financial centre and business
- Human rights, humanitarian policy and migration
- Swiss abroad

These publications can be downloaded as PDF files or ordered online. www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/doc/publi.html

Federal acts and ordinances which came into force on 1 January 2011

A list of new Federal acts and ordinances passed by the Federal Assembly and Federal Council, as well as amendments and repeals, which came into force on 1 January 2011, is available at www.admin.ch/ch/d/gg/ikt/2011_1.html. Available only in German, French, Italian

These relate to:

1. State, population, authorities
2. Private law, administration of civil justice and enforcement
3. Criminal law, administration of criminal justice and execution of sentences
4. Education, science, culture
5. National defence
6. Finance
7. Public works, energy, transport and communication
8. Health, employment, social security
9. Economy, technical cooperation

NEW POPULAR INITIATIVES AND REFERENDA

By the time of going to press, the following new popular initiatives had been launched since the last edition:

- "Für ein EU-Beitrittsmoratorium" (For a moratorium on membership of the EU), committee: Interest Group for a Moratorium on Membership of the EU, deadline for collection of signatures: 23.05.2012
- "Unsere Pensionskassen nicht missbrauchen!" (Stop the misuse of our pension funds!), committee: "Unsere Pensionskassen nicht missbrauchen!" inter-party committee, deadline for collection of signatures: 18.07.2012
- "Unsere Nationalbank gehört uns allen!" (The Swiss National Bank belongs to us all!), committee: "Unsere Nationalbank gehört uns al-

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len!" inter-party committee, deadline for collection of signatures: 18.07.2012

■ "Unsere Armee benötigt eine klare Kompetenzregelung für den Einsatz im Ernstfall!" (Clarify competences in respect of real engagements of the armed forces), committee: "Unsere Armee benötigt eine klare Kompetenzregelung für den Einsatz im Ernstfall!" inter-party committee, deadline for collection of signatures: 18.07.2012

By the time of going to press, there were other referenda pending, but the deadlines for the collection of signatures will expire by the time that "Swiss Review" is published. We have therefore decided not to list them.

At www.bk.admin.ch/aktuell/abstimmung/ you will find a list of pending referenda and popular initiatives and the corresponding signature forms if available. Please complete, sign and send the forms directly to the relevant initiative committee.

WE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO REMIND YOU OF THE DEFINITIONS OF THE VARIOUS POLITICAL RIGHTS.

Right of initiative:

Citizens may use their right of initiative to demand that a proposed change to the Federal Constitution be subjected to a popular vote. For the initiative to proceed, its promoters must collect the signatures of 100,000 citizens who are entitled to vote within 18 months. Popular initiatives do not originate with Parliament or the government, but with citizens themselves. The right of initiative is equally recognised at both cantonal and communal levels.

Right of referendum:

If a group of citizens do not agree with a law passed by the Federal Parliament, they may demand a referendum. The legislation in question is subjected to a national vote if 50,000 citizens sign the demand for a referendum within 100 days. This is known as a facultative referendum. Only a national majority is required. Any change to the Constitution, and also the joining of a supranational organisation, must be the subject of an obligatory referendum. It must therefore be subjected to a national vote. Referenda of this type require a "double majority", i.e. a majority at both national and cantonal levels (a canton being a member state of the Swiss Confederation).

Right of petition

Any person capable of exercising judgement – who does not necessarily have to be an "active citizen" – has the right to address a written request to an authority concerning any activity of the state. The authority is obliged to acknowledge the petition, but is not obliged to respond. However, as a general rule, the Swiss authorities do consider and respond to petitions.



89th Congress of the Swiss Abroad: 26 to 28 August 2011, Palazzo dei Congressi in Lugano

Participants at the 89th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lugano will debate direct democracy in an international context. Among other speakers, Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard will honour us with her presence. More about the topic and the latest information on the 2011 Congress can be found at: www.aso.ch/de/angebote/auslandschweizer-kongress.

Put the Congress dates in your diary today. We look forward to seeing you.



Please send me the registration documents for the 89th Congress of the Swiss Abroad (26–28.8.2011 in Lugano) in spring 2011.

My contact details are:

Surname/first name:

Address:

City/postcode/country:

E-mail:

Please write clearly in block capitals.

Please send the completed form to: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Communications & Marketing, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Fax: +41 (0)31 356 61 01 or send us an e-mail to communication@aso.ch.