

European Commission reaction to Swiss Federal Council announcements

The European Commission respects the wish of the Federal Council to consult all stakeholders on the Institutional Framework Agreement before a formal submission to the Federal Assembly so as to secure an as large backing of the text as possible. We would like to make crystal clear that the final text published today, including annex and protocols, was agreed by the EU and Swiss negotiators and is the result of long, intense and constructive negotiations. We will follow the process closely. We therefore expect the consultation to be swift and hope that its outcome will be positive, as this is necessary to put relations between the EU and Switzerland on a solid institutional footing.

We want to recall that the EU side has invested a lot of time, effort and political goodwill into this process. President Juncker personally spoke 23 times to four Swiss Presidents; 32 rounds of technical negotiations took place. Commissioner Hahn met his Swiss counterpart Federal Counsellor Cassis seven times since January, and spoke to him on the phone numerous times in-between. The EU side has also been willing to address and accommodate the concerns of our Swiss partners. We have shown great flexibility, while respecting the interests of Member States, notably when finding a solution on the dispute settlement and the so-called "flanking measures" on the Swiss side. The text published today is the best possible outcome negotiated between the two sides.

The Commission will now have to discuss and assess the situation, including on the Swiss stock market equivalence decision, and consider the appropriate next steps. The College is expected to discuss these developments at its meeting on Tuesday (11 December).

On the extension of the transitional measures for Croatian workers:

The European Commission regrets the decision by Switzerland to extend the transitional measures for Croatian workers and self-employed beyond the initial period of two years. The decision is particularly regrettable as there was no rapid growth in the numbers of Croatians working in Switzerland justifying this decision.

We invite the Swiss authorities to consider shortening the period of application of the transitional measures, particularly in view of the undoubted economic benefits of free movement of labour between the EU and Switzerland.

On the cohesion contribution:

The European Commission looks forward to the Swiss Parliament agreeing on the financing for cohesion policy as soon as possible. We consider the contribution to be the natural consequence of Switzerland's access to the

Single Market and it should be proportionate to the substantial benefits Switzerland draws from its participation in the Single Market.