

Popular initiative threatens successful bilateral path

11.09.2019

At a glance

By means of a new popular initiative, the right-wing Swiss People's Party aims to terminate the Agreement on the free movement of persons between Switzerland and the European Union. The approval of the initiative would mean the end for the successful bilateral path.

Given the fact that the Agreement on the free movement of persons includes a guillotine clause, six other agreements in the first package of bilateral agreements (Bilaterals I) would automatically be cancelled as well if the initiative were to be accepted. Within a year, the highly successful bilateral path would be destroyed, and Swiss companies would no longer be able to participate on an equal footing with their EU competitors in the Single Market. This would have severe negative consequences for the Swiss economy and adversely affect all involved players.

The fact sheet (see link below) explains why the existing bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU are so important for our country:

- Several independent studies show that the bilateral agreements lead to a higher per capita income
- The Agreement on the free movement of persons on its own is worth around 14 billion Swiss francs per annum
- Most small and medium-sized Swiss companies are in favour of the bilateral agreements
- The Agreement on the free movement of persons contributes towards job creation, from which Swiss citizens benefit too

- A comprehensive free trade agreement and WTO rules are not equivalent alternatives to the Bilaterals
- The EU is by far the most important trade partner for Switzerland
- The US market and emerging Asian markets cannot compensate for Switzerland's trade with the EU

[Get the full factsheet here](#)



Jan Atteslander

Head of Department International Relations, Member of the Extended Executive Board



François Baur

Head of European Affairs