



Federal Council adopts maritime strategy for Switzerland

Bern, 02.06.2023 - The Federal Council adopted a maritime strategy on June 2, 2023 that provides an overview for all stakeholders and will make federal policy on issues in this area more coherent. Although Switzerland is a landlocked country, it has a number of interests in maritime affairs.

While Switzerland is a country of land and freshwater, seas and oceans are of paramount importance to the country economically, scientifically and environmentally. With its first maritime strategy, approved by the Federal Council on 2 June 2023, Switzerland has gained an overview and a common understanding that will improve the coherence of federal policy in this area.

About 90% of intercontinental trade in goods takes place on seas and oceans. As a globally oriented economy, Switzerland depends on maritime trade and global logistics chains. It is also an actor here. Major shipping and logistics companies are based in Switzerland, operating around 900 vessels – one of the world's largest merchant fleets.

As a stakeholder in our globalised world, Switzerland also depends on the quality and sustainable use of marine ecosystems. They play a decisive role in tackling challenges such as climate change and food security.

Thematic focus areas

The maritime strategy is structured around five thematic focus areas, for which measures and targets are set.

- **International law**

Through its role in various international bodies, Switzerland wishes to strengthen its commitment to the development and respect of international law in maritime affairs. The country will focus its engagement primarily on issues relevant to the implementation of the

2030 Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals.

- **Maritime economy**

Swiss companies are important global service providers in the field of maritime transport, but also in chartering and in the transit of goods. Switzerland seeks to uphold the good framework conditions in which these companies operate.

- **Environmental concerns for marine life and society**

Switzerland will continue and, where necessary, strengthen its commitment in areas such as the protection of marine biodiversity, the fight against plastic pollution and climate protection. The Federal Council confirms that Switzerland works within the International Maritime Organization towards a climate target of zero net emissions from global shipping by 2050.

- **Maritime science and research**

Swiss universities are at the forefront of maritime research. Yet this expertise is not sufficiently recognised internationally; its visibility should be boosted. Switzerland also seeks to support access to research vessels for the Swiss scientific community and to promote its participation in international projects and expeditions.

- **Swiss-flagged vessels**

Few Swiss-owned commercial ships still sail under the Swiss flag. The legislation on maritime navigation no longer takes sufficient account of current needs and circumstances. This includes making the registration process for commercial vessels less stringent and introducing a flexible and proportionate system of sanctions and inspections. In addition, ships flying the Swiss flag must meet high safety and sustainability standards, at the very least no lower than those prescribed by international regulations. In this vein, the Federal Council aims to create an attractive and competitive Swiss flag flanked by a reliable regulatory framework. The provisions relating to international recreational boating and those relating to international Rhine navigation must also be updated in multiple ways, in particular to facilitate the registration of these types of vessels.

Strengthened foreign policy coherence

The maritime strategy for the years 2023–27 is based on the objectives set out in Switzerland's foreign policy strategy. By bringing greater coherence to maritime issues, it contributes to the foreign policy coherence sought. The maritime strategy was developed with various federal departments and partners from the scientific, economic, environmental and social sectors. It will be evaluated by the end of 2027.

For further information:
FDFA Communication
Tel. Press service +41 460 55 55
kommunikation@eda.admin.ch

Documents

 [Maritime strategy \(FR\)](#) (PDF, 2 MB)

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