

Media release

Cantons support package of agreements between Switzerland and EU

24 October 2025

The cantons support the package of agreements negotiated with the European Union (EU). Following a detailed examination, the cantonal governments believe that the results achieved by the Federal Council and the domestic implementation measures meet their expectations. The Swiss-EU package will stabilise and further develop bilateral relations over the long term – a key concern of the cantons.

At their extraordinary plenary session on Friday, 24 October 2025, the cantonal governments adopted (by 21 votes to four with one abstention) their response to the consultation launched by the Federal Council on 13 June. This joint position is the result of an in-depth discussion of the package in which the cantonal governments expressed their views on two occasions.

In their position statement of 24 March 2023 and their statement of 2 February 2024 on the draft negotiating mandate, the cantons had set out a series of expectations and conditions. They acknowledge that these have been met. The cantons support the package as a whole and approve the negotiation results as well as the Federal Council's proposal for implementing the stabilisation and further development of Swiss-EU relations. "In addition to strengthening our relations with our neighbours and most important trading partners, these agreements secure permanent access for Switzerland to its largest export market and promote cooperation in areas of vital importance to Switzerland," stressed Markus Dieth, member of the Aargau cantonal government and President of the KdK/CdC. "Updating and enhancing these agreements will further strengthen economic relations between our cantons and the EU Member States, especially in border regions, and significantly increase legal certainty in institutional cooperation," he added.

Stepping up and institutionalising the cantons' involvement

This response does not give the federal government a free pass. The agreements will also have an impact on the cantons, so they expect the federal government to support them in the tasks affected by the agreements, and they make a number of proposals for optimising their implementation. The cantonal governments would therefore like to emphasise the importance of including them in the various domestic and foreign policy processes. "This involvement must be stepped up and institutionalised to ensure that both their interests and those of Switzerland as a whole are adequately taken into account in relations with the EU and the implementation of the agreements," said Olivier Curty, member of the Fribourg cantonal government and Chair of the KdK/CdC Europe Committee.

The cantons also discussed the issue of a referendum. A majority of cantonal governments back the Federal Council's proposal to group the agreements and their implementing legislation into four federal decrees (on stabilisation, health, electricity and food safety) and make them subject to an optional referendum. This would allow the electorate to decide on the basis of their knowledge of the individual proposals and their domestic implementation. However, this was not a unanimous decision. A minority of cantonal governments take the view that the scope of this dossier requires a mandatory referendum.

How the cantons voted:

Approved the response:	21 cantons	ZH, BE, LU, UR, GL, ZG, FR, SO, BS, BL, AR, AI, SG, GR, AG, TG, VD, VS, NE, GE, JU
Rejected the response:	4 cantons	SZ, NW, SH, TI
Abstained:	1 canton	OW (definitive government decision still pending)
Optional referendum:	15 cantons	ZH, LU, FR, SO, BS, BL, SG, GR, AG, TG, VD, VS, NE, GE, JU
Mandatory referendum:	10 cantons	UR, SZ, OW, NW, GL, ZG, SH, AR, AI, TI
Abstained on the referendum question:	1 canton	BE

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