

## Navigate

Home  
 Top News  
 World  
 Economy  
 science  
 Tech  
 sport  
 entertainment

[Home](#) / [Top News](#) / Relations with Brussels – Switzerland signed a free trade agreement with the EEC in 1972.

TOP NEWS

## Relations with Brussels – Switzerland signed a free trade agreement with the EEC in 1972.

July 21, 2022 / Gregory Barlow

### – Switzerland signed a free trade agreement with the EEC in 1972

The Research Center for Swiss Diplomatic Documents (TODIS) released a special file on Thursday to mark this fiftieth anniversary.

Published today at 08:56



“The Federal Council’s European policy has never had such legitimacy,” says Sacha Zala, director of the Todis Research Center. (file image)

Keystone/Valentine Flarat

In a “milestone in history” for some commentators, Switzerland signed a free trade agreement with the European Economic Community (EEC) in Brussels on July 22, 1972. Swiss consular documents (Dodis) mark this fiftieth anniversary. The institutional question was already the topic.

### Read more

“The horizon for the first enlargement of the EEC emerged in 1969 with the lifting of France’s veto on Great Britain’s entry,” explains Sacha Zala, director of the Todis Research Center, in a special file published on Thursday. Brussels was engaged in negotiations aimed at establishing special links with the then EFTA states (Austria, Finland, Iceland, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland) which were “non-candidates” to the EEC.

It is a question of avoiding the economic fragmentation of Western Europe. But negotiators were moving into uncharted territory, Todis recalled. On the Swiss side, we perceive a “range of possible solutions” from “an issue close to membership” to a “normal trade agreement”.

Switzerland’s chief negotiator, Paul Jolles, director of the trade division of the Federal Department of Economics, summarizes the task: “The structure of Switzerland’s corporate participation in the integration process will be the most difficult problem. Fifty years later, this analysis is still valid, Todis notes.

### No political integration

No global corporate solution was finally found. On July 22, 1972, the radical Federal Councilor Ernst Brucker signed an agreement that would “make no contribution to the political integration of Europe”. But the agreement excludes customs duties and sets competition rules for more than 90% of Swiss exports to the EEC.

Switzerland used the argument of the threat of rejection in the referendum to put pressure on the EEC within the framework of the negotiations, Todis explains. The Federal Council finally submits the Free Trade Agreement to a binding vote, which it considers to strengthen European cooperation in the long term. According to Socialist Federal Councilor Hans-Peter Zudy, “an irreversible development”.

### “What not to say”

From this referendum on, European policy decisions will increasingly be submitted to the sovereign. The Federal Council is strengthening its communication policy. Not to preach, but for “preaching” reasons, he explains.

The Coordination Office, the organization responsible for relations with Brussels, gives the title to one of its announcements, Todis reveals: “What not to tell the public in information about the Switzerland-EEC agreement.”

On December 3, 1972, the People and Provinces ratified the agreement by a 72.5% vote. “The European policy of the Federal Council has never acquired such legitimacy”, Sacha Zala summarizes. In a referendum on the EEA Agreement in December 1992, the people blocked further integration in Switzerland.

Before supporting a bidirectional route multiple times. A draft institutional framework agreement was abandoned last year. Since then, discussions with Brussels have resumed, but without any compromise on the popular institutional issue.

TTY

Did you find an error?[Please let us know.](#)

0 comments



**Gregory Barlow**

“Avid gamer. Social media geek. Proud troublemaker. Thinker. Travel fan. Problem solver.”