



Ressort: Politik

## Switzerland's Neutrality initiative.

Bern, 26.06.2024 [ENA]

The popular initiative 'Safeguarding Swiss neutrality' (Neutrality Initiative) seeks to enshrine neutrality and its practical application in Switzerland's Federal Constitution. The new constitutional provision would, among other things, disallow Switzerland from taking sanctions against belligerent states in the future. The Swiss Federal Council recommend that the people and cantons reject the Neutrality Initiative.

On 11 April 2024, the Neutrality Initiative committee submitted the initiative to the Federal Chancellery with 129,806 valid signatures. The initiative aims to add a new article (Article 54a) to the Federal Constitution. The article would enshrine certain elements of Switzerland's existing neutrality practice in the constitution and add to them, in particular as regards sanctions and security policy cooperation. The Neutrality Initiative proposes enshrining in the constitution Switzerland's neutrality as permanent and armed.

It would prohibit Switzerland from joining a military or defence alliance, with the exception of (preparatory) cooperation with such alliances if Switzerland is directly under attack or facing an attack. In addition, Switzerland would not be allowed to participate in military conflicts between third states nor to take any non-military coercive measures, i.e. sanctions, against belligerent states. The initiative also seeks to add a provision to the effect that Switzerland is to use its neutrality for its role as a mediator.

The Federal Council is of the opinion that the current provisions and practice of neutrality have proved their worth. The initiative calls for a clear change of course for Swiss neutrality on several points:

- Neutrality would be locked into the Federal Constitution as an inflexible concept.
- Imposing sanctions on belligerent states outside the UN would no longer be possible.
- Cooperation with military and defence alliances would be limited to cases of direct attacks on Switzerland.

Embedding such provisions in the constitution would make it impossible to deviate from them without amending the constitution.

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The Federal Council also concluded that the current practice of neutrality has served the country well. Affording a certain degree of flexibility, it is an ideal instrument for safeguarding national interests. While the current Federal Constitution stipulates that the Federal Council and Federal Assembly shall take measures to safeguard Switzerland's neutrality, it does not go on to flesh out the parameters of that neutrality. Anchoring neutrality and, in particular its parameters in the constitution would restrict this flexibility.

The Federal Council is of the opinion that it is in Switzerland's interests to support internationally broad-based sanctions, which serve to maintain a peaceful and just international order. Cooperation with military and defence alliances is also in Switzerland's interests, in the view of the Federal Council. Joining any such alliance is already prohibited under the law of neutrality.

These considerations have led the Federal Council to recommend, without a counter-proposal, that this initiative be rejected. The Federal Council has instructed the FDFA to prepare a corresponding dispatch for the attention of Parliament. (SOURCE: FDFA - Federal Department of Foreign Affairs)

Bericht online lesen: [https://afro-europa.en-a.eu/politik/switzerlands\\_neutrality\\_initiative-89357/](https://afro-europa.en-a.eu/politik/switzerlands_neutrality_initiative-89357/)

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