



## **Joint Declaration**

**by**

**Eric NUSSBAUMER, Chair of the Swiss Federal Assembly Delegation to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Parliamentary Committee and for relations with the European Parliament (EFTA/EU Delegation)**

**and**

**Andreas SCHWAB, Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Northern Cooperation and for relations with Switzerland and Norway to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee (DEEA Delegation)**

**on the status of bilateral relations between Switzerland and the European Union following the breakdown of talks on the Institutional Framework Agreement**

**on the occasion of the virtual meeting between the two delegations on 11 June 2021**

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The chairs of the EFTA/EU Delegation and the DEEA Delegation declare the following:

- a) regret the decision of the Swiss Federal Council on 26 May 2021 to break off talks with the European Commission on the Institutional Framework Agreement without reaching a successful conclusion after seven years of negotiations;
- b) express their disappointment that it was not possible to find mutually acceptable solutions to the outstanding issues;
- c) regret that the negotiations between Switzerland and the European Union on a transitional solution on medical devices in terms of the Agreement on Mutual Recognition in relation to Conformity Assessment have not so far resulted in an agreement and that in the meantime new barriers to market access for trading in these products have arisen;
- d) stress that it is in the mutual interest to stabilise and further develop European-Swiss cooperation, which is characterised by a high degree of economic integration and special closeness on almost all political issues, and the bilateral agreements; accordingly expect that the Swiss Federal Council will quickly explain how it intends to include concrete strategies, concepts and a corresponding roadmap in the political dialogue that it has announced;

- e) regret that the failure to reach consensus on the Institutional Framework Agreement will affect the updating of existing market access agreements in response to new EU legal developments and that there will be legal uncertainty in this respect;
- f) see good chances of avoiding an imminent deterioration in bilateral relations, because the friendly and close relations provide a strong foundation; take the view that an escalation between two parties, which are so closely bound to each other in every respect, may have drastic and protracted consequences; urge the two parties to proceed in an amicable manner;
- g) call on the two parties to focus now above all on their citizens and therefore to proceed with mutually beneficial cooperation, detached from institutional issues, outside the area of market access – in particular Swiss participation in all EU programmes in the 2021-2027 period; in this regard, urge the Swiss Federal Council and the European Commission to promptly start negotiations on Switzerland's association with the Horizon Europe, Digital Europe, Euratom, Iker and Erasmus+ programmes in the 2021-2027 period; express their wish that Switzerland and the European Union also start negotiations in the coming years on Switzerland's association with the Creative Europe and Copernicus programmes if conditions so permit; and expect that the political dialogue proposed by the Swiss side must also include civil society, especially in neighbouring states and border regions;
- h) express their expectation that the two parties will engage in a comprehensive political dialogue, as they do at the level of the parliamentary delegations, with the aim of once again bringing forward-looking issues of strategic importance to the forefront of bilateral relations.