

# **Evaluation of the Swiss Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**

**Report by the Parliamentary Control of the Administration for the Control Committee of the Council of States**

3 March 2011

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## Summary

*The Council of Europe is a multilateral organisation which has championed human rights, the rule of law and democracy ever since 1949. Its members, whose number has risen to 47 by now, cover almost the entire European Continent. From 18 November 2009 to 11 May 2010, Switzerland chaired the Committee of Ministers, the decision-making body of the Council of Europe.*

*At the request of the Swiss Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Control Committees of the National Council and the Council of States had the Swiss Chairmanship evaluated by the Parliamentary Control of the Administration (PCA).*

*The Chair of the Council of Europe must act on its own initiative in order to set something in motion, while at the same time chime in with the practice of the organisation. The evaluation comes to the conclusion that all in all, the Swiss Chairmanship mastered this balancing act between independence and consideration well. The Swiss Chairmanship made an important contribution towards the objectives of the Council of Europe, whereas its contribution to Switzerland's foreign policy objectives was less prominent. The performance of the Chairmanship had both strong and weak points.*

*The domestic dimension of Switzerland's Chairmanship was accorded only little importance by the Federal Council and was only examined marginally in the evaluation. Many interviewees expressed their regret that the Chairmanship had not been used to make the Council of Europe better known in Switzerland. The Swiss press published only a few reports on the Swiss Chairmanship.*

### **Performance of the Chairmanship with strong and weak points**

*By and large, the handling of the Chairmanship by the Federal Administration worked well. Various federal services participated in the Chairmanship and coordinated their activities with the relevant section in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The Head of the FDFA was visibly involved in the Chairmanship.*

*However, the organisation also had weaknesses, which will have to be avoided with a view to similar functions to be performed by Switzerland. Firstly, the existing line organisation in the FDFA proved to be too cumbersome for the Chairmanship to be handled efficiently. Secondly, competencies and processes had been inadequately clarified, which resulted in recurring friction within the FDFA. Thirdly, the involvement of the Head of the FDFA used to be characterised by a certain degree of short-termism.*

*The cost/performance ratio deserves special mention as a strong point. The Federal Administration worked in a cost-conscious way. At a conservative estimate, the overall costs of the Chairmanship amounted to about CHF 4.2 million. Non-personnel costs amounted to approximately CHF 2.8 million, with a large part*

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*accounted for by longer-term support services to the Council of Europe. Events, including one Conference of Ministers, called for an expenditure of about CHF 1 million, which is comparatively little.*

### **Important contribution towards the objectives of the Council of Europe**

*For the Council of Europe, the most important problem by far is the huge mountain of applications pending before the European Court of Human Rights. The Court makes the Council of Europe unique as a multilateral organisation and has the highest public profile. It will be in danger of losing its credibility if it is unable to deal with its pending cases before long.*

*Switzerland placed the reforms of the Court at the top of the priority list and made crucial headway with them. In this context, the Swiss Chairmanship made skilful use of its possibilities. It deliberately moulded the negotiations for a joint declaration of the member states, and it succeeded in reaching a consensus. The joint declaration adopted by the Conference of Ministers in Interlaken established a reform schedule and also imposed obligations upon member states and the Committee of Ministers. Switzerland thus comprehensively and successfully tackled the problems connected with the enforcement of human rights.*

*The Swiss Chairmanship contributed towards a situation whereby relations between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly have returned to normal after the crisis that had developed in the wake of the election of a new Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Instead of becoming active itself, Switzerland supported the new Secretary General and his Secretariat in certain areas. This course of action may have been pursued at the expense of direct influence, but it ensured that Switzerland's concerns would continue to be taken into account after the termination of its Chairmanship.*

*Besides the Court, Switzerland prioritised the reinforcement of democracy and thus staged a conference on "Democratisation and Decentralisation" in Saint Gallen. Like the Conference of Ministers in Interlaken, this conference was well organised. However, as a one-off, academically oriented event, it was not suited to attaining the ambitious aim of strengthening civic democracy in the member states. In addition, the Chairmanship failed to involve the Council of Europe sufficiently bindingly to ensure follow-up activities.*

### **Small contribution towards the objectives of Swiss foreign policy**

*Any chairmanship's possibilities of pursuing national interests are limited. It therefore does not come as much of a surprise that the Swiss Chairmanship only made a modest contribution towards foreign policy objectives.*

*Many objectives of Swiss foreign policy, such as peace and stability, are identical with the aims of the Council of Europe, which means that the successes that the Swiss Chairmanship achieved within the Council of Europe can also be regarded as contributions to foreign policy objectives. The Swiss Chairmanship made progress in the Council of Europe precisely because it put its own positions on hold and made*

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*a credible appearance as a neutral mediator. Switzerland relied on values such as goal orientation and efficiency, for which it is well-known at an international level. The success of Interlaken, in particular, may well have a positive impact on Switzerland's image in the Council of Europe and possibly among European government circles.*

*Moreover, the Saint Gallen conference provided an opportunity for Switzerland to present itself with the topic of civic democracy, which is an important issue in this country. However, the impact of the conference was rather slight. The marketing aspect of the Chairmanship was generally somewhat neglected. Yet whether a distinctly greater involvement on the part of the Federal Council, which would be necessary for a strong international presence, would have been appropriate, is dubious in view of the fact that in comparison with the EU or the UN, the Council of Europe is of limited significance to Swiss foreign policy.*

## **Table of contents**

<b>1 The reason for the evaluation</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2 The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3 Analytical model and method of the evaluation</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4 Priorities of the Chairmanship and their execution</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Priorities and activities	9
4.2 Organisation and resources	13
<b>5 Exercise of the Chairmanship functions</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Agenda-Setting	16
5.2 Mediation	16
5.3 Representation	18
<b>6 Results of the Chairmanship</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>7 Overall appreciation</b>	<b>22</b>
7.1 Contribution to the objectives of the Council of Europe	22
7.2 Contribution to the objectives of Swiss foreign policy	24
7.3 Implications from the evaluation	25
<b>List of abbreviations</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Literature and document directory</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Directory of interviewees</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Imprint</b>	<b>33</b>

# Report

## 1 The reason for the evaluation

Switzerland chaired the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from 18 November 2009 to 11 May 2010. The Council of Europe is a multilateral organisation based in Strasbourg (France) which champions human rights, the rule of law and democracy. It was established in 1949 and now numbers 47 member states, which cover almost the entire European Continent. The Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, the decision-making body of the Council of Europe, is passed on every six months in the alphabetical order of English country names.

In a letter dated 16 January 2009, the Swiss Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of Europe (PDCE) submitted a request to the Control Committees of the National Council and the Council of States to have the Swiss Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe evaluated by the Parliamentary Control of the Administration (PCA). In doing so, the PDCE intended to follow Sweden's example, which also had its Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (May to November 2008) evaluated.

According to the PDCE, the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers provides a valuable opportunity for Switzerland to assume leadership responsibility at an international level and to mould its image. "Switzerland should display the ambition to drive the Council of Europe forward and to lead urgent problems towards a solution, whilst at the same retaining a realistic sense of proportion." The PDCE wanted the evaluation to subject the management of the Chairmanship by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and other federal offices involved, as well as the performance of the Chairmanship itself, to a critical appreciation. The PDCE hoped that this would provide lessons to be learnt with regard to similar functions in other international organisations.

The request was granted by the Control Committees on 23 January 2009, and the PCA was mandated to conduct the evaluation. On the basis of a project outline drawn up by the PCA, the competent FDFA/DDPS Subcommittee of the Control Committees of the Council of States decided at its meeting of 13 October 2009 that the Swiss Chairmanship should be examined both from the perspective of the Council of Europe and from the point of view of Swiss foreign policy. Accordingly, the central questions of the evaluation were these:

1. To what extent did Switzerland exercise its Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe so as to ensure that a *contribution to the objectives of the Council of Europe* would be made?
2. To what extent did Switzerland exercise its Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe so as to ensure that a *contribution to the objectives of Switzerland's foreign policy* would be made?

After a brief presentation of the Committee of Ministers as a body of the Council of Europe (Chapter 2), Chapter 3 will explain the methodology of the evaluation. Chapters 4 to 6 will present the results of the evaluation. To conclude, answers to

the central questions will be provided, and potential implications of the evaluation will be discussed.

This report represents the evaluation in a condensed form. A detailed description of the analyses and assessments can be found in the explanatory report (available in German only).

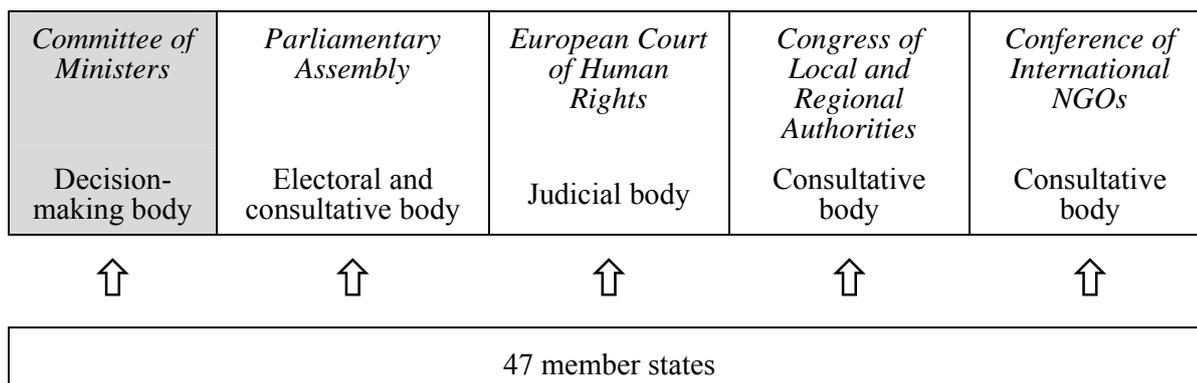
## 2 The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe

The Committee of Ministers is the *decision-making body* of the Council of Europe. Since joining the latter in 1963, Switzerland has exercised the Chairmanship four times to date. If the number of states remains unchanged, the next Swiss Chairmanship would take place in 2034.

Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the Committee of Ministers and the other bodies of the Council of Europe. The bodies are supported by the General Secretariat (often only called “Secretariat”), i.e. the administration of the Council of Europe. The General Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General, who is elected for a five-year term of office.

Figure 1

### Bodies of the Council of Europe



Source: own graph based on Klett, Infoblatt Europarat, <http://www.klett.de>

Formally, the Committee of Ministers is made up of the foreign ministers of all 47 member states, but in fact the latter only gather for one meeting a year. At any other time they are represented at the meetings by the ministerial delegates, i.e. permanent diplomatic representatives in Strasbourg. Basically, the ministerial delegates have the same competencies as the ministers themselves and hold a meeting approximately once a week. In many fields, there are also rapporteurs and working groups in which the issues are prepared.

The Committee of Ministers negotiates and takes decisions about the admittance of new member states, as well as about recommendations and conventions. It monitors the implementation of the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) and of the obligations assumed by the member states. The Committee of Ministers adopts the working programme and the budget of the Council of Europe. It may deliberate on all political issues which require a Europe-wide solution, with the exception of defence, which according to the statutes of the Council of Europe is outside its remit.

### 3

## Analytical model and method of the evaluation

To answer the central questions of the evaluation, the enquiry followed the *analytical model* in Figure 2.

Figure 2

### Analytical model

		Assessment perspective: Council of Europe	Assessment perspective: Switzerland
Planning	<b>Priority paper</b> Focal points, objectives and planned activities	Chairmanship specifies issues that are relevant from the viewpoint of the Council of Europe	Chairmanship specifies issues that are relevant from the viewpoint of Swiss foreign policy
	↓		↓
Execution	<b>Resources and organisation</b> Finances, staff structures, processes and completed activities		
	↓		↓
Exercise of the Chairmanship functions	<b>Agenda-setting</b> Specification of issues		
	<b>Mediation</b> Management of the Council of Ministers and mediation between members	Chairmanship exploits its scope of action with regard to issues relevant from the viewpoint of the Council of Europe	Chairmanship exploits its scope of action with regard to issues relevant from the viewpoint of Swiss foreign policy
	<b>Representation</b> Internal and external representation of the Committee of Ministers (towards other bodies of the Council of Europe and to the outside)		
↓		↓	↓
Results	<b>Goal attainment</b> Attainment of the objectives of the Chairmanship	Contribution to the objectives of the Council of Europe	Contribution to the objectives of Swiss foreign policy

Firstly, the planning stage of the Swiss Chairmanship was examined, which covers the definition of focal points, objectives and activities of the Chairmanship and is written down in the priority paper that the Council of Europe published at the start of the Swiss Chairmanship. Secondly, the execution of these plans was looked at more closely by means of an analysis of the resources used and the organisation. Thirdly, this examination was then extended by an analysis of how Switzerland had exercised the three functions of a chairmanship of a multilateral organisation, namely agenda-setting, mediation and representation. Fourthly, the results of the Chairmanship were analysed by means of a comparison between what had been achieved and what had been planned.

The findings were assessed from the two perspectives of the Council of Europe and Swiss foreign policy, which correspond to the two central questions. What was appraised is whether the Swiss Chairmanship had specified issues that were relevant from either perspective, had exploited its scope of action and had thus made a contribution to the objectives of the Council of Europe and Swiss foreign policy, respectively.

In order to analyse the above-mentioned elements, a number of *data collections* were conducted: interviews with 52 persons, written surveys, analyses of documents, resources and the media, and participatory observations during events and meetings. The PCA started with exploratory interviews in June 2009. The other data collections were carried out during the Chairmanship and a short time after its conclusion between November 2009 and June 2010.

The bases for assessments were provided by a target/performance comparison between the priority paper and its implementation, a comparison with the three previous Chairmanships of Sweden, Spain and Slovenia, subjective assessments of those involved, and a comparison with existing studies, including the evaluation of the Swedish Chairmanship.

The diplomatic context of the enquiry constituted a challenge. It was particularly difficult to accomplish the mission of a critical appreciation since in comparison with other evaluations conducted by the PCA, the interviewees addressed negative points less openly. Some pointed out that they were in a relationship of dependency with other people involved and were afraid of personal consequences.

The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) made use of the opportunity to comment on a draft of the present report. Their remarks were largely taken into account. Major differences are mentioned in the present report.

#### **4 Priorities of the Chairmanship and their execution**

After the previous chapters have described the point of departure and the methods employed for the evaluation, the remaining part of the report will present the results of the evaluation. The present chapter will deal with the focal points and objectives specified by the Swiss Chairmanship at the planning stage and with their implementation by means of concrete activities. In addition, the financial and human resources that were used will be quantified, and the organisational structures in the Federal Administration will be analysed.

## 4.1 Priorities and activities

At the start of a new Chairmanship in the Committee of Ministers, the country that has assumed this office proposes priorities, which are submitted to the Committee of Ministers for approval and then published in the form of a priority paper. The Swiss Chairmanship published an additional flyer about its priorities. Switzerland specified three focal points for its Chairmanship:

1. human rights protection and the rule of law,
2. strengthening democratic institutions,
3. transparency and efficiency of the Council of Europe.

In each of the three areas, the Swiss Chairmanship set several priorities. The most important priority was the ECHR under the heading of “Human rights protection and the rule of law” (Priority 1.1 in Table 1 below). The Court is confronted with a big and growing mountain of pending complaints (more than 120,000). The priority paper stipulates a smooth functioning and thus the credibility of the Court as a long-term objective. As a short-term objective which the Swiss Chairmanship wanted to attain during its term of office, the priority paper listed the ratification of Protocol 14, with which certain proceedings before the Court should be simplified and which had not entered into force because Russia was the only member state not to have ratified it. Secondly, the Swiss Chairmanship wanted to implement short-term measures for the improvement of the Court’s working order, and thirdly, it wanted to get the member states to adopt a political declaration with an action plan for a long-term structural reform of the Court. For this purpose, the Swiss Chairmanship organised a Conference of Ministers in Interlaken on 18-19 February 2010.

Civic democracy was another important priority for the Swiss Chairmanship, which was treated mainly at a Conference in Saint Gallen on 3-4 May 2010 (Priority 2.1 in Table 1).

The priorities of the Swiss Chairmanship can be conceived of as functional chains (long-term objective – short-term objectives – activities): the Swiss Chairmanship formulated long-term objectives that reached beyond its term of office. Then it stipulated which steps it wanted to complete by the end of its term of office. In order to attain these short-term objectives by the end of its term of office, it defined various activities. Table 1 lists all the Swiss Chairmanship’s priorities in the form of such functional chains.

Among the activities, those that had been announced in the priority paper and/or in the flyer are emphasised in italics. These announced activities were all carried out. The last column of Table 1 shows that the Swiss Chairmanship conducted activities in addition to those that it had announced. At least one activity was realised for each priority. The activities of the Swiss Chairmanship that are not directly related to any priority are listed at the end of Table 1.

Table 1

**Focal points, objectives and activities of the Swiss Chairmanship for the individual priorities**

No.	Priorities	Long-term objectives	Short-term objectives (by end of Chairmanship)	Activities
1	<b>Human rights protection and the rule of law</b>			
1.1	Court	The credibility and functioning of the ECHR are assured in the long term.	Ratification of Protocol No. 14 by Russia Implementation of short-term measures Adoption of a political declaration with an action plan for long-term structural reforms	<i>High-ranking conference about the future of the ECHR</i>
1.2	Rule of law	The member states implement the European Convention on Human Rights and the rulings of the Court.	The Committee of Ministers ensures that the Council of Europe’s monitoring and assistance mechanisms work to optimal effect. Improvement of the judicial system in individual member states	<i>Meeting of the Network of Pilot Courts of the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)</i> <i>Secondment of an expert for the CEPEJ Secretariat</i>
1.3	Human rights on the whole continent	Human rights are complied with on the whole continent.	Strengthening of the structures of the rule of law, particularly in Belarus	<i>Secondment of an expert on Eastern Europe, particularly Belarus</i> Chair’s meeting with the Belarus Foreign Minister Chair’s meeting with the Belarus President Chair’s visit to Georgia Extension of the secondment of an expert on Georgia to the Commissioner for Human Rights Chair’s visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina Ministerial meeting (“Ministérielle”): informal lunch and presidential declaration on Bosnia-Herzegovina

No.	Priorities	Long-term objectives	Short-term objectives (by end of Chairmanship)	Activities
<b>2</b>	<b>Strengthening of democratic institutions</b>			
2.1	Democracy close to the citizen	There is a participatory democracy that is close to citizens in the member states.	Improvement of the possibilities of citizens' political involvement in the member states Strengthening of governance at all government levels	<i>Conference on democracy and decentralisation</i> <i>Financial support of a Council of Europe project on local and regional democracy in Albania</i> <i>Meeting of the Bureau of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe</i> <i>Symposium in the context of the "Living and learning democracy" programme of the Council of Europe</i>
2.2	Dialogue with the Parliamentary Assembly	Strengthening of the democratic legitimacy of the Council of Europe	Extension of the dialogue and of cooperation between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly	<i>Meeting of the Bureau and the Standing Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly</i> <i>Chair's participation in the meeting with the Presidential Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly</i>
(2.3)	Freedom of expression, freedom of the media	The member states' media policy is based on the freedom of expression and allows for a diversity of media work.	Suitable bodies of the Council of Europe promote freedom of expression and freedom of the media.	<i>Secondment of an expert on the freedom of the media to the Commissioner of Human Rights</i> <i>Conference on the freedom of the media</i>
<b>3</b>	<b>Transparency and efficiency of the Council of Europe</b>			
3.1	Reform of the Council of Europe	Sustainable funding of the core tasks of the Council of Europe is assured.	Resources to be concentrated on core tasks Improvement of the efficiency of the Council of Europe	<i>Contribution towards the employment of an advisor for the reform of the Council of Europe</i>
3.2	Cooperation with international organisations	Close institutionalised relations between international organisations assure the protection of human rights.	Increased cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU, the OSCE and the UN Accession of the EU to the European Convention on Human Rights	<i>Position of a representative of the Secretary General at the UN</i> <i>Chair's participation in the quadripartite meeting with the OSCE</i>

No.	Priorities	Long-term objectives	Short-term objectives (by end of Chairmanship)	Activities
4	Further priorities (only mentioned in the flyer about the Swiss Chairmanship)			
(4.1)	Protection of the environment	Human rights can be guaranteed in the long term thanks to the protection of the environment.	--	<i>Standing Committee of the Berne Convention, 30th anniversary</i>
(4.2)	Cultural diversity	Cultural diversity is part of a code of values based on human rights and fundamental rights and serves integration.	--	<i>Intercultural Cities programme of the Council of Europe: international conference</i> Meeting of cultural experts (Compendium project of the Council of Europe) Seminar on international minority rights
Further activities that are not linked to any priority				Exhibitions in the foyer of the Palais de l'Europe International conference on the MEDICRIME Convention Colloquy on "Switzerland and its cross-border relations" Information day on youth policies in Europe Event for the celebration of Europe Day Secondment of an expert on money laundering (to MONEYVAL)

*Key:* Number in brackets: priority only listed in the flyer, not in the official priority paper. --: no information available. *Italics:* main activities of the Chairmanship as announced in the priority paper/flyer.

## 4.2 Organisation and resources

The PCA asked the people from the Federal Administration who were involved in the Chairmanship to quantify the time spent on the Chairmanship. Since this was done retrospectively, the following data are not absolutely reliable. According to this survey, the Swiss Chairmanship occupied roughly 3,370 working days and caused non-personnel costs of 2.8 million Swiss francs (CHF). With a conservative estimate of personnel costs<sup>1</sup>, this amounts to overall costs of CHF 4.2 million. The economical utilisation of resources constitutes a strong point of the Swiss Chairmanship.

The financial costs of events and meetings that took place under the Chairmanship totalled just under CHF 1 million. Added to this, there were approximately CHF 1.8 million for expert secondments and further measures to support the Council of Europe which would continue to be effective after the Chairmanship. Particularly with regard to events, the Chairmanship did not exhaust the budget. About CHF 292,500 of the CHF 370,000 budgeted by the Political Affairs Division I of the FDFA were used up, which amounts to about 80 %. In the case of the Interlaken Conference, the divergence from the budget is striking: instead of the planned CHF 1.3 million, only just under CHF 400,000 was spent. The Federal Administration staff proved to be highly cost-conscious.<sup>2</sup>

The Swiss Chairmanship involved five of the seven Departments of the Federal Administration, as well as the Federal Supreme Court and the Parliamentary Services, with 91 % of the work accounted for by the FDFA (cf. Table 2).

Table 2

### Working days for the Chairmanship according to Departments

Department	Number of working days	in %
FDFA	3,059	90.7 %
FDHA	130	3.9 %
FDJP	118	3.5 %
FDG	44	1.3 %
DETEC	no information	no information
Federal Supreme Court	6	0.2 %
Parliamentary Services	16	0.5 %
<i>Total working days</i>	<i>3,373</i>	<i>100.0 %</i>

Key: for the Departments, cf. list of abbreviations

<sup>1</sup> Calculations were based on 70 % of the highest gross annual salary of the relevant salary grade. Employers' contributions to social insurance schemes, expenses and further supplements, as well as ancillary wage costs, were not taken into account.

<sup>2</sup> Thus it is not surprising that a rough comparison of the costs of the Conference of Ministers in Interlaken with those of the Francophonie Summit in Montreux (October 2010) reveals that the costs of the latter per participant and day were one and a half times higher.

If the working days are differentiated according to administrative units, then the lion's share is accounted for by the Political Affairs Division I of the FDFA, with the Permanent Representation of Switzerland in Strasbourg coming second. The other FDFA units involved, as well as the other Departments, deployed distinctly fewer resources.

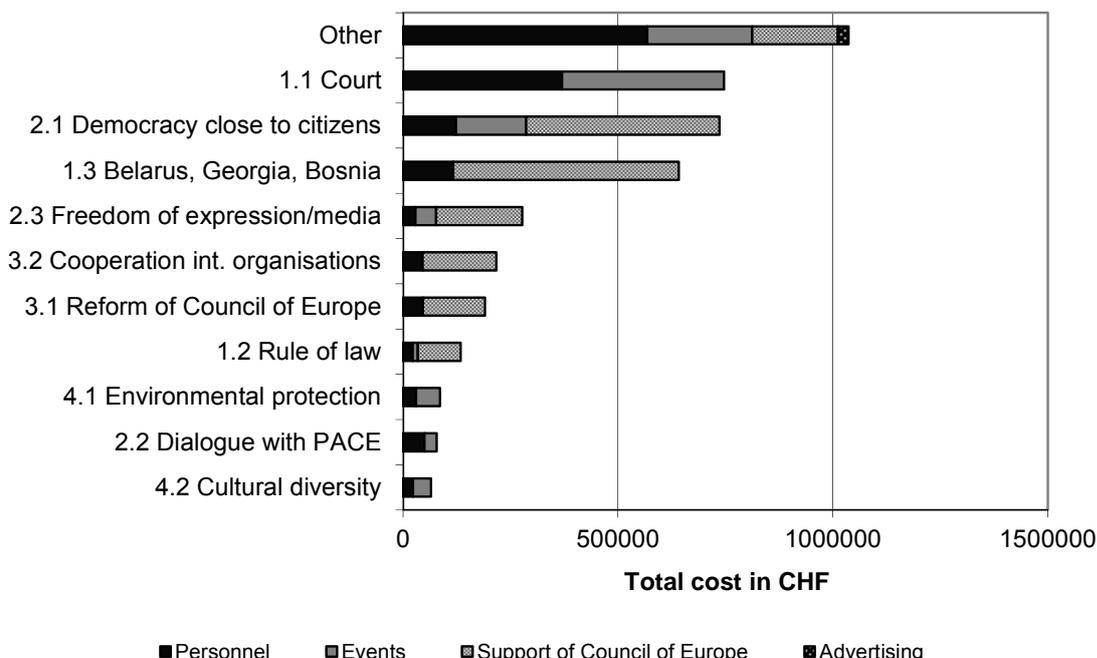
The Federal Council did not grant any resources for the Swiss Chairmanship in the Council of Europe. All financial and personnel costs of the Chairmanship were internally compensated for by the Departments involved. The FDFA granted the Political Affairs Division I two more posts, which were utilised as planned. The Directorate for International Law in the FDFA employed an additional intern for the Interlaken Conference for the duration of three months. In all other respects, the Swiss Chairmanship was conducted with the existing human resources in the individual administrative units.

What must be emphasised is the great work effort put in by many employees in Berne and Strasbourg. They worked a substantial amount of overtime, for which only a limited number were remunerated or compensated. With 60-hour weeks and weekend work, individual workloads were very heavy at times.

Looked at according to individual priorities (cf. Figure 3), the largest part of the work is accounted for by "Other", which can be ascribed to a variety of factors. Many people in the FDFA found it difficult to allocate their work to individual priorities. In addition, "Other" includes all those activities that could not be allocated to any priority (cf. list at the end of Table 1). Here, it is the secondment of an expert on money laundering and the MEDICRIME Conference organised by Swissmedic that are of particularly strong significance.

Figure 3

**Expenses according to priorities (total = CHF 4.2 million)**



In terms of priorities, the Court with the Interlaken Conference generated the highest amount of personnel and financial costs (Priority 1.1). The runner-up was

Priority 2.1 concerning democracy close to citizens, where it was not so much the Saint Gallen Conference but the financial support of a Council of Europe project in Albania that was the major cost factor. According to the feedback of those involved, the Chairmanship's two large-scale events, i.e. the Conferences in Interlaken and Saint Gallen were well organised and tailored to their respective audiences. In the case of the Interlaken Conference, all those involved praised the good and close cooperation between the FDFA and the FDJP.

In third place was Priority 1.3, for which Switzerland seconded several experts for the improvement of the human rights situation in individual countries, thus entering into a financial commitment that would continue after the Chairmanship.

The Swiss Chairmanship's activities had to be coordinated both within the Federal Administration and with the General Secretariat of the Council of Europe. Owing to their novelty and complexity, the processes constituted a challenge for all those involved. Although no major incidents occurred, there was some friction on a number of occasions, which was mainly caused by an insufficient clarification of the interfaces between the Permanent Representation in Strasbourg and the Council of Europe and OSCE Section within the Political Affairs Division I, which was responsible for overall coordination. In particular, there were no clear-cut rules concerning contacts with the General Secretariat, which caused a certain amount of confusion there.

The organisational chart drawn up in the run-up to the Chairmanship stipulates strict processes in the line organisation. In practice, however, the great number of hierarchical levels proved to be a problem. Decisions were delayed, and the participation of the various hierarchical levels in the decision-making process aggravated cooperation between the federal offices. The fact that hierarchical levels were circumvented on occasion must therefore be regarded as a pragmatic solution.

*Table 3*

### **Appraisal of the execution**

Strong points	Weak points
- Good cost/performance ratio	- Inert line organisation
- Low financial expenditure	- Heavy workload
- Great work effort	- Unclear interfaces between Berne and Strasbourg
- Well organised events	
- Pragmatic adaptation of processes	

## **5 Exercise of the Chairmanship functions**

The Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers is difficult to assess just on the basis of its results since these depend on a great number of factors and not on the Chairmanship alone. For this reason, the present evaluation analysed the execution in depth. The focus is on how Switzerland exercised the three functions of a chairmanship, namely agenda-setting, mediation and representation.

## 5.1 Agenda-Setting

The FDFA determined the Chairmanship's priorities early on and involved the relevant actors in Switzerland and at the Council of Europe in this process. However, the top level of the Department only dealt with the priority paper in depth at a late stage and made changes at the very last minute, which from the outside was deemed to betoken a lack of preparation.

The Swiss Chairmanship defined three focal points and implemented a number of activities in them. Outsiders frequently criticised the range of activities as too narrow, yet it turned out that the actual breadth of the activities was not as much as noticed because the Swiss Chairmanship only actively communicated a few activities. The evaluation has come to the conclusion that in view of the limited duration of the Chairmanship, it was right to restrict the programme to three focal points and to place clear emphasis on them but that the Chairmanship ought to have marketed its various activities slightly better.

In the written survey, seven out of ten key personalities from the General Secretariat of the Council of Europe indicated that in comparison with previous chairmanships, the Swiss Chairmanship exerted a stronger influence on the priorities of the Council of Europe. This opinion was also frequently voiced in interviews with people from inside and outside the Administration. The Swiss Chairmanship's agenda-setting may therefore be rated as effective.

*Table 4*

### Appraisal of the agenda-setting function

Strong points	Weak points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Early preparation</li><li>- Good harmonisation of the topics in the Federal Administration, with relevant actors in Switzerland, with past and future chairmanships and with the Council of Europe</li><li>- Coherent and demanding programme that was manageable in terms of its breadth</li><li>- Comparatively strong influence on the agenda of the Council of Europe</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Late exertion of influence by the top level of the FDFA</li><li>- Somewhat restrained communication of the various activities</li></ul>

## 5.2 Mediation

With regard to mediation, the focus of the evaluation was on the chairing skills of the Swiss Chairmanship in the Committee of Ministers, on the one hand, and on the conduct of negotiations for the Declaration of Interlaken on the Reform of the ECHR (Priority 1.1) on the other. Key personalities of the General Secretariat indicated that on the whole, the Swiss Chairmanship chaired the meetings and negotiations with skill, made constructive proposals and made dexterous use of bilateral and informal contacts.

The persons interviewed by the evaluation strongly emphasised the successful conduct of negotiations in the run-up to the Interlaken Conference. The Swiss Chairmanship clearly directed the negotiation process and organised it with great deliberation. For instance, it chose a format outside the regular meetings of the Committee of Ministers. Moreover, the negotiations intentionally took place under time pressure. The Swiss Chairmanship also succeeded in creating positive group dynamics among the members of the Committee of Ministers. The Swiss Chairmanship pulled out all the stops and negotiated with other states at all levels right up to the Federal Council in order to achieve consensus.

With regard to chairing the Committee of Ministers, the Swiss Chairmanship stands for an efficient, results-oriented and informed leadership of the body. The Swiss Chairmanship made skilful use of its powers in order to guide the meetings towards the essential points and to bring about decisions. The chairing function was exercised in a robust fashion.

In its relations with the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, the Swiss Chairmanship acted more independently than other chairmanships, which resulted in certain tensions. The majority of interviewees regarded this independence as being more on the positive side. It was hinted at in several interviews that the Swiss Chairmanship had not shown sufficient consideration for existing sensitivities, with the treatment of a parliamentary question concerning the Swiss minaret ban initiative being quoted as an example. The evaluation is unable to assess this point conclusively.

On the strength of what several interviewees said, the evaluation has also come to the conclusion that the Swiss Chairmanship had started organise the annual meeting of foreign ministers (the *Ministérielle*), which took place at the conclusion of the Chairmanship, rather too late. The topic that had been planned originally could not be treated owing to the absence of important personalities.<sup>3</sup>

The evaluation is unable to say unequivocally to what extent the Swiss Chairmanship fulfilled the function of a mediator between members divided by disagreement. According to its own statements and in the opinion of some members, the Swiss Chairmanship tended to exercise restraint as a mediator in the Committee of Ministers. At the same time, however, Switzerland was very often described as a neutral mediator.

<sup>3</sup> In its comment on a draft of this Report, the FDFA put on record that preparations were not started too late. The absence of certain participants was solely due to imponderables outside the Department's sphere of influence.

## Appraisal of the mediation function

Strong points	Weak points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Informed, efficient and results-oriented chairing</li> <li>- Deliberate exploitation of the Chairmanship's possibilities in the chair</li> <li>- Independence from the Secretariat</li> <li>- Interlaken: deliberately designed negotiation process, successful negotiation strategies, clear leadership role, mediation efforts up to the level of the Federal Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chairmanship's independent action resulted in tensions that had to be eased.</li> <li>- Preparations for the <i>Ministérielle</i> started rather too late.</li> <li>- At least in one case: inadequate consideration of existing sensitivities</li> </ul>

### 5.3 Representation

The evaluation examined both internal and external representation.

In terms of *internal representation*, the Chairmanship represents the Committee of Ministers vis-à-vis other bodies of the Council of Europe and the General Secretariat. With the Parliamentary Assembly, in particular, the Swiss Chairmanship exploited its scope for negotiation to the full and thus advanced the solution of internal procedural issues. Thanks to the efforts of the Head of the FDFA, among other things, relations between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly returned to normal. With regard to the reform of the Court and the reform of the Council of Europe (Priorities 1.1 and 3.1), the Chairmanship established contact with the Court and the General Secretariat and in this way was able to present objectively founded proposals and secure the relevant authorities' support for the reform plans. By providing the various bodies with information about the Conference in Saint Gallen (Priority 2.1) and by inviting individual representatives of these bodies, the Swiss Chairmanship was at most able to raise awareness in the Council of Europe for the issue of civic democracy. But in contrast to the Interlaken Conference, the Chairmanship did not try to persuade the bodies or the General Secretariat to pursue concrete follow-up activities in this area. The involvement of the bodies remained non-committal. All in all, however, the evaluation arrived at a largely positive result with regard to representation within the Council of Europe.

The achievements of the Chairmanship's *external representation* of the Council of Europe turned out to be more modest. Positive emphasis must be accorded to the Swiss Chair's visits to Georgia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. With those visits, the Swiss Chairmanship exercised more distinctively than its predecessors its representational function towards member states that serves to remind the countries of the obligations they have assumed on joining the Council of Europe. However, the Swiss Chairmanship did not achieve any concrete results.

In addition, the Swiss Chairmanship undertook less representational work vis-à-vis other international organisations than previous Chairmanships. There was merely one high-ranking meeting with the OSCE whereas a meeting with high

representatives of the EU primarily came to naught for reasons internal to the EU. At times, the Chairmanship exercised restraint and instead supported the Secretary General in his representation efforts. The evaluation rates this as positive because in this way, the Swiss Chairmanship was able to guarantee that its concerns would be followed up in the longer term.

The Chairmanship's representation towards the media displayed weaknesses. Thus the media information of the Council of Europe on the Swiss Chairmanship was distinctly below that on other Chairmanships in quantitative terms. In qualitative terms, however, one of the positive aspects is constituted by the fact that in contrast to previous Chairmanships, Switzerland issued many statements together with the Secretary General or the President of the Parliamentary Assembly, which is likely to have increased the weight of the latter. During the Chairmanship, the Federal Administration informed the media more frequently about the Council of Europe than had been the case in the time before. Even so, according to the analysis conducted in the course of the evaluation, only two of the Chairmanship's events were covered well by the Swiss press: the assumption of the Chairmanship in November 2009 and the Conference in Interlaken. According to the interviewees, more targeted media work would have yielded better results.

*Table 6*

### **Appraisal of the representation function**

Strong points	Weak points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exploitation of the scope in negotiations with the Parliamentary Assembly</li> <li>- Pertinent involvement of the ECHR and the Secretary General and mobilisation of their support</li> <li>- Active exercise of representational functions vis-à-vis member states</li> <li>- Strengthening of the representational functions of the Secretary General</li> <li>- Cooperation in the field of media information inside the Council of Europe</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Involvement of the various bodies at the Saint Gallen Conference remained non-committal</li> <li>- Only one high-ranking meeting with international organisations</li> <li>- Limited and not very well targeted media information through the Council of Europe and the Federal Administration</li> </ul>

## **6 Results of the Chairmanship**

The results of the Chairmanship depended on a large number of factors. An exact specification of the Chairmanship's contribution is difficult. A forecast of the longer-term impact of the Swiss Chairmanship is even more difficult. Nonetheless, a comment on what the Chairmanship achieved during its term of office can still be made on the basis of the interviewees' assessments and the appraisals from the written survey about this.

Table 7 lists the short- and longer-term results of the Swiss Chairmanship. The grey typeface is meant to indicate the uncertainty of forecasting longer-term results. Uncertain assessments are additionally marked with a question mark (?).

One extremely demanding objective was attained by the Swiss Chairmanship: the adoption of the Declaration of Interlaken, which contains a reform plan for the ECHR (Priority 1.1). Moreover, the Declaration covers at least part of the objective of an improvement in the rule of law (Priority 1.2) by also making member states and the Committee of Ministers assume obligations.

Certain objectives were (partially) attained by the Swiss Chairmanship in that it specifically supported the Secretary General and his Secretariat, for instance with regard to the reform of the Council of Europe (Priority 3.1). In this way, the Swiss Chairmanship ensured that its concerns would be pursued beyond its own term of office. The drawback of this course of action was the Swiss Chairmanship's limited say in matters. The concentration on core tasks that had originally been called for by Switzerland, for example, was placed on the back burner in the Secretary General's reform plans.

*Table 7*

### Goal attainment and contributions to long-term objectives

No.	Priorities	Long-term objectives	Forecast on Chair's contribution	Short-term objectives (by end of Chairmanship)	Goal attainment
<b>1</b>	<b>Human rights protection and the rule of law</b>				
1.1	Court	The credibility and functioning of the European Court of Human Rights are assured in the long term.	High	Ratification of Protocol No. 14 by Russia	High
				Implementation of short-term measures (Protocol No. 14bis, etc.)	Medium
				Adoption of a political declaration with an action plan for long-term structural reforms	High
1.2	Rule of law	The member states implement the European Convention on Human Rights and the rulings of the Court.	Medium	The Committee of Ministers ensures that the Council of Europe's monitoring and support mechanisms work to optimal effect.	Medium
				Improvement of the judicial system in individual member states	Medium/?
1.3	Human rights on the whole continent	Human rights are complied with on the whole continent.	Low/?	Strengthening of the structures of the rule of law, particularly in Belarus	Low
<b>2</b>	<b>Strengthening of democratic institutions</b>				
2.1	Democracy close to the citizen	There is a participatory democracy that is close to citizens in the member states.	Low/?	Improvement of the possibilities of citizens' political involvement in the member states	Low/?
				Strengthening of governance at all government levels	?

No.	Priorities	Long-term objectives	Forecast on Chair's contribution	Short-term objectives (by end of Chairmanship)	Goal attainment
2.2	Dialogue with the Parliamentary Assembly	Strengthening of the democratic legitimacy of the Council of Europe	Medium	Extension of the dialogue and of cooperation between the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly	High
2.3	Freedom of expression, freedom of the media	The member states' media policy is based on freedom of expression and allows for a diversity of media work.	?	Suitable bodies of the Council of Europe promote freedom of expression and freedom of the media	High
<b>3</b>	<b>Transparency and efficiency of the Council of Europe</b>				
3.1	Reform of the Council of Europe	Sustainable funding of the core tasks of the Council of Europe is assured.	Medium	Resources to be concentrated on core tasks Improvement of the efficiency of the Council of Europe	Low Medium
3.2	Cooperation with international organisations	Close institutionalised relations between international organisations assure the protection of human rights.	Medium	Increased cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU Accession of the EU to the European Convention of Human Rights Increased cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE Increased cooperation between the Council of Europe and the UN	Low Medium Low Medium/?
<b>4</b>	<b>Further priorities (only mentioned in the flyer of the Swiss Chairmanship)</b>				
4.1	Protection of the environment	Human rights can be guaranteed in the long term thanks to the protection of the environment.	Low	--	--
4.2	Cultural diversity	Cultural diversity is part of a code of values based on human rights and fundamental rights and serves integration.	?	--	--

*Key:* Degree of goal attainment: high: objective largely achieved; medium: objective partially achieved; low: objective largely not achieved; ?: appraisal uncertain or impossible owing to lack of information. --: objective not specified, which is why goal attainment cannot be assessed. Forecast of the Chairmanship's contribution to the long-term objectives: high: great step in the direction of the objective to be expected; medium: small step in the direction of the objective to be expected; low: hardly any progress to be expected; ?: appraisal uncertain or impossible owing to lack of information.

The fact that the Swiss Chairmanship only achieved its objectives in part firstly has something to do with external circumstances. In the case of Belarus, the Belarus side failed to oblige (Priority 1.3). Secondly, the gaps in goal attainment are partially a consequence of how the activities were implemented. Preparations for the ministerial meeting at the end of the Chairmanship (the *Ministérielle*), for instance, were started rather too late. Thirdly, there are priorities for which the activities were unsuited to achieving the Swiss Chairmanship's objectives from the outset. Thus the Conference of Saint Gallen – a one-off event with an academic orientation – was bound to have just a limited impact on the political involvement of citizens. In addition, the Chairmanship failed to ensure any follow-up work on the conference topic in the Council of Europe, for example by means of an action plan.<sup>4</sup> Finally, the effects of many support measures for the benefit of the Council of Europe can only be expected in the longer term and could not be identified in this evaluation.

In sum, it may be said that when it comes to the extremely demanding priority of the reform of the Court, which was foregrounded when the priorities were drawn up, the Swiss Chairmanship achieved its objective very well. In the case of the second issue that had been given a great deal of advance publicity, however, namely that of democratisation, the main event – the Conference of Saint Gallen – was little suited to achieving the ambitious objectives from the very beginning. Besides, there are both minor successes and failures, for which the Chairmanship's own responsibility varies in degree.

## **7 Overall appreciation**

The first two sections of this chapter will provide answers to the two central questions as to the Swiss Chairmanship's contributions to the objectives of the Council of Europe and Swiss foreign policy, respectively. The third section will present possible implications to be drawn from the evaluation.

### **7.1 Contribution to the objectives of the Council of Europe**

From the perspective of the Council of Europe's objectives, the Swiss Chairmanship can be considered to be a success. For the Council of Europe, the credibility of the Court (Priority 1.1) is by far the weightiest issue. The ECHR makes the Council of Europe unique as a multilateral organisation and is perceived most strongly from the outside. According to many interviewees, the future of the Council of Europe as a whole depends on the functioning of the Court. It was greatly welcomed that the Swiss Chairmanship addressed the problems of the ECHR. Switzerland had supported the cause of the ECHR in the past and possessed the necessary knowledge about the Court, as well as the requisite resources to organise a high-ranking conference.

<sup>4</sup> According to the comment by the FDFA on a draft of this Report, the results of the Saint Gallen Conference were taken up by the Forum for the Future of Democracy in Yerevan (19-21 October 2010) and provided the basis for a project of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities about models of civic democracy at municipal level.

With regard to the priority of the reform of the Court, the Chairmanship exploited its functions with skill. It ran the risk of public failure that is associated with a high-ranking conference and placed the issue prominently on its agenda. The Swiss Chairmanship framed the process for the development of a joint declaration very deliberately and independently. It involved the relevant units of the Council of Europe, particularly the Court, in the preparations, thus ensuring that the declaration would be both accepted and factually correct. In the negotiation process, Switzerland deliberately assumed a leadership role. The FDFA and the FDJP worked well together, and both Heads of Department also personally recommended the declaration to foreign ministerial colleagues. The FDFA ensured that the event was flawlessly organised in an appropriate framework while still consuming a modest amount of resources: at just under CHF 400,000, costs were well below budget. Many members of staff showed a great deal of dedication.

At the Conference of Interlaken, Russia was the last member country to deposit its ratification of Protocol 14, which means that the simplifications of the proceeding at the Court provided by this Protocol could enter into force as per 1 June 2010. This ratification was decisive for the success of the Interlaken Conference because without it, no reform discussion reaching beyond Protocol 14 would have been possible. The extent to which the Swiss Chairmanship contributed to the ratification of Protocol 14 by Russia will have to remain open.

The Declaration adopted in Interlaken does not only serve as a timetable for the reform of the Court but also confers responsibility on member states and the Committee of Ministers and thus has the potential to drive the Council of Europe forward in respect of the difficulties of the implementation of the Human Rights Convention and the enforcement of the rulings of the Court (Priority 1.2). With the Interlaken Declaration, the Swiss Chairmanship took the Council of Europe a big step forward with regard to the most important challenge that this organisation is facing, thus tackling the problems of the enforcement of human rights in a comprehensive way.

In terms of the reform of the Council of Europe (Priority 3.1), the Swiss Chairmanship primarily supported the Secretary General, both politically and financially. The Swiss Chairmanship ensured that the Committee of Ministers was involved and that the latter made the necessary decisions. In doing so, the Chairmanship shelved its own objective of focusing the Council of Europe on its core tasks.

The Swiss Chairmanship's contribution to the Council of Europe's remaining priorities is less clear. Measured against the yardstick of its ambitious goal, the impact of the Conference on Democratisation and Decentralisation in Saint Gallen (Priority 2.1) was limited. The Chairmanship failed to ensure that the issue would be followed up in the Council of Europe, for example through an action plan. According to FDFA comments, however, the results of the conference fortunately appeared to have inspired certain follow-up activities in the Council of Europe.

Finally, the Swiss Chairmanship was more strongly involved in the improvement of human rights in selected member countries than previous Chairmanships. In this respect, the commitment of the Head of the FDFA in favour of a rapprochement between Belarus and the Council of Europe (Priority 1.3), as well as an improvement of the human rights situation in Georgia and constitutional reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina can be mentioned. These efforts were not crowned with

concrete successes. However, these problems are complex, and no quick solution to them can be expected. With longer-term planning, though, the Swiss Chairmanship could have based the selection of the countries it visited on a more systematic evaluation of opportunities, thus possibly achieving a greater impact.

It is the role of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers to provide impetus. In the longer term, the implementation of measures must be effected through the General Secretariat. Good cooperation between the General Secretariat and the chairmanship is therefore central. In the case of the Swiss Chairmanship, this cooperation worked well all in all, although it was aggravated by a somewhat unclear delimitation of tasks between the FDFA in Berne and the Swiss Representation in Strasbourg. With the Interlaken Declaration, the Swiss Chairmanship succeeded in getting the relevant offices involved in its implementation. Thus the Swiss Chairmanship has left a permanent imprint on the Council of Europe.

## **7.2 Contribution to the objectives of Swiss foreign policy**

In Swiss foreign policy, the Council of Europe is of limited significance; organisations such as the EU and the UN are much more important. For the representation of economic interests, the Council of Europe is practically irrelevant. It does, however, stand for the advancement of central values of Swiss foreign policy, such as human rights, the rule of law and democracy. The great number of members of the Council of Europe and the fact that the Chairmanship is limited to chairing the Committee of Ministers lessen a Chairmanship's possibilities of asserting its own interests. The structural prerequisites for a Chairmanship to pursue objectives of its own foreign policy are therefore unpropitious.

The FDFA emphasised that the Swiss Chairmanship's priorities had been formulated from the perspective of the Council of Europe and precisely not from a national perspective. By championing legal security and democracy on the Continent, the Council of Europe strengthens the cornerstones of peace and stability, and this fundamental orientation is in accord with Swiss foreign policy, which is why the FDFA assumed that it would be best for the Chairmanship to put itself at the service of the organisation and to place its own objectives on the back burner.

This restraint was important for the credibility of the Swiss Chairmanship. Concerning the reform of the Court, the Swiss Chairmanship conducted the process for the preparation of a declaration with a high degree of independence. Initially, this course of action was observed with scepticism by the other states and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, and it was ultimately only accepted because they were convinced that the Swiss Chairmanship was acting in the overall interest. Thanks to the leadership role in the process, Switzerland was still better placed to carry the day than other countries and was able, for instance, to push through the adoption of a concrete time schedule despite resistance.

With participatory civic democracy, the Swiss Chairmanship put an issue of national significance into a prominent position on the agenda but is unlikely to have created much impact. Many interviewees regarded this priority as important because they perceived great scepticism in the Council of Europe towards federalist, participatory democracies. The main event of this priority, the conference in Saint Gallen, was

well organised and interesting for participants. Switzerland was able to present itself as a democracy that was close to its citizens, but the Conference was hardly noticed by the general public owing to a low degree of media coverage.

Many interviewees criticised the fact that Switzerland did not use the Chairmanship more strongly for “image cultivation” in the public (media) domain. The evaluation also considers media presence to be a weak point. At the same time, however, the PCA comes to the conclusion that the Chairmanship did in fact strengthen Switzerland’s image, albeit not with the general public but chiefly inside the Council of Europe and in European government circles. One important prerequisite for this was the fact that the Swiss Chairmanship had drawn up a profile of issues more strongly than previous Chairmanships by limiting itself to only a few issues, which in turn were given a great deal of emphasis. Thanks to “Interlaken”, Switzerland was also able to reinforce its reputation as an honest mediator.

Owing to circumstances, only a limited contribution of the Swiss Chairmanship to the objectives of Swiss foreign policy could be expected from the beginning. The Swiss Chairmanship was successful, in particular, because it placed its own concerns on the back burner and was able to act as a credible representative of the Council of Europe. For this reason, the leading role it laid claim to was accepted by the other members in spite of initial doubts. In this way, the Swiss Chairmanship was able to attain goals, which may well pay off through an improvement in this country’s image at the Council of Europe and in certain government circles.

### **7.3 Implications from the evaluation**

The chairmanship of a multilateral organisation is a balancing act: in order to leave an imprint, a chairmanship must have the courage to act independently and to introduce new emphases although this also always engenders resistance. At the same time, a chairmanship has to make sure that its action is part and parcel of the organisation and that the other members follow it in order to prevent its actions from fizzling out. All in all, the Swiss Chairmanship in the Committee of Ministers mastered this balancing act well.

Part of the recipe for success was the fact that the Swiss Chairmanship based itself on values for which Switzerland is internationally known: Switzerland as a neutral mediator, its compromise orientation, its target orientation, its efficiency and its correctness, which is not least reflected in an economical use of resources.

Careful, early planning is important and in principle was carried out by the Chairmanship in the Council of Europe, although some activities were only partially suited to attaining the set objectives. The top level of the FDFA only became involved in planning at a late stage. Earlier involvement would have been desirable, not only in order to ensure political support for all the activities but also because high-ranking visits and meetings, in particular, require long preparation. It was sometimes no longer possible for these activities at ministerial level to be implemented in the desired form.

In addition to the objectives and activities, it is important to plan structures and processes. The Swiss Chairmanship of the Council of Europe paid insufficient attention to this step. Although an organisational chart was drawn up on the basis of the existing line organisation, this organisational structure was firstly too

cumbersome owing to the numerous hierarchical levels and was circumvented at times in practice. Secondly, tasks and processes were not clearly defined so it is not surprising that there was friction. The line organisation was plainly pushing its limits with Switzerland's Chairmanship in the Committee of Ministers. Individual members of staff bore a heavy workload, indeed they were clearly overworked at times because they had to work for the Chairmanship over and above their standard functions. Work was made difficult by inflexible structures. In view of the assumption of a similar function, the evaluation therefore regards it as indispensable that a pertinent project organisation is defined in good time.

One lesson to be learnt is the fact that communication is important. Thanks to the focus on three priority areas, the Swiss Chairmanship acquired a clear-cut profile, which was also perceived as such. However, the range of activities within the three areas was not communicated actively enough, with the consequence that the Swiss Chairmanship was unjustly criticised as being too narrow.

The fact that a leading function at international level could also be exploited in terms of domestic policy is another insight. Switzerland's Chairmanship of the Council of Europe largely failed to make use of this opportunity, which was later regretted by many people. The Swiss Chairmanship had a low media presence, which is why it cannot be assumed that the Council of Europe and the values for which it stands have become better known in Switzerland. A stronger media presence could probably only have been achieved through more concerted media work and even greater involvement of the Head of the FDFA and further members of the Federal Council. Such involvement, however, must always be viewed in relation to the significance of the function and organisation that is being chaired.

The Swiss Chairmanship in the Committee of Ministers could also have made a contribution to a reconsideration of the Swiss obligations towards the Council of Europe. At the initiative of the Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of Europe, the FDFA used the Chairmanship as an opportunity to check the ratification status of conventions of the Council of Europe by Switzerland and if necessary to drive it forward. Those checks were tackled at a point in time, however, at which it would already have been impossible for ratifications to be actually effected during the Chairmanship. Owing to resistance from other Departments, the FDFA aborted these efforts even before the Chairmanship had begun.

Basically, any leading function in an international organisation is strongly dependent on the prevailing structural framework conditions and current circumstances. Depending on the nature of general conditions, a chairmanship's scope of action is bigger or smaller. In order to get the maximum out of a chairmanship – both for the benefit of the organisation and of Swiss foreign and domestic policy – the scopes of action in the various functions of a chairmanship (agenda-setting, mediation and representation) must be sounded out as early as the planning stage and consistently exploited during execution.

Finally, the following success factors for a chairmanship can be gleaned from the evaluation:

- consistent orientation towards only a few priorities and concrete objectives,
- lean structures and processes (project organisation),
- balance to be secured between independent action and integration in the organisation in order to ensure that the impact will outlast the chairmanship.

## **List of abbreviations**

CEPEJ	European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (Commission européenne pour l'efficacité de la justice)
CHF	Swiss franc
DDPS	Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport
DETEC	Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
FDF	Federal Department of Finance
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FDHA	Federal Department of Home Affairs
FDJP	Federal Department of Justice and Police
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PCA	Parliamentary Control of the Administration
PDCE	Swiss Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of Europe
UN	United Nations Organization

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## **Directory of interviewees**

### **Exploratory interviews**

Axelsson, Erik	Research Service, Swedish Parliamentary Services
Brütsch, Christian	Senior Assistant, International Relations, University of Zurich
Furrer, Hans-Peter	President of ATD Vierte Welt, former Head of the Directorate of Political Affairs at the Council of Europe
Habegger, Beat	Center for Security Studies, ETH Zurich
Haller, Gret	Lecturer, Goethe University, Frankfurt am Main
Jakobsson, Ulf	formerly of the Research Service, Swedish Parliamentary Services
Nielsen, Anne Grethe	Self-employed consultant
Zehnder, Daniel	Secretary of the Swiss Parliamentary Delegation to the Council of Europe, Parliamentary Services

### **Federal Administration**

Altermatt, Claude	Head of the Council of Europe and OSCE Section, Coordinator of the Chairmanship, Political Affairs Division I, FDFA
Best, David	Diplomatic Advisor, Council of Europe and OSCE Section, Political Affairs Division I, FDFA
Meuwly, Christian	Head of the Political Affairs Division I, FDFA
Schnyder, Adrienne	Scientific Officer, Council of Europe and OSCE Section, Deputy Coordinator of the Chairmanship, Political Affairs Division I, FDFA
Schürmann, Frank	Agent of the Swiss Government before the ECHR, Federal Office of Justice, FDJP
Seger, Paul	Head of the Directorate for International Law, FDFA
Stürchler, Nikolas	Consular employee, Section of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, Directorate for International Law, FDFA
Trautweiler, Stéfanie	Scientific Officer, Permanent Representation of Switzerland to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg
Wey, Marc	Deputy of the Minister's Deputy of Switzerland to the Council of Europe, Permanent Representation of Switzerland to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg
Widmer, Paul	Ambassador, Minister's Deputy of Switzerland to the Council of Europe, Permanent Representation of Switzerland to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg

## **Ministers' deputies**

Batibay, Daryal	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Turkey
Brenčič, Jakob	Interim Chargé d'affaires, Slovenia
Perelygin, Yevhen	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Ukraine
Ristovski, Vladimir	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Sjögren, Per	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Sweden
Vilardell Coma, Marta	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Spain

## **General Secretariat of the Council of Europe / ECHR**

Berge, Bjørn	Ambassador, Head of the Private Office of the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General
Boillat, Philippe	Head of the Directorate General of Human Rights and Legal Affairs
Fribergh, Erik	Head of the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights
*Gachet, Isil	Head of the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights
Heinrich, Mario	Head of the Secretariat of the Committee on Rules of Procedure, Immunities and Institutional Affairs and of the Documentation Service, Secretariat of the Parliamentary Assembly
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