



Ten Years after the Rejection of the EEA Treaty

A current Assessment with Outlook

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EEA Rejection blocked joining the EU

On 6 December it is ten years since the people and the States Council rejected the European Economic Area (EEA). With an electoral participation of over 78% the population decided in favour of an independent way, **the Swiss way in Europe and the world.**

Five consequences

The following **five consequences** can be determined **ten years after the EEA rejection.:**

1. **The EEA rejection blocked joining the EU.** Thus Switzerland was able to preserve its political and economic independence.
2. **The EEA rejection blocked an undignified colonial Treaty.** This Treaty would have forced us to adopt over 80% of existing EC law. Additionally, Switzerland would have been obliged to accept future unknown EC laws without contributing to the decision-making process.
3. **Switzerland has succeeded in maintaining its prosperity simply because it is outside the EEA and EU.** Debts and a rampant social welfare state, the steep increase in taxes and thereby slender growth are home-made problems.
4. The previously EU enthusiastic industry has in the meantime come to realise that an independent Switzerland open to the world represents a model for success. **Industry today clearly has a negative view of EU membership.** The rejection of the EEA has indeed led to this **remarkable volte face.**
5. **The apocalyptic forecasts about Switzerland outside the EEA have turned out to be gigantic false prophecies.** Thus the conclusion drawn in the first assessment in 1997¹ has been vindicated.

A liberal conservative society with the will to self-determination is able to pursue policies particularly suited to Switzerland and thereby achieve greater economic success than inside a massive, through and through regulated structure with its pressure of downward harmonisation. **An independent and sovereign Switzerland offers the opportunity to take the initiative to be more innovative, industrially more efficient and than within a centrally organised EU.** Albeit this presupposes that the Federal Council and Parliament have this will and also follow to the mandate of independence.

¹ Christoph Blocher: The Situation Today, 5 years after the rejection of the Agreement concerning the European Economic Area (EEA) by the Swiss voters, December 1997.

The Federal Council splits the population asunder with its duplicity

The Swiss population has unequivocally bound the governing leaders to preserve the independence of our country². Nevertheless the Federal Council persists with its membership application and now refers to EU membership as “a project in the making”³. **This ambiguous attitude enormously harms our country.** It weakens our negotiating position with the EU in the sectorial agreements⁴ and the Federal Council precipitates the division of our country with its **duplicity**. As the relevant referenda⁵ have shown, **half of the Swiss population no longer** considers itself **represented** by the foreign affairs policy of the Federal Council and the parliamentary majority.

Conclusions

Against the will of the people and against all state-political and political-economic objections the Federal Council and the parties, SP, FDP, and CVP, persist in their objective of EU membership.

The *classe politique* is ensnared in the **Europe-trap**.

The **rush ahead** in the membership question has enormously weakened Switzerland's position at the bilateral negotiating table.

This **foreign policy amok run** has brought us **inferior agreements** and will **also weaken our future negotiating position**.

Foreign policy activism is always a sign of domestic political failure.

Instead of delegating their incompetence to Brussels, our political elite should be held accountable here and now for failure in their responsibility.

Therefore:

Membership of the EU is not an option for Switzerland.

The negotiations for the Bilateral Agreements II have to be broken off under today's terms.

The Federal Council must cease its foreign political ambiguity and immediately withdraw the application for membership.

Instead of a frantic foreign political activity, the domestic political shortcomings must finally be addressed:

- **balancing the budget**
- **reducing tax rates**
- **debt reduction**
- **cutting back the welfare state**

² The electorate overwhelmingly rejected the referendum “Yes to Europe” on 4.3.2001 with a 76,8% “No”.

³ Federal Councillor Josef Deiss, NZZ, 30.5.2000.

⁴ Even the former State Secretary Franz Blankart, who had led the negotiations for the EEA, today acknowledges that one cannot be an EU candidate and at the same time negotiate bilateral agreements. Either the Federal Council should open negotiations for membership or withdraw the application for membership. “*Tertium non datur*”, Blankart concludes.” NZZ am Sonntag, 27.10.2002.

⁵ Referendum on “Blue Helmet” operational commitment of 12 June 1994.

Referendum on Revision of the Military Law of 10 June 2001.

Referendum on UNO Membership of 3 March 2002.

Referendum on the Asylum Initiative of 24 November 2002.