



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA  
**Federal Office of Public Health FOPH**  
Division of International Affairs

# Swiss Health Foreign Policy



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## Agreement on health foreign policy objectives

- Aim: better interdepartmental collaboration in sectors where the MFA does not have the lead (retreat of Swiss Federal Council 18.5.2005)
- Agreements on shared objectives between FDFA and other sectoral department
- First application: Health
- Health Foreign Policy (HFP) was signed and submitted to the Federal Council on 9.10.2006 by the heads of the Federal Department of Home Affairs Pascal Couchepin and the head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Micheline Calmy-Rey



# Three Aspects of Health Foreign Policy (HFP)



## Global Health Policy

1. Tool to improve health in Switzerland
2. Health as a pillar of development policy
3. Coherence with general foreign policy



## Goals and Priorities HFP (1/6)

- **Health interests of the Swiss population**
- **Harmonisation of national and international health policy**
- **Improve international collaboration on health issues**
- **Improve the global health situation**
- **Switzerland as a host country to international organizations and as an industrial location**



## Goals and Priorities HFP (2/6)

### Health interests of the Swiss population

- Strengthen the international monitoring networks for **communicable diseases** (e.g. pandemic influenza) through rapid implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR)
- Maintain a **high level of protection** for Switzerland through international cooperation (in particular with the EU) in areas such as **food safety, drug safety, radiation protection, chemicals and the environment.**
- Maintain the level of health and productivity of the Swiss population by adapting international strategies and targets relating to fighting **non-communicable diseases, particularly obesity.**



## Goals and Priorities HFP (3/6)

### Harmonisation of national and international health policy

- Use multilateral and bilateral **comparisons** to obtain key information with a view to further **developing the Swiss health system** and controlling costs.
- Conclude **bilateral agreements with the EU** covering the EU's major health policy activities, or at least cooperate more closely in the following areas and with the following bodies: PHP 2007-2013; ECDC; EFSA; rapid alert systems
- Manage **migration of health professionals** so as to ensure that the needs of labour markets in the industrialized countries and emerging economies are satisfied, without depriving developing countries of the health professionals they need.



## Goals and Priorities HFP (4/6)

### Improve international collaboration on health issues

- Strengthen the **normative role of WHO** and Support cooperation between WHO, OECD and EU on normative health issues to promote greater use of synergies.
- Improve international **access to essential drugs** – both recognized and newly developed and efficiency of multilateral players in the fields of health, development cooperation, and humanitarian aid (architecture, normative role, operational aspects).
- Actively support the definition of **international health standards** to be applied in **humanitarian crisis** and emergency situations, and support associated implementation strategies.
- Promote research to strengthen the empirical basis for effective health interventions. Influence the dialogue on **global research priorities** in the health field in order to reduce the disproportionate burden of disease in the southern hemisphere in a sustainable way.



## Goals and Priorities HFP (5/6)

### Improve the global health situation

- Further **develop**, reform and harmonise the **health systems in developing and transitional countries**, as well as countries in crisis, focusing on efficient and non-discriminatory access to health services and drugs.
- **Contribute to:**
  - eliminating the three significant poverty-related diseases - **Aids, tuberculosis and malaria (MDG 6)** - paying particular attention to gender-specific issues
  - global strategies and programmes in the area of combating **non-communicable diseases** with an emphasis on prevention, health promotion and **reproductive health**
  - Cooperate bilaterally or multilaterally to save lives, deliver **aid to victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts**, and restore their health



## Goals and Priorities HFP (6/6)

### Switzerland as a host country to international organizations and as an industrial location

- Consolidate and strengthen **Geneva's** position as an international centre of excellence for public and humanitarian health ("**health capital of the world**") as part of Switzerland's host country policy
- Ensure **appropriate protection for intellectual property as an essential incentive for research** into, and development of new drugs and vaccines.

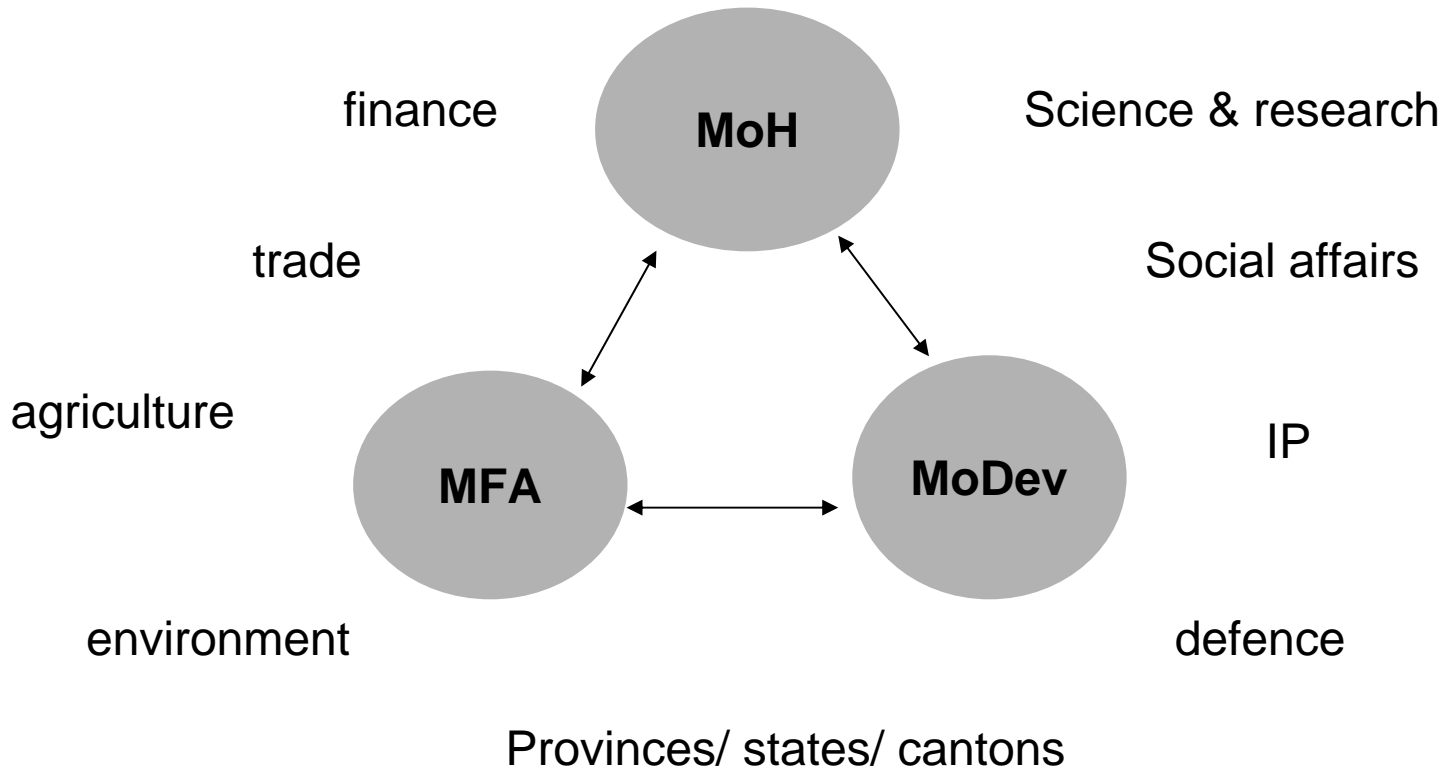


## HFP Measures

- **Measures undertaken by the FDFA**
  - Establishment of a **coordinating unit** for foreign health policy
  - Establishment of an **information platform** for foreign health policy
- **Measures undertaken by the FDHA**
  - Produce **policy papers** on subjects arising in health foreign policy and strengthen academic competence
  - **Harmonisation with general foreign policy** and other sectoral policies
- **Joint measures**
  - Creation of an **Interdepartmental Conference on Health Foreign Policy** (IC HFP)
  - **Staff exchange** and foreign missions



# The key triangle





## Conclusions / lessons learnt

- First country with a strategy on health foreign policy jointly signed by ministers of health and of foreign affairs/development – others are about to follow
- Triangle Health – Foreign Affairs – Development Cooperation common to most industrialized countries
- Long process needing trust building and perseverance
- Policy coherence increases the impact of Switzerland on Global health policy and the added value of the health foreign policy for Switzerland
- Classical sector-wise approach leaves many questions of health as global public goods insufficiently addressed
- Continuum of trans-border questions, European aspects, truly global challenges and classical development issues