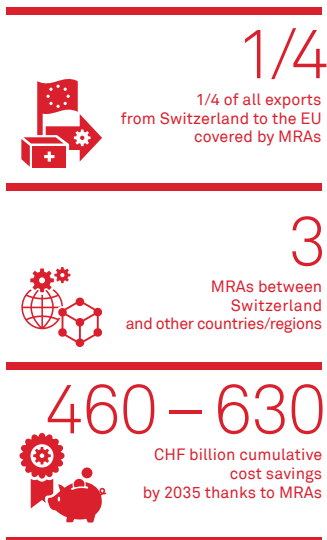




**KEY FIGURES**



Source: SECO, 2018

# SWITZERLAND AS A PRODUCTION AND TRADING HUB

**AT A GLANCE**

Swiss products stand for quality, precision, safety and reliability, all of which are attributes buyers abroad are willing to pay higher prices for. The mutual recognition agreements (MRA) provide products from Switzerland with official recognition of conformity with the product regulations of numerous trading partners, including the EU, the largest sales market worldwide. The process of importing and exporting goods is facilitated as a result of this agreement and gives Swiss companies a decisive advantage over competition from third countries which lack such agreements.

**EU Countries with Easy Access to Swiss Products**

Products for which Switzerland and the EU have reached an agreement on mutual recognition of conformity assessments

**Products and product category**

- Machines
- Personal protective equipment
- Toys
- Medical products
- Gas consumer appliances and boilers
- Pressure devices
- Radio equipment
- Telecommunications end devices
- Devices and protective systems for use in potentially explosive atmospheres
- Electrical equipment and electromagnetic compatibility

**Products and product category**

- Construction devices and construction machines
- Measurement devices and pre-packaged goods
- Motor vehicles
- Agriculture and forestry tractors
- Good laboratory practice (GLP)
- Inspections of the good manufacturing practice for medicines (GMP) and certification of batches
- Construction products
- Lifts
- Biocide products
- Cable cars
- Explosive substances for commercial use

Source: SECO, Mutual Recognition Agreement Schweiz - EU, as of 2018

## PRODUCT REGULATIONS AND PRODUCT SAFETY

Numerous government regulations must be adhered to when manufacturing and selling goods in order to ensure the health and safety of the workers, the environment and consumers. In Switzerland, these product regulations are governed by a number of laws and directives and comprise the following product categories:

 Agricultural products/Food

 Industrial products

 Commodities

 Other products

These product regulations differ from country to country and essentially translate to restrictions on trade. This means that goods being exported must meet the product regulations of the importing country.

This generally means that exporters are obliged to have the products they are exporting checked in advance by a recognized body based in the importing country, to ensure that all product regulations are complied with. The time and costs required for this procedure may have a detrimental impact on the international competitiveness of the products concerned.

[www.seco.admin.ch](http://www.seco.admin.ch)  
Portal of Swiss technical regulations  
Languages: German, French, English

## MUTUAL RECOGNITION AGREEMENTS

In order to simplify trade in spite of the different product regulations, countries reach agreements on the mutual recognition of conformity assessments (mutual recognition agreements – MRA). These agreements obligate the importing country to recognize the conformity assessments carried out in the exporting country. Companies therefore have the option of having their products assessed on the domestic market in accordance with the product regulations of the exporting country. If the product regulations of both countries are the same, a conformity assessment carried out in the exporting country in accordance with its own regulations is sufficient.

Switzerland currently has MRAs in place with the following partner countries:

1. EU (28 countries)
2. EFTA/EEA (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein)
3. Canada

Since many products have, for the most part, already been subject to an inspection within the domestic market in accordance with national product regulations, the MRA helps companies avoid duplicate conformity assessments. This is especially important in high-tech industries, such as Life Science, MEM and ICT, given that the more complex the products are, the more elaborate the conformity assessment procedures tend to be.

From a business perspective, MRAs help to significantly enhance legal security and, at the same time, reduce the time and money invested in trading activities. **Cost savings** resulting from trade with the EU and EEA/EFTA countries alone are estimated at around **CHF 250-500 million each year**.

The MRA between Switzerland and the EU authorizes Swiss companies to affix the CE label required for EU-bound exports to their products. The **CE label** allows products to be brought directly onto the EU market without being subject to any further inspections.

[www.seco.admin.ch](http://www.seco.admin.ch)  
Mutual Recognition Agreements  
Languages: German, French, English

[www.s-ge.com/ce-marking](http://www.s-ge.com/ce-marking)  
CE label  
Languages: German, French, Italian, English

## CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODIES (CAB)

Assessment of adequate conformity with the product regulations of the importing country is undertaken by a number of authorized conformity assessment bodies (CAB) in Switzerland. As Switzerland has ensured many of its product regulations are consistent with those of the EU and EFTA/EEA, these regulations are mutually recognized as being the same. Therefore, a single conformity assessment, in line with Swiss technical regulations, is sufficient for many products.

Swiss CABs' conformity assessment procedures are considered especially quick and efficient. As a result, some companies from neighboring countries opt to have their products assessed and certified in Switzerland in spite of the greater distances involved. Swiss CABs are also regarded as important sources of knowledge and often take on an advisory function to support companies with their expertise in innovation projects.

[www.seco.admin.ch](http://www.seco.admin.ch)  
Conformity Assessment - Accreditation  
Languages: German, French, English

## CASE STUDY

### Situation:

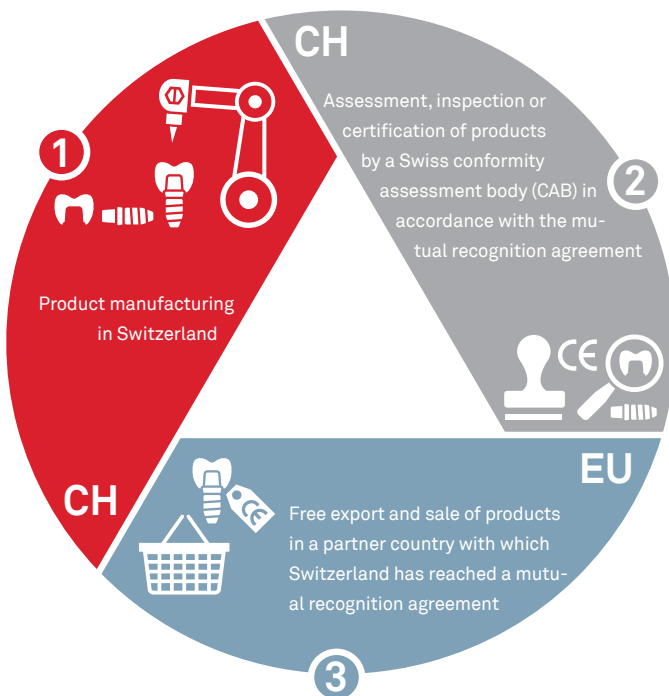
- A Swiss manufacturer of medical products wants to sell dental implants in Switzerland and the EU (with CE label).
- In accordance with regulations in Switzerland and the EU, dental implants must be assessed by a national CAB to ensure that they comply with all relevant legislation before being sold for the first time on either market.
- Due to the fact that medical products have been included in the MRA between Switzerland and the EU and that the similarity between the Swiss and European product regulations are recognized in this sector, a single conformity assessment is deemed sufficient.

### Procedure:

1. The dental implant manufacturer can opt to either have its product certified by the European CBA (one that is recognized by the MRA) or by a CBA accredited by the Swiss Accreditation Service (SAS), located near to its production facilities. The manufacturer then provides the chosen CBA with all the information required for the conformity assessment (description of the manufacturing process and user instructions, etc.).
2. A positive assessment allows the manufacturer to issue a conformity declaration for its dental implants and to affix an MD or CE conformity label including the identification number of the responsible CBA.
3. The manufacturer can now export dental implants to the EU without any restrictions.

### Swiss Products that Benefit from MRA

Reduction in production costs thanks to the one-off conformity assessment



## “CASSIS DE DIJON” PRINCIPLE

Since 2010, the “Cassis de Dijon” principle has been applied to the process of importing goods that are not covered by an MRA from the EU/EEA zone to Switzerland. According to this principle, products that are sold legally in the EU or EEA can, in principle, also be circulated freely within Switzerland without any prior inspections. Exceptions are only possible if they are thought to protect public interests.

A special regulation for applying the “Cassis de Dijon” principle is laid down for food: Food not meeting the technical regulations in Switzerland must be approved by the Federal Office for Public Health (FOPH). The FOPH issues their approval if the food meets the EU’s technical regulations or those of a member state of the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA) and is sold legally in those areas. As a prerequisite, there should be no concerns about the food in terms of safety and fraud protection.

[www.seco.admin.ch](http://www.seco.admin.ch)  
“Cassis de Dijon” principle  
Languages: German, French, English

## PRODUCT LIABILITY

Product liability in Switzerland means the manufacturer is strictly liable for damage caused by a defect in its product (damage due to defects). The manufacturer, quasi manufacturer or the importer is deemed liable. Should it be impossible to pin down either of these parties, the supplier is ultimately liable. A product is considered defective if it does not provide the level of safety that can be reasonably expected of it, when all circumstances are taken into account.

The statutory provisions relating to product liability are similar in Switzerland and the EU. As the legal consequences of liability may differ from country to country, the product liability guidelines regarding exports must still be adhered to. If we look at the deductibles of the injured party, for example, they are generally lower in the EU than in Switzerland and in some countries, the compensable amount for damage is strictly limited.

## CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

- As part of the **new legislative framework**, the EU has introduced a process for enhancing the efficacy of the EU product regulations and their implementation systems. This process required that, in 2014, the EU revise eight product regulation guidelines, each touching upon different economic sectors. In order to ensure conformity with the new EU standards, the appropriate Swiss product regulations have been adapted. These came into force at the same time as the EU's regulations, in the spring of 2016.
- The EU has employed the chemical ordinance **REACH** to harmonize existing chemical laws relating to registration, assessment, approval and restrictions within the EU. To ensure the Swiss chemical industry's market entry, Switzerland has adapted its chemical law to EU law, where necessary. The Swiss authorities are continuing to monitor further legal developments in the EU with the aim of reacting with additional changes to their laws in good time.

## CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

### Authorities and regulators

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs  
[www.seco.admin.ch](http://www.seco.admin.ch)

Federal Office of Public Health  
[www.bag.admin.ch](http://www.bag.admin.ch)

Swiss Federal Customs Administration  
[www.ezv.admin.ch](http://www.ezv.admin.ch)

Swiss Accreditation Service  
[www.sas.admin.ch](http://www.sas.admin.ch)

**Publications and tools**  
Accredited Swiss Conformity Assessment Bodies  
[www.seco.admin.ch](http://www.seco.admin.ch)

European Commission  
[www.ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/switzerland/](http://www.ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/switzerland/)

Registration Form for Dangerous Consumer Products  
[www.seco.admin.ch](http://www.seco.admin.ch)

CE label  
[www.s-ge.com/ce-marking](http://www.s-ge.com/ce-marking)

Mutual Recognition Agreements  
[www.seco.admin.ch](http://www.seco.admin.ch)

### Associations and other organizations

Switzerland Global Enterprise  
[www.s-ge.com](http://www.s-ge.com)

Swiss Export Association  
[www.swiss-export.com](http://www.swiss-export.com)

Swiss Association for Standardization  
[www.snv.ch](http://www.snv.ch)

### Legal basis

Legal Basis for Product Safety

Swiss Federal Law on Technical Barriers to Trade

Swiss Product Liability Act

### S-GE resources

Handbook for Investors  
[www.s-ge.com/handbookforinvestors](http://www.s-ge.com/handbookforinvestors)

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