



## **Switzerland: A Country Ideally Suited for International Dispute Resolution**

**Integrated but independent:** Switzerland has a longstanding federalist tradition, tracing its roots back to a loose federation of three alpine communities to which more and more cantons, (states) with their specific historical and cultural identities, voluntarily acceded over the centuries. Through this process, Switzerland developed into an independent country with a strong national identity that – although situated at the heart of Europe and closely connected to its European neighbours – is not a member of the European Union.

**Easily accessible:** Switzerland can be conveniently reached from all parts of the world, with three international airports (Zurich, Geneva and Basel) offering direct flights to more than 80 countries. The city centres are only a short commute by train or car from the airports and thanks to Switzerland's extensive public transportation network, travel within the country is easy and reliable: it is braced for all weather conditions and public strikes are almost unheard of.

**Politically stable:** Switzerland is a country that stands for continuity. Its political system dates back to the Middle Ages, with the main features of today's modern federal state having been established in 1848. A rather unique feature of Switzerland's government is the system of long-term coalitions involving all major parties on all levels of government, which guarantees political stability and predictability over decades with constant checks and balances.

**Multicultural and international:** Switzerland can be divided into three main linguistic regions: the German, French and Italian-speaking parts of the country. In addition, more than a quarter of its population is foreign or foreign-born. The Swiss sense of identity is therefore not based on any ethnic or linguistic identity, but rather on shared values such as multiculturalism and democracy. Many professionals have lived, studied or worked abroad or have moved to Switzerland from other countries and are multilingual. Perhaps also due to its historical dependence on foreign trade, Switzerland has a long tradition of being open to – and interested in – other cultures.

**Neutral:** Switzerland has a long history of military neutrality. This neutrality, which was internationally recognized at the Congress of Vienna in 1815, is also one of the reasons why Switzerland is home to a number of international organizations, which include not only the Red Cross (ICRC and IFRC) and the United Nations (which has its second largest base in Geneva), but also the WTO, WIPO, IATA, IOC, and FIFA.

**Knowledgeable:** Switzerland is home to some of the best universities in Europe, with the Federal Institutes of Technology in Zurich and Lausanne (ETH and EPFL) consistently ranked among the top universities globally. Despite a relatively small population of just over 8 million inhabitants, Switzerland is home to several of the world's largest and best-known global corporations from a variety of sectors, including the financial (UBS, Credit Suisse), pharmaceutical (Novartis, Roche), engineering (ABB), and food industries (Nestlé). There are also a myriad companies in other industries, including from the biotech, medtech, and the watch industry.

**Committed to diplomacy and world peace:** Switzerland pursues an active foreign policy and undertakes social, economic, and humanitarian activities that contribute to world peace. Switzerland has served as a neutral intermediary and host of many international treaty conferences and continues to play an important role in the international diplomatic arena.