

The relationship between the European Union and Switzerland constitutes one of the most interesting phenomenons in Europe. Both entities have closely cooperated e.g. in the field of economy, culture or education but there have been just few formal agreements which would regulate this cooperation till the recent time. Bilateral agreements I and II between the EU and Switzerland, which were negotiated at the turn of the century, therefore represent a “small revolution” for both contracting parties and a new quality in their relationship. They regulate the most important common fields of interest, mainly at the area of mutual trade.

But the main question remains: do these negotiations and agreements create a solid basis for a further integration of Switzerland into the EU or do they contrariwise constitute a status quo which will not be changed for a longer period of time? The search for this answer is not an easy one. The EU would be surely interested in an accession of Switzerland but it is quite obvious that there is not so much enthusiasm on the Swiss side. The skepticism towards a deeper integration into the EU is spread mainly among electors and it has been proved in several plebiscites on this theme.

The accession is backed approximately by 30 percent of voters and there is no canton with a majority of supporters among its population. This attitude lies in a strong contrast with an attitude of major political parties which with exception of SVP support the future accession. The main reason for a non – participation at the EU is a strongly conservative character of Swiss population. The accession is associated with a necessity of changes of traditional values like direct democracy, neutrality and federalism. People are also afraid of a lost of sovereignty together with an economical and social decline.

The above mentioned facts clearly show that bilateral agreements can not be considered as being a part of a continual path towards the accession to the EU. In the contrary,

they represent a maximum of reachable in today's Swiss political situation. A sudden change in electoral views is not realistic, so this type of cooperation creates the modus vivendi for the next future. A possible shift in the preferences depends mainly on a development both in Switzerland and the EU but a Swiss membership in the EU still sounds a bit like science - fiction.