Federal Council strategy for a digital Switzerland

Bern, 20.04.2016 - Switzerland should consistently exploit the opportunities of digitisation in all areas of life. To this end, the Federal Council today adopted the "Digital Switzerland" strategy. This has immediate effect and will be continuously developed in dialogue with representatives from the economy, science, research and civil society. For Switzerland to succeed in the digital arena it is crucial for all stakeholders to work closely together. However, the previous strategy of the Federal Council for an information society in Switzerland, dating from 2012, was relevant only in terms of action by the Confederation.

With the "Digital Switzerland" strategy adopted today, the Federal Council wishes to ensure that Switzerland can benefit from increasing digitisation and develop even more dynamically as an innovative national economy. The economy must be able to develop as freely as possible in the digital arena. With a view to creating an informed and democratic society and ensuring wellbeing it is also critically important that Switzerland's inhabitants can use modern information and communications technologies in their daily lives competently and securely.

This requires a stable national framework and agreement on key benchmarks (in terms of growth policy, innovation, infrastructures and environment, e-Government, education co-operation, security and confidence, and international integration). In addition, a coherent and future-oriented data policy must be developed. This must ensure that the potential of the increased collection and processing of data can be realised to Switzerland's advantage, without losing control of this data.

Content and implementation of the strategy

The new "Digital Switzerland" strategy is defined as an umbrella strategy intended to co-ordinate the numerous activities and existing expert groups already in place. In addition, the Federal Council is defining various priority areas for implementation, e.g. the digital economy, data and digital content, as well as Switzerland's exchanges with other countries, with particular focus on the digital domestic market of the European Union. Together with the strategy it has therefore adopted the following projects:

- The Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) is analysing the consequences of digitisation for the economy in Switzerland. It is investigating which basic conditions are necessary to ensure that the Swiss national economy can exploit the opportunities presented by digitisation. The key areas in this context are competition law, regulatory issues and effects on the job market.
- In order to develop a coherent, future-oriented data policy, the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) is drawing up an overview concerning access, handling and security of data in the Confederation. On this basis, the Confederation will have to rule on any need for action in this area.
- Switzerland must be able to exploit the opportunities of a stronger European digital domestic market. The federal administration is therefore seeking an exchange with the EU in this area with a view to co-ordination.

Dialogue on Digital Switzerland

The Federal Council's strategy does not merely provide the guidelines for action by the federal administration. Networked co-operation between authorities, businesses, science, research and civil society is critical for successful implementation. All relevant stakeholders are invited to take part in a structured dialogue on Digital Switzerland, which will be launched together with the new strategy. The dialogue will build on existing platforms (such as Infosociety Days, the "Smart Switzerland" initiative, the Swiss Internet Governance Forum and the Swiss Telecommunication Summit) and will be co-ordinated by the Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM). Within the federal administration, activities will be managed by a co-ordinating group.