

Examples of Swiss commitment within Europe

- **Water:** Four times more water (50 bn cubic metres per year) flows out of Switzerland than flows in. Switzerland takes its responsibility as a major water supplier to neighbouring countries seriously. It is actively involved on international commissions for the protection of boundary waters or of the North Sea: ICPR (Rhine), IGKB (Lake Constance), CIPEL (Lake Geneva), CIPAIS (Lake Lugano and Lake Maggiore) und OSPAR (North East Atlantic). Water flowing out of Switzerland is in very good condition. The European environmental report shows that the water quality in western Europe has greatly improved since the 1970s but that the connection level to waste water treatment plants only comes up to the Swiss standard in a few European countries.
- **Biodiversity:** In Switzerland as in Europe as a whole, biodiversity is degenerating despite the efforts already made. 32% of wild plant species, 95% of amphibians and 80% of reptiles are endangered or have already disappeared from Switzerland. The disappearance and the fragmentation of natural habitats and their pollution, particularly under the onslaught of urbanisation and agriculture, are the main reasons for this decline in biodiversity. Switzerland is aware that the conservation of biodiversity, which provides a range of ecological goods and services, is vital for sustainable development. At the last meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in April 2002 Switzerland, along with the other Parties, pledged to stop the decline of biodiversity by 2010. To realise this objective, Switzerland is endeavouring, on its own territory and abroad by means of international cooperation, to foster an awareness of the requirements for preserving biodiversity in human activities, particularly in business sectors such as spatial planning, agriculture, forests, the management of water resources and even tourism. Switzerland is particularly involved in the pan-European strategy for biological and landscape diversity, which is one of the CBD's important regional implementation tools Europe-wide. This strategy is an effective means of cooperation favouring a pooling of the concerns regarding biodiversity and promoting the action to be taken in a range of sectoral policies applicable at pan-European level.
- **Air:** Switzerland, along with other countries in western Europe, still encounters problems with harmful concentrations of fine, respirable particles and (ground level) ozone and with excessive nitrogen compound deposits. Many efforts have been made over the years in connection with the UNECE Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution and the situation will improve when the 31 signatory countries of the Gothenburg Protocol apply it more systematically. However, greater commitment will be needed after 2010 to eliminate the concentrations of air pollution harmful to human health and the ecosystems.
- **Climate change:** European countries have responded favourably to the Kyoto Protocol by ratifying it. Switzerland is in the process of completing the parliamentary process to this effect. However, as this third report shows, the trend of emissions in most European countries indicates that they will have to make concerted efforts to achieve the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol. Switzerland, where emissions have been stable for a decade or more, should likewise redouble its efforts to achieve its objective of an 8% reduction by

2008-2012 of the 1990 figure. The entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol depends on ratification by Russia.

- **Waste:** As in other European countries the amount of household waste produced in Switzerland is on the increase. The recycling rate, however, is also rising, reaching 45% in 2000, a record. Due to these good results the amount of waste to be incinerated has remained constant and incineration capacities have been able to be accurately planned. Switzerland has a wealth of experience of selective collection systems, where the onus is partly on the manufacturers, and is willing to share its knowledge, especially of electric and electronic appliances, with those interested. Government-level information-sharing meetings are regularly held with German-speaking countries. Lastly, faced with the risks of inadequate elimination of hazardous waste, Switzerland is actively involved under the Basel Convention in helping to guarantee an effective control of transboundary transport and is studying ways of reducing the pollutant content of certain products. One of Switzerland's recent actions at international level is its strong commitment to a framework agreement between manufacturers for the ecological disposal of used mobile telephones.