



## World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic follow-up processes

Status: November 2024

---

### Adoption of the amendments to the International Health Regulations (IHR 2005)

- On 1 June 2024, the 77<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005) by consensus of all member states.
- While the adoption of the amendments by the WHA is a crucial step, it does not automatically bind Switzerland to their implementation. The Swiss government will undertake a thorough review process in accordance with its national procedures and constitutional and legal framework to determine whether to accept or reject these amendments. Switzerland retains full sovereignty in making this decision.
- States parties received the official notification of the amendments adopted by the 77<sup>th</sup> WHA on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Consequently, Switzerland can communicate possible reservations to or rejections of amendments until 19<sup>th</sup> July 2025. The amended IHR will enter into force on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025.
- On the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024 the Federal Council opened a consultation procedure regarding the amendments. The consultation will last until 27<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### Extension of the negotiations for a WHO agreement on pandemic preparedness and response (WHO pandemic agreement)

- Since 2022, a WHO Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) has been developing proposals for a WHO pandemic agreement. The 77<sup>th</sup> WHA has extended the mandate of the INB, which was initially set to conclude in May 2024, by one year.
- Switzerland's active participation in the ongoing negotiations is crucial to ensure adequate representation of interests. Switzerland aims to promote the enhancement of international early warning and notification systems to ensure that all countries, particularly low-income countries, have the necessary capacity to detect and control communicable diseases. The recent pandemic highlighted the importance of international collaboration, coordination and knowledge-sharing in transboundary health emergencies.
- Switzerland's position on specific substantive elements of the ongoing WHO negotiations is formulated in collaboration with the federal authorities involved in the country's health foreign policy as adopted by the Federal Council, and incorporated into the negotiating process. Switzerland's positions for the ongoing WHO negotiations were established in the Federal Council's decisions concerning Switzerland's participation in the World Health Assemblies since 2021.
- The main aim of the discussions on the WHO pandemic agreement is to strengthen various aspects of international collaboration (e.g. research and development for pandemic-related products, early detection of pathogens presenting significant risks). Notably, mandatory vaccination is not under consideration. WHO can currently already – as it did during the Covid pandemic – issue recommendations to member states, including pandemic control measures. However, these are not legally binding.
- In Switzerland, fundamental rights are protected at all times by the Federal Constitution and international law – in particular, the European Convention on Human Rights. Switzerland does not enter into any international treaties that violate these fundamental rights.
- The WHO pandemic agreement will not infringe upon the sovereign rights of states to pass laws implementing their own national health policy. As a sovereign member state, Switzerland retains the freedom to decide whether to ratify a new agreement.
- **Moving forward, Switzerland will continue to make independent decisions regarding its own health policy and measures to be adopted in the event of a pandemic.**

The negotiations are currently continuing. The result shall be presented to the 78<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly in May 2025 at the latest.

### Additional information

- Press release in French: [La conseillère fédérale Elisabeth Baume-Schneider ouvre la 77e Assemblée mondiale de la santé de l'OMS \(admin.ch\)](#)