[CH] Swiss Government adopts report on Switzerland's digital sovereignty

IRIS 2026-2:1/16

Flavia von Meiss & Moritz Burrichter
Federal Department of Foreign Affairs

On 26 November 2025, the Federal Council adopted a report on Switzerland's digital sovereignty. For the first time, the Federal Council sets out its understanding of the concept of digital sovereignty and frames the concept in terms of security policy and international law. This provides an important basis for the political debate.

The report is based on a request from the Swiss Parliament. Specifically, postulate 22.4411 from Councillor of States Z'graggen called for the government to comment on: (1) how it defines the term "digital sovereignty"; (2) how the status of Switzerland's digital sovereignty is assessed and (3) what measures are proposed to strengthen it.

The report follows this structure. With regard to the question of how digital sovereignty is to be defined, it is noted that there are different understandings both in Switzerland and internationally. What they have in common is that the claim of a particular actor (e.g. state, company or citizen) to independence and self-determination in the digital space takes centre stage. In some cases, far-reaching demands are formulated for the state and its role in economic and social issues. Guided by the constitutional principles of subsidiarity, proportionality and individual liability, the Swiss Government has opted for the following narrow and state-related definition of digital sovereignty: "Digital sovereignty means having the necessary control and capacity to act as a state in the digital space in order to ensure the fulfilment of its state responsibilities."

The clear and concise definition is based on the principle of sovereignty under international law, in which it is oriented towards the state or the fulfilment of state functions. It is also crucial that the providers of state functions have the necessary degree of control that is required for the state function in question. This is because only those who have sufficient control can be capable of acting to the desired extent. This approach makes it possible to operationalise the principle of sovereignty under international law for a large number of very different state functions.

Based on this definition, a desired vision is derived, which is used to analyse the status of Switzerland's digital sovereignty. The analysis shows that the Swiss state

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

has numerous structures and measures at federal level that already contribute to safeguarding and strengthening Switzerland's digital sovereignty. In particular, an overview of the digital resources used and their relevance is provided by the Federal Government's existing risk management system and information security legislation. Open source applications are already being specifically promoted and there is a cloud strategy that relies on a diverse provider landscape and provides for content of high and very high classification levels to be stored in federal data centres.

However, the report states that the assessment of risks has become significantly more complex. For example, the increasing willingness of states to use access to the digital technologies under their control as a means of exerting pressure poses challenges for highly digitalised states such as Switzerland. These accentuated geopolitical risks have not yet been sufficiently taken into account in risk management and information security processes.

The need for action in analysing and evaluating security and foreign policy developments for digital resources is being met by the establishment of an interdepartmental and interdisciplinary committee. It is intended to further update the overall view of the work on digital sovereignty set out in the report and ensure the coordination of individual measures. Against the backdrop of the dynamically developing geopolitical situation, measures that can further strengthen the availability and confidentiality of digital resources in the Federal Administration will also be examined and proposed. In addition to technical measures, this also includes instruments under international law to ensure the inviolability and protection of official data from access by other states.

Digitale Souveränität der Schweiz, Bericht des Bundesrates in Erfüllung des Postulats 22.4411 Z'graggen, 14.12.2022

https://cms.news.admin.ch/dam/en/der-schweizerische-bundesrat/nyg2NmYUzuqm/Beilage+01+Bericht+in+Erf%C3%BCllung+des+Postulats+22.4411+DE+zu+BRA+EDA.pdf

Switzerland's digital sovereignty, Federal Council report in fulfilment of postulate 22.4411 Z'graggen, 14.12.2022

Postulats 22.4411 Z'graggen, 14.12.2022

https://www.parlament.ch/de/ratsbetrieb/suche-curia-vista/geschaeft?AffairId=20224411

Postulate 22.4411 Z'graggen, 14.12.2022

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026

© European Audiovisual Observatory (Council of Europe) 2026