

Press release

## Swiss Federal Audit Office publishes its 2017 annual report

Bern, 9 May 2018 – The Finance Delegation and the Federal Council have acknowledged the annual report of the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO). In 2017, the SFAO published over 50 audit reports. It informed the Federal Council of serious shortcomings on three occasions. Are the size of the SFAO's area of supervision and the increased complexity of its audits compatible with its allocated resources?

In 2017, the SFAO published half of its audit work. The Confederation's supreme financial supervisory body published 47 audit reports, the same number as in 2016. It also gave access to a further six reports requested by journalists on the basis of the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA). Again in 2017, Parliament adopted the new Federal Audit Office Act. Finally, the SFAO published, with the help of the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics (OFCL), two commemorative works on the 140 years of the supervisory institution which was created on 19 February 1877 and edited a website ([timeline.sfao.admin.ch](http://timeline.sfao.admin.ch)).

Audit topics and questions were varied in 2017. Will the federal prosecution authorities occupy their new premises cost effectively? What can be said about the future of innovations whose development is financed by the Confederation? Are all internal transfers of diplomats carried out in an efficient manner? What about the underutilisation of IT in the processing of AHV and IV invoices? Who benefits from the monopoly on the supply of electricity to the trains which run our country's railways? How are the Swiss Armed Forces museums managed? These are all questions which were answered in the SFAO's 2017 audit reports and which are developed in its annual report published today.



By supervising the federal finances, the SFAO fulfils its task as auditor of the authorities and the beneficiaries of subsidies. Its annual report mentions three cases of serious shortcomings discovered in the Federal Administration and within a public enterprise. It also includes eight recommendations that the SFAO considers essential and which had still not been corrected by those audited within the deadline agreed with the supervisory authority.

The SFAO's annual report has been illustrated by a press cartoonist since 2014. Following on from Mix & Remix, Max Spring and Swen, the SFAO this year has given Neuchâtel cartoonist Nicolas Sjöstedt carte blanche.



### **Do the allocated resources reflect the risks?**

In his preamble to the 2017 annual report, the Director of the SFAO, Michel Huissoud, asks whether the institution's resources are sufficient to cover the risks identified and analysed by his organisation's auditors. And what level of risk cover is acceptable for Parliament and the Federal Council? Recent examples of fraud and IT problems show that this type of risk can only be partly identified by the SFAO. This is why the SFAO proposes a moderate increase in personnel over the coming years.

Over the last decade, the SFAO's audits have generated nearly half a billion Swiss francs in receipts for the Confederation. In 2017, the SFAO cost Swiss taxpayers CHF 24.2 million against CHF 23.6 million in 2016. At the end of December 2017, it employed 106.3 staff (expressed in full-time equivalents) against 104.3 in 2016.

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*The 2017 annual report is published in French, German, Italian and English on the SFAO website ([www.sfao.admin.ch](http://www.sfao.admin.ch)).*