

AUDIT

Audit of the resource situation

Federal Office of Police fedpol

KEY FACTS

The Federal Council asked the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) to review the resource situation at the Federal Office of Police (fedpol). The audit is intended to provide a response to a parliamentary procedural request asking whether fedpol has sufficient personnel to fulfil its statutory mandate in relation to investigative activities.⁴ The security policy environment has become significantly more challenging in recent years, and investigations are proving increasingly complex.

The SFAO considers the staffing levels for investigations at the Federal Criminal Police (FCP) to be insufficient. As a result, important proceedings are being delayed or not initiated at all. This compromises Switzerland's domestic security. The SFAO recommends that fedpol, together with the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland (OAG), assess the specific additional need for investigators. The SFAO advocates a phased expansion of the FCP's investigation divisions, provided that this expansion is in line with the priorities of the Federal Council's future security policy strategy. It should also be achieved as far as possible using the savings and optimisation opportunities identified in the report.

Deficiencies in coordination, management culture and efficiency

As the OAG's judicial police force, the FCP is integrated into fedpol structures and is therefore subject to the regular budgetary process of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP). For its part, the OAG, as an independent authority, can more easily recruit new directors of proceedings, and has indeed done so. The resulting mismatch between additional directors of proceedings and unchanged investigative resources is a key factor in exacerbating the FCP's resource problems. The SFAO regrets that there was not better coordination between the FCP and the OAG. The existing cooperation agreement between the FCP and the OAG was not adhered to in this connection.

The SFAO sees fedpol's hierarchical management culture as one reason for the FCP's long processing and response times for requests and tasks. Decisions have often not been taken at the appropriate level and have required lengthy internal clarifications. The staff sectors appear to be significantly oversized, and there is no clear management system for the use of external staff. The SFAO acknowledges that the office's new management has initiated improvements since the start of 2025. Nevertheless, in its view, fedpol must review the decision-making powers of its employees.

While fedpol has embarked on a digital transformation, the potential of digitalisation is not being exploited systematically enough. For example, integrated case management software is not due to be introduced in the FCP until seven years after the successor solution was initiated.

A tighter remit and more targeted personnel development

fedpol does not have a dedicated policing act. Its remit is based on the Federal Constitution and various legal orders. The division of powers between the Confederation and cantons is not always appropriate. One example of this is cybercrime. This area of criminality is constantly evolving, with criminals often operating in international networks. Combating them requires high levels of coordination and specialist knowledge. When it comes to cybersecurity, a pooling of forces between fedpol and the cantonal police forces is urgently needed.

⁴ Postulate 23.4349, "Ressourcenüberprüfung beim fedpol" [Review of fedpol's resources], submitted by the National Council Finance Committee, 20 November 2023

The SFAO recommends that fedpol review its mandate and coordinate the FCP's service remit with the FCP's partners.

The SFAO advises fedpol to develop a training strategy to enable staff to better cope with constantly changing requirements and perform their assigned tasks more efficiently. This strategy must be coordinated with the cantons. The mobility of employees between cantonal police forces and fedpol is key to the fulfilment of the joint remit. The same applies to the exchange of information at federal level. The police query platform (POLAP) being set up to this end is taking too long, although this is not due to a lack of support from fedpol, but rather to the different legal standards in the cantons.

The Money Laundering Reporting Office Switzerland (MROS) is based within fedpol. The number of reports has steadily increased in recent years and there is no sign of a reversal in this trend. Current legislation to combat money laundering focuses on financial intermediaries, who are required to report any suspected cases. Financial intermediaries benefit from MROS's work because its activities also serve to protect the integrity of the financial centre and the reputation of the industry. The reporting office does not charge any fees, which means that the costs are not borne in line with the "user pays" principle. The SFAO therefore welcomes the idea of transferring the financing of MROS to financial intermediaries. This could also help to ease the resource situation at fedpol, as MROS's annual personnel costs amount to around CHF 8.3 million.