

Swiss Environmental Foreign Policy and Sustainable Development

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Abstract

This paper provides a narrative account of the Swiss environmental foreign policymaking process by former Swiss government officials and links their observations to relevant foreign policy and international relations theories. It provides background information on the broader context for sustainable development contained in the new Swiss Federal Constitution and suggests how realigning government, economy and society on the new Federal Constitution can help to promote sustainable development domestically and through multilateral channels.

Keywords: Swiss environmental foreign policy, sustainable development, application of foreign policy/international relations theory

Introduction¹

As practitioners in environmental foreign policy on behalf of the Government of Switzerland during the last two decades of the 20th Century, we wish to bundle our collective experience to make a preliminary assessment of the Swiss environmental foreign policy process. It should be noted at the outset that this contribution involved no new empirical research, for which we did not have

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the resources, but instead builds on direct involvement in the environmental foreign policy process, including preparation of proposals to the Federal Council and active participation in countless negotiation sessions. It is our hope that this paper will stimulate more rigorous research on this subject matter – which is of growing significance for the future well-being of Switzerland – as well as to encourage the application of theoretical insights in practice.

We begin with a description of the environmental foreign policymaking process, going into some depth on institutional arrangements, the establishment of strategic objectives and priorities, procedures for policymaking and the negotiation/ratification of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), as well as negotiating strategy. We then discuss how our observations relate to foreign policy and international relations theories, concluding that systemic theory that emphasizes state interest and cognitive factors as determinants of environmental foreign policy outcomes is most relevant in the Swiss context. We then suggest means of improving the effectiveness of Swiss environmental foreign policy and call for a reorientation of government, economy and society on the new Federal Constitution, which embodies a global citizen perspective fundamental to sustainable development.

Background on Swiss Environmental Foreign Policy

Environmental foreign policy is a new and underdeveloped dimension of Swiss foreign policy compared with the traditional pillars of Swiss foreign policy (i.e., neutrality and foreign economic policy, which defined the purpose of the modern Swiss Confederation at the time that it was founded in 1848, and disponsibility and solidarity, that were added later). However, the Federal Constitution underwent a complete revision in 1999, and it now embraces the sustainable development paradigm, thus according environmental protection the same priority as the more established policy fields (economic policy, security policy, humanitarian policy, development policy).

The Preamble to the new Constitution² refers, for example, to the responsibility of the Swiss people and the cantons towards future generations; Article 2 defines the overarching purpose of the Confederation, including

² “In the name of Almighty God! *We, the Swiss People and Cantons*, whereas we are mindful of our responsibility towards creation; resolve to renew our alliance to strengthen liberty and democracy, independence and peace in solidarity and openness towards the world; are determined to live our diversity in unity respecting one another; are conscious of our common achievements and our responsibility towards future generations; and know that only those remain free who use their freedom, and that the strength of a people is measured by the welfare of the weakest of its members...”

the promotion of sustainable development; and Article 73 imposes a binding requirement on all levels of government, the Confederation and the cantons to “strive to establish a durable equilibrium between nature and its capacity for renewal, on the one hand, and its use by humans, on the other” (Federal Council 2002). The new Constitution reflects the Swiss world view enshrined in shared political-cultural values, such as self-determination and neutrality, federalism, direct democracy, and collegial decision-making, with roots in collectivism and particularism, which create the context for policymaking, despite linguistic, religious and ethnic diversity.³ The resulting Swiss foreign policy principles and priorities are described in greater detail in the following section.

Foreign policy context and legal framework

Swiss environmental foreign policy has emerged as a distinct issue area only recently, beginning in earnest with preparations for the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. However, prior to that, Switzerland was engaged in numerous regional environmental institutions and initiatives (Böhlen and Cléménçon 1992), has hosted international organizations for over a Century and has domestic sustainable development policies dating back as far (e.g. Forest Police Law of 1876).

For the first time in 1993, environmental foreign policy was conceptualized as one of the five core elements of broader Swiss foreign policy (Federal Council 1993). In light of the radical changes taking place at the beginning of the 1990s, such as the collapse of the Soviet Union, completion of the EU’s single market, accelerated globalization, and strong momentum for preservation of the environment in the follow-up of the Rio Earth Summit, the Foreign Policy Report 1993 provided a roadmap for Switzerland’s future foreign policy. It built on the assumption that the country’s self-determination can only be safeguarded through strengthened international cooperation.

This reorientation was quite radical – at least by Swiss standards – since Switzerland had, as a result of the Cold War and a changed understanding of neutrality, focused on a bilateral approach after World War II. Thus, the Foreign Policy Report 1993 and its update of 2000 established a framework for reconnecting to Switzerland’s tradition of multilateralism.⁴ In fact, the Foreign Policy Report 2000 stated that Switzerland’s “influence in the sphere of foreign affairs has undoubtedly diminished” and that the country “occupies a more

³ For details on core values and their effects on social cohesion and priority setting, see Schmid (1981), Fossedal (2002), Hofstede (2001), and Rellstab (2001).

⁴ See Goetschel (2000: 10) and further studies quoted there.

modest position than is appropriate for its economic weight" (Federal Council 2000: Annex, p. 1). Increased participation in the multilateral (UN) and supra-national sphere (EU) was prescribed as the antidote reverse this trend.

This shift in foreign policy corresponded to a total revision of the Swiss Federal Constitution. The supreme objective of the new Constitution, which went into effect on 1 January 2000, is "preservation of Switzerland's independence and welfare", which might appear to be a rather traditional formulation of national interest. However, the Constitution fully embraces the concept of sustainable development, a concept that is based on a broader perspective and different understanding of security than traditional national security and foreign policy.

While the relationship between ethics and security continues to be a controversial issue in the academic literature on international relations (Irwin 2001: 3), the new Federal Constitution reflects the will of the people that – in addition to national interest – conscience should also play a role in guiding foreign policy. What this means in practice is that foreign policy

"must be orientated (sic) towards ethical principles", even recognizing that "tensions can emerge between the safeguarding of interests and ethical principles, especially when economic interests have to be brought into line with the objective of playing a part in shaping a more just and peaceful world" (Federal Council 2000: iv).

Article 54 Paragraph 2 FC translates these ethical considerations into a set of four more specific foreign policy objectives that refine the supreme objective:⁵

- Peaceful coexistence of nations;
- Respect for human rights and promotion of democracy;
- Alleviation of need and poverty in the world;
- Preservation of natural resources.

Allenby (2001) attributed these types of ethically motivated priorities – which address the human security and global environmental stability concerns – to a "global citizen" perspective, in contrast to the traditional, more narrow interest-based "nation state" perspective (national security and foreign policy). Whatever the terminology, the new Constitution – adopted by a clear majority of citizens and cantons – codifies the strong support of the Swiss people for implementation of sustainable development concepts, which has been documented in various surveys. One example was the 1999 UNIVOX Development

⁵ The fifth objective – safeguarding the interests of the Swiss economy – is motivated by national economic interest, rather than ethical considerations.

Assistance Monitor survey, which showed that the Swiss population sees the justification for development cooperation in the following order:⁶

- solidarity with fellow human beings (78%)
- halting environmental degradation (68%)
- fostering world peace (63%)
- ease the refugee problematic (58%)
- Christian duty (43%)
- economic benefit (31%).

According to the authors of the survey report, there is a clear trend towards an emphasis on changes in the personal lifestyles of the Swiss citizens interviewed as a key contribution to improve the situation in developing countries. Taken together with opinions on environmental protection, these surveys paint a picture of a population that is concerned about global and intergenerational equity, understands the feedbacks between environmental degradation and poverty, exhibits solidarity with the less fortunate, and is willing to take responsibility (sacrifice lifestyle, pay for environmental improvements).⁷

Thus the Constitution represents a unique and compelling mandate to reorient Swiss foreign policy towards the pursuit of sustainable development and to ensure the necessary policy coherence. As a result, it can lend democratic legitimacy to respective Swiss foreign policy initiatives in international fora, but only if foreign policy prescriptions are also translated into domestic action.

The Environmental Foreign Policymaking Process

Foreign policy decisionmaking framework

Foreign policy processes within Switzerland have traditionally been a “black box”, but Klöti et al. (forthcoming) provide a much needed in-depth analysis.⁸ There are no particular rules regarding – or controls on – the process of environmental foreign policymaking, as distinct from more traditional areas of foreign policy. The Administration is the dominant actor in the policymaking process, with a limited number of agencies materially involved (Klöti et al. forthcoming); whereas the Federal Council is regularly implicated, but has tended to provide little strategic guidance.

⁶ “Entwicklungshilfe-Monitor”, conducted in January 1999 by the GfS-Forschungsinstitut (www.gfs.ch). Percentages indicate the fraction of persons that unconditionally agree that Switzerland should provide development assistance for the reasons indicated.

⁷ Schenkel (2000: 171).

⁸ For a comprehensive overview of the institutional framework and the conceptual base and theories, see Klöti et al. (forthcoming), especially 2.1 and 2.2, and further studies quoted there.

In the realm of foreign policy, the influence of political parties has been limited, and it is difficult to draw general conclusions about the political influence of special interest groups, such as environmental NGOs or business associations, particularly domestic ones (Widmer and Serdült, 1999). With respect to environmental foreign policy, we have observed that domestic special interests play a minimal role in cases where existing domestic legislation exceeds anticipated international requirements, other than to stimulate a proactive approach. However, in situations where new ground is being broken (climate change, biosafety), the situation is more complex (we have observed the following tactics: adoption of an EU-compatible position; passivity, based on a “wait and see” approach; or using environmental foreign policy to drive domestic policy).

Institutional arrangements

The process of negotiating cross-border and multilateral environmental agreements is not new, but until the early 1990s was regarded as either:

- a technical exercise to be conducted by environmental specialists at the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) with their foreign counterparts with the aim of pushing other countries to adopt environmental regulations that would be as strict as existing Swiss domestic legislation, or
- a general matter of inter-State diplomatic relations under the purview of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

As Switzerland is no longer an environmental poster child across the board (see, for example, SAEFL (2002)), international environmental agreements increasingly require strengthening of domestic legislation, which can have implications for the Swiss economy and thus have taken on greater strategic significance for the country. As a result, such international agreements are now scrutinized by the private sector and are no longer the responsibility of environmental specialists alone.

The Department of Foreign Affairs' (DFA) role is currently limited to three areas of relevance to environmental foreign policy: (i) legal scrutiny of international environmental law under preparation, which is handled by a Service in the Directorate for International Law; (ii) establishing effective international institutions, with an emphasis on defending the interests of Geneva as a host to international organisations; (iii) technical and financial assistance to third countries in addressing environmental problems, under the Swiss Development Cooperation Agency.

The DFA is responsible for coordinating the periodic foreign policy reports, but responsibility for developing and implementing Swiss environmental foreign policy in accordance with the applicable political guidelines and within the existing legal framework has shifted to the SAEFL⁹ and, in particular, its International Affairs Division (IAD). Although the IAD regards itself as an integral part of Switzerland's foreign policy system, it plays a dominant role, and the DFA is still struggling to exercise its strategic planning function (Klöti, Serdült and Widmer 2000: 18-19).

Other Government entities that regularly play a role in the process are the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and, in specific instances, agencies whose mandates are relevant in particular international environmental issue areas, such as the Federal Office for Energy (e.g., climate change) or the Swiss Federal Office for Public Health (e.g., biosafety).

Establishing strategic objectives and priorities

The guiding premise for Swiss environmental foreign policy is that, at the outset of the 21st Century, the solution of the greatest environmental problems is only possible with an international approach and will require the solidarity of Switzerland. As an affluent industrialized country, Switzerland bears a particular responsibility to demonstrate leadership in taking action with respect to global environmental issues, such as climate change (Forward Planning Staff of the Federal Administration 2003).

However, Switzerland must set priorities for its engagement at the international level.¹⁰ The official policy is therefore to concentrate on areas in which the world at large is diverging most markedly from the path of sustainable development and in which Switzerland is particularly affected or can make an especially effective contribution (SAEFL and FSO 1997). Each foreign policy objective in the new Federal Constitution is given specific

⁹ Serduelt and Hirschi (2004) found that the Department of Foreign Affairs was at the core of the policy network involved in Swiss ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. This apparent contradiction merely underscores the fact that, although social network analysis can be a useful tool to make actor involvement and interaction in the policy process more explicit, the resulting "structural configuration of political actors" alone cannot represent the functions and degree of political influence of the various actors in policymaking processes. Just because an actor is implicated, does not mean that it plays a key role in policymaking.

¹⁰ Compared to other countries, the number of staff at Swiss federal agencies engaged in environmental issues is low (Gudet and Gähwiler 2002). This is also true regarding environmental foreign policy.

form by the Federal Council through a number of mid-term priorities which embody the actual issues which will characterise Swiss foreign policy in the next decade. With respect to environmental foreign policy,

“...the Federal Council wishes to work for the further development and enforcement of legal instruments which create a strong international environmental system. Its most pressing concerns are to consolidate existing treaties, especially in the climate, biological diversity and chemicals fields, as well as to create international rules on the protection of forests and water”. (Federal Council 2000: 39)

These general Federal Council mandates have been operationalized by the Administration to encompass the following basic objectives and current priorities for Swiss environmental foreign policy (DFA 2003; SAEFL and FSO 2000; SAEFL 2002):

- Cooperation in the development of international environmental law (i.e., ratification/implementation of existing MEAs, filling gaps in international environmental regulations).
- Institutional reform to ensure an effective international institutional framework.
- Support for countries needing assistance in addressing environmental problems through bilateral projects and multilateral programs.
- Pursuit of public-private partnerships.
- Strengthening “international Geneva” in the environmental sector as a contribution to both (i) institutional coherence, synergy and efficiency and (ii) promotion of Geneva’s interests as a host to international organizations.

Policymaking procedures

As is common in other foreign policy areas, the main responsibility for formulating environmental foreign policy has generally been left to the Federal Administration. Only in cases where there is disagreement among the Federal Offices and/or evidence of strong domestic interest conflicts is a political decision by the Federal Council usually necessary. Otherwise, the Federal Council typically rubber stamps policies and negotiating positions agreed by federal civil servants.

Several of the environmental foreign policy priorities listed in the previous section were established through an interdepartmental process to

draft the Sustainable Development Strategy 2002, which was issued by the Federal Council and has the character of a work program for implementing the 22 proposed measures (Wachter 2003). In addition to strengthening the system of international environmental governance, the Strategy 2002 contains several other environmental foreign policy measures (multilateral sustainability policy; climate change policy, in particular efforts to achieve an international agreement on limiting greenhouse gas emissions from aviation). Other priorities were defined by the SAFEL. The process by which these rather vague environmental foreign policy priorities are translated into specific international negotiating objectives, strategies and positions and are reflected in policies, initiatives and budgetary priorities is discussed below.

Consistent with previous research on foreign policy decisionmaking, clear strategies and policies are lacking in most environmental foreign policy subject areas. The vague and not readily accessible environmental foreign policy priorities defined by the Federal Council and Administration have not been translated into comprehensive foreign policies for specific issue areas. Instead piecemeal “policy statements” are issued in the context of negotiations, domestic legislation, publications, and ratification processes. The Sustainable Development Strategy 2002 is one of the few “strategies” that has been developed, but is essentially a patchwork of proposed measures that were developed individually at the operational level, rather than a coherent strategic policy framework.

In the absence of strategic policy guidance, we have found environmental foreign policy decisionmaking to be characterized by:

- *ad hoc* micro-management: Swiss foreign policy decisionmaking has been characterized as generally *ad hoc* micro-management, rather than strategic decisionmaking derived from macro-level guiding principles (Ruloff et al. 1999: 12; Morand forthcoming). The federal civil service thus responds to specific demands on a case-by-case basis at the operational level, without regard to the strategic implications in the broader foreign policy framework, because: (i) no clear sectoral foreign policy has been defined at the strategic level; (ii) human and financial resources to engage in strategic analysis proactively are lacking in the Administration; and (iii) general foreign policy principles have not been translated into concrete attitudes and practices at the operational level (Ruloff et al. 1999: 12). In our experience, these general observations are fully consistent with decisionmaking in the field of environmental foreign policy.

- lack of efficient institutional alignment to deal with emerging environmental issues, for which administration units other than SAEFL bear competence.
- limited analytical input: Swiss environmental foreign policy has rarely been based on systematic, transparent decision-analysis techniques (e.g. cost-benefit analysis, multi-criteria analysis, moderated expert panels)¹¹, or on institutionalized contributions from consultants or academia. In addition to a lack of policies (and therefore an objective basis on which to evaluate individual negotiating positions and implementation measures) and performance indicators, limited human and financial resources are also a barrier to the application of decision-analysis techniques.
- heavy reliance on implicit, shared values: Environmental foreign policy decision-making has tended to be relationship-based, personalized and network centered, rather than rule- and institution-based. This observation is consistent with recent studies of foreign policy decisionmaking, which suggest that personal relationships and direct access to the Federal Council are more important than official, formal channels of communication in determining influence in foreign policy affairs (Ruloff et al. 1999). As a result, legitimacy is shaped more by cognitive and normative than by regulative institutional constraints.¹² For this reason, the shared political-cultural heritage and the world view embodied in the new Constitution provide a crucial common basis for consensual decision-making across departments and within Swiss society at large.
- significant discretion of individual civil servants: As regulative institutional constraints and a culture of management for results are both lacking, individual civil servants have great discretion in shaping environmental foreign policy.¹³ Analysis of the factors that shape individual preferences and the extent to which these preferences determine environmental foreign

¹¹ Ruloff *et al.* (1999: 11) concluded that the foreign policy apparatus generally functions at a low analytical level, and OECD (1998) came to the same conclusion regarding environmental policies.

¹² For definitions of the three “institutional pillars” see Peng (2003: 276).

¹³ Other relatively new domains of Switzerland’s international cooperation, such as the membership in the Bretton Woods Institutions, seem to follow similar patterns, with a “strong concentration of powers at administrative levels” (Parlamentsdienste 2001).

policymaking outcomes is beyond the scope of this paper. We can only speculate based on our own experience that many factors enter into the equation, including cultural and individual values; personal and career motivation; know-how, ability and experience; access to resources, including social capital; and the individual's position in the administrative hierarchy, which influences ability to act autonomously. Given the lack of high-level policy and the degree of individual discretion, continuity (for example, with respect to priorities or budget allocation) and overall effectiveness can suffer.

- strong interdependence with domestic legislation: It is common practice (though not a legal obligation), to only sign new international legal instruments, when national legislation is already in place – at least regarding the core of the new obligations included in the international agreement. Because Switzerland's own domestic environmental legislation was among the most advanced in the OECD during the eighties and the beginning of the nineties (Böhlen and Cléménçon 1992), Switzerland had great flexibility in the environmental foreign policy arena and was able to assume a proactive stance. Since then, novel global environmental issue areas have emerged that required Switzerland to develop new domestic legislation (e.g. climate change), and existing Swiss environmental law has basically only been strengthened in harmony with EU legislation.¹⁴

Procedures related to MEA negotiation and ratification

With respect to the negotiation of international legal instruments, the Federal Council issues the formal mandates for the participation of Swiss delegations; in the case of environmental foreign policy, the draft mandates are prepared by the SAEFL, in some cases with the input of other involved Federal Offices. The negotiating mandates are adopted following a two-step formalized consultation procedure as for domestic affairs.

In addition, Article 39 of the Federal Law on Environment stipulates that the cantons and interested parties are consulted in the preparation of international legal instruments, though there are no specific procedural rules (when, how) nor

¹⁴ This is mainly due to the explicit policy of the Swiss Government to avoid any new technical barriers to trade between Switzerland and the EU.

clarity about the effects, which has sometimes lead to inconsistent positions.¹⁵ In practice, the cantons generally have not been involved in preparing negotiating positions and have seldom participated in negotiations in the context of MEAs. This is true even with respect to conventions that to a large extent require implementation by the cantons.

The Swiss Parliament must approve the ratification of multilateral environmental agreements, but has tended to act more as a rubber stamp than as a guiding force. Recent examples include the non-controversial ratifications of the Kyoto Protocol on climate change and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. The ratification process for the Kyoto Protocol, for example, was formally initiated by the Federal Council on 21 August 2002 (Bundesrat 2002). Following the unanimous recommendation of the responsible Commission, the Council of States approved the ratification with no debate and an obvious majority on 12 December 2002. The second chamber gave its approval by a vote of 130:7 on 2 June 2003, paving the way for Switzerland to deposit its instrument of ratification on 9 July 2003. In neither chamber was there any debate. There have been some individual Parliamentary initiatives aimed at influencing environmental foreign policy, but these are exceptions that have not had much influence on the process.

Negotiation strategy and performance

With respect to global environmental issues, MEAs have generally been negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations, where each nation has one vote. Under most of these regimes, however, negotiation blocks consisting of groups of states such as the EU or the Group of 77 and China (major developing country block) have played a key role in negotiation process, particularly in determining the final outcomes of high-level negotiations, as well as with regard to the nomination and election of officers to negotiation bodies.

Switzerland has been part of various groupings under changing constellations among the non-EU OECD countries under different MEA negotiation processes. In some cases, this was a passive result of the coalitions formed by other groups (e.g., when the EU formed a cohesive group, the rest of the OECD countries were

¹⁵ A telling example is the 'Alpine Convention' – a sub-regional framework convention among the alpine countries, which tries to balance environment and development. The cantons were not consulted early enough in the negotiation process, which led to delays in ratifying the Convention (Switzerland signed the Convention in 1991, but did not deposit its instrument of ratification until January 1999) and a lack of support for Swiss ratification of the 9 sectoral protocols. At the same time, Switzerland pays a significant part of the operating budget for the Convention and conducted an unsuccessful bid for Lugano to become the permanent headquarters of the Convention.

left over by default). In other cases, Switzerland took a conscious opportunistic or strategic decision. In order to gain access to the final round of negotiations on the Cartagena Protocol (Biodiversity Convention) in 1999, for example, Switzerland formed the Compromise Group, including Japan, Norway, Mexico, South Korea, New Zealand, and Singapore. In the same year, Switzerland followed a similar strategy in the context of the UNFCCC to form the Environmental Integrity Group (Morand, forthcoming), but this time, the countries were held together more by their non-aligned (Liechtenstein, Monaco, Switzerland) or ambiguous status (Mexico, South Korea) than by common environmental interests and objectives. The implications of these Swiss-initiated coalitions in the broader foreign policy context and their contribution to improving negotiation outcomes for Switzerland have never been systematically evaluated.

Switzerland's ability to use its unaligned position to its advantage is strongly dependent on the initiative and active stance of the members of its negotiating delegation, and on their ability to find effective ways to introduce their ideas. Yet civil servants who conduct environmental foreign policy on behalf of Switzerland are not systematically trained in negotiation techniques and strategy, even though the Swiss government provides support for the training of negotiators in other countries in cooperation with international organizations such as the WTO Training Institute, the UN Institute for Training and Research and the World Bank.¹⁶

Discussion

Reconciling observations and existing theory

To facilitate environmental foreign policy analysis, Barkdull and Harris (2002) developed a framework that groups the relevant foreign policy and international relations theories into nine categories, based on their locus of application (systemic, societal, state-centric) and whether they attribute influence to power, interests or ideas.¹⁷ We use this framework to discuss the applicability of the different theories to Swiss environmental foreign policy (Table 1).

¹⁶ For the latter see, for example, Saner, Jáuregui and Yiu (2001).

¹⁷ See Barkdull and Harris (2003: 63-69); Ikenberry, Lake and Mastanduno (1988) and Hasenclever, Rittberger and Mayer (1997) for details.

Table 1: Relevance of theoretical approaches to Swiss environmental foreign policy

		<i>Locus of Application</i>		
		<i>Systemic</i>	<i>Societal</i>	<i>State-centric</i>
<i>Source of Influence</i>	<i>Power</i>			possibly important
	<i>Interests</i>	current foreign policy focus		relevant (bureaucratic politics)
	<i>Ideas</i>	new opportunity: sustainable development niche	political-cultural heritage crucial	no conclusive evidence, requires further research

Note: grey cells indicate relevant/promising approaches; white cells, less relevant approaches

Overview of systemic theories: Power, interests and ideas

Systemic theories assume that a large part of state foreign policy stems from the role, identity or interests given to the state by systemic factors inherent to the international system (such as the distribution of power), as opposed to domestic sources of foreign policy conduct (Barkdull and Harris 2002). As reflected in the Foreign Policy Report 2000, the supreme foreign policy objective of the new Federal Constitution is the pursuit of Swiss independence and welfare. To do so, Switzerland rejects systemic, neo-realist theories that subscribe to the premise that foreign policy is all about acquiring power. The notion of neorealism is at odds with Swiss neutrality policy; class or elite theory is incompatible with Swiss conceptions of equality and consensual decision-making (reflected, for example, in the structure of the Federal Council); and the suggestion that shifting power relations between the Executive and Legislative would have a major impact on foreign policy ignores the constitutional division of power and responsibilities and the limited resources available to the only part-time Swiss Parliament to engage in policy shaping. Instead, Swiss foreign policy is consistent with the basic premise behind interest-based theory, namely that rational actors will cooperate to achieve joint gains (Barkdull and Harris 2002: 70). This is reflected in the emphasis of Swiss environmental foreign policy on MEAs and effective international institutions.

On the other hand, we have observed that, as a small, unaligned state, Switzerland's environmental foreign policy options in multilateral negotiation fora are indeed influenced by its lack of political clout. As often as not, the final decision-making process in a difficult and contentious negotiation takes place between the three "major blocks", namely the US and its allies, the G77 and

China, and the EU, in an informal setting, from which small, unaligned countries are factually excluded.¹⁸ As a result, one might argue that Switzerland has no choice but to defend its interests with innovative ideas. Independence from major coalitions provides Switzerland with flexibility and room for manouver in the negotiations to (Kummer Peiry 2003):

- assume a catalytic role by introducing innovative ideas or a new perspective that can influence the discussions in major groups;
- assume a compromise-oriented, bridge-building role;
- define its own role in the negotiation process, acting alongside major groups, and adapting this role as the process evolves.

Switzerland's ability to use its unaligned position to its advantage is strongly dependent on the initiative and active stance of the members of its negotiating delegation and on their ability to find effective ways to introduce their ideas, as well as on a negotiating set-up that provides room for small unallied actors, as was the case in the World Summit on Sustainable Development and Biosafety negotiations.

We have shown above that the supreme objective of the Federal Constitution and its foreign policy is driven not only by national interest in the traditional sense, but also by ethical considerations consistent with the concept of sustainable development. The emerging paradigm of sustainable development thus provides a new conceptual framework for an interest-based foreign policy, based on a "global citizen" approach. The fact that Switzerland frames its foreign policy in this way, rather than in terms of geopolitical power, suggests that interest-based and cognitive theories generally do a better job of explaining Swiss environmental foreign policy than do power-based theories.

Power of interests

We find that interest-based theories applicable at the systemic (national interest model) or state-centric level (bureaucratic politics model) may be more relevant to Swiss environmental foreign policymaking than are those localized at the societal level (interest group politics, pluralist models). This finding is consistent with the recognition that foreign policy processes differ in some fundamental ways from domestic policymaking, in particular, clear Executive Branch competence and limited direct influence of other actors in the policymaking

¹⁸ This approach has undergone some modification in recent years, not the least due to protests from Switzerland (e.g., at the UNFCCC COP4 meeting in 1998), calling for a more open and democratic consultative process.

process (see, for example, Klöti et al. forthcoming; Serduelt and Hirschi forthcoming).

Based on systemic, interest-based theory, Sprinz and Vaahutoranta (1994) assert that the primary state interests in environmental questions are vulnerability to environmental damage and the cost of abatement. They therefore predict that states with high costs and low vulnerability will be “draggers”, whereas the “pushers” will be states with low abatement costs and high vulnerability. With respect to climate change, for example, Switzerland falls into an intermediate category: It must face relatively high greenhouse gas emission abatement costs (although the “no regrets” potential has not yet been fully exploited), and – as a mountainous country subject to glacier retreat, landslides and flooding – is quite vulnerable to climate change impacts (OcCC 2003), despite its high GDP. Consistent with this model, Switzerland has acted neither as a pusher nor a dragger in the Kyoto Protocol process, but has taken an intermediate position: Although Switzerland generally supports greenhouse gas emission reductions in line with EU propositions and is taking necessary steps to implement its commitments domestically (as evidenced by the adoption in 2000 of a CO₂ Law designed to ensure Swiss compliance with the Kyoto Protocol), it was one of the last OECD countries to ratify the Kyoto Protocol as the 111th Party in July 2003. Whether the same holds true in other environmental issue areas would have to be analyzed as a matter of future research.

In the case of climate change, however, considerations other than abatement cost and vulnerability also play a role in shaping Swiss environmental foreign policy, including economic interest (e.g., ensuring a level playing field with respect to competitors and increasing demand for its environmental technology), political interest in attracting international institutions to Geneva and humanitarian concerns and principles (e.g., reducing the risk of environmental refugees), all of which would tend to support a proactive stance. At the societal level, ideology and culture also support a progressive stance, but there is no political will to go beyond the EU position.

Significance of cognitive factors

In contrast to power-based explanations of the structure of international politics, Wendt (1999) has adopted the constructivist view that ideas are the main determinant, due to their impact on state identity, preferences and foreign policy (Barkdull and Harris 2002: 74).

In our experience, cognitive theories are highly relevant under the Swiss direct democratic system of consensual politics. As mentioned above in the discussion of interest-based theory, Switzerland – on the basis of its new Constitution – has chosen to frame its foreign policy priorities in global stewardship terms, a

shift with the potential to impact the international world order, as suggested by Barkdull and Harris (2002: 73). For this reason, we recommend that Switzerland promote a broad conceptualization of “human security” internationally, in line with the basic premise of sustainable development. In terms of global geopolitics, this remains a “niche area” where a small state like Switzerland could engage itself with some prospect for success to both give expression to and facilitate the uptake of the principles and priorities laid down in the new Constitution. Leadership in environmental foreign policy would serve to protect Swiss national interests and ensure an effective contribution of Switzerland to the promotion of sustainable development worldwide. It is in the realm of ideas and institutions that small states can have the greatest impact.

Acceptance of long-held guiding principles such as equity, solidarity, self-determination and neutrality, federalism and particularism, consensual decision-making, and the rule of law, as well as support for the basic tenets of sustainable development (such as the precautionary approach, the polluter pays principle and common, but differentiated responsibility), is high throughout Swiss society, at least at the rhetorical / conceptual level, transcending political parties, traditional interest groups and cultural and language boundaries. Even the leading conservative party, the Swiss People’s Party, openly accepts the precautionary principle and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (SVP, 2001).

Despite very limited involvement in environmental foreign policymaking, Swiss citizens’ views play a crucial indirect role in shaping policy. According to the Forward Planning Staff of the Federal Administration (2003: 37),

“Swiss characteristics such as multilingualism, federalism or direct democracy will be the internal-political factors that will shape the nature of its responses”.

Surveys provide detailed feedback on Swiss views toward various environment and development issues. The representative UNIVOX survey conducted in June 1999 included a set of additional questions on climate change causes, impacts and policy. Forty-one per cent of those interviewed were of the opinion that the Swiss government was undertaking adequate steps to protect the climate system, but an additional 51% believed that the government should do even more. Respondents also indicated a clear preference for immediate action, as opposed to a “wait and see” approach that would put the burden on future generations. The 2001 UNIVOX environment survey showed that public perception of global and regional environmental problems is generally higher than that of local environmental issues. The results indicate overwhelming public support for an active Swiss environmental foreign policy. Furthermore, the Swiss public believes that both technologies and behavioral changes are needed to address environmental and development challenges. These data suggest that Swiss citizens are generally:

- well-informed about global environmental issues;
- accepting of sustainable development principles such as equity, solidarity, burden-sharing and the precautionary approach;
- critical of unchecked consumption patterns in industrialized countries;
- willing to pay for environmental protection; and
- supportive of aggressive environmental foreign policy and domestic efforts to address global environmental problems.

In one comparative survey, about 70% of Swiss expressed a willingness to reduce their own standard of living in order to protect the environment (Diekmann 1997); the corresponding figures for all other countries analyzed, including Germany (53%), the Netherlands (47%), Italy (50%) and the USA (33%) were lower.¹⁹

This does not necessarily mean that Swiss will behave more environmentally responsibly on an individual basis, but they are generally more accepting of environmental protection policies and measures. In a federalist democracy, with many direct democratic elements, this basic “environmental world view” of the populace is an important factor that allows Switzerland to play a credible, progressive role in shaping MEAs. Future research might examine the underlying reasons for this world view and whether there is a gap between the professed general values/beliefs and voting behavior with respect to specific policy proposals.

State-centric theory

State-centric theories of environmental foreign policymaking based on power, interests or ideas have scarcely been explored in the Swiss context, but could be quite relevant. From a state-centric perspective, the role of the Swiss Administration as a relatively stable and dominant institution in environmental foreign policymaking is central. Unlike other countries, political changes in the Government (composition of the seven-member Federal Council and distribution of responsibilities among them) generally do not lead to changes in senior civil service posts. As a result, the Administration is a constant force in determining

¹⁹ Other analyses, such as Franzen (2002) and index-based international comparisons, such as the 2002 WEF/CIESIN/YCELP environmental sustainability index (ESI) and the 2002 environmental performance index (EPI) by the same organizations, paint a similar picture.

foreign policy outcomes. Furthermore, we have observed instances in which a Federal Department or Office has acted independently of societal actors to adopt a particular environmental policy, thereby furthering its own sectoral policy interests, with implications for Swiss environmental foreign policy. One example is the initiative that the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco) took in 1996 to finance a study to prepare recommendations on Switzerland's participation in the international pilot phase for the Kyoto mechanisms. Although the lead agency for climate change, the SAEFL, showed no interest in engaging in joint implementation activities, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs grasped the strategic importance of the Kyoto mechanisms for the Swiss private sector as a means of reducing the cost of climate protection. The study (Arquit Niederberger 1996) led to a decision by Switzerland to engage in the international pilot phase, as well as to the inclusion of the Kyoto mechanisms in the Swiss CO₂ Act of 2000.

During the early stages of international climate policy development, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was the dominant scientific force in informing the Swiss foreign policymaking process. Arquit Niederberger (forthcoming) assessed the impact that the Swiss scientific community has had on shaping Switzerland's foreign environmental policy in the field of climate change since 1996 and found that

"A lack of a critical mass of social science expertise to deliver authoritative climate policy guidance (or a failure to mobilize it effectively) might help explain why the [Advisory Body on Climate Change Research and Policy] since its inception in 1996 has yet to issue recommendations on international measures to avoid dangerous anthropogenic climate change (mitigation) or to lessen or avoid damage to people and objects resulting from climate change (adaptation), and it has only once commented on the negotiating position of the Swiss delegation in international negotiations..." (Arquit Niederberger forthcoming).

The paper suggests that financial dependency on and cognitive convergence with the administration coalition, a lack of attention to hybrid management functions and limited (and underutilized) entry points into the political decisionmaking process may inhibit the Advisory Body on Climate Change Research and Policy from playing a more significant role in both domestic and foreign environmental policy.²⁰ It is certainly difficult to demonstrate causal linkages between ideas and foreign policy choices, not the least because of the

²⁰ Over the past 10 years, social studies of science have developed various theoretical streams and concepts (e.g., boundary organization theory, hybrid management, discourse coalitions, network theory, such as the actor coalition framework), which all point to the importance in bringing about policy change of engaging actors with differing norms and belief systems to create new cognitive social worlds (Arquit Niederberger forthcoming).

relative inaccessibility of the foreign policy decisionmaking process. The role of ideas in shaping the environmental foreign policy choices of government officials remains a largely unexplored area (Barkdull and Harris 2002: 84), also in the Swiss context.

One aspect of power-based theory that deserves further study in the Swiss context is the effect of power relations within the Government itself (Federal Council, Administration), for example, whether the relative strength of various bureaucratic actors or individual government officials acting as “policy entrepreneurs” (Barkdull and Harris 2002: 81) influence environmental foreign policy outcomes. Given the degree of discretion that civil servants enjoy, the importance of personal relationships and networks and the lack of formal oversight that we have observed, it seems likely that such policy entrepreneurs could play a significant role, at least in catalyzing new policy directions or initiatives.

An example from climate policy illustrates this point. In the early 1990s, the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, which was generally perceived as representing the voice of the Swiss private sector, did not support a progressive Swiss climate policy (Morand forthcoming). Representatives of this federal office worked in the field of energy policy, with an emphasis on energy markets. During the initial negotiation of the UNFCCC, the Swiss delegation had extreme difficulty forming common positions. Fortunately for the process, a change in personnel paved the way for rapid internal learning regarding climate change and sustainable development. Indicators of this newfound interest in the subject were the initiative of Switzerland to call for negotiation of a Protocol on Energy Efficiency and Environmental Aspects under the leadership of the trade ministry in the context of the European Energy Charter, and the fact that the head of the State Secretariat began attending UNFCCC Ministerial meetings in 1995. A single individual thus had a major influence on Swiss environmental (foreign) policy: The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs came to adopt the policy that climate change and other environmental problems were real issues that needed to be dealt with, and the Office worked constructively to achieve environmentally effective and economically efficient domestic and international legal frameworks; in doing so, the Office played an important role as a knowledge interface with the private sector and demonstrated leadership in not hiding behind the lowest common denominator of less progressive private sector circles.

Another analysis addressed climate change and Swiss foreign policy in the 1990s and found that Swiss public policy-making in the field of environmental diplomacy

“...is influenced by different people with various individual agendas and

idiosyncrasies, and outcomes tend to reflect bureaucratic politics more often than one would wish". (Morand forthcoming)

The individual agendas of civil servants are ascribed mainly to power struggles between individuals and among Federal Offices (state-centric, power-based theory), rather than to individuals acting as "idea brokers".

Summary

Overall, our observations and the existing literature suggest that systemic theory which challenges traditional neo-realism and instead puts the emphasis on state interest and cognitive factors as determinants of environmental foreign policy outcomes are most relevant in the Swiss context (see Table 1). However, systemic theory does not capture the importance in the Swiss context of a common political-cultural heritage and prevailing public opinion. A common Swiss "world view" at the societal level is a crucial factor in shaping environmental foreign policy, due in part to the power that the people have to reject international treaties, either through mandatory or facultative votes.

Assessment of Swiss environmental foreign policy

In certain sectors, Switzerland has played an influential role in shaping environmental policy in Europe and globally (Morand forthcoming). Whenever Swiss domestic environmental policy and law was clearly defined and democratically legitimized, Switzerland was able to play a more important role in multilateral regimes, and was generally more effective. In those cases, one can usually notice a truly joint effort of the various Swiss actors, which is not just limited to the negotiation rounds, and makes best use of scientific knowledge inside and outside of the federal administration. Yet certain trends are increasingly limiting Switzerland's ability to pull off major new initiatives with the goal of shaping the international environmental agenda (Cléménçon 1995):

- As many international environmental issues have evolved from a primarily scientific and technical topic ('track-two diplomacy') to mainstream foreign policy, geopolitics and relative political power have become more important, also with respect to innovative approaches or successful domestic experience.
- Other European countries have caught up with Switzerland's previously more advanced (i.e. stricter) domestic environmental law. Thus, Switzerland no longer has the 'buffer' that allowed it to propose far reaching new international environmental instruments.

Despite that, Switzerland was quite successful over the last few years as a niche player²¹ and in fostering compromises on a number of issues. But institutional realignment – interagency coordination mechanisms, linkages with scientific institutions, number and profile of staff, budget amounts, mainstreaming environment into strategic decision-making and diplomacy²² – is needed to keep up with the more complex and politically and technically more challenging agenda of environmental foreign policy, and to achieve real human security benefits in line with the purpose of the Swiss Confederation. Particularly the underdeveloped coordinating mechanism at strategic level between different federal agencies and reduced engagement of the Department of Foreign Affairs seem to hamper a more prominent role of Switzerland in foreign environmental policy at a time when the critical importance this topic for the security and well being of the country is increasing.²³

Another factor that may have limited the effectiveness of Swiss foreign policy, in general, and environmental foreign policy, in particular, is the structure and function of government and administration. Recognizing the need for reform, new legislation²⁴ was adopted, clarifying objectives and tasks of each of the seven Departments,²⁵ the Federal Chancellery and the Federal Offices, thereby shifting away from a mere description of activities to a greater focus on objectives and the effectiveness of outcomes. These reforms could enhance the institutional basis for strategic planning, policy coherence and quality assurance of decisionmaking processes. Further reforms could provide additional opportunities to strengthen the effectiveness of Swiss initiatives, for example (Schweizerische Bundeskanzlei 2000):

²¹ For example regarding ‘mountain issues’, where Switzerland has specific knowledge, is perceived as important and has allocated sufficient resources in the last years to influence the international agenda.

²² Whereas the SAEFL operates from headquarters, the Swiss Science and Technology Agency has developed a network of 10 counselors, which are part of the Swiss Embassy staff in their host country to pursue active scientific and technical cooperation with other countries, regions, or organizations.

²³ Our findings are consistent with the recommendation of Klöti, Serdült and Widmer (2000: 21) that “strategic planning within the Swiss foreign ministry should be upgraded, and co-ordination with other planning units within the administration should be improved”, as well as with the more general suggestion by Schenkel (2000: 162) that the function of governance must shift from an operational to a strategic level to implement sustainable development.

²⁴ Law on Government and Administration Organization of 21 March 1997 and the related Ordinance of 25 November 1998.

²⁵ The new Ordinance for the Department of Foreign Affairs that went into effect 1 June 2000 entrusts the Department with ensuring the coherence of all Swiss foreign policy business.

- A government structure that would allow the Federal Council to concentrate on its executive duties, rather than on the management of the Administration.
- A greater emphasis on objectives, performance- and outcome-orientation; cost-effectiveness of services; public – private partnerships; and customer satisfaction.
- Improved communication, based on adoption of the principle of public access to information in the Administration to increase the transparency and credibility of information and communication, as well as to support public dialog.

Compared with domestic policymaking processes, environmental foreign policy is not as well established with respect to inclusive and comprehensive decision shaping processes, mainstreaming environment into sectoral policies, and public–private partnerships, although on all fronts, progress has been made since the early 1990s.²⁶ As international environmental policy matures, greater emphasis will be placed on implementing existing MEA obligations and, secondly, on complementing them in the light of compliance shortcomings and new scientific evidence. This may likely lead to a more pluralistic and participatory decision shaping process.

Reorienting government, economy and society on the new Federal Constitution²⁷

Strategic importance of sustainable development for Switzerland

For Switzerland, sustainable development is both a necessity (Federal Council 2002) and an opportunity, and the country is uniquely placed to play a catalytic role in the transition to sustainability worldwide. With its democratic, federalist and consensual form of decisionmaking, Switzerland's citizens are used to balancing competing economic, social and environmental interests for the common good, so Swiss civil society was quick to comprehend the sustainability paradigm and – with its acceptance of a fully revised Federal Constitution in 1999 – has embraced

²⁶ This is true for foreign policy in general, as Klöti et al. (forthcoming) point out: Parliament, cantons, and non-state actors including business are much less involved in foreign policy decision making than in matters of domestic policy.

²⁷ This section draws on an unpublished policy paper prepared for the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs by one of us (Arquit Niederberger 2003).

sustainable development as an overarching aim of the Swiss Confederation. At a time of increasing political polarization, widespread human insecurity, waning social solidarity, armed conflict and violence, and fear of the future, even among the younger generations, Swiss leaders face the challenge of reorienting politics from the defensive to the positive. As a regulative idea, the sustainability paradigm is ideally suited to this purpose and can assist leaders in fostering a positive culture of community, excellence, vitality, and resilience that can energize our society and economy.

Current situation

Although the sustainable development paradigm forms an important conceptual basis for the new Swiss Federal Constitution, its fundamental significance as a unifying force for positive societal transformation and, hence, for the future well-being of Switzerland has not been fully recognized/embraced by decision makers in Government or civil society. Key barriers to realizing the full potential of such a political reorientation include:

- **Lack of leadership:** The Federal Council has not yet placed sustainable development at the center of its strategic planning for both foreign and domestic policy.
- **Institutional shortcomings:** Sustainable development is approached at the operational level and sectorially (albeit with interdepartmental cooperation). This approach can lead to incremental gains, but will fail to catalyze the necessary societal changes. Existing institutional arrangements are a barrier to synthetic approaches and strategic planning, and institutional capabilities to manage complex decisionmaking tasks and boundary interactions with non-state actors and other government ministries are insufficient.
- **Focus on problems rather than solutions:** Greater synergies in domestic and foreign policy endeavors and more effective outcomes overall can be achieved by approaches dedicated to activating and connecting Switzerland's unique strengths to promote extraordinary human performance in pursuit of sustainable development.
- **Insufficient stakeholder engagement:** The Government has failed to engage in a meaningful way the non-governmental

actors that will be crucial for implementing the transition to sustainability.²⁸

- Weak link between domestic and international agenda: Ultimately, the credibility of foreign policy initiatives depends on how a country behaves at home. As a fundamental purpose of the Swiss Confederation, sustainable development offers a timeless, comprehensive and coherent strategic framework to focus Swiss policy at home and in the context of international relations.

Call for leadership and action

Swiss leaders across sectors face the need to provide a new orientation. Federal Government leadership will involve steps to ensure appropriate institutional arrangements and to clearly define sustainable development strategy and policy, for example:

- Commission a series of in-depth Swiss sustainability innovation studies.
- Improve democratic decision making processes to expand public involvement beyond veto and referendum rights to include early input into the development of strategic visions, policies and resource allocation.
- Implement reforms to ensure that institutions have the authority, human and financial resources, knowledge, and tools to develop and implement sustainable development strategy.
- Appoint a State Secretary for Sustainable Development as a means for greater policy coherence domestically and a signal that Switzerland intends to serve as a voice for a comprehensive, ethically based “global citizen” conception of national interest in foreign affairs.
- Establish safeguards policies to ensure that sectoral policies (e.g., development assistance, export guarantees) comply with principles of sustainable development.

²⁸ For example, there was a conscious decision – based on resource and time considerations – to refrain from public participation in the process of defining an indicator set for sustainable development (Altwegg, Roth and Scheller 2003: 41), and the Sustainable Development Strategy 2002 was prepared by the Government in isolation; external interest groups were merely consulted by written procedure on a draft, and there was no public participation process.

- Develop effective partnerships with the other levels of government and the non-governmental actors who will need to innovate and implement sustainability on the ground (e.g., the research community, educators, the private sector, individuals).

Small states that act in harmony with international law cannot protect their national interest with a foreign policy based on military power. In discussing “The United Nations, Switzerland and the Role of Small States in World Politics” (at an event held at Columbia University in March 2003), Swiss personalities²⁹ suggested that Switzerland could add value in sharing its experience as a federal, multicultural democracy; facilitating behind-the-scenes diplomatic dialog; playing a key role in delivering humanitarian relief; leading in niche issues such as potential environment-related conflicts; serving as a voice of conscience and guarantor of integrity; and continuing to support international institutions.

Although the new Swiss Federal Constitution and Government rhetoric support a focus on sustainable development, the Executive Branch of Government has failed to provide the necessary leadership. One exception is in the context of Switzerland’s UN policy, where the Federal Council has established priorities, including a clear commitment to sustainable development. What is lacking is a coherent Swiss foreign policy across sectors based on the notion of sustainable development.

Need for Further Research

Our analysis is an initial attempt to describe and analyze Swiss environmental foreign policy processes. It offers observations and hypotheses, based on our government service in the field of environmental foreign policy, rather than empirical data or theoretical contributions. It should therefore be regarded as a source of insights for rigorous research into Swiss environmental foreign policy processes, as well as regarding the contribution that theoretical considerations can make to improving the effectiveness of public policy and decisionmaking processes. Fruitful avenues for future research might include:

- Quantitative analysis of environmental foreign policy case studies and comparison between environmental and other foreign policy processes in Switzerland;

²⁹ Ambassador Edouard Brunner, President of the Swiss Foundation for World Affairs in Washington, DC; Ambassador Blaise Godet, Head of the Political Affairs Directorate, Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs; Dr. Felix Müller, Editor-in-Chief of the “NZZ am Sonntag”; Edward Joseph, Director of the International Crisis Group in Macedonia.

- Comparative study of Swiss environmental foreign policy and approaches of other countries;
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of governmental institutional arrangements for environmental foreign policymaking, including inter-office & cross-sectoral cooperation and interfaces with other actors;
- Evaluation of Swiss environmental foreign policy objectives, initiatives, outcomes, effectiveness (e.g., perceptions of the effectiveness of Swiss environmental foreign policy among practitioners abroad);
- Implications of EU membership for the effectiveness of Swiss environmental foreign policy;
- Review and recommendations regarding Swiss environmental foreign policy priorities and policymaking, including analysis of particular approaches and issue areas where a small state like Switzerland has a competitive advantage.

Conclusion

Although the Swiss Federal Council has recently begun to address environmental foreign policy in the context of sustainable development, this new priority area is much less well developed than traditional foreign policy issue areas like security policy or humanitarian and human rights policy. Further development of principles, objectives and strategies, as well as a discussion of institutional alignment and resource allocation, by the Federal Council and Parliament is needed and should derive from a broad-based dialog.

Switzerland is in a unique position to promote a broad conceptualization of “human security” internationally, in line with the basic premise of sustainable development. In terms of global geopolitics, this remains a niche area where a small state like Switzerland could engage itself with some prospect for success to both give expression to and facilitate the uptake of the principles and priorities laid down in the new Federal Constitution. Leadership in environmental foreign policy would serve to protect Swiss national interests and ensure an effective contribution of Switzerland to the promotion of sustainable development worldwide. Domestically, the sustainability paradigm is ideally suited to assist leaders in fostering a positive culture of community, excellence, vitality, and resilience that can energize our society and economy.

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Die Schweizerische Aussenpolitik im Umweltbereich und nachhaltige Entwicklung

Dieser Artikel beschreibt - aufbauend auf den Erfahrungen von zwei ehemaligen Bundesangestellten - die Entscheidungsprozesse der schweizerischen Umweltaussenpolitik und stellt die Feststellungen in Verbindung mit einschlägigen Theorien aus den Bereichen Aussenpolitik und internationale Beziehungen. Der Artikel enthält Informationen zur nachhaltigen Entwicklung, wie sie in der neuen Bundesverfassung stipuliert wird, sowie Vorschläge wie eine der Verfassung entsprechende Ausrichtung von Behörden, Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft dazu beitragen kann, nachhaltige Entwicklung in der Schweiz und auf multilateralen Wegen zu fördern.

La politique extérieure suisse dans le domaine de l'environnement et le développement durable

Dans cet article, les auteurs, qui ont travaillé pour le gouvernement suisse, décrivent le processus de décision de la politique extérieure suisse dans

le domaine de l'environnement à la lumière des théories des relations internationales et de la politique extérieure. L'article montre de quelle manière la question du développement durable est traitée dans la nouvelle Constitution fédérale suisse, et postule qu'un réalignement du gouvernement, de l'économie et de la société sur ces normes favoriserait la promotion du développement durable en Suisse et par des instruments multilatéraux.

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