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Federal Act on the Control of Dual-Use Goods, Specific Military Goods and Strategic Goods¹ (Goods Control Act, GCA)

of 13 December 1996 (Status as of 1 January 2022)

The Federal Assembly the Swiss Confederation,

based on the powers of the Confederation in foreign affairs²
as well as on Article 64^{bis} of the Federal Constitution^{3,4}

and having considered the Federal Council Dispatch dated 22 February 1995⁵,
decrees:

Section 1 General Provisions

Art. 1⁶ Purpose

This Act is intended to allow for the control of goods usable for civilian and military purposes (dual-use goods), specific military goods and strategic goods.

Art. 2 Scope of application

¹ This Act applies to dual-use goods and specific military goods that form the subject matter of international agreements.

AS 1997 1697

¹ Amended by Art. 2 of the FD of 26 Sept. 2014 on the Adoption and Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between Switzerland and the EU and its Member States on the European Satellite Navigation Programmes, in force since 1 July 2016 (AS 2016 2191; BBl 2014 357).

² Powers in accordance with Art. 54 para. 1 of the Federal Constitution of 18 April 1999 (SR 101).

³ [BS 1 3]. This provision now corresponds to Art. 123 of the Federal Constitution of 18 April 1999 (SR 101).

⁴ Amended by No 14 of the FA of 22 June 2001 on the Streamlining of Federal Legislation on Arms, War Materiel, Explosives and Goods Usable for Civilian and Military Purposes, in force since 1 March 2002 (AS 2002 248; BBl 2000 3369).

⁵ BBl 1995 II 1301

⁶ Amended by Art. 2 of the FD of 26 Sept. 2014 on the Adoption and Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between Switzerland and the EU and its Member States on the European Satellite Navigation Programmes, in force since 1 July 2016 (AS 2016 2191; BBl 2014 357).

² The Federal Council shall determine which dual-use goods and which special military goods that form the subject matter of international control measures that are not binding under international law are subject to this Act.

^{2bis} It shall also determine which strategic goods that form the subject matter of international agreements are subject to this Act.⁷

³ This Act only applies insofar as the Federal Act of 13 December 1996⁸ on War Materiel or the Atomic Energy Act of 23 December 1959⁹ is not applicable.

Art. 3 Definitions

In this Act:

- a. *goods* means commodities, technologies and software;
- b. *dual-use goods* means goods that may be used both for civilian and military purposes;
- c. *specific military goods* means goods that have been designed or modified for military purposes, but which are neither weapons, ammunition, explosives nor any other means of combat, together with military training aircraft equipped with suspension points;

^c_{bis}.¹⁰ *strategic goods*: goods that form an element of critical infrastructure;

- d. *technology* means information for the development, manufacture or use of goods that is neither generally accessible nor serves the purposes of pure scientific research;
- e. *brokerage* means the creation of the essential requirements for the conclusion of agreements or the conclusion of such agreements itself, if such service is provided by third parties, irrespective of the location of the goods.

Section 2 Control Measures

Art. 4 Implementation of international agreements

For the purpose of implementing international agreements, the Federal Council may:

⁷ Inserted by Art. 2 of the FD of 26 Sept. 2014 on the Adoption and Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between Switzerland and the EU and its Member States on the European Satellite Navigation Programmes, in force since 1 July 2016 (AS 2016 2191; BBl 2014 357).

⁸ SR 514.51

⁹ [AS 1960 541, 1987 544, 1993 901 Annex No 9, 1994 1933 Art. 48 No 1, 1995 4954, 2002 3673 Art. 17 No 3, 2004 3503 Annex No 4. AS 2004 4719 Annex I No 1]. See now: the Nuclear Energy Act of 21 March 2003 (SR 732.1).

¹⁰ Inserted by Art. 2 of the FD of 26 Sept. 2014 on the Adoption and Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between Switzerland and the EU and its Member States on the European Satellite Navigation Programmes, in force since 1 July 2016 (AS 2016 2191; BBl 2014 357).

- a. introduce licence and reporting requirements and order supervisory measures for:
 - 1.¹¹ the research, development, manufacture, storage, transfer and use of goods,
 2. the import, export, transit and brokerage of goods;
- b. issue regulations on inspections.

Art. 5 Support for other international control measures

In support of international control measures that are not binding under international law, provided such measures are also supported by Switzerland's most important trading partners, the Federal Council may:

- a. introduce licence and reporting requirements;
- b. order supervisory measures

in respect of the import, export, transit and brokerage of goods.

Art. 6 Refusal of licences

¹ Licences shall be refused if:

- a. the activity covered by the application violates international agreements;
- b. the activity covered by the application violates control measures that are not binding under international law but which are supported by Switzerland;
- c. corresponding enforcement measures have been taken in accordance with the Embargo Act of 22 March 2002^{12,13}

^{1bis} Licences shall also be refused if there is reason to believe that the activity covered:

- a. may benefit terrorist groups or organised crime;
- b. may constitute a danger to international critical infrastructure in which Switzerland participates.¹⁴

² Licences for specific military goods shall also be refused if the United Nations or states that participate with Switzerland in international export control measures

¹¹ Amended by No I 4 of the FA of 22 June 2001 on the Streamlining of Federal Legislation on Arms, War Materiel, Explosives and Goods Usable for Civilian and Military Purposes, in force since 1 March 2002 (AS 2002 248; BBl 2000 3369).

¹² SR 946.231

¹³ Amended by Art. 17 No 2 of the Embargo Act of 22 March 2002, in force since 1 Jan. 2003 (AS 2002 3673; BBl 2001 1433).

¹⁴ Inserted by No I 4 of the FA of 22 June 2001 on the Streamlining of Federal Legislation on Arms, War Materiel, Explosives and Goods Usable for Civilian and Military Purposes (AS 2002 248; BBl 2000 3369). Amended by Art. 2 of the FD of 26 Sept. 2014 on the Adoption and Implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between Switzerland and the EU and its Member States on the European Satellite Navigation Programmes, in force since 1 July 2016 (AS 2016 2191; BBl 2014 357).

prohibit the export of such goods, and if Switzerland's most important trading partners adhere to these prohibitions.

³ The Federal Council shall regulate the refusal of licences for the export or brokerage of dual-use goods pursuant to Article 2 paragraph 2 that can be used for internet and mobile telecommunications surveillance.¹⁵

Art. 7 Revocation of licences

¹ Licences shall be revoked if the situation has changed to such an extent since the licence was granted that the requirements for refusal in accordance with Article 6 are fulfilled.

² Licences may be revoked if conditions and obligations related thereto are not complied with.

Art. 8 Measures in relation to specific countries of destination

¹ For the purpose of implementing international agreements, the Federal Council may provide that no licences be issued for certain countries of destination.

² The Federal Council may provide for a relaxation or an exemption from control measures for certain countries of destination, and in particular for:

- a. contracting parties to international agreements; or
- b. countries participating in non-binding international control measures supported by Switzerland.

Section 3 Monitoring

Art. 9 Duty to provide information

¹ Any person who applies for or has received a licence is obliged to provide all the information and submit the documents to the control authorities that are required for a comprehensive assessment or control.

² Any person who is subject in any other way to the control measures under this Act is also subject to the same requirements.

Art. 10 Powers of the control authorities

¹ The control authorities have the right to enter and inspect the business premises of persons required to provide information during normal working hours without prior notice as well as to inspect the relevant documents. They may confiscate incriminating material. If there is a suspicion that offences have been committed, further provisions of procedural law may apply.

¹⁵ Inserted by No I of the FA of 19 June 2020, in force since 1 Jan. 2021 (AS 2020 6349; BBl 2018 4529).

² The control authorities may request the assistance of the police of the cantons and communes as well as the investigative authorities of the Federal Office for Customs and Border Security. If there is evidence of violations of this Act, the control authorities may request the assistance of the Federal Intelligence Service and the relevant federal police authorities.¹⁶

³ The control authorities may process personal data for the purposes of this Act. In the case of particularly sensitive data, only such data relating to administrative or criminal prosecutions or penalties may be processed. Other particularly sensitive personal data may be processed if this is essential in order to deal with the case in question.

⁴ The control authorities are obliged to preserve official secrecy and must take all the necessary precautions in their activities to prevent industrial espionage.

Section 4 Procedures and Reporting

Art. 11 Jurisdiction and procedure

The Federal Council shall designate the competent authorities and regulate the details of procedures. Border controls are the responsibility of the customs authorities.

Art. 12 Appeals procedure

The procedure for appeals against rulings under this Act is governed by the general provisions on the administration of federal administrative justice.

Art. 13 Reporting

The Federal Council shall inform the Federal Assembly on the application of this Act in its reports on foreign economic policy.

Section 5 Criminal Provisions¹⁷

Art. 14 Felonies and misdemeanours

¹ A sentence of imprisonment or a fine not exceeding 1 million francs shall be imposed on anyone who wilfully:

¹⁶ Amended by No I 38 of the O of 12 June 2020 on the Amendment of Legislation as a consequence of the Change to the Name of the Federal Customs Administration as part of its further Development, in force since 1 Jan. 2022 (AS 2020 2743).

¹⁷ As of 1 Jan. 2007 the potential penalties and prescriptive periods must be interpreted and/or calculated in application of Art. 333 para. 2–6 of the Swiss Criminal Code (SR 311.0) in the wording of the FA of 13 Dec. 2002 (AS 2006 3459; BBI 1999 1979).