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Cybersecurity in Switzerland

Brief summary

The National Cybersecurity Centre (NCSC) is the Confederation's competence centre for cybersecurity and thus the first contact point for businesses, public administrations, educational institutions and the general public for cyber-issues. It is also responsible for the coordinated implementation of the 2018-2022 national strategy for the protection of Switzerland against cyber-risks (NCS).

Cybersecurity has grown hugely in importance in recent years. It plays a key role in national and international foreign and security policy, and is increasingly becoming an important factor for the general public and Switzerland as a business location. By creating the NCSC, led by the Federal Cybersecurity Delegate, the Federal Council aims to support the population, businesses, educational institutions and public administrations in protecting against cyber-risks, as well as to improve the security of its own systems.

Figure 1: Federal cybersecurity organisation
Cybersecurity organisation and coordination at federal and cantonal level

The Ordinance on Protecting against Cyber-Risks in the Federal Administration creates the legal basis for the organisation of the Confederation in the area of cyber-risks and governs cooperation both within the Federal Administration and with the cantons, businesses and academia.

The measures to protect Switzerland against cyber-risks are divided into three areas within the Federal Administration:

- Measures to boost prevention and resilience in terms of public cybersecurity (coordinated by the FDF)
- Civilian, military and intelligence measures in the area of cyberdefence (under the responsibility of the DDPS)
- Prosecution authorities' measures in the area of cybercrime at federal level (under the responsibility of the FDJP); cantonal sovereignty primarily applies in the area of cybercrime

As there are overlaps and interdependencies between the areas, close cooperation is particularly important. To this end, the necessary interdepartmental bodies have been created in the form of the Cyber Core Group (for coordination within the Confederation, with the involvement of the cantons) and the NCS Steering Committee (for coordinating NCS implementation, with the involvement of all stakeholders). Both of these are led by the Federal Cybersecurity Delegate, who ensures that work is closely coordinated and synergies are exploited in an optimal manner.


National Cybersecurity Centre NCSC

The NCSC is headed by the Federal Cybersecurity Delegate and is part of the FDF General
Secretariat.

The Reporting and Analysis Centre for Information Assurance (MELANI) is being integrated as a technical expertise hub into the national Computer Emergency Response Team (GovCERT) and thus into the NCSC, and will be expanded further. The newly created national contact point receives cyberincident reports, analyses them and provides those reporting with an assessment of the incident, as well as recommendations on how they should proceed. Overviews of the number and type of reports can be found on the NCSC website. These are updated weekly.

Within the Federal Administration and after consulting the services concerned, the NCSC can take the lead when dealing with a cyberincident if it jeopardises the proper functioning of the Federal Administration. It maintains a pool of experts to support the specialist units in developing and implementing cybersecurity standards. Moreover, as the federal ICT security specialist unit, the NCSC issues guidelines on cybersecurity within the Federal Administration, checks compliance with these guidelines and helps service providers to eliminate vulnerabilities.

**Outlook**

- The Ordinance on Protecting against Cyber-Risks in the Federal Administration, which was adopted by the Federal Council on 27 May 2020, will come into force on 1 July 2020.
- The Federal Council intends to make fundamental decisions on the introduction of a cyberincident reporting obligation by the end of 2020.
- Work has begun on creating instruments to increase cyber-resilience in the financial market.