

Shaping foreign policy by enabling new voices in the public discourse

Strategy

foraus 

Forum Aussenpolitik
Forum de politique étrangère
Forum di politica estera
Swiss Forum on Foreign Policy

Snapshot

We shape foreign policy by enabling new voices in the public discourse.

Mission statement

foraus is the Swiss participatory think tank on foreign policy. As a vibrant grassroots community of young people, we shape foreign policy, shape how foreign policy is made and enable new voices to grow, domestically as well as internationally. We publish evidence-based, high-quality content with constructive policy recommendations, organise thought-provoking events and develop innovative tools for engagement and impact, with the aim to address global challenges.

Purpose

Values

- **Participatory**

foraus is an open community. Our think tank is powered by a decentralised network of volunteers in Switzerland and beyond. Our community relies on collective intelligence and leverages the benefits of diverse perspectives to make foreign policy more inclusive. Volunteers are free to choose the topics and create the content themselves.

- **Forward-looking**

foraus provides access to foreign policy debates to the new generations. Through foraus, young people can challenge the business as usual and contribute with novel, foresighted perspectives. We are an open catalyst for constructive ideas on the futures of foreign policy, as well as new tools and processes towards a more inclusive foreign policy.

- **Evidence-based**

foraus follows a scientific approach. Our events and publications provide analytical and relevant insights into their topics. All our publications are evidence-based and subject to a rigorous review process.

- **Independent**

foraus is an officially recognised non-profit organisation. We are not linked to any political party, nor specific donor. We take our decisions independently and provide transparent information on our funding.



WHY? BUSINESS
WHY? ✓
PROCESSES
WHAT?
HOW? REPERCUSS

VISION
IMPACT
NETWORK DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNICATIONS
OPENING
PROJECTS

IMPACT

AIN DEMAIN EST UNE EXCUSE DE PERSONA... IT QUE VOUS

'OULEZ VOIR DANS LE REUX QUE D'ÊTRE... RISQUE DE DEVE



**We shape foreign policy by
enabling new voices in the
public discourse.**

Strategic orientations

Foreign policy serves Switzerland, a small and highly connected country, to develop relations with other states and international actors, to promote its interests and values, as well as to address and navigate through global challenges at the geopolitical, social, economic and environmental level.

Purpose (detailed)

In light thereof, the purpose of foraus is to work towards two equally important overarching goals:

<i>Engagement goal</i>	<i>Policy impact goal</i>
Facilitate the access to the foreign policy debate for the younger generations, give them visibility and a voice, and empower them to play an active role.	Shape foreign policy making through evidence-based, forward-looking, cutting-edge and constructive content generated by our community.

By doing so, foraus wants to address two societal challenges:

- Although the young generation is very much affected by current foreign policy choices, they have traditionally been left out of the opinion-shaping process.
- Foreign policy decisions and processes are informed by little to no inclusive, evidence-based and anticipatory content.

> **Defining *Engagement***

Who to engage: defining 'Community'

- foraus' community is organised in open circles differentiated by activity level, from casual audiences (outermost circle) to active volunteers with an official role (innermost circle).
- Activity level goes beyond mere formal membership, formal volunteer role or status (e.g. Policy Kitchen user), even though these are 'activity' markers.

How to engage

- Raise awareness on the possibility and the value added to engage with foraus.
- Enable foraus' community members to reach their optimum level of activity and support them in achieving as strong an impact as possible at that level.
- Sustain an accessible, inspiring and stimulating community attractive to young people interested in foreign policy.

> **Defining *Policy impact***

foraus focuses on three forms of impact:

1. Shape decisions in foreign policy

This can take the following forms, depending on the impact level (from higher to lower):

- Idea is implemented
- Idea is considered (e.g. elements reflected in implementation)
- Idea is publicly discussed by decision makers and multipliers
- Idea is internally discussed/shared by decision makers and multipliers
- Idea is in media

2. Shape the way policy is done

This can take the following forms:

- More citizen participation and inclusion in the realm of foreign policy
- More involvement of younger generations in the realm of foreign policy
- Inspire current and future leaders

3. Empower community members (“Talent catalyst”)

This can take the following forms:

- foraus community members acquire new skills and mindsets, which they will carry on in their future engagements
- foraus community members are consulted on foreign policy issues
- foraus community members make careers in foreign policy

Linking Engagement & Policy Impact



foraus pilots and develops processes, tools and methodologies seeking to combine broad participation and high quality output, supported by a rigorous review process.

In practice, the concept of *volunteer journey* is the main conceptual framework used to efficiently link both overarching goals.

The design of a comprehensive *volunteer journey* creates a space open to various forms of activities and levels of engagement, with the possibility to adjust one’s engagement level over time.

Strategic priorities

Taking stock of foraus' current achievements and based on the outcome of the strategy process, the following priorities are set:

> Upscale through more diversity

- **Boost foraus' topical diversity and relevance**

Publicly position foraus as an early warning system for Swiss foreign policy by making it the go-to organisation for emerging issues and new thought leaders, leveraging the participation of younger generations with constructive evidence-based ideas.

- **Go transnational: strengthen foraus' internationalisation**

Scale up foraus' community and content creation opportunities through the engagement in the Open Think Tank Network (OpenTTN) as well as other international partnerships. Carry out projects of international scale and encourage international collaborations with relevant stakeholders to increase policy impact and strengthen the global community.

- **Make our community more multidisciplinary and inclusive**

Strive to attract individuals with diverse disciplinary, thematic or life backgrounds in our community.

> Facilitate participation of any interested young person

- **Enable all volunteers to generate content**

Aim at making foraus a "community of authors". Diversify the way in which volunteers can contribute as authors, including through the organisation of events, the writing of papers and other content formats creating impact. Design and communicate clear content generation options at the disposal of volunteers.

- **Clarify ways of joining, evolving and growing with foraus**

Design a comprehensive volunteer journey encompassing casual to very active forms of engagement. The volunteer journey will contribute to increase policy impact and community engagement and decrease community turnover. It should specify the facilitating role of the Office, decrease the threshold for entry-level participation and facilitate the adoption of "roles" by volunteers, in order to facilitate content creation.

- **Boost participation through better knowledge management**

Provide better information to volunteers on how to get involved and on existing best practices, communication channels and tools, in order to facilitate content creation and increase policy impact.

Facilitate impact of any interested young person <

- **Ensure an active stakeholder management**

Have a strong impact by nurturing a relevant and wide network with key decision makers and multipliers, such as politicians, civil servants, journalists and the wider policy ecosystem in Switzerland and internationally. Provide this network to our authors for them to present high quality content to key stakeholders, exchange first hand information and gain new channels of influence.

- **Strengthen our rich capacity-building offer for our volunteers**

Develop a holistic framework for capacity-building within foraus (trainings, peer learning, coaching, mentoring...), both through oral and written channels (e.g. media training vs a one-pager guide), at various stages of the volunteer journey (e.g. how to write a blog post in an early stage vs. media training), in order to facilitate content creation and increase policy impact.

- **Institutionalise a foraus-friendly mechanism to brainstorm policy developments ('policy planning')**

Create online and physical spaces in which volunteers can meet and exchange on latest or upcoming policy developments, identify the relevant topics on which they want to work and team up with other like-minded volunteers, in order to facilitate content creation and increase timeliness. Such spaces should take into account the bottom-up and decentralised structure of foraus and ensure smooth coordination with the office.

- **Apply novel methods to combine broad participation and quality content**

Use and test engaging methodologies to enable the participation of many while ensuring very high quality standards for our content, in particular through innovative event design and digital participatory tools.



The foraus strategy was adopted on 6 September 2022.
The last revision dates back to 6 September 2022.
The strategy was produced in the frame of a one-year participatory process, continuously involving the volunteer network in addition to the board and the office.
This process reflects foraus' values and aims to boost citizen participation, in particular of the younger generations, in the realm of foreign policy.

Editor

foraus – Swiss Forum on Foreign Policy

Contact

foraus - Forum Aussenpolitik
Badenerstrasse 431
8003 Zürich
office@foraus.ch

foraus - Forum de politique étrangère
Avenue de France 23
1202 Genève
bureau_romandie@foraus.ch

Facebook: @forausthinktank

Twitter: @foraus

Instagram: @foraus

LinkedIn: foraus

www.foraus.ch