

SWITZERLAND

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In Switzerland, the executive authority is vested in the Federal Council, which presides over the seven Federal Departments (Ministries). It operates by the collegiate system - the President of the Confederation is nominated in rotation for a one-year term. The present composition of the Federal Council was established in 1955, according to a 'magic formula' - each of the four major political parties is thus represented.

Few Western countries have to rely so heavily on the outside world for economic survival. Switzerland's natural resources are poor, and the mining industry is almost non-existent. Without taking into account gravel, sand and clay, Swiss domestic mineral production is limited to cement (4 Mt/y), gypsum (200,000 t/y) and lime. The salt

mining operations in the Rhine Valley and in the Alps produce 350,000 t/y and 50,000 t/y, respectively.

Aluminium (some 80,000 t/y), iron and steel are produced from imported raw materials, but these smelting activities are being phased out. High-purity gallium is produced from lower purity material in a 10 t/y plant.

Some 12 Mt of petroleum are imported and cover more than 63% of the primary energy needs. Geothermal resources are being investigated with the assistance of the federal government.

In the mineral sector, no exploration activity was recorded. However, gold properties in the Disentis and Medel communities of Graubünden canton were kept in good order.