



Switzerland and Indonesia sign mutual legal assistance agreement

Bern, 04.02.2019 - Switzerland and Indonesia aim to work more closely together in combating international crime. On 4 February 2019 justice minister Karin Keller-Sutter and the Indonesian Minister of Law and Human Rights, Yasonna Laoly, signed a bilateral agreement on mutual assistance in criminal matters in Bern. The Federal Council approved the agreement on 14 September 2018.

The bilateral agreement on mutual legal assistance creates a basis in international law upon which justice authorities in the two countries can cooperate on detecting and prosecuting criminal activities, in particular crimes such as corruption and money laundering.

The mutual assistance agreement with Indonesia is based to a large extent on the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and on the Federal Act on International Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters. It simplifies and accelerates mutual legal assistance procedures, in particular by reducing formal requirements (e.g. waiving of need for authentication) and setting out in detail the requirements for mutual assistance requests. It also designates central authorities in each country responsible for dealing with such requests. The treaty expressly refers to human rights: if violations of human rights are suspected, Switzerland may refuse to give legal assistance.

The agreement will come into force as soon as each country's domestic legal requirements have been met. In Switzerland, Parliament must approve the agreement. Once it has done so, the agreement will be open to an optional referendum, as is usual in the case of international agreements.

The Federal Council is pursuing a policy of extending its network of international agreements on mutual legal assistance in order to increase security within Switzerland and to ensure the integrity of the country as a financial centre. The agreement signed with Indonesia forms part

of this policy.

Free trade and patent protection

Federal Councillor Keller-Sutter also used her meeting with Minister Laoly to highlight the importance of good patent protection for Swiss companies active in Indonesia. Last December Switzerland and Indonesia signed a free trade agreement under which both Swiss and Indonesian goods produced in the Asian country should enjoy the same level of patent protection.

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