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Press release

## **"In these unstable times, our institution must be agile"**

**Bern, 19.12.2022, 1.30pm – Pascal Stirnimann, the new Director of the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO), has given a positive assessment of his first days at the helm of the federal financial supervisory authority. Many challenges lie ahead for this institution, which enjoys a high level of credibility within the federal government.**

After around 100 days as the new Director of the SFAO, Pascal Stirnimann appreciates how well equipped the institution is for the challenges ahead. His meetings with members of Parliament, the Federal Council and senior management at the Federal Administration also showed the respect in which the SFAO is held. The SFAO has a wide range of topics to cover, including the difficult energy situation, the state of the federal finances and the transparency of political financing.

In terms of financial supervision, the SFAO is faced with a highly dynamic and changing environment. In its audits, the SFAO has to cover complex and pertinent topics in an unstable world in which Switzerland is not used to operating (COVID-19 pandemic, war in Ukraine, energy crisis, etc.). The SFAO considers it necessary to ensure a systematic risk assessment, an ongoing dialogue with its partners, and to be open to unforeseen circumstances.

For Pascal Stirnimann, the SFAO's annual audit programme – which will be published at the end of January 2023 – reflects this situation. It is not set in stone – changes could and should be made to best respond to the changing context.

### **Transparency in political financing is a major challenge**

Since the summer of 2022, the SFAO has been tasked by the Federal Council with ensuring transparency in political financing. Implementation is planned for the elections in October 2023. The timetable is tight for setting up the internal organisation, the IT tools and the formal and material audits to be carried out by the supervisory authority's experts.

The SFAO is aware that this task is also a major challenge for the political players who are subject to the new legal provisions. For this reason, the SFAO has already held several preparatory meetings with these organisations, and Pascal Stirnimann is supervising this new assignment himself.

### **Encouraging people to come to work at the SFAO**

The SFAO is currently in need of highly qualified and motivated employees. Like others, it is confronted with a highly competitive job market, especially when it comes to large IT projects.

In order to be able to attract talented individuals, the SFAO must continue to present itself as an attractive, modern and diverse employer in the auditing areas it covers.

### **Further details**

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*More information is available on the website: [www.sfao.admin.ch](http://www.sfao.admin.ch).*