

Apertus 1.5: Switzerland's Open AI Turns Multimodal, Context 4x Longer

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY & CORE TAKEAWAY

Released on 24 July 2026 by ETH Zurich, EPFL and CSCS, Apertus 1.5 is Switzerland's first fully open, multimodal AI generation: native image understanding, an optional thinking mode, a 262,144-token context window and stronger tool integration. For Swiss companies, this means production-ready, sovereign, self-hostable AI without vendor lock-in or compliance risk.

CONTEXT & EXECUTIVE RELEVANCE

On 24 July 2026, ETH Zurich, EPFL and the Swiss National Supercomputing Centre (CSCS) released Apertus 1.5, the second generation of their open large language model. Building on Apertus 1.0 from September 2025, the new release adds native image understanding, an optional thinking mode, a context window quadrupled to 262,144 tokens, and improved instruction-following and tool use. The 8B model received 4 trillion additional training tokens, the 70B model 2 trillion — both remain freely available under the same open licensing approach as Apertus 1.0 (Apache 2.0), fully open and self-hostable.

For Swiss organisations, Apertus 1.5 makes sovereignty practically usable. Data stays on Swiss infrastructure, dependency on US cloud providers is avoided, and the model is built to align with revDSG requirements and the transparency obligations under Article 50 of the EU AI Act.

CORE ACTION ITEMS

- 01 Native image understanding: documents, technical drawings, diagrams and photos are processed directly, without a separate OCR pipeline.
- 02 Thinking mode: an optional reasoning step before the response improves performance on multi-step, strategic tasks.
- 03 Long context: 262,144 tokens allow entire annual reports, technical manuals or long dialogue histories to be processed without chunking or information loss.
- 04 Tool use and instruction-following: more precise command execution and more robust integration with external tools and APIs — the foundation for agentic workflows.

SWISS COMPLIANCE & ARCHITECTURE GUIDELINES

- ☑ Full compliance with revised Swiss Data Protection Act (revDSG).
- ☑ Zero vendor lock-in on closed proprietary models.
- ☑ Seamless integration into Abacus, Bexio and M365 ecosystems.

Non-Binding Process Analysis

Let us review in 20 minutes where AI agents create immediate measurable efficiency in your workflows.

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