

## Switzerland White Paper: Six Sketches for the Future

**Gridlock at the Gotthard. Switzerland is immobile, though inaction is unworthy of a nation state. To maintain its prosperity, the country must develop its own ideas for the future. That requires domestic economic reforms and revised external trading relationships with Europe and the rest of the world. In a “Switzerland White Paper”, Avenir Suisse examines the economic costs and benefits of six scenarios for the future. The study, designed to stimulate essential debate, concludes with an Afterword by former federal councillor Kaspar Villiger.**

The “Switzerland White Paper” should reinvigorate discussion about the country’s future. Lying back comfortably and trusting to familiar solutions distracts attention from the needs and risks – but also the chances – of the years ahead. With that in mind, the report sets out six scenarios for Switzerland, based on fundamental questions that need to be addressed today.

Each scenario has very different consequences for business, employees and consumers. Swiss citizens’ future wellbeing depends on policy choices made today. But because we take current conditions as fixed, the economic consequences of innovative decisions (and omissions) are often underestimated.

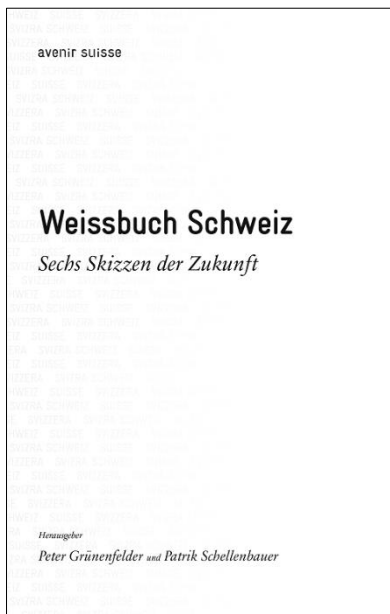
The White Paper offers guidance and perspective on fundamental issues. It retraces Switzerland’s economic history and describes the fundamentals of Swiss prosperity before moving on to the current gridlock on reforms and the need for modernisation.

The inability to take major decisions is the result of a social rift affecting foreign policy as well as individual and public action. However, change is inevitable, at home and abroad. Preparing for Switzerland’s future requires frank discussion today about the country’s economic and political options in the decades ahead.

The White Paper’s guiding principle is maintaining Swiss prosperity. Ideally, that means ensuring deeper and stable integration with European and world markets, overcoming current resistance to reform and boosting domestic productivity. Of the six scenarios, “Retreat to Autonomy” is a dead end, whose disadvantages far outweigh any purported gains in sovereignty. By contrast “Solid Partnership” would ensure unobstructed and potentially improved access to the EU internal market, at only limited cost to formal sovereignty. The study even discusses the possibility and consequences of EU membership, removing an important taboo in public debate.

In an Afterword, former federal councillor Kaspar Villiger notes the importance of the issues raised. He argues that realistic forecasts based on hard facts allow sober analysis of the issues important for Switzerland today, either through national consensus or democratic decision making in the case of opposing views.

The six scenarios should eliminate taboos, stimulate discussion and allow people to think the unthinkable. It's time to get over the gridlock in the Alps.



**Live streamed media conference:** on [www.avenir-suisse.ch](http://www.avenir-suisse.ch) Wednesday, 30 May 2018 at 10am at Avenir Suisse, Rotbuchstrasse 46, 8037 Zurich. With Peter Grünenfelder, Jennifer Langenegger, Patrik Schellenbauer and Verena Parzer-Epp.

**“Switzerland White Paper: Six Sketches for the Future”**, edited by Peter Grünenfelder and Patrik Schellenbauer, co-authors by Patrick Dümmler, Jennifer Langenegger, Verena Parzer-Epp, Marco Salvi, Jakob Schaad, Fabian Schnell and Urs Steiner. Afterword by former federal councillor Kaspar Villiger. 221 pages. Print edition CHF 35, Online from 10am [www.avenir-suisse.ch](http://www.avenir-suisse.ch).

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