

What if...

13 possible developments and their consequences for Switzerland

On 20 October Swiss voters elected a new parliament. This is an opportunity to press ahead with pending reforms – not just addressing climate matters, but also the issues of an ageing population and relations with the EU. In a new publication entitled “Was wäre, wenn... – 13 mögliche Entwicklungen und ihre Konsequenzen für die Schweiz” (What if... 13 possible developments and their consequences for Switzerland), Avenir Suisse sheds light on the pitfalls on the way to a sustainable and prosperous future.

How can we step back from the comfort of the present moment and take a critical look at the breathtaking changes taking place in the economic and political framework? The researchers at Avenir Suisse asked the question “what if...,” identifying three areas where they believe Switzerland needs to take strategic action. The hypotheses they come up with illuminate the pitfalls and the best strategies for addressing them:

First, our little nation must anticipate geopolitical shifts and global megatrends early on rather than merely reacting under pressure. This particularly applies to foreign trade and national security.

Second, there have to be structural changes to take account of the effects of digitalization and changing demographics – in healthcare as much as in education or e-democracy.

Thirdly, illiberal activism on the home front won't get us anywhere, so there has to be a more vigorous response. This doesn't just apply to monetary and fiscal policy, but to climate, housing, and family policy as well.

An introductory interview with historian André Holenstein shows how in the past, Switzerland has frequently demonstrated a lack of political foresight, often only coming up with solutions and compromises when forced to by pressure from outside or practical circumstances. The new parliament will need plenty of self-discipline if it's to shed its ideological blinkers and find intelligent responses to the upheaval currently taking place. In this publication Avenir Suisse creates a sound economic basis for an objective debate.



Media conference: Thursday, 31 October 2019, 10.00am, Rotbuchstrasse 46, 8037 Zurich. With Jürg Müller, Peter Grünenfelder, and Verena Parzer-Epp. Online streaming (in German) on www.avenir-suisse.ch.

Publication: “What if... 13 possible developments and their consequences for Switzerland” In German and French. 214 pages. CHF 28 (plus shipping).

[Available online as a PDF from 8.00am on 31 October 2019.](#)

Further information: Peter Grünenfelder (+41 44 445 90 01/+41 79 458 08 63), Jürg Müller (+41 44 445 90 13). French: Jérôme Cosandey (+41 21 612 66 10, +41 79 828 27 87).

The 13 “what if” questions

What would happen if the WTO were to fall apart?

What would happen if all multinationals were to suddenly leave Switzerland?

What would happen if NATO were to become incapable of acting?

What would happen if an unconditional basic income were to be introduced?

What would happen if 90% of young people were to leave school with an academic Matura qualification?

What would happen if suddenly everyone were to consume public services like 20-year-olds do now?

What would happen if signatures for popular referendums could be collected electronically?

What would happen if life expectancy increased to 110?

What would happen if Swiss climate policy were only implemented domestically?

What would happen if the government were to provide “affordable” housing for everyone?

What would happen if tax competition between cantons were to be abolished?

What would happen if the SNB’s currency reserves were to be moved to a sovereign wealth fund?

What would happen if we subsidized housework?