

Strategy

2020 to 2023

avenir suisse

think tank for economic and social issues



Mission

Avenir Suisse is an independent think tank dedicated to developing free market, liberal, research-based ideas for the future of Switzerland.

Introduction

In this strategy paper Avenir Suisse presents the areas of focus of its research, communications, and funding in the period from 2020 to 2023. As in the 2016-19 period, the work of our think tank will continue to revolve around the long-term preservation and ongoing development of prosperity in Switzerland. In the current planning period we will concentrate even more closely on the liberal framework that is a basic prerequisite for assuring wellbeing and democratic participation. We will systematically point out what is wrong and where this framework is eroding, and propose evidence-based solutions to remedy these problems.

In 2020 the coronavirus pandemic has been a painful reminder that there is no guarantee of prosperity, employment, and a high quality of life. But precisely in such times of uncertainty and disruption, it's crucial to maintain Swiss ent-

enterprise's capacity for innovation, and safeguard individual freedoms and opportunities to develop. We will draw attention to illiberal activism just as ruthlessly as to regulatory constraints, and critically monitor the degree of government activity on an ongoing basis.

The voice of Avenir Suisse should serve as a benchmark for liberal approaches and solutions. It should encourage reflection on the state of this country and its potential to develop – in normal as well as in exceptional times.

Michel M. Liès
Chair of the Board of Trustees

Peter Grünenfelder
Director

Guiding Principles

A think tank for Switzerland

Avenir Suisse develops ideas for the future of Switzerland. It identifies relevant issues, rapidly highlights the need for action, and proposes solutions. Avenir Suisse's ideas are designed to pave the way for future political and social reforms. Its work is all geared to maintaining and increasing Switzerland's prosperity and quality of life in the long term on the basis of a liberal framework.

Independent

Avenir Suisse develops its views independently and free of political restriction. This is possible thanks to our donors' commitment to funding several years in advance and our clear corporate governance rules. As a non-profit foundation committed to independent thought and research, unlike interest groups and lobbies Avenir Suisse does not take part in consultations or referendum campaigns.

Evidence-based policy research

In dialogue with research institutions in Switzerland and abroad, Avenir Suisse's research team draws up reforms based on evidence – primarily from economics. Avenir Suisse is particularly committed to open dialogue with politicians and business leaders, while disseminating its findings clearly and appropriately to the relevant audiences.

Liberal

Avenir Suisse's values are based on liberal social principles and free market economics. They are grounded in the conviction that the best conditions for widespread prosperity are a liberal state and an open society that advocate initiative and personal responsibility as well as promoting efforts to modernize.

Privately financed

Avenir Suisse is privately funded. Its donors include small and large companies from all economic sectors and regions of Switzerland, as well as private individuals. Thanks to such wide backing, the think tank is free of special interests and is able to address uncomfortable topics and political taboos.

A Liberal Framework for
Switzerland's **House of Prosperity**

**Open
Switzerland**

Swiss-EU relations
Free trade agreements
Multilateralism
Integration issues
Agriculture
Monetary policy

**Infrastructure
and Markets**

Regulatory and competition policy
Public services
Telecoms infrastructure
Media
Mobility
Environment and energy policy
Financial infrastructure
Regional planning and housing market

**Sustainable
Welfare Policy**

Pensions
Silver workforce
Healthcare
Disability and reintegration
Care
Social security

**Smart
Government**

Fiscal policy
Tax system
Government budgets
Federalism
Fiscal equalization
Democracy
National defense
Security

**Equal
Opportunity
Society**

Educational system
Labor market
Social partnership
Gender equality
Migration
Refugee policy
Family policy
Social policy

Our Program

A liberal, democratic framework is the basis for prosperity and quality of life in Switzerland. In this light our research focuses on five drivers which we see as pillars of Switzerland's "House of Prosperity": Open Switzerland, Infrastructure and Markets, Sustainable Welfare Policy, Smart Government, and Equal Opportunity Society. Additionally we look at cross-cutting issues such as digitalization and demographics that influence all the pillars and are therefore incorporated into all our proposals.

Our Communications

Communications and formats tailored to specific audiences are crucial to the direct democratic opinion-building process and a strong media presence. As media consumption continues to change, Avenir Suisse's focus is shifting toward online media. The majority of publications appear simultaneously in German and French, with a selection of texts also published in Italian and English. Multilingualism is important to us as a Swiss institution. A key element of Avenir Suisse's work is still classic networking by team leaders and discussion of research findings at events in a wide range of formats.

Open Switzerland

Switzerland's prosperity rests to a great extent on openness, and its economic success is based on the largely unhindered exchange of goods, services, capital, people, and ideas with other countries. Avenir Suisse develops strategies for foreign trade policy, with the emphasis on Swiss-EU relations, new trade agreements, and Switzerland's participation in multilateral organizations.

Avenir Suisse critically examines both monetary policy and agricultural policy against the backdrop of foreign trade relations, with the aim of strengthening Switzerland's position in the long term.

Infrastructure and Markets

Switzerland boasts an outstanding infrastructure, with the products and services on offer in this country generally of excellent quality. Safeguarding these high levels of quality going forward requires a clear regulatory and competition policy. There is already room for improvement in this regard. State and quasi-state enterprises are prone to conflicts of interest and anti-competitive practices. The result is macroeconomic inefficiencies. Problems like this are accentuated by advances in technology making it necessary to repeatedly redefine the points of intersection between government and the private sector.

Avenir Suisse shows how and where the boundary between the public and private sphere should be drawn. This includes formulating proposals for efficient public services and intelligent regulation to safeguard effective infrastructures, boost competition, and facilitate sustainable economic development.

Sustainable Welfare Policy

In the 20th century Switzerland built an extensive social safety net which is the envy of many other countries. But despite fundamental changes in the way we live and work in recent decades, our welfare system continues to mirror the social structures of the 1970s. Added to this, advances in medicine and the resulting increase in life expectancies have changed our expectations of healthcare, in some cases with serious cost implications. These developments are tying up increasing amounts of taxpayers' and premium-payers' money and social security contributions, and are placing a burden on businesses and individuals.

Avenir Suisse develops strategies that will allow the Swiss welfare state to (again) be financially sustainable in the medium to long term and improve prosperity per franc invested.

Smart Government

A key factor in Switzerland's prosperity is the set-up of its government institutions. This small-scale federalism leads to duplications of effort, but in conjunction with the high degree of fiscal autonomy enjoyed by the cantons and municipalities it favors systemic competition, which allows the public sector to gear itself more closely to the needs of the population than in other countries. While (direct) democratic processes usually take longer than elsewhere, decisions are more broadly underpinned and often more accurate.

Avenir Suisse formulates proposals designed to help optimize this complex system; in other words to weaken its weaknesses and strengthen its strengths so that government continues to serve rather than detract from our prosperity.

Equal Opportunity Society

Growth in Swiss (labor) productivity is sluggish. Avenir Suisse devises strategies for a dynamic, liberal employment market that encourages enterprise and rewards innovation. Greater involvement of women in the workplace, a functioning and lasting social partnership, and a modern education system that creates opportunities for everyone are central elements of these strategies.

In addition, Avenir Suisse develops proposals related to migration issues that take account of labor market developments and demographic changes in this country. We also work for a Switzerland where individual development and a self-determined lifestyle are guaranteed.

Avenir Jeunesse

Today's young people are our future. Avenir Jeunesse provides interested young people with a platform to meet at events in a variety of formats, exchange views, and debate the future of Switzerland.

This way we can get them excited about liberal reforms. We also address topics that particularly concern the younger generation. In the coming years a priority will be to use appropriate formats to boost the effectiveness of Avenir Jeunesse's work in primary and secondary schools.

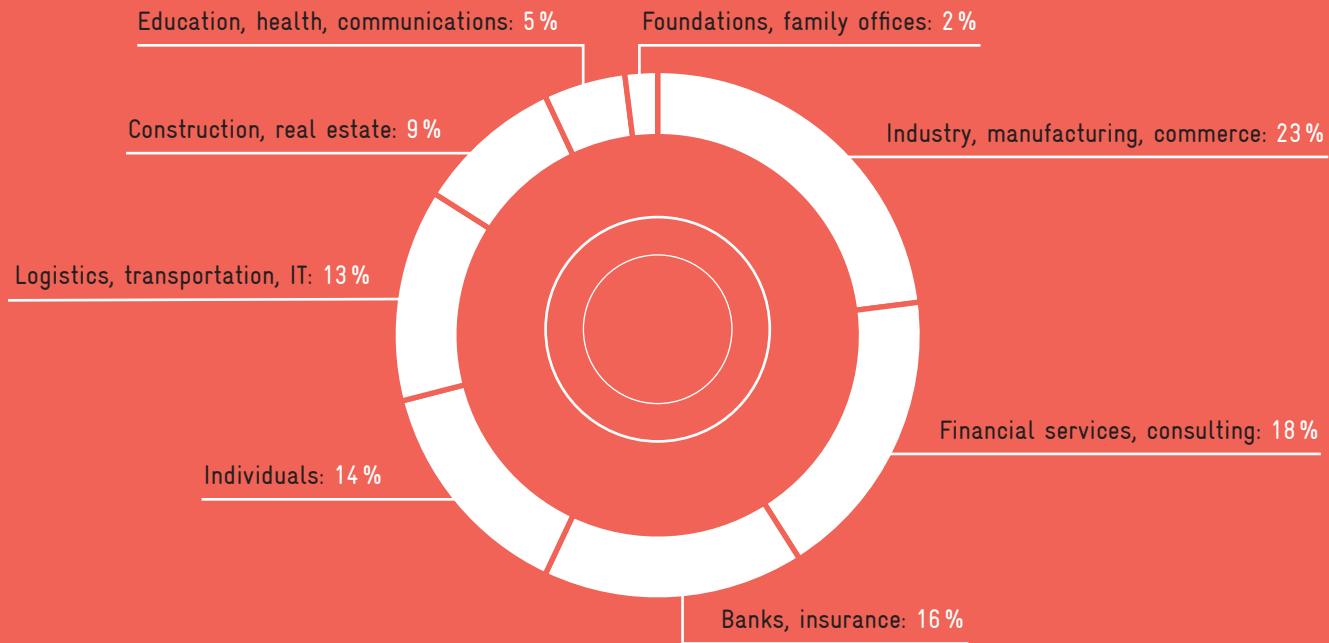


Financial Strategy

Avenir Suisse is organized as a non-profit foundation. The annual budget of CHF 5.5 million for research, publications, and communications is financed purely by contributions from donors. Our funding strategy is geared to stability and broad-based growth.

In recent years we have successively expanded the support group of donors and made it more diverse in terms of economic sectors. In the early days of Avenir Suisse around half of its donors came from the financial sector or industry, manufacturing, and commerce; since the support foundation was established in 2005 the group has been broadened to include many other sectors and regions. This diversification makes Avenir Suisse more independent. We have also been able to involve many private individuals and foundations as additional donors.

The target for the planning period is to extend the support group to include around 200 organizations and private individuals.



Corporate Governance

Board of Trustees

In its capacity as Avenir Suisse's most senior body, the board of trustees selects the members of all its committees and the director. Meeting once or twice a year, the trustees approve the budget, the annual report, and the financial statements.

Michel M. Liès (Chair)

Management Committee

The management committee supervises the foundation's operations, approving thematic priorities, overseeing the finances, and preparing meetings of the board of trustees.

Michel M. Liès (Chair)

Nomination Committee

The nomination committee is responsible for selecting candidates for all the foundation's committees and its director.

Suzanne Thoma (Chair)

Program Committee

The program committee advises the director on setting research priorities as well as guiding project activity and assuring the methodological quality of Avenir Suisse's work. It meets three times a year to discuss individual projects in detail. Committee representatives are also in close dialogue with think tank staff outside formal meetings.

Professor Marius Brühlhart (Chair)

Finance Committee

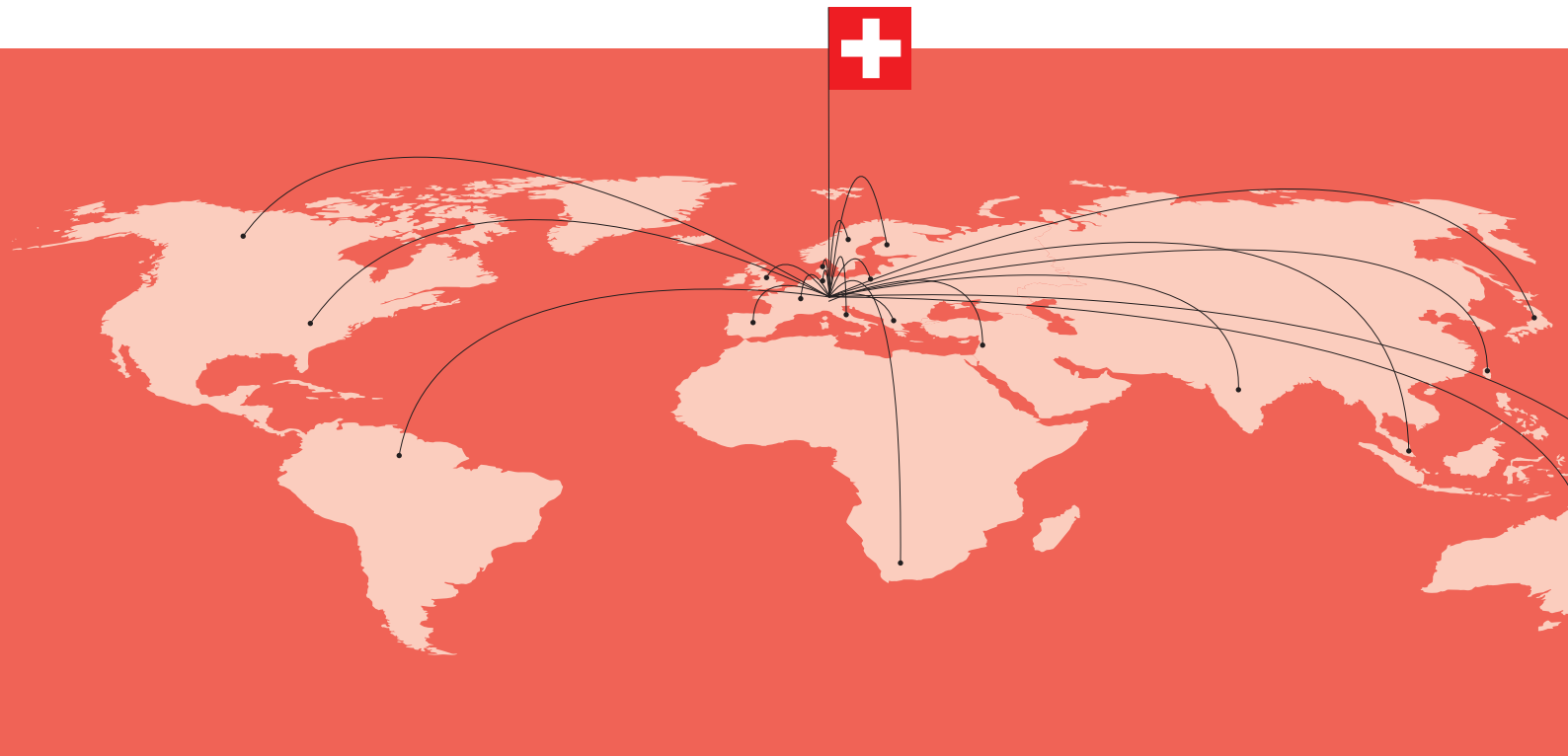
The finance committee oversees the management of the foundation's capital. It checks quarterly figures, the annual financial statements, and the budget.

Markus Neuhaus (Chair)

Support Group

The support group assures the sustainable long-term funding of the foundation's activities. Its members are organizations and individuals who support the foundation with a substantial one-time or recurring contribution. The support group serves as a sounding board for Avenir Suisse's project activities.

Thomas Hammer (Chair of the Support Foundation)

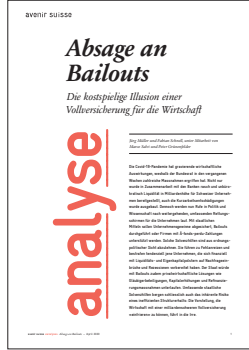
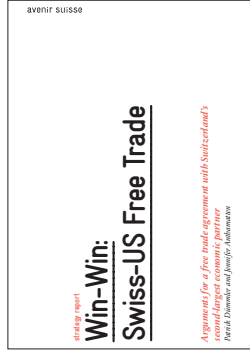
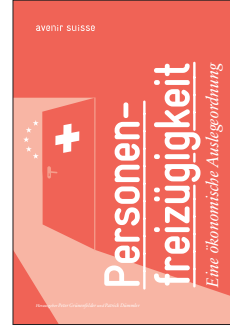
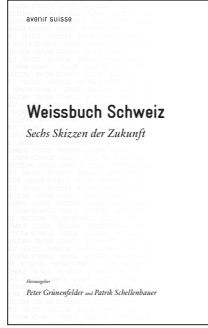


Regional Strategy

In the coming years Avenir Suisse intends to strengthen both its regional roots and its international networking.

While the think tank's research concerns nationwide issues, it can also address them on a more specific cantonal or regional basis. By 2023 the think tank wants to make its presence felt even more clearly not just in French-speaking Switzerland, but also in Eastern Switzerland and Ticino.

Cross-border networking is becoming increasingly important in a globalized world. Avenir Suisse stages an annual international Think Tank Summit attended by like-minded organizations. Over the planning period it also intends to step up cooperation with foreign think tanks in the Anglo-American world and the Asian region. Avenir Suisse's publications include a monthly newsletter in English informing an international readership of the work of Avenir Suisse and special developments in the Swiss political and economic landscape.



Zurich

Rotbuchstrasse 46
8037 Zurich
Switzerland
Tel +41 44 445 90 00

Lausanne

Chemin de Beau-Rivage 7
1006 Lausanne
Switzerland
Tel +41 21 612 66 10

avenir suisse

info@avenir-suisse.ch www.avenir-suisse.ch