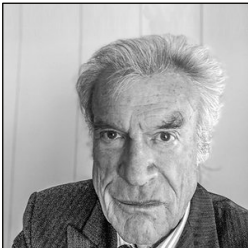


Preserving Switzerland's federalist form of government and society

Setting the course for a humane future

by Hans Bieri,* Zurich



Hans Bieri. (Picture www.neutralitaet-ja.ch)

(CH-S) With the planned EU treaties, Switzerland is in danger of degenerating into an "agglomeration" of the European Union. Our country is also coming under increasing pressure from other quarters. The filigree, citizen-oriented political system of "Switzerland", built up over centuries by its inhabitants, is at risk of being squandered by a short-sighted political and economic "elite".

Hans Bieri, Managing Director of the "Swiss Association of Industry and Agriculture" (SVIL), opposes this and provides us with a comprehensive overview of the current situation of our country in the European context.

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The challenges

Switzerland is being pressured to cede part of its sovereignty to the EU, to relocate production and financial assets to the US, to abandon its neutrality and to join the NATO military alliance.

Furthermore, the US and the EU have declared Switzerland's neutrality obsolete. The Ukraine conflict is being separated from its causes, thereby undermining diplomacy and Switzerland's neutral position. Triggered by geopolitical change and the global loss of power of the former Western supremacy, a retreat and concentration on continental power centres and their compact expansion is currently underway. This is what Switzerland is feeling the effects of. Similarly, the achievements of the European Enlightenment are in danger of falling victim to techno-feudalism.

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Switzerland – EU – Europe

Switzerland's upcoming agreements with the EU express this through their unambiguous encroachment on Switzerland's political freedom.

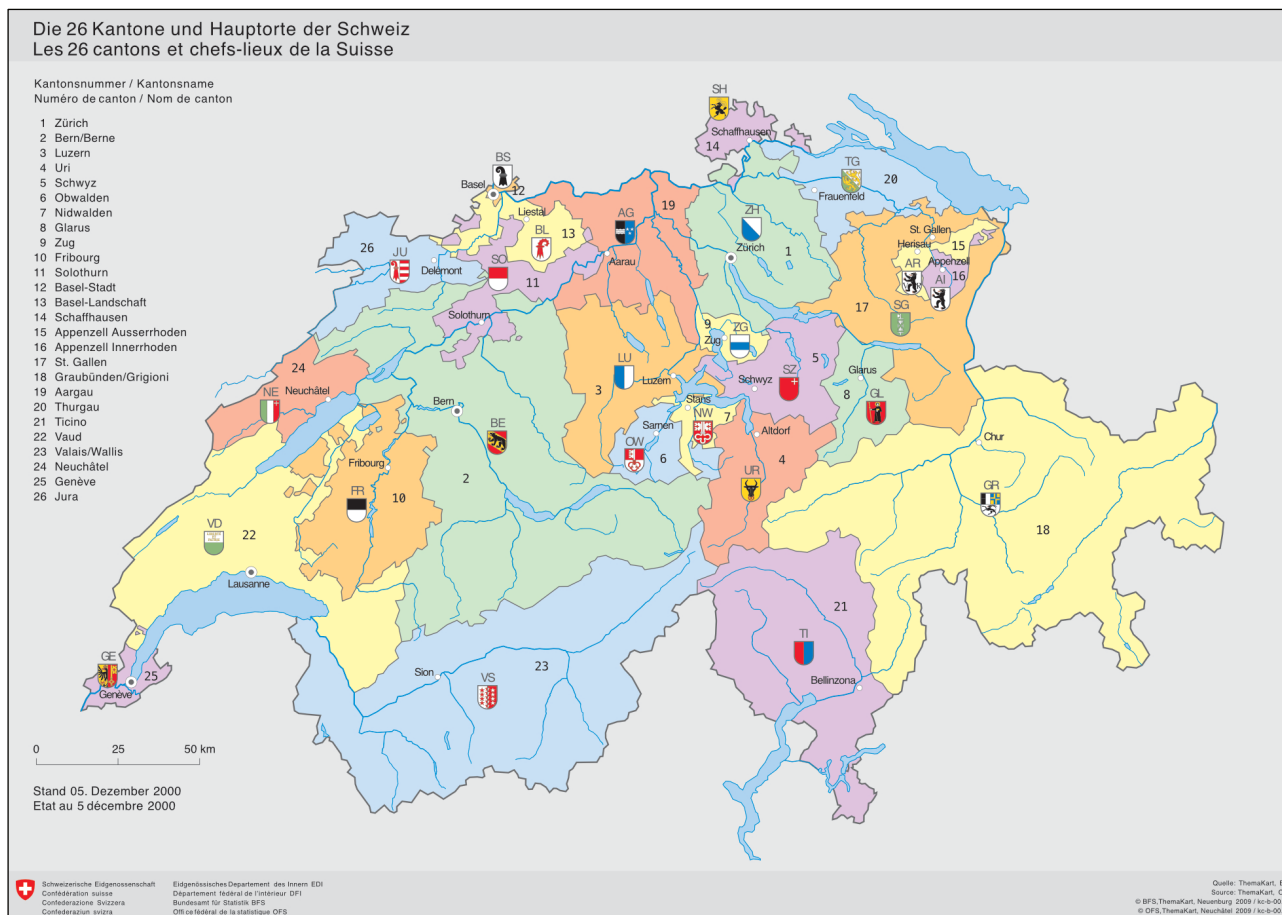
Until now, the rule has been that goods and services cross national borders in lively trade in accordance with the international division of labour. The territories whose borders are crossed, on the other hand, remain "static" and form the state order. The state enacts rules that apply within its territory. However, if these rules are also to apply in a foreign territory, the states can – as before – freely agree on this between themselves.

In the agreements between Switzerland and the EU, however, the adoption of EU regulations on Swiss territory is agreed unilaterally. Switzerland remains excluded from the legislative process in the EU. This is the clear intention of the EU to consolidate its territory militarily, together with NATO. As a result, Switzerland would have to relinquish its political heritage and achievements, built up over centuries, and rejoin the "empire". In Switzerland's relationship with the US, too, freedom of trade is increasingly being restricted, controlled (banks) and determined on an open-ended basis (pharmaceuticals) by the more powerful market player.

These political and cultural restrictions have so far been justified by the hoped-for economic growth stimulus for the Swiss export industry in its important sales markets in the EU and the US.

However, what is hoped for as a gain in efficiency through the expansion of Switzerland's institutional ties to the EU is lost on the other hand through the enormous current and future regulatory costs for Switzerland, but above all through the elimination of our direct democracy. Switzerland's finely meshed settlement structure cannot be expanded and converted into a city-state or metropolitan region either.

Those who earn their money from Switzerland's development into a city-state overlook the fact that property prices are merely a rent that



feeds off the value added by the real economy. The subprime crisis in the US in the 2000s clearly showed how this “perpetuum mobile immobilitium” leads to crisis. “Singapore”, meaning overlaying from above (expats) and underlaying in social networks on the other hand, is emerging.

In the meantime, conflicts on all fronts have intensified. And the question arises: why is economic development without territorial expansion not possible in the EU, as the history of Switzerland shows? This socio-political question is anything but new and has been discussed and clarified repeatedly in Switzerland and in enlightened Europe. Here is just one example of the level of discussion we once had:

“A humane community also requires a modern form of federalism. For it can be shown that properly understood democracy and genuine federalism guarantee greater opportunities for individual development than democracy in a unitary state. Citizens’ opportunities for democratic participation are greater in a federal state than in a unitary state: in the smaller legal communities of the constituent parts, special laws adapted to their needs can be implemented. The requirement of double majorities, namely democratic and federal, for the enactment of federal law also gives citizens greater opportunities for participation in the federal system.”¹

And today?

The current agreements with the EU, the vote on the federal popular initiative “Preserving Swiss neutrality”, the reaching of a 10 million population in Switzerland and the immigration problem, food and supply security in the 2030 agricultural policy and Switzerland’s chairmanship of the OSCE are the main topics for the coming year!

Neutral Switzerland cannot enter into an agreement with the EU that leads to the institutional and territorial integration of Switzerland into the territory of the EU! In this sense, the 2030 agricultural policy, among other things, must be detached from its dependence on Brussels.

Switzerland must not sacrifice its historical achievements in terms of its federalist form of government and society with a view to the future!

The formation of blocs into a centralised European unitary state, driven by the war in Ukraine, is destroying Europe’s diversity. What is becoming an existential question for Switzerland also applies to Europe. This must be Switzerland’s message to the OSCE, which Switzerland will chair in 2026. Switzerland must

– politically and personally refined by its current contacts with the EU and the US – mobilise its achievements and its strengths, remove the barriers to thinking and dialogue in the OSCE from a neutral position, and help diplomacy achieve a breakthrough in conflict resolution in Europe.

How can we secure our “food supply” or our existence if we do not do everything in our

power to end this war and finally resolve its causes?

Source: *Letter to members 2025*: <https://svil.ch/SVIL%202025%20Mitgliederbrief%2021Nov2025%20Kopie.pdf>, 21 November 2025

(Translation “Swiss Standpoint”)

¹ Martin Usteri. *Die Funktion der Regierung im modernen föderalistischen Staat*. Vienna 1977.