

Press release

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The Switzerland-EU relationship in a globalised world

On the eve of the Conference of Directors General of European Industrial Federations which has been organised this year by economie suisse in Geneva, BUSINESSEUROPE and economie suisse celebrated the 40th anniversary of the free-trade agreement between Switzerland and the EU and presented a joint brochure to mark the occasion. In addition, the Danish business federation presented the results of its “Global Benchmark Report” on the competitiveness of European countries. Each Director General highlighted the importance of free trade for Europe in order to improve its ability to compete in a globalised environment.

At a time of crisis the success of the bilateral free-trade agreement justifies the celebration: Switzerland is the third biggest export market for the European Union, just behind the USA and China, but in front of countries such as Russia, Japan or India. Therefore Philippe de Buck, Director General of BUSINESSEUROPE underlined that “the tight trade and investment relationship between Switzerland and the EU contributes significantly to the competitiveness of the European economy and promotes European exports in other markets such as China, Japan and Korea”. In the anniversary brochure policy-makers, diplomats and business leaders provide insights into 40 years of fascinating history of an agreement which still forms the basis for the intense economic relations between Switzerland and the European Union.

The Danish business federation DI presented the recently published “Global Benchmark Report” on the competitiveness of European countries. “Once again Switzerland leads the list of the most competitive markets as a result of coming first on most of the 92 criteria which were combined to form one list” as the Director General of DI, Karsten Dybvad, said.

“Although Switzerland provides comparable good economic data, we cannot rely on our achievements from the past” remarked Pascal Gentinetta, Director General of economie suisse. In a globalised world Switzerland and the EU are confronted with the same challenges. The further development of the relationship between the two should focus on improving the competitiveness of the whole continent of Europe by strengthening common interests.

Economic openness and free markets are key drivers to economic success in Europe and thus should be further promoted.

Questions:

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