



Annual General Meeting 2021



On June 28, The Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce organized its Annual General Meeting at the beautiful Gottlieb Duttweiler Institute in Rüschlikon. The members of the Board of Directors and some special guests joined physically, while some 200 members joined the meeting virtually due to the actual Covid rules. Guest of Honor Prof. Dr. Thomas Jordan, Chairman of the Governing Board of the Swiss National Bank, captivated the hybrid audience with a very interesting speech on the SNB's role in combatting the financial consequences of Covid-19 and on the prospect of continued inflation. Swiss

Amcham's Chairman Silvio Napoli (also Chairman of Schindler Group) led through the meeting efficiently and with style. Ambassador Jacques Pitteloud, Swiss Ambassador to the USA, joined the meeting from Washington DC to give his well-received remarks on the status of the Swiss-American relationship. And Matthew Boyse, Deputy Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, travelled from Washington to give his views on this great relationship in the new Biden area.

New chapter for the Swiss-EU relationship

On May 23, the Federal Council has decided to stop all negotiations regarding the Swiss-EU Framework Agreement. Discussions and negotiations lasted some 14 years and have ended in a cul-de-sac. Federal Councilor Ignazio Cassis promised the start of a strategic dialog which for the moment looks rather like a strategic monologue. The EU has reacted with a series of retaliation measures such as a discontinuation of the MRA (multilateral recognition agreement) on medtech products without any transitional solution, a stop of discussions between BAFIN (the German finance regulator) and certain Swiss financial services companies, a stop of discussions on energy questions and a postponement of the EU accreditation for the Swiss Covid pass.

Regarding the participation of non-EU countries in the very important research program Horizon Europe, the EU just released a list of countries invited to negotiate. The list of 18 countries includes the UK, Israel and Norway, but also countries such as Albania, Armenia, Faroe Islands and North Macedonia. No mention of Switzerland - the most innovative country in the world!

We call on the EU to stop these infantile retaliation measures and come back to a reasonable dialog with its third largest export market and historic partner Switzerland. And let us support the Swiss Federal Council in their quest to open a new chapter with the EU.

Federal Council selects American plane

On June 30, Federal Councilor Viola Amherd disclosed the decision of the Federal Council on a new fighter aircraft: Lockheed Martin's F-35. FC Amherd reported that an extensive and highly professional analysis by the government's experts left no alternative. The F-35 offered the best cost-benefit ratio - by far.

Politically, this was a courageous decision as the left-wing, green and anti-army forces had already announced an initiative against any US planes and the EU countries will probably not react benevolently to the defeat of the two European offers. Such a decision should not become an object of political infighting but rather mirror the best outcome for the security of Switzerland. Twenty years ago, the Swiss air force had some 170 fighter planes. In 2030, it will have 36 only. So, the selected planes need to be the best.

We call on the nay-sayers to stop playing political games and accept a) the positive popular vote of September 27, 2020, and b) the opinion of experts in the same way we accepted the opinions of experts during the pandemic.

Bidenomics move forward creating opportunities for Swiss companies

After the American Rescue Plan (US\$1.9 tr) signed by President Biden on March 11, 2021, the President proposed two more large stimulus packages: the American Jobs Plan (US\$ 2.3 tr) and the American Families Plan (US\$ 1.8 tr) resulting, combined with last year packages of US\$ 4 tr, in a total commitment of US\$ 10 tr (equivalent to 50% of US GDP). Last week, a bipartisan infrastructure plan of approx. US\$ 1 tr emerged from negotiations with the White House, a plan covering infrastructure spending only. It is very likely that the remainders of the Jobs Plan and the Families Plan will get wrapped into a new package to be passed by Democrats only using budget reconciliation to avoid being bogged down by the filibuster in the Senate.

Whatever outcome, a lot of money will be spent in the coming years, especially in four sectors: infrastructure, green energy, pharma and research, and reshoring manufacturing. In all these sectors, Swiss companies are strongly invested in the USA and enjoy a superb competitive position. Possible increases in corporate taxes notwithstanding, these are excellent news for Swiss companies.

Hi Martin, what is your bright spot in June?

Switzerland was removed from the US Treasury list of currency manipulators; Switzerland was ranked the most competitive country in IMD's World Competitiveness Report; Switzerland soccer team beat France to access the quarterfinals of the European Championship; and summer is approaching fast. Hopp Schwiiz!



I wish you all relaxing, exciting and delightful vacations and I am looking forward to reconnect in the hopefully post-Covid fall.

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