

Skills shortage as a stumbling block for a competitive Switzerland

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At a glance

For the sixth time in a row, Switzerland has topped the rankings of the Global Competitiveness Index compiled by the WEF. It thus remains the most competitive and innovative country in the world. Although Switzerland was able to defend its top position, the WEF economists urge caution. Isolationist tendencies and the potential shortage of skilled workers are jeopardizing competitiveness.

As in the previous year, Switzerland was awarded 1st place in the Global Competitiveness Index for its competitiveness and innovative strength. It impresses with its macroeconomic stability and efficient institutions. The authors of the World Economic Forum (WEF) also praise the excellent education system and Swiss research, which maintains an intensive exchange with companies. Switzerland maintains a balance between employee protection and the flexibility of companies. Finally, it shows that sustainability and economic interests do not have to be in conflict.

Alongside praise for Switzerland, the authors call for caution. The shortage of skilled workers is an increasing threat to Switzerland's competitiveness. Switzerland can only be successful as a center of innovation thanks to the contribution of the best researchers and specialists from all over the world. The Executive Opinion Survey 2014 conducted by the WEF shows that the availability of specialist staff is the biggest stumbling block to employment in Switzerland. This problem is also evident in the ranking: since 2012, Switzerland has slipped from 14th to 24th place in terms of the availability of engineers and scientists.

WEF economist Thierry Geiger points to upcoming initiatives that further jeopardize the recruitment of talent. For example, although the adoption of the mass immigration initiative has not yet had any impact on competitiveness, it is important to prevent further restrictions on access to the labor market.

These clear words show that the availability of skilled workers is of crucial importance for Switzerland's successful model, which should be taken into account in particular when implementing the mass immigration initiative. Switzerland's leading position is not set in stone, the competition is catching up. This makes it all the more important to fend off attacks on the Swiss model of success and ensure that the successful framework conditions are maintained.