

# “The Swiss-EU package poses a massive threat to Swiss agriculture”

by the editorial team of “Swiss Standpoint”

(CH-S) After thoroughly studying the approximately 2,000-page agreement package between Switzerland and the European Union (EU), the “Interessengemeinschaft (IG) BauernUnternehmen”\* (Farmers’ Business Interest Group) has concluded that it poses a massive threat to Swiss agriculture. It therefore clearly rejects this “administrative monster”.

Although no date has yet been set for the referendum, opinions are being formed at all levels in Switzerland. A critical examination of the agreement package is urgently needed, as it binds Swiss legislation to the EU to such an extent that its adoption would mean a significant loss of sovereignty for our country and its citizens.

In its analysis<sup>1</sup> presented on 20 October, IG BauernUnternehmen (Farmers’ Association) focuses on the issues of agriculture and food. These are its core areas. The Federal Council has divided the existing agricultural agreement into two parts: a *food safety agreement* and an *agricultural agreement*.

Until now, Switzerland has been able to create its own equivalent legislation to EU regulations, which has achieved the same purpose and had the same effect. However, if Switzerland were to adopt EU standards “dynamically” (= automatically) in future – as provided for in the current package of agreements – it would no longer be able to go its own way. If it did so nonetheless, this would be interpreted by the EU as a breach of the agreement and the EU could take economic countermeasures – known as compensatory measures – to compensate for its “disadvantage”. This would significantly restrict Switzerland’s legal autonomy.

\* Farmers and entrepreneurs working in the agricultural sector are active members of IG BauernUnternehmen. They are committed to “rational, productive agriculture”. Modern agriculture has proven that it can feed the world’s population while continuously minimising its environmental impact. IG is open to anyone who supports forward-looking agriculture. <https://www.bauern-unternehmen.ch/home-de.html>



(Picture [www.bauern-unternehmen.ch](http://www.bauern-unternehmen.ch))

The EU’s “Farm to Fork” strategy has been criticised by many.<sup>2</sup> According to IG BauernUnternehmen, it encompasses measures along the entire food chain, from the production of food to its consumption, and includes specific objectives “to promote sustainable nutrition”. This would also patronise consumers and encourage them to eat a diet low in meat or sugar – which would ultimately also affect food producers.

In its newsletter,<sup>3</sup> IG BauernUnternehmen clearly explains the consequences of specific articles in the agreement on agriculture and food safety. Here are just two drastic examples:

Firstly, a *threatened decline in food quality*: “Article 5(2)(c) also states that Switzerland will be forced to ‘integrate harmonised standards for the entire food chain’. In practice, this means a downward harmonisation, as European legislation sets lower standards than Switzerland in key areas. The ‘Made in Switzerland’ label, which represents a promise of quality and an important distinguishing feature, will thus lose its significance. Consumers who were willing to pay a higher price for Swiss quality will in future receive products that hardly differ in quality.”

Secondly, *“Suffocating bureaucracy for clubs, folk festivals and school events*: The situation becomes particularly absurd when it comes to traditional community events. If the local gymnastics club sells homemade bratwurst at its festival or the women’s association offers homemade jam and confectionery at the Advent bazaar, these activities fall under EU food regulations. Volunteers must complete hygiene training, kitchens must be EU-certified, and doc-

umentation of ingredients and manufacturing processes must be kept for each product. This bureaucratisation is destroying community structures and local traditions. Swiss wrestling festivals, fairs and other typical Swiss folk events are either becoming impossible or having to give up their traditional food offerings. The vibrant culture of local markets and festivals, which is an important part of Swiss identity, is in danger of being lost due to EU regulations.”

The IG BauernUnternehmen deserves great credit for already drawing the attention of the public – the citizens who will one day be asked to vote on this Swiss-EU package – to the far-reaching consequences of accepting this agreement.

*(Translation “Swiss Standpoint”)*

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bauern-unternehmen.ch/aktuell-details-de/das-vorliegende-vertragspaket-schweiz-eu-ist-klar->

[abzulehnen-denn-es-gefährdet-die-schweizer-land-wirtschaft-massiv.html](#)

<sup>2</sup> “A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system” – this was the official announcement made by the European Commission on 20 May 2020. The strategy is the centrepiece of the European Green Deal, which aims to make Europe the first climate-neutral continent by 2050. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0003.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0003.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

*In reality, this programme goes much further and destroys innovative, small-scale agriculture in favour of agro-industrial companies. See also:*

– <https://swiss-standpoint.ch/news-detailansicht-en-gesellschaft/agricultural-policies-brunch.html>

– <https://swiss-standpoint.ch/news-detailansicht-en-gesellschaft/the-eu-is-destroying-farms-across-europe.html>

– <https://swiss-standpoint.ch/news-detailansicht-en-wirtschaft/industrialisation-of-agriculture-through-great-food-reset.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://mailchi.mp/bauern-unternehmen/vertragspaket-ch-eu-de-fr>