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Swiss Biotech Day: Switzerland is extraordinarily successful as a biotech hub and globally connected

Switzerland is one of the most attractive locations for biotech companies and benefits from a very high influx of venture capital. At the same time, Switzerland has excellent prerequisites for further expanding its strong position in manufacturing complex biopharmaceuticals, as illustrated by numerous reports, presentations and panel discussions at the leading Swiss biotech industry conference.

At the Swiss Biotech Day, KPMG presents its latest report «Site Selection of Life Sciences Companies in Europe». The study analyzes the attractiveness of European countries as locations for pharmaceutical, biotech and medtech companies. «Switzerland is an attractive location in important comparative categories such as the size of the cluster, attractiveness for qualified employees and competitive taxes. However, the EU is also investing heavily in expanding the life sciences industry. Thus, competition for investments and talent are likely to increase further» explains André Guedel, expert in site evaluation at KPMG Switzerland. Economic parameters such as general competitiveness and innovation power, the financing environment, or the size of the talent pool are critical when choosing a location for biotech companies. Quality of life and a general work-life balance, R&D infrastructure and political stability also play a major role.

A global leader with a long list of successes

Thanks to this excellent environment coupled with continuous investments in research and the strong ability to innovate, the Swiss biotech industry has been one of the leading biotech hubs for many years. Together with the pharmaceutical industry it contributes to more than 40 percent of Swiss exports.

Brought to public attention by the Covid pandemic, the biotech industry has become very popular among investors. «By July 2021, investors invested around 2 billion Swiss francs in Swiss biotech companies. 80 percent thereof was raised by IPOs and companies listed on the stock exchange. In the first seven months of this year alone, five Swiss biotech companies successfully went public» says Jürg Zürcher, expert and EY Senior Advisor Biotechnology, in his update on this year's Swiss Biotech Report.

The success stories of Bachem, Basilea, Esbatech, Lonza or Novimmune demonstrate the broad-based success of this industry. Consequently, these companies are honored with a «Swiss Biotech Success Stories Award» at the Swiss Biotech Day. In his keynote address, Roger Nitsch, CEO of Neurimmune, explains the important role Switzerland plays in the development of new drugs, such as Aducanumab. Aducanumab has recently been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. It was discovered by Neurimmune in collaboration with the University of Zurich and will be marketed by Biogen. Biogen will produce Aducanumab at its new manufacturing site in Luterbach in the canton of Solothurn.

International cooperation as the key to success

The fact that Switzerland is a major player in biotechnology is also reflected in its important contribution to combat the Covid pandemic. However, the performance of individual countries is not critical to overcoming the pandemic, as Michael Altorfer, CEO of the Swiss Biotech Association, emphasizes: «The success in developing new vaccines, diagnostics and a growing range of therapeutic options are ultimately the result of a fantastic international cooperation.»

Paradoxically, this cooperation is suddenly under severe pressure at a time of its greatest success. A wide variety of countries have realized how dependent they are on global supply chains, which have proven to be politically susceptible under time and demand pressures. Many countries therefore wish to become more independent in the development and production of active ingredients for their own supply and to establish their own supply chains. The retreat to national supply chains and national, isolated research programs would be a massive set-back for global research networks. As Switzerland only has a very small local market it can focus and dedicate its capacity to the needs of foreign countries and thus has the opportunity to further expand its strong position in pharmaceutical manufacturing for the world.

Switzerland as a global producer of biopharmaceuticals and novel therapies

The competitive advantages of Switzerland, such as global networks, highly qualified talent, political stability and neutrality are being used by both multinational pharma companies as well as contract manufacturers to produce highly complex biopharmaceuticals and products in the field of novel gene and cell therapies. The rapid expansion of companies such as Lonza, Bachem, Siegfried, Dottikon and Celonic, demonstrate the potential of Switzerland to produce for a global demand. «The Swiss biotech and pharma industry covers the entire value chain and has significant – and growing – production capacities. For example, Merck has invested more than 400 million Swiss francs in new production capacities in Switzerland over the past two years, Biogen more than 1 billion Swiss francs in its site in Luterbach, and Lonza has built three new vaccine production lines in Visp,» emphasizes Michael Altorfer.

Well equipped for the future

In conclusion, Switzerland is well equipped for the future. Next to the expansion of industrial parks and production facilities, Switzerland offers a broad-based commitment to strong patent protection, a well-filled product pipeline and a strong start-up scene, which has contributed significantly to industry growth, as Jordi Montserrat, CEO of Venturelab, confirms at the Swiss Biotech Day: «The life sciences alumni of Venturelab and Venture Kick are among the biggest Swiss success stories in this area and have attracted several billion Swiss Francs in investments.»

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The Swiss Biotech Report 2021

The [Swiss Biotech Report](#) examines the most important trends, innovation factors and sources of innovation and reports on topics and facts about the development of the Swiss biotech industry. This year's focus is on agility, leadership and innovation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Site Selection of Life Sciences Companies in Europe 2021

[The report](#) is addressed to Life Sciences companies that want to select a location for their regional headquarters, research and development facilities and production plants as well as investment promotion agencies that want to get a comparison of their location with others.

Swiss Biotech and the Swiss Biotech Association

Founded in 1998, the Swiss Biotech Association represents the interests of the Swiss biotech industry. To support its members in a competitive market, the association works to secure favorable framework conditions and facilitate access to talents, novel technologies and financial resources. To strengthen and promote the Swiss biotech industry, the Swiss Biotech Association collaborates with numerous partners and life science clusters globally under the brand Swiss Biotech™. For further information see [swissbiotech.org](https://www.swissbiotech.org).