



Swiss popular initiative “For Moderate Immigration” (Limitation Initiative)

Statement from the Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation

Bern, 25 August 2020

“No” to the Limitation Initiative – Preserve favourable conditions for research and innovation in Switzerland

On 27 September 2020, the Swiss electorate will vote on the popular initiative called “For Moderate Immigration” (Limitation Initiative). This initiative calls for ending the free movement of people between Switzerland and the European Union, which is guaranteed by the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (AFMP). The AFMP is tied to six other agreements in the Bilateral Agreements I package by the so-called guillotine clause. This means that, ultimately, the Limitation Initiative threatens in its entirety Switzerland’s bilateral arrangement with the EU. Because one of these six agreements governs research collaboration, a termination of the AFMP would end the agreement on research collaboration as well.

Passing the Limitation Initiative would have grave consequences for clinical research in Switzerland. Not only would the initiative jeopardise access to important research projects, activities, and programmes in the EU, it would also endanger both cross-border collaboration between researchers and the larger exchange of ideas so important for research as a whole.

For these reasons, the Swiss Clinical Trial Organisation (SCTO) joins the Swiss Science Council¹, the Swiss National Science Foundation² and the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences³ in their opposition to the Limitation Initiative and cautions that, if passed, this initiative would negatively impact Switzerland as a place to conduct research.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored how important it is to collaborate across borders and coordinate the exchange of information and resources within the scientific network when finding and developing a vaccine or an effective treatment for a pathogen. Working together internationally leads to better and quicker results – and benefits Swiss citizens as well.

¹ <https://blog.wissenschaftsrat.ch/switzerland-is-not-an-island/>

² <http://www.snf.ch/en/theSNSF/research-policies/european-policy/Pages/default.aspx>

³ http://www.akademien-schweiz.ch/index/Aktuell/News/mainColumnParagraphs/0110/download_website.pdf (in German)