

Consequences for employment in Basel and St Gallen

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The cost synergies announced at the time of the merger implied a substantial reduction of employment. At the end of 2025, Helvetia Baloise announced that it would reduce its workforce by up to 2,600 positions between 2026 and 2029, of which between 1,400 and 1,800 would fall in Switzerland.¹ The group stated that it would rely as far as possible on natural fluctuation, early retirement and internal transfers before launching consultation procedures with the employee representatives under the Code of Obligations.

The reductions affected both head office locations. Group functions that had existed twice, such as finance, risk management, investment management and information technology, were combined. In the Swiss market, the two operating organisations were merged, which led to the closure of duplicate offices and agencies.² Basel and St Gallen both lost positions, although the distribution of the losses between the two cities remained a sensitive question that the management treated with caution.

For the Basel labour market, the reductions were significant but absorbable. The city has a large and diversified economy dominated by the pharmaceutical industry, in which qualified employees in finance, actuarial science and information technology are in demand across sectors. For St Gallen, whose financial sector is smaller, the impact was proportionally greater, which led to political interventions by the cantonal government and to assurances from the company about the future of the location.³ The experience showed that the consolidation of financial institutions, even when it strengthens a city as a seat, can weaken it as a place of employment.

1 Notes

1. On the announcement by Helvetia Baloise of a reduction of up to 2,600 positions between 2026 and 2029, including 1,400 to 1,800 in Switzerland, see the media release of Helvetia Baloise of December 2025 and contemporary press reports (e.g. finews.ch). Figures to be verified. ↩
2. On the consultation procedure for collective dismissals under Articles 335d et seq. of the Swiss Code of Obligations and its application to the Helvetia Baloise integration in early 2026, see the media releases of the company and of the employee associations. Status to be verified. ↩
3. On the reactions of the cantonal governments of Basel-Stadt and St Gallen to the merger and the announced job reductions, see their media statements in 2025. To be verified. ↩

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Online version: helveticaregister.com/basel-consequences-for-employment-in-basel-and-st-gallen