

The industry association

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The chemical companies of Basel organised their common interests in an industry association, founded in 1882 as the Swiss Society of Chemical Industries, today scienceindustries, the business association of the Swiss chemical, pharmaceutical and life sciences industry.¹ The association represented the industry in the debates on patent law, customs tariffs, trade agreements, environmental regulation and labour law, negotiating with the authorities and with foreign industry associations.

The influence of the chemical industry on Swiss economic policy was considerable. The industry was one of the largest exporters of the country. Its companies were among the largest employers and taxpayers, with leaders who had close relationships with the federal government and administration. Its opposition delayed the introduction of patent protection for chemical processes until 1907 and for chemical products until 1978. Its interests shaped the Swiss positions in trade negotiations, from the bilateral trade treaties of the nineteenth century to the negotiations of the World Trade Organization on intellectual property in the 1990s. And its concerns about the competitiveness of Switzerland shaped the debates on corporate taxation, which Part G examines.

1 Notes

1. On the Swiss Society of Chemical Industries (Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Chemische Industrie, SGCI), founded in 1882, today scienceindustries, see its publications. To be verified. ↩

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