

Reputation and responsible business

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The canton's reputation depends on the conduct of its companies. The canton cannot control that conduct directly, since the regulation of companies and markets is largely federal. It can, however, use its influence in several ways. It can support federal measures that strengthen the integrity of the commodity sector, such as due diligence obligations and transparency on payments to governments, in a form that is effective without driving companies away.¹ It can cooperate closely with the federal authorities in the enforcement of sanctions and anti-money-laundering rules. It can engage with non-governmental organisations and the public in an open discussion about the benefits and risks of the canton's economic model.

The companies themselves have the main responsibility. The commodity traders have improved their compliance programmes after the corruption cases of the past decade. The crypto industry has developed standards of conduct and supported regulation, while the multinational groups report on their sustainability and their tax contributions. These efforts will need to continue and deepen, since the scrutiny of the public, the media and the authorities will not diminish. A canton whose companies are known for integrity is more resilient than one whose companies are known for scandals, whatever its tax rates.

1 Notes

1. MLL News, "Aktienrechtsrevision: Bundesrat legt Zeitpunkt des Inkrafttretens ... der Transparenzregeln für Rohstoffunternehmen fest", 17 September 2020, mll-news.com: Federal Council decision of 11 September 2020, transparency rules for extractive companies (reporting on payments of CHF 100,000 or more to state bodies; then numbered Art. 964a ff. OR) in force 1 January 2021; Federal Office of Justice, "Nachhaltige Unternehmensführung zum Schutz von Mensch und Umwelt", bj.admin.ch: due diligence obligations for conflict minerals and child labour (Art. 964j ff. OR, ordinance VSoTr) in force since 1 January 2022. ↩

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