

SSP-CH

# Shared Socioeconomic Pathways for Switzerland

## *Detailed description of the scenarios*

Authorship: Lena Gubler, Pascal Tschumi, Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL

Collaboration: Deborah Hefti, Marco Pütz, Xander Reimann, Irmi Seidl, Cyril Studach, Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL

1.4.2025, Birmensdorf

This work is funded by the National Centre for Climate Services NCCS and carried out as part of the programme 'Decision-making bases for dealing with climate change in Switzerland (NCCS-Impacts)' as part of the project 'Socio-economic scenarios for Switzerland'.

The SSP-CH describe five plausible societal developments for Switzerland up to the year 2100. These are described below, each divided into the time periods 2024-2035, 2035-2060, 2060-2085 and 2085-2100. The main characteristics of the SSP-CH that characterise Switzerland in the corresponding SSP-CH at the end of the century are mentioned at the beginning. Possible developments within individual socio-economic areas (mobility, agriculture, energy, geopolitical situation) are analysed in brief digressions. These are not part of the actual scenarios and are merely intended to illustrate possible characteristics.

Data and further information on SSP-CH can be found at: [ssp-ch-szenarien.wsl.ch](https://ssp-ch-szenarien.wsl.ch)





## **SSPO-CH – Frugal Switzerland**

### *Key features*

*The Swiss population is socially engaged, organised in a spirit of solidarity and practises strong social cohesion. Consumption has decreased. Economic performance and financial prosperity have fallen. Basic values of solidarity are firmly anchored in society and all state institutions consistently build on them in their activities. Trust in political institutions (parliament, administration, judiciary) is high.*

## *Development*

### 2024-2035

To counter the shortage of skilled labour at the end of the 2020s, Switzerland is relying on an active immigration policy: immigration will continue to increase slightly as a result. The young generation entering the labour market prefers part-time jobs to high incomes. In the 2030s, this will be a matter of course for large sections of the population, in trade, industry, administration and also in the management sector. The lifestyles and consumption patterns in society will also change with this new generation focussed on time prosperity.

### 2035-2060

Material consumption is on the decline. Owning objects is soon considered obsolete. They are borrowed for the duration of their use and then returned for reuse. Community service for all replaces civil and military service, which strengthens social cohesion. Organisations are gaining in popularity.

Because the range of products on offer was more focussed on lending and sharing, sales figures and production volumes declined. As a result, economic output falls, jobs are cut, which reduces the number of working hours and working weeks for everyone. At the same time, immigration is declining, which is due to three factors: firstly, Switzerland is stopping its active immigration policy; secondly, it has lost its economic attractiveness; and thirdly, the quality of life in neighbouring countries has risen sharply. The financing of social services must therefore be reorganised. Tax redistribution measures are being introduced, which will gradually reduce the financial prosperity of the wealthy sections of the population. As a result, funds are now available to expand the welfare state and basic services. To this end, the population and politicians are engaged in an intensive dialogue about the type of basic services they want to secure. Access to free or affordable basic services for all (education, healthcare, child/elderly care, old-age provision, etc.) becomes a state priority. As a result of this, as well as the shift in social values towards a greater affluence of time and indifference to declining economic performance, the purchasing power of the middle class is also decreasing. This further reduces and dematerialises consumption (fewer products are consumed, but many more services and culture). As a result, mobility and energy consumption are also falling sharply. Thanks to the reduction in energy consumption, coupled with an intensive expansion of renewable energy, Switzerland is achieving a very high level

of self-sufficiency in energy production. However, the economy is still dependent on energy imports from abroad, which is possible thanks to integration into the European electricity market. The expansion of renewable energy production requires resources such as concrete, steel, etc., which partially cancels out the reduced production of energy-intensive sectors until the middle of the century due to the decline in consumption. Only then will the production of energy-intensive companies begin to decline significantly.

Citizens devote a lot of time to community services. As a result, the care and health system, food production, child and elderly care as well as

### **Possible development in the area of agriculture**

Agriculture in Switzerland is ecological, small-scale and labour-intensive. Many people are employed in agriculture - it is widespread among the population to spend part of their leisure time on food production. The population is very economical with food. Large parts of the cities are supplied directly from the neighbouring farms. No animal feed is grown on arable land and meat consumption has been reduced to a minimum. Other products have also disappeared from the diet.

The Alps are grazed by extensive, long-lived dairy cow breeds. Extensive farming takes up a lot of land: the foothills of the Alps are largely terraced. Biodiversity benefits as production are extensive and diverse. Resource efficiency and closed cycles are key. There is a state subsidy system, which now promotes ecology, efficiency and diversity.

local politics and administration can rely on voluntary civic engagement. It has become more attractive to have and care for children - the birth rate is rising slightly.

Thanks to a strengthening of political education, a broad, diverse range of media and newly created, low-threshold opportunities to have a say at various political levels, political and social participation increased significantly in the 2030s. Thanks to strict action against disinformation, the credibility of the media is high. This also strengthened trust in science, both among the population and in politics. In the latter, a culture of professional discussion and compromise has developed, allowing pragmatic, far-sighted and, if necessary, radical solutions to be pursued. The population supports government bans and control measures as long as their aim serves the common good.

### **2060-2085**

The birth rate remains unchanged. However, because immigration has decreased and life expectancy has fallen, population growth is declining, resulting in a reduction in the residential population.

International solidarity has increased. An international economic model is spreading that promotes redistribution and reduces wealth and income inequalities. It is supported by global policies that are enforced by neutral international institutions and supported by all states. Together, they set limits to the free movement of capital and introduce measures that massively reduce offshore wealth in Switzerland. As a result, financial prosperity and the general standard of living (in terms of material goods) have continued to decline in almost all sections of the population in this country. Only the segment of the population that earns the least has been able to increase its purchasing power thanks to the expansion of the welfare state and the falling cost of living. In particular, the wealth of the wealthiest 20% of the population has decreased. Many material-intensive products that were part of everyday life at the beginning of the century have disappeared from the market. Energy imports have been greatly reduced thanks to lower consumption, particularly in mobility and production, but also in households. Some energy-intensive companies have moved to the energy-safe Mediterranean region, while others have seen their production shrink as demand for their products has fallen sharply. Government intervention and security measures are becoming increasingly rare, and a committed civil society is binding disadvantaged populations together. State intervention and security measures are becoming increasingly rare, and a committed civil society is involving disadvantaged population groups and minorities. Internal security is provided by this intrinsic cohesion despite a very small state security apparatus.

### **2085-2100**

Society has undergone a change in values. Values such as private property, individualism, utility maximisation and self-optimisation have become less important. Instead, personal well-being, community cohesion and solidarity have become central. Immigrants are well integrated into this society and adopt its basic values. The community tolerates differences and unconventional lifestyles - the diversity of life models is very high. The population accepts new technologies as long as they correspond to its basic values, for example if they increase resource

## **Possible development of mobility**

Massive mobility pricing on public transport and motorised private transport, as well as radical spatial planning measures and the taxation of second homes have greatly reduced both commuter and leisure traffic. Today, Switzerland has a decentralised and small-scale structure, with a wide range of services in a small area. Rural centres also have all public services and have grown accordingly. Despite a wide range of Mobility Sharing services, commuting has become so expensive that many people have decided to move to the centres. When people change their place of work, it is now common to also change their place of residence. The rural population outside the centres works locally. The high quality of the social structures and public spaces make it possible for many people to live and spend their leisure time in a relatively small area.

efficiency in production and are accessible and usable for everyone. Companies no longer create new needs; their production, like the economy as a whole, is no longer geared towards growth. Instead, companies and civil society are highly innovative when it comes to cost-effective low-tech, process and social innovations: new ways of designing and using products are created using what is already available. Individual (energy) consumption has once again fallen significantly.

A holistic approach and far-reaching prevention in the healthcare system as well as increased avoidance of life-sustaining measures in old age have reduced healthcare costs. Medical success is measured by the long-term health of patients. - The majority of the population leads a healthy lifestyle.

Many small towns offer good basic services and have become regional centres. In larger cities, the range and public services in the neighbourhoods have become more diverse. Distances are short and active mobility (slow traffic) dominates. The population is rooted locally and the idea of subsidiarity is also very present in public administration. The level of self-sufficiency in food and energy supply is high. Society is strongly linked to agriculture; nature is valued as a basis for production and is managed sustainably. People are establishing new traditions and narratives. The family is important, but it is no longer understood to be the nuclear family of the 20th century, but a community of choice and responsibility that is often larger than the nuclear family.

Switzerland's political relations with other European countries that share similar fundamental values are very close. The EU has reformed itself and gradually adopted federalist structures. Overarching problems are tackled centrally and jointly, but in many areas the member states have extensive freedom of decision - here, too, the principle of subsidiarity applies. Global political organisations are of central importance for international exchange, while economic interdependence is low due to declining economic output and reduced consumption. Trade relations with regions outside the EU are rather rare, partly due to the high transport costs. Switzerland has therefore withdrawn completely from the global trade in raw materials.

## Possible development in the energy sector

The level of self-sufficiency in Switzerland's energy supply for heat and electricity is 80-90%. This is thanks to the expansion of renewable energies and a sharp fall in energy consumption, which has been achieved through both efficiency improvements and energy savings. Energy-intensive industries have largely relocated or become obsolete because demand for their products has fallen sharply. The energy supply consists of many decentralised small systems, which are often operated privately by the population. The population is also involved in planning the energy supply. It is based on a mixture of wind energy, photovoltaics, hydropower, geothermal energy and wood. Solar panels can be found on almost every house roof and on farmland. The systems are accepted by the population as they fulfil high environmental standards. Nevertheless, the obvious land consumption acts as a strong incentive to save additional energy. Switzerland is integrated into the EU electricity market, but the trading volume is low. Because Switzerland is therefore less dependent on international electricity prices and supply capacities, energy prices are high but relatively stable.

## Possible geopolitical situation

Neutral international organisations such as the UN and WTO have gained in importance and promote stability and exchange. China as well as the USA and the EU have lost influence for various reasons (population decline, domestic political problems and lack of consensus). In the other regions of the world, new conglomerates have formed based on shared values or geographical proximity. None of the conglomerates dominates another. The international community has reformed organisations such as the World Bank and the IMF in order to organise global financial equalisation. Political stability has led to a regionally intertwined economy, while global trade volumes have decreased due to self-sufficiency and declining consumption.



## SSP1-CH – Efficient Switzerland

### *Key features*

*Switzerland's energy supply is based entirely on renewable energies. It imports a large proportion of this from neighbouring countries; a close relationship with the EU makes this possible. The economy is innovative and technologised, with highly efficient production processes. There is stable, moderate economic growth, with a considerable proportion of the productivity gains being redistributed to the population as a whole. Switzerland's appeal attracts many people from abroad. The population is open to new ideas and at the same time individualistic.*

## *Development*

### **2024-2035**

The population in Switzerland is growing, mainly because companies are demanding more and more skilled labour from abroad. The companies are specialised and largely export-oriented. Switzerland has continued to lift protectionist measures. International trade and consumption have increased steadily. The economy is growing continuously at a moderate level. The federal government developed a communication strategy back in the 2030s to create a positive attitude towards renewable energies and efficient technologies among the population. As a result, the population has become more open to new technologies. This has accelerated the transformation of the energy system.

### **2035-2060**

Regulations aimed at internalising the external costs of fossil and nuclear energy have made these energy sources more expensive and further promoted the expansion of renewable energies. Switzerland produces electricity with highly efficient hydroelectric, solar and wind power plants, while at the same time being strongly integrated into the international electricity market. The restructuring of the energy system is global, is recommended by international organisations and is supported by the vast majority of governments. At the beginning of the 2060s, there is an extensive international energy.

From the mid-2030s, the federal government increased state social redistribution measures. Initially only slightly, but then more and more drastically over the years. The federal government has continued to increase taxes on profits, inheritance taxes and wealth and income taxes for high incomes in order to siphon off productivity gains from the economy. These are redistributed via state instruments and measures and thus benefit the population as per capita payments or in the form of social benefits, access to education and childcare facilities.

After initial scepticism, ever larger sections of the population are accepting the state's redistribution measures, as people realise that they are geared towards the common good and ultimately benefit the individual. They now have more incentives to have children due to better childcare and education programmes, which slightly increases the birth rate.

Administrative processes will be standardised across all political bodies. Cantons have transferred competences to the federal government, and the federal government has centralised administrative processes more strongly and made them more digital, efficient and faster. In the mid-2040s, the federal government and cantons also introduced strict spatial planning measures to utilise land as efficiently as possible and allocate it to clear uses. For example, high-density construction and local public transport were promoted.

### **2060-2085**

## **Possible development in the agricultural sector**

Agriculture has split into two sectors: food and energy production agriculture, and maintenance agriculture. The former involves highly specialised agricultural production, most of which takes place in efficient, multi-storey greenhouses ('vertical farming'). It consumes a lot of energy but saves resources and land thanks to efficient irrigation and the precise use of fertilisers and pesticides. Meat production has been reduced to a minimum because farming has to take place on limited land and the population wants agriculture with limited animal husbandry. The import of meat is at a manageable level. Milk production has been largely outsourced. Switzerland has a lively international trade in other agricultural products, and a large proportion of its food supply is imported, mainly from neighbouring countries. The level of self-sufficiency is much lower than it was in the 2020s. The land that is freed up is used for energy production using energy crops and solar energy and is maintained by the agricultural sector for nature conservation purposes.

The Swiss economy continues to grow, but less than in previous decades. Immigration of skilled labour is decreasing slightly. On the one hand, this is because companies are demanding fewer skilled workers thanks to significant efficiency gains through the use of new technologies and, on the other, because the quality of life in neighbouring countries has improved. Investments are still being made in new technologies, but fewer people are now needed to develop them. However, the population has grown significantly since the 2020s. The pressure on space is high. Strict spatial planning measures are turning larger cities into liveable, very dense living and working spaces. At the same time, fast, space-saving and capacity-intensive transport links are being built between the cities. Overall, there is sufficient land available for agricultural use, energy production and nature.

Consumption and (international) trade in products remain high. The materials used in production are almost completely recycled and material cycles are closed wherever possible.

Over the decades, the population's trust in the government has been strengthened: Economic and social inequalities are becoming ever smaller thanks to the now established social redistribution instruments, and the quality of life has improved despite the decreasing amount of land available per person. These developments have strengthened social cohesion as a whole, while at the same time people attach great importance to their personal freedom.

### **2085-2100**

The energy supply in Switzerland is based entirely on renewable energies. Energy prices are at an affordable level for everyone, but higher than in the 2020s. Both the energy supply and all other areas of life, such as healthcare and mobility, are highly technologised and very efficient. It

is common to commute (on affordable public transport or in your own vehicle with a highly efficient drive) and to work in different locations. The highly specialised, export-oriented economy is growing at a moderate rate thanks to constant increases in efficiency and productivity. The financial prosperity of the population has increased; income and wealth are more evenly distributed than at the beginning of the century. Education and training opportunities are similar for everyone - the level of education and training among the population is very high. There is a favourable, high-quality and diverse range of state care and nursing services for children, the sick and the elderly. This makes the family as an institution less important. The state also uses its income to subsidise non-profit initiatives and projects that develop and/or use new technologies to solve social problems. Numerous civil society initiatives have emerged that develop digital services. There are also many privately run communication and technology companies that offer various platforms for publishing and exchanging content.

While the influx of skilled labour from neighbouring countries had already levelled off in the second half of the century, immigration from outside Europe remained at a high level after 2085 until it was

## **Possible development in the energy sector**

Switzerland has greatly expanded its energy infrastructure. It has highly efficient hydroelectric, solar and wind power plants as well as large storage capacity. Nevertheless, domestic energy production is not sufficient to cover its own high demand for electricity. Switzerland therefore imports a large proportion of its electricity from renewable sources. Wind energy comes from northern Europe, while substances produced from solar power such as hydrogen, ammonia, synthetic methane, methanol and aluminium come from North Africa, where solar power is generated efficiently in desert areas without any major environmental impact. Switzerland, for its part, exports electricity from pumped storage power plants throughout Europe, thereby helping to balance out seasonal fluctuations in production.

## **Possible development of mobility**

Efficient batteries and hydrogen drives have made it possible to reduce energy consumption per kilometre travelled to a minimum while at the same time satisfying the high mobility demands of the population. Public transport is well developed and affordable. Autonomous vehicles are widespread. Commuting is just as common as travelling long distances for leisure activities. The mobility infrastructure is capacity-intensive and space-saving.

actively managed and regulated. However, the population is stagnating, as life expectancy is high and the birth rate is unchanged.

The vast majority of people now live in densely populated cities. The areas outside the cities are used to produce renewable energy and food or are well-maintained natural areas. Relatively little land is used for agricultural production in relation to the size of the population, firstly because this is highly technologized and largely takes place in autonomous, multi-storey greenhouses with efficient use of resources and secondly because a lot of food is imported. The level of self-sufficiency in food is low, while trade in agricultural products with neighbouring countries is well developed.

Switzerland has very close relations with other countries. It maintains close economic and political dialogue with the EU in particular. This is essential for good trading conditions for goods, services, energy and the immigration of skilled labour. The EU has a flourishing internal market and functioning institutions and regulations, which contributes to its ongoing political and economic stability. The member states have ceded many competences to a strong central government and are politically highly integrated. Expenditure on border protection and the military has been significantly reduced in Switzerland and throughout Europe. At a global level, conflicts have decreased, neutral international organisations carry a lot of weight, and many countries have implemented the globally agreed climate and environmental goals.

## **Possible development in the healthcare sector**

The healthcare system is geared towards research and the development of new technologies. The aim is for everyone to have access to high-quality medical care. Costly life-sustaining measures are the norm. Little is invested in preventive healthcare. Highly specialised medical technology and therapies are reflected in high costs for everyone. People can afford this type of healthcare thanks to their high income and the state's extensive redistribution measures and instruments.

## **Possible geopolitical situation**

The world is organised into various major regional powers that resemble the political and economic alliances of the year 2000, such as an expanded EU, North America, Mercosur and others. New neutral international organisations have been created and strengthened. These are central to global political exchange and trade. There is no dominant superpower. Political exchange and economic integration between the regional powers are intensive. Ambitious global environmental goals promote short cycles and transport routes. Good relations and strong international organisations have led to long-lasting global stability and strong economic interdependence.



## **SSP3-CH – Conflict prone Switzerland**

### *Key features*

*Switzerland has hardly any political or economic relations with other countries. Population and economic output have declined sharply. State institutions are weakened and barely functional, the state can maintain critical infrastructures but has no resources for social policy measures. People help each other by organising themselves into social groups.*

## *Development*

### **2024-2035**

Swiss politics is polarised, with vested interests blocking the development of compromises. Clientelism and corruption are on the rise. Accordingly, some economic sectors and companies receive regulatory and political advantages. On the other hand, companies that do not participate in clientelism or compete with favoured companies are burdened with regulatory or other obstacles. The latter lose their competitiveness as a result - they go bankrupt, go out of business or are taken over by one of the supported companies. Industry monopolies or oligopolies are created. As these rely on the support of the state, they hardly have to invest in new technologies themselves in order to remain competitive. Innovation decreases. While prices rise for consumers, product quality falls. Acceptance of technological innovation is low. Companies need fewer skilled workers because they hardly invest and innovate. As a result, immigration of foreign skilled labour is gradually ebbing away.

### **2035-2065**

The state is cutting social services for the population as part of its cost-cutting measures. This affects most areas, from healthcare and education to pension provision. As many people can no longer count on state support, family structures and neighbourhoods are becoming more important for social security. This goes hand in hand with a strengthening of the values of strong family relationships, traditional role models and local pride. Unemployment rises slowly from the mid-2030s and increases in the following years. Fears for the future spread among the population. Emigration increases and the birth rate falls. By 2065, there are significantly fewer people living in Switzerland than in the 2020s.

The Confederation is cultivating international relations less and less - the credo is to make Switzerland independent of foreign dependencies and obligations. A patriotic mood is spreading among the population. Efforts to achieve autonomy lead to the promotion of agricultural production and the expansion of domestic renewable energies. It is only in the negotiation of trade agreements for the import of raw materials, goods such as oil, electricity or rare earths, that the state is deploying many resources. Other international trade relations are declining because, on the one hand, Switzerland is producing fewer export products and, on the other, foreign demand for Swiss products is falling as neighbouring countries and many other European countries are pursuing similar autonomy efforts. This development also makes it unattractive for Switzerland to import goods. However, increasingly fewer funds are available for the promotion of renewable energies, their expansion is faltering and will ultimately be cancelled due to a lack of resources. The promotion of agriculture is also being cancelled for cost reasons.

### **Possible development in the agricultural sector**

Agricultural production is extensive - i.e. with few industrial additives - and not very technologised. The farmland is cultivated with a lot of manual labour and has a small-scale structure. Large farms are rare. Mainly calorie-intensive crops such as cereals and oilseeds are grown to cover basic needs. Hardly any fodder is grown for livestock and meat consumption has fallen to a mini-mum. Those who want animal products and can afford them keep farm animals privately. Overall, agricultural production is not sufficient to supply the population. Self-sufficiency is therefore widespread, both in urban and rural areas.

### **Possible development in the area of mobility**

Due to high energy prices, people are much less mobile than before. The reduced public transport services due to government cutbacks have not been able to replace private transport. The state no longer maintains parts of the transport infrastructure. This initially led to the growth of large cities as people moved closer to potential places of work. Towards the end of the century, this trend reversed, and people increasingly returned to the countryside. Bicycles and pedestrians account for the largest share of transport.

## **2065-2085**

The Swiss economy produces significantly fewer goods than in the first half of the century, partly because demand has fallen due to the decline in population and income. The volume of international trade is low. Many manufacturing companies have emigrated to more energy-efficient countries, mostly outside Europe, or have had to close down. There is hardly any demand for service companies. The state has almost completely stopped public financial support in favour of the population or companies because its finances have shrunk considerably. The government has centralised itself in order to pool its resources. Independence from foreign influences is still important to it - it only maintains international relations for the bare necessities. This isolation makes it increasingly difficult to maintain basic services for the population and economic structures. Unrest among the population is growing and the government is increasingly preoccupied with crisis management to prevent the country from disintegrating due to internal conflicts. The last welfare state benefits are almost completely cancelled by the mid-2080s. Fears about the future are growing among the population. Many people are emigrating to regions that are doing even better economically. Those who remain in Switzerland move to the cities in the hope of finding work. In rural areas, basic state services have been cancelled. In order to help, support and protect each other, people organise themselves into extended families and clan-like groups.

## **2085-2100**

Political and economic relations with neighbouring countries and third countries are extremely weak. Switzerland has no attractive goods for export and too few resources for import. The countries of Europe and many beyond are similarly isolated and nation centred as Switzerland and have similarly weak economic structures. Only the import of small quantities of fossil fuels still functions quite reliably because the state is prepared to pay a lot for them. Domestic energy production is largely based on old hydroelectric power plants. But even with both together, the population's energy needs cannot be met - shortages and rationing occur. The economy consists mainly of less specialised companies that manufacture products for basic needs. Production is not sufficient to supply the population. The population has declined because many people have emigrated and both the birth rate and life expectancy are low. People who in the 2080s still lived almost exclusively in urban areas - close to the companies that provided work - are now increasingly moving back to the countryside in order to secure their livelihoods through self-sufficiency. Food production

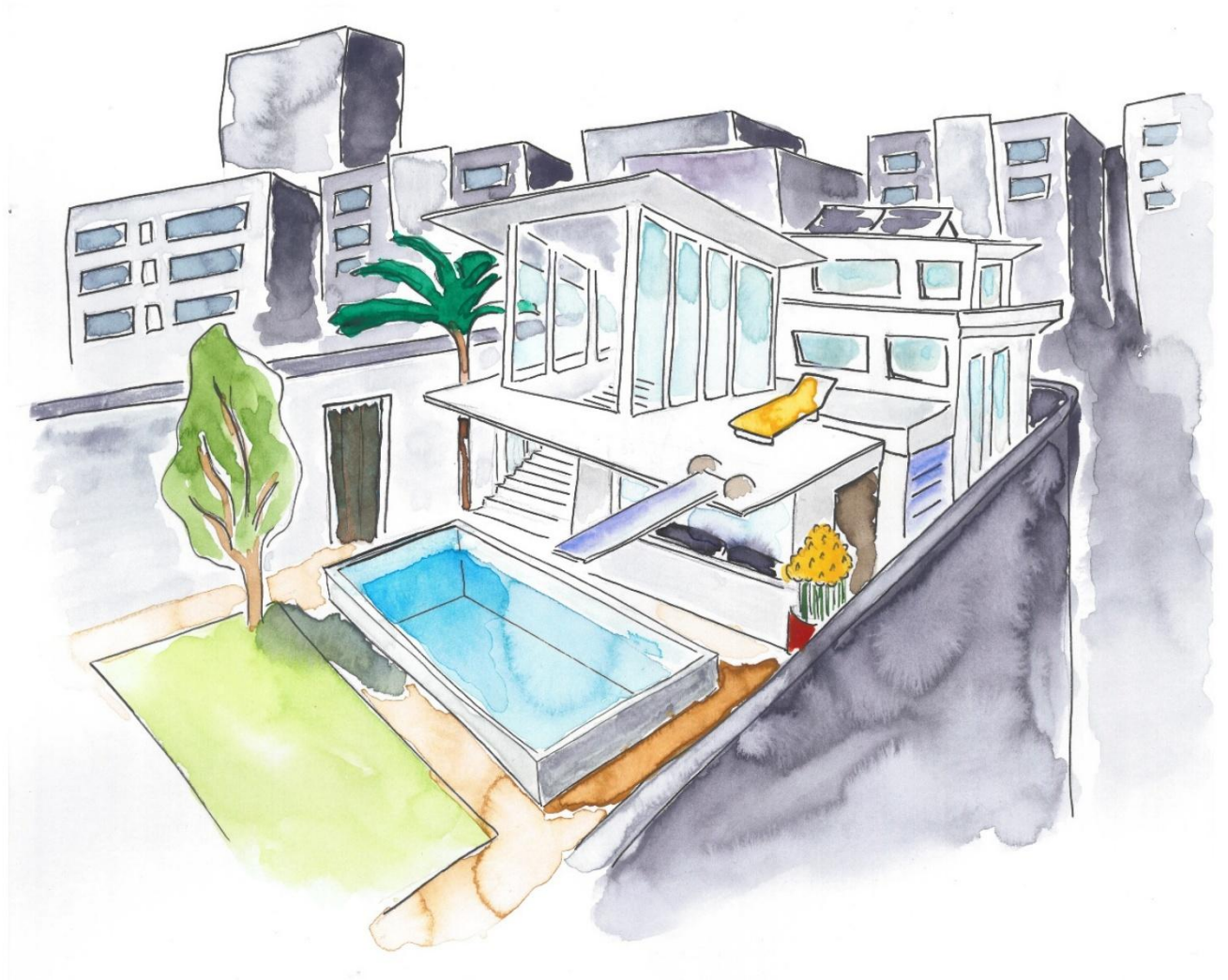
### **Possible development in the energy sector**

Switzerland has virtually no energy trading activities. It only imports small quantities of expensive fossil fuels, for which it is prepared to pay a lot. Fossil fuels are converted into electricity and heat in old gas and heating plants. Domestic energy is mainly produced in old hydroelectric power stations. The state has to ration energy consumption in order to maintain basic economic and social structures. Many private households have small, old photovoltaic systems for their own use.

### **Possible geopolitical situation**

The world is in crisis and countries are focussing on their own problems. There is a strong nationalistic mood. The USA and the EU have been weakened by internal crises. China has lost importance due to its dwindling population. The UN and other neutral international organisations became meaningless, alternative organisations were not created. This increased mistrust between the regional powers. Global specialisation declined, living standards fell worldwide, which further encouraged nationalism and the desire for self-sufficiency. Migration and free trade declined sharply, border controls were reintroduced.

and small animal husbandry are also widespread in cities. Due to the sharp decline in population and the closure and emigration of companies, many once urbanised areas have been abandoned, allowing ecosystems to regenerate. Existential fears prevail among the population. The reduced state endeavours to ensure internal security with its very limited resources or to regulate the allocation of resources (e.g. fossil energy) in order to prevent potential conflicts. It focusses on the appropriate maintenance of security, economic structures and energy supply. Safeguarding national independence is becoming less relevant in view of the tense situation. This development is taking place in a similar way in all European countries. Although the EU still exists, it has lost many member states and has not been able to fulfil its purpose of political and economic integration for some time. International networking is at a low level. International (trade) agreements have been put on hold or not renewed on a large scale in recent decades and international organisations have lost relevance.



## SSP4-CH – Unequal Switzerland

### *Key features*

*Swiss society is divided into two parts. An internationally well-connected elite determines economic and political events. Large sections of the former middle class have disappeared, and the low-wage sector has grown. A high share of society lives in increasingly poorer circumstances.*

### *Developments*

#### **2024-2035**

Thanks to its high level of political stability, Switzerland can continue to expand its prosperity. A liberal economic credo prevails. The state is increasingly privatising welfare state services. It is reducing wealth taxes and lowering the tax burden on companies. In contrast, the tax burden on gainful employment is increasing. The state and companies are investing heavily in technological development. The transformation of the energy sector is being driven forward by the expansion of renewable energies and securing access to the European electricity market. The state is also promoting digitalisation and companies are investing heavily in the development of artificial intelligence and the automation of work processes. As a result, the number of jobs in production and administration is falling. Unemployment is on the rise.

## **2035-2060**

For the most part, only the wealthy segment of the population benefits from the technological innovations that are transforming the labour market. Wealth and income disparities are increasing. The welfare state is being further dismantled due to government austerity measures, while at the same time the tax burden on the lower- and middle-income classes is increasing. Social relegation from the middle class to the lower class is increasing. In order to make ends meet, many people are forced to work longer and longer hours or to take low-paid jobs. At the same time, job vacancies are declining, meaning that unemployment continues to rise and undeclared work is on the increase. The economic elite has a strong influence on politics and steers it according to its own interests or provides the political elite itself. The instruments of direct democracy are being dismantled and the opportunities for political participation are being restricted. There is no resistance to this among the population because they are preoccupied with their own personal problems. Access to privatised services such as education, childcare and healthcare is only guaranteed for a few.

Trade barriers in agriculture have been largely dismantled. Large, highly mechanised agricultural enterprises dominate. The electricity market is fully liberalised, the level of self-sufficiency in energy production is low and most energy is imported.

## **2060-2085**

The skilled workers required for the remaining, highly specialised labour market are recruited internationally. The remaining immigration is highly regulated - interest in immigrating to Switzerland has declined. Large sections of the population are living in increasingly poorer conditions. Many women drop out of the labour market and look after children, the sick and the elderly unpaid. A broad section of the population is emerging that is highly vulnerable, as it has neither sufficient assets nor security in the form of pensions or secure access to privatised basic services, as these are expensive. This segment of the population can hardly afford to live in city centres anymore but is settling in increasingly dense suburban agglomerations. The birth rate is falling, and the population is beginning to shrink.

## **2085-2100**

### **Possible development in the agricultural sector**

Since the 2050s, the average farm size has been increasing, and a new type of farming is emerging: the technical agricultural enterprise. Production is largely automated, and the necessary labour is recruited from the lower classes. Production is large-scale and cost-effective. Genetic engineering is used. The Central Plateau is cultivated by a few farms and the (grain) yields are exported. While intensive dairy farming dominated in the foothills of the Alps in the middle of the century, dairy farms have increasingly withdrawn from Switzerland since 2080 because production abroad has become more favourable for them. Dairy and meat products are imported, but demand for them has declined because the lower classes can afford to consume them less and less.

### **Possible development of mobility**

While the elite utilise energy-intensive global mobility, the distances travelled by the lower classes are becoming increasingly shorter. The wealthiest 20 per cent of the population use international air travel. The rest are largely immobile or use poorly developed public transport. Since the mid-2070s, there has been a decoupling of goods and passenger transport. Due to falling prices for alternative drive systems and new technologies, more and more unmanned delivery robots are being used. Some of the elite own entire fleets of different transport robots - from drones to self-driving small delivery cars. This development has also significantly changed the retail trade. There are hardly any non-food shops left for physical shopping on site. Instead, large warehouses dominate, in which goods robots and drones are loaded with goods ordered online.

Society is divided into two parts. A wealthy elite dominates social and political life. It is well connected internationally and enjoys a high standard of living that is resource intensive.

Numerous former state services have been privatised, and many people can no longer afford them. Those that remain are reduced to a minimum and are of poor quality (education) or overburdened (healthcare). Accordingly, the disparity in society is very high, also in terms of education levels and life expectancy. The maintenance of internal and external security by private security services requires the most state resources.

The Swiss economic and financial centre is small but highly profitable. Trade barriers within the western economic area have been largely dismantled. Massive increases in productivity through technologization and the digitalisation of work processes have led to high unemployment, resulting in a significant reduction in the middle class. The low-wage sector has grown. Large sections of the population are living in precarious conditions, with consumption barely exceeding basic needs. This also applies to mobility behaviour: The lower income groups can barely afford mobility. The economic elite, on the other hand, is globally mobile. The demand for energy is covered by domestic production of renewable energies, Swiss participation in foreign hydrogen production facilities, nuclear power plants, solar and wind parks, as well as good integration into the European electricity market. The elite will continue to use fossil fuels as long as there are no alternatives, for example in air transport.

Agricultural production is completely liberalised, with a few large, financially strong farms producing grain on a large scale and at low cost in the Central Plateau. Towards the end of the century, the dairy industry withdrew from Switzerland because production abroad became more profitable. Milk and meat products are imported. Some of the unused agricultural land in the foothills of the Alps is used as private parks by the wealthy elite, while others are left to run wild. The protection of nature is not a high priority for the population. Nevertheless, biodiversity is less threatened than it was at the beginning of the 2020s. This is because less land is being utilised, allowing previously degraded ecosystems to recover to some extent.

### **Possible development in the energy sector**

Domestic energy production is based on solar, wind, hydro and nuclear energy, but is low overall. Switzerland is therefore dependent on international contracts, some of which energy-intensive industries negotiate directly with international energy suppliers. The resilience of the domestic basic supply is correspondingly low. Swiss companies are increasingly participating in foreign production, with the result that Swiss companies are operating hydrogen, solar, wind and nuclear power plants abroad. The well-connected business elite can secure favourable contracts. The state cushions potential energy price fluctuations for energy-intensive industries. The population adapts its consumption to price fluctuations.

### **Possible development in the healthcare sector**

The socially better-off sections of the population have access to very expensive, personalised therapies, which are mainly offered in specialist clinics for privately insured patients. Research invests heavily in the development of highly specialised technologies for a small, affluent upper class. All life-sustaining medical procedures are carried out. The few state hospitals in which economically weak population groups are treated are decaying.

Social tensions, fear of the future and resentment are on the rise. The prevailing political apathy threatens to turn into protests as poverty increases. However, the state is able to keep the discontent under control.

## **Possible geopolitical situation**

The world is divided into two blocs: the West, which includes the USA and Europe, and China, which has greatly expanded its influence since the 2030s. Many African countries as well as Brazil, India and parts of North Africa and the Middle East have become dependent on China due to financial aid and proximity to the system. China is pursuing an intensive immigration policy to rejuvenate its shrinking population, which is weakening neighbouring countries. Neutral international organisations have lost importance, while security alliances within the blocs dominate. Europe has moved closer to the USA but cannot fully adopt the economic sanctions imposed by the USA against China. Trade relations between the blocs are maintained by a networked global economic elite. Political relations are almost non-existent, and the mobility of goods and people is highly regulated.



## SSP5-CH – Resource intensive Switzerland

### *Key features*

*The Swiss economy grew strongly until the second half of the century thanks to high immigration and a stable political framework. The economy is resource-intensive and based on fossil fuels. Towards the end of the century, resource prices rose massively, which is why many companies went bankrupt. Switzerland has introduced protectionist measures. It has become increasingly isolated economically and politically. After decades of strong immigration, many people have now emigrated again. Natural resources are severely degraded.*

## *Development*

### **2024-2035**

Immigration figures are high, driven by the growing economy's strong demand for labour. However, a lack of integration measures, an unsupportive family policy and scarce old-age pensions mean that some migrants leave Switzerland after 10-20 years. This is compensated for by new labour migrants, resulting in a high fluctuation of workers who adapt to the needs of the growing labour market. Overall, the resident population is growing strongly due to the high level of immigration. This goes hand in hand with a flourishing consumer and export sector and high economic growth. The service sector is strongly developed, and the state does not pursue an innovation and industrial policy, which means that the Swiss economy has lost its innovative strength over the years. Increasing polarisation in the party landscape and parliament is also increasingly leading to political blockades. The resulting limited ability of politicians to act leaves them - and with them society - trapped in traditional structures.

Because the external costs of fossil fuels are not taken into account and environmental standards are dismantled, fossil fuels remain the cheapest form of energy. As a result, the economy and society continue to be based primarily on fossil fuels. Switzerland is dependent on contracts with oil states.

### **2035-2065**

Although the world is increasingly divided into two geopolitical blocs - West and East - trade agreements are still possible and Switzerland's energy situation is relatively stable, secured by energy contracts with oil-exporting countries. The proportion of private transport is high and the transport infrastructure is land intensive. There is a strong expansion of the settlement area on the Central Plateau. Industrial agriculture dominates food production. Its production is energy and resource intensive. In order to meet the population's high demand for food - especially meat - a lot of food is imported, and trade barriers are dismantled.

Individualism and personal freedom are very important to people. Social cohesion is weak. The search for advantages for oneself and one's own family dominates. Traditional role models prevail. Women often take on family care work and do not work, as the labour market is saturated due to the high level of immigration.

The administration has focussed on expanding its workforce in order to meet the needs of the growing population. Increasing efficiency through digitalised and standardised services was not supported by politics or society.

### **2065-2085**

From the middle of the century, political relations between the two geopolitical blocs gradually break down, mutual economic sanctions are imposed and strictly enforced. Many of the countries with which Switzerland had previously concluded energy supply contracts ceased to be energy suppliers. Switzerland competes with other European countries for profitable energy contracts with those oil-producing countries that are part of the West. The federal

## **Possible development in the agricultural sector**

Industrially producing agriculture may not be able to cover the high meat consumption of a growing population, so the degree of self-sufficiency falls until the middle of the century. Towards the end of the century, Switzerland endeavours to increase its level of self-sufficiency again in response to its increasing economic isolation. Production is further intensified: Calorie-intensive production (e.g. grain cultivation) takes place in multi-storey, highly energy-intensive, vertical farms. Cows, pigs and poultry are also often kept in large, sometimes multi-storey barns on the Central Plateau. Milk and meat are also produced on intensively utilised land in the Alps and Alpine foothills. Whatever animal feed can be imported is fed to the animals. As the possibilities for importing fertiliser and fodder diminish, milk and meat production decline. By the end of the century, some of the grassland has been converted into arable land and parts of the foothills of the Alps have been terraced.

government is responding to the rising costs of fossil fuels by increasingly subsidising them from the middle of the century in order to reduce prices. This is at the expense of other areas such as the welfare state, which it continues to cut back. It can no longer maintain its costly administration, which is being dismantled. At the same time, the state is increasingly privatising public services.

As foreign countries have become more attractive compared to Switzerland, far fewer people are immigrating to Switzerland than in previous decades. At the same time, the birth rate and life expectancy are falling. The latter is due to an unhealthy lifestyle with a lot of stress and an unhealthy diet. Dependence on fossil fuels remains high, although they are becoming increasingly expensive due to the short supply. As a result, companies are relocating and closing down, and production and exports are declining. And although the population's financial prosperity is declining, people's preference for fast, cheap consumption has not changed. However, they are less and less able to satisfy their needs. Family cohesion is becoming more important, as people are increasingly dependent on the social security provided by their families.

### **2085- 2100**

Prices for fossil fuels continue to rise. The EU's neighbouring countries, which are themselves dependent on fossil fuels, are competing with each other and with Switzerland for the remaining oil, gas and coal reserves. International solidarity is rapidly declining, and protectionist measures are being introduced. Switzerland, like the other countries in Europe, is increasingly isolated. Because Switzerland has become less attractive as a business location, emigration has skyrocketed. The population is still significantly higher than in the 2020s but is declining. Although this has put a stop to further urban sprawl - the Central Plateau resembles a single contiguous city - the sealing of the area has continued. Since energy prices have risen massively, the transport infrastructure is being used much less. Industrial agricultural production facilities continue to be operated in order to ensure greater self-sufficiency and thus counter Switzerland's increasing economic isolation. High energy prices and dwindling import opportunities for animal feed and

## **Possible development of mobility**

Mobility in Switzerland is heavily based on fossil fuels. Both leisure and commuter traffic reached a very high level in the middle of the century, and the distances travelled were long. The transport infrastructure for private transport was greatly expanded and accordingly takes up a lot of space. Since the rise in the price of fossil fuels, private transport has declined sharply. By the end of the century, only the richest 20% of the population will be able to afford stable individual mobility and air travel. The international transport of goods will also decrease towards the end of the century, firstly because of the decline in consumption due to the fall in prosperity, and secondly because of the increasingly polarised world order and trade restrictions.

## **Possible development in the energy sector**

The expansion of renewable energies has hardly been driven forward. In the meantime, the raw materials for their expansion have become so scarce and access to them so difficult that this is hardly possible anymore. With long-term contracts, it is trying to meet the high demand of the large resident population and the resource-intensive economy with imports of fossil energy. In order to conclude the contracts and secure the transport routes, Switzerland is forced to fulfil terms and conditions that are rarely in its favour. Due to the geopolitical situation, more and more energy agreements are cancelled towards the end of the century. Energy prices rise sharply. European countries are competing for the remaining fossil resources

## **Possible geopolitical situation**

The world is divided into two blocs, the West with Europe and the USA and the East dominated by China, to which many of the countries colonised in the 20th century turned over the course of the century. Up until the 2060s, Europe had made great efforts to bring all productive industries back to the continent in order to free itself from dependence on China. On the other hand, Europe remained dependent on fossil fuels sourced from oil-producing countries that were still allies. While the economy was still strongly intertwined globally until the middle of the century, trade flows and global specialisation declined sharply thereafter. Both blocs are very isolated from each other, both politically and economically, which has meant a significant shortage of resources (especially fossil fuels) for the West. Security alliances play a very important role. Cultural and systemic rifts have also deepened between the various regions within the blocs - each country is closest to itself and is trying to strengthen its own self-sufficiency.

fertilisers are causing food prices to rise, resulting in a drop in meat consumption. The population's income and wealth have fallen significantly over the last 15 to 20 years, which has also led to a drop in consumption of products and services. Even the privatised, once public services (education, healthcare, care facilities, pension funds, etc.) are becoming less and less affordable for people, or they no longer have access to them because the companies that provided them have gone bankrupt or emigrated as a result of the deteriorating economic situation. The state is confronted with massive environmental problems and corresponding costs and is no longer able to cope with these challenges due to the dismantled administration and polarised politics. The government is taking on autocratic traits, as the crises require rapid action without long processes of public participation. Measures are increasingly being implemented by emergency law.