

Stop the zero-risk policy

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The Association of Swiss Private Banks (ASPB) has published its 2020 [Annual Report](#), which summarises the key events in the financial sector between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. The past year has of course been marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, a challenge which the banks and their supervisor, the FINMA, have met pragmatically. But the last twelve months have also been marked by the strengthening of fear and risk aversion. A trend that must be urgently reversed.

For example, the law that was to introduce an electronic identity was rejected in a popular vote, following fears that private companies would abuse personal data, even though they would have been monitored, and the law on data protection has just been completely revised and reinforced.

And above all, giving up on the framework agreement with the EU gives the victory to those who spread negative emotions instead of sticking to the text. A text that provided that Switzerland, either its Parliament or its people, could refuse any development that it would not like; it would have remained sovereign, which was probably not said enough.

The Federal Council has thus not solved anything and will have to redouble its efforts to preserve Switzerland's prosperity. Let us hope that it will be able to take courageous decisions, such as those that led it to pursue a mutual recognition agreement for financial services with the United Kingdom or to adapt the federal law to the developments of the distributed ledger technology, which allows trading in digital assets.

In any case, the ASPB will ensure in the coming months that Parliament sees not only the risks but also the opportunities, notably in the development of sustainable finance and the necessary trimming of the withholding tax and the stamp duty. These two themes also come together in the area of so-called green bonds, which will have to be issued in huge quantities, given the numerous investments required to transform our society. Here too, we should not be afraid of failure: it is only a step towards success.

This is a free translation of the article published in 'Agefi of June 8, 2021