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DEMOGRAPHIC AGEING IN SWITZERLAND – THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF A MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE

The ongoing demographic ageing of Switzerland's population (by 2030 the number of 65+ and 80+ citizens will increase by 50% and 60% respectively) calls for innovative approaches that have to take into consideration not only ageing itself, but also differentiated structures and aspirations. Factors such as social status, health, education and financial security result in significant differences within and between the ageing and other cohorts therefore requiring tailored solutions. New forms of housing and care models as well as mobility, security and the integration of ageing people in daily community life are just some examples that have to be addressed.

In addition, Switzerland's rapid demographic ageing will make it increasingly difficult to sustain the currently very generous Swiss social security system which is based on three pillars. The growing share of elderly people and continuous low birth rates will be a particular challenge for funding fairly soon. Consequently, it is inevitable to think about new options which have to lead to better financing solutions of pensions and entitlements. Possible approaches are higher and longer monetary contributions during the working life period. The sophisticated and only way is to shift from predefined and fixed retirement plans to flexible working-life balance schemes which take longer life expectancies into account.

Ageing has many faces and never before in history have retired people had so much high-quality time after retirement as today – often 20 years or more. This poses an inexhaustible level of possibilities which must be used for innovative approaches in business and society. At the same time it is essential to aim for a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. Its importance is based on the fact that demographic shifts always lead to huge challenges within our social systems, our communities and business. It is therefore imperative that not only representatives from politics and economics engage in the solution process but rather that an interdisciplinary exchange – with the inclusion of a broad spectrum of players – takes place. The ultimate and shared objective is: Flexible and sustainable solutions to the Megatrend «Demographic Change».

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