



European Policy & Open Markets, Industrial Policy, International Market Access

"Buy European": ***First positive signals*** for Switzerland

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At a glance

- Simplified approval procedures and more "Made in Europe" are intended to strengthen European industry in key areas and make it more competitive internationally.
- Bids from Swiss companies should in principle be treated equally to bids from the EU in certain public tenders under the Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA).
- The published proposal is positive for Switzerland. However, the legislative process has only just begun and must continue to be closely monitored.

With the Industrial Accelerator Act (IAA) published yesterday the EU Commission is pursuing the goal of simplifying and digitalizing approval procedures for sustainable industrial projects. In addition, industrial production within the EU is to be increased to 20% of gross domestic product and dependence on third countries in key industrial sectors is to be reduced.

The focus is particularly on strengthening the competitiveness of the European manufacturing industry against low-cost competition from abroad. The focus is on energy-intensive sectors, automotive value chains and net-zero technologies, which are important for a sustainable industrial transformation and robust supply chains. For example, low-carbon steel and aluminum in particular are to be used in the automotive industry in the future. The law also provides for "Made in EU" requirements for critical components in the production of sustainable energy, such as batteries, heat pumps or wind turbines, provided they are financed through public tenders. In addition, "Made in EU" provisions are to be introduced for electric vehicles and their components.

Public procurement remains open to partner countries under certain conditions

The EU Commission wants to continue working with trusted partners ("**trusted partner**") in public tenders. Bids from third countries are to be accepted if they grant equal treatment to EU companies when awarding public contracts and meet certain conditions. Bids from companies from these countries are to be treated as equivalent to "Made in EU" bids.

Good starting position for Switzerland as a "trusted partner"

It was previously unclear whether Switzerland would be part of the new "Buy European" strategy. The published proposal is positive in this respect. As a close economic partner of the EU and participant in the WTO Agreement on Government Procurement, Switzerland should continue to be considered a "trusted partner". As a result, it can be assumed that bids from Swiss companies will generally be treated equally to bids from the EU in certain public tenders under the IAA.

In addition, Switzerland is closely integrated into the European Economic Area through various agreements. The linking of emissions trading systems means that the conditions for CO₂ emissions in Switzerland are already comparable to those in the EU. In addition, the bilateral agreement on public procurement extends the scope of the WTO agreement and also includes investments in sustainable energy infrastructure - an important area of the IAA. Should an early adjustment to the Agreement on Government Procurement be necessary for an even better integration of Swiss companies into the European value chain, the Bilaterals III form a good basis for this.

European preference and "Buy European" will remain an issue in the future

The EU Commission's proposal must now be discussed and approved by the EU Parliament and the Council of the European Union. This may take up to two years. Some adjustments may still be made. Only the final result will make it possible to assess what concrete impact the IAA will have on the Swiss economy. In any case, the EU Commission's proposal creates the opportunity for Swiss companies in important industrial sectors to continue to participate in European value chains.



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