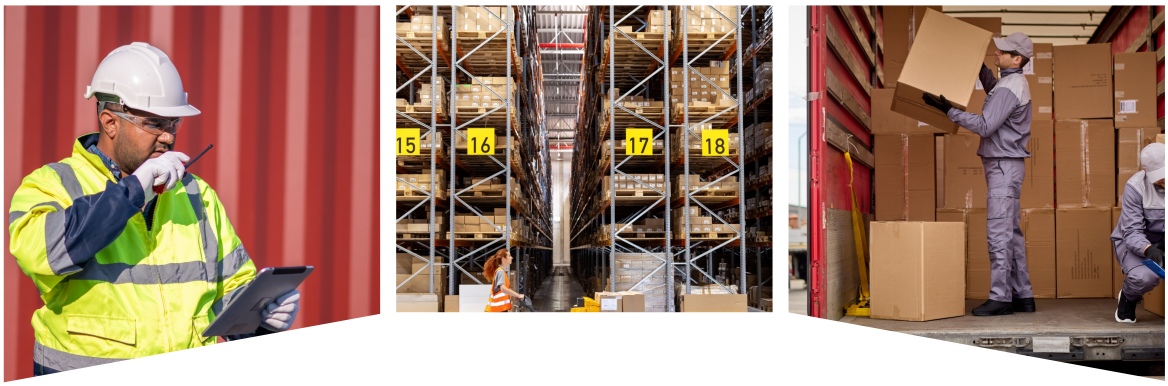


International Market Access

Globalization Remains Strong: Switzerland Must Continue to ***Commit to Open Markets***

25.11.2026

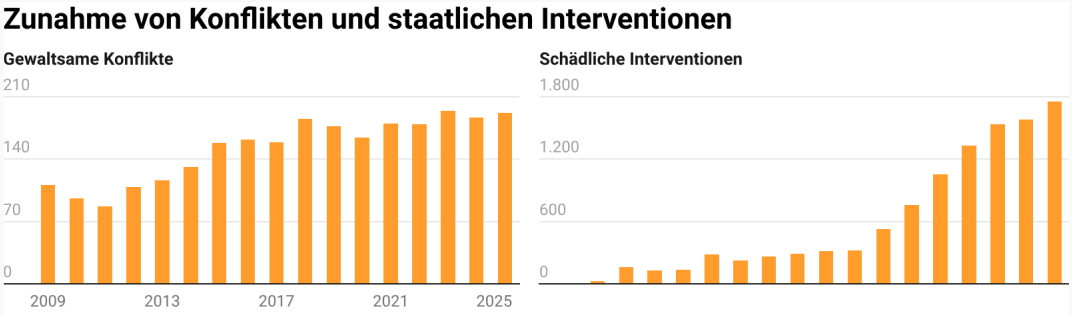
At a glance

- Conflicts, sanctions, and government intervention have increased significantly in recent years.
- Despite these developments, globalization has not yet come to a halt.
- Switzerland must continue to consistently prioritize openness, diversification, and the best possible framework conditions.

The headlines of recent years paint a bleak picture: wars, sanctions, tariffs, and subsidy programs worth billions. It is often said that globalization is coming to an end. A look at the data tells a different story.

The environment has become harsher

Although the environment has become more challenging, international interdependence remains high. The number of armed conflicts has risen in recent years. For companies, this generally means more sanctions, export controls, and investment restrictions. Geopolitical tensions are increasing pressure on supply chains and making it more difficult to access markets, technologies, and capital. Uncertainty has also risen noticeably as a result of these conflicts. At the same time, governments are once again intervening more heavily in trade, as data from Global Trade Alert shows. This trend is driven primarily by major industrialized nations: Through subsidies, tax incentives, and local-content regulations, they are attempting to strengthen domestic production of certain technologies.

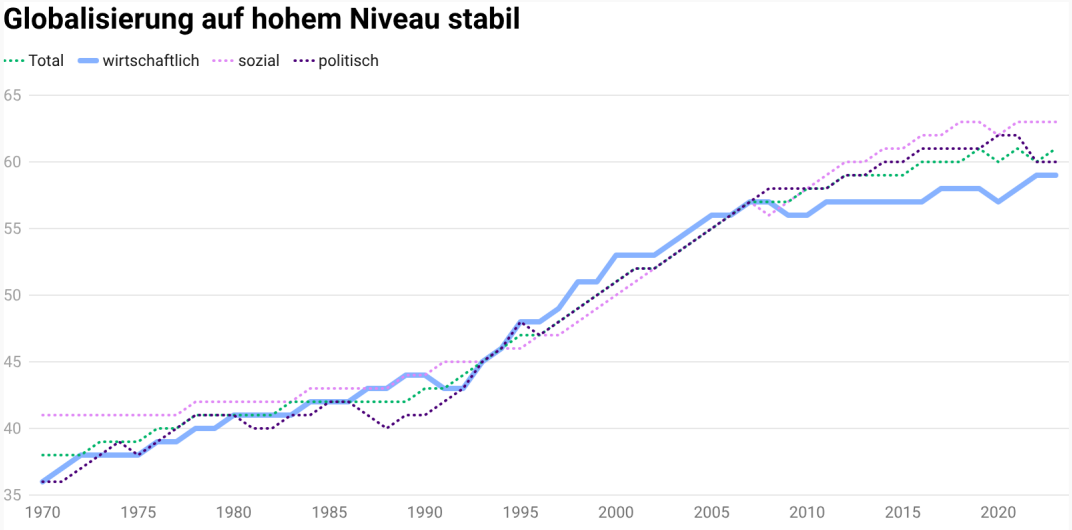


Zahl der gewaltsamen Konflikte gemäss Uppsala Conflict Data Program (links) & Zahl der schädlichen Interventionen gemäss Global Trade Alert (rechts)

Grafik: Guido Saurer - economiesuisse • Quelle: Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Global Trade Alert • Erstellt mit Datawrapper

Globalization Remains Strong

Despite these challenges, globalization has not come to a halt. The KOF Globalization Index from ETH Zurich shows that, following the sharp rise since the 1990s, economic integration has stagnated at a high level since the financial crisis. However, it has not declined. There is a simple reason for this: Companies have adapted and diversified their supply chains rather than withdrawing from the global market. The division of labor, specialization, and free trade offer such significant benefits to all parties that policymakers cannot simply reverse them.



Globalisation Index des KOF Institut der ETH Zürich.

Grafik: Guido Saurer - economiesuisse • Quelle: KOF • Erstellt mit Datawrapper

A Reason for Optimism for Switzerland

For Switzerland, this resilience is an encouraging sign. As a small, internationally interconnected economy, it depends on open markets. It can neither exert pressure through tariffs nor win subsidy races against the major economic powers. Its strength lies in openness, diversification, cooperation with reliable partners, and the best possible framework conditions. And this strategy must be pursued with determination—not in spite of, but because global developments are moving in the opposite direction.

Read more about this in our Working Paper.



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