



Press release

Academies publish white paper on the Future of Education in Switzerland Gaining higher degrees, developing more competencies

Berne, 31 August 2009. In the future, over two thirds of a class should gain a qualification for tertiary education. At the same time, the development of interpersonal skills need to be supported. Education should not just provide the knowledge to perform professional duties; it should also provide a deeper understanding in order to deal appropriately with the world and society. This is what the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences are proposing in their white paper 'Zukunft Bildung Schweiz' which defines the requirements on the Swiss education system in 2030 using a scenario to describe the future understanding of education in Switzerland. It makes recommendations on the Swiss education strategy and describes its implementation in a roadmap. A public debate on the white paper will be held on 24 September 2009.

The Swiss national education system is confronted with new challenges. Global developments in the areas of economics, communications technology, the environment and science are having a long-term impact on social, cultural and political life. The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences consider education to be the most important strategic investment Switzerland can make – whether people are able to utilise these changes for their individual and collective well-being, and whether the values and wishes of society can be successfully retained and developed over the long-term, all depend on it. In light of this, the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences presented on Monday a white paper on the future requirements on the Swiss education system. And they invite people to attend a public debate on 24 September 2009 in Biel.

Supporting particular talents at an early stage

The white paper 'Zukunft Bildung Schweiz' outlines how the education in 2030 might look like. The focus lies on people being able to comprehensively develop their competencies and making them capable of participating in public life in an active and self-determined way. The 2030 scenario is based on supporting particular talents at an early stage. At the same time, an elementary understanding of science and technology is also an integral part of general education. The proportion of tertiary qualifications is noticeably higher. Training periods are more flexible in design and a higher weighting is given to non-scholastic informal learning. Comprehensive foundations in information technologies belong to the schools' core mandate as well as the appropriate training of teachers.

Further developing the Swiss education system at a national level

The Academies propose simplifying and harmonising the structures of the entire Swiss education system; they also recommend further developing the education system at a national level. This requires both a strategy which has a stronger international focus than previously and a Swiss Federal institution which implements this strategy. Furthermore, the Academies recommend to aligning the education to a set of key and minimum competencies. Further improvements are necessary such as in terms of selection and support, course contents and their prioritisation, coordination of educational levels, the relationship between formal and informal education as well as collaboration between those responsible for education and training. The white paper 'Zukunft Bildung Schweiz' illustrates appropriate implementation steps in a roadmap.

Useful information

White paper 'Zukunft Bildung Schweiz'
Download from www.akademien-schweiz.ch

Debate on 'Zukunft Bildung Schweiz'
24 September 2009, 13:30-17:30, Kongresszentrum Biel
For the programme and how to register visit www.satw.ch/future

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The **Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences** are an association of four Swiss scientific academies: the Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT), the Swiss Academy of Humanities and Social Sciences (SAGW), the Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences (SAMW) and the Swiss Academy of Engineering Sciences (SATW). Along with the four Academies, they also comprise the TA-SWISS Centre of Excellence and further scientific networks. The Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences link the sciences at a regional, national and international level. They represent the science communities both at a disciplinary and interdisciplinary manner as well as independently of institutions and subjects. Their network has a long-term focus and is committed to scientific excellence. They advise politicians and society on knowledge-based and socially-relevant issues.