Green pasture

Switzerland is a model country in almost all respects. Its strengths include the stability and quality of democracy, an efficient rule of law, an excellent state education and research system and a competent public transport system. The country is also doing well from an economic point of view. Switzerland is one of the richest countries in the world, but the gap between rich and poor is relatively small. Moreover, at 2.4%, the unemployment rate is the lowest in ten years and the social security provided by the state is comprehensive. As a result, the Swiss people express high satisfaction with their lives and the political system. The situation is less favourable for some of the immigrants in the country. More than 30% of the workforce comes from abroad. Migrants with low qualifications are often exposed to hostility, accused of overstraining the social system and the tight housing market. As a result, right-wing populism has recently increased throughout the country and the Swiss People’s Party (SVP) has become the strongest political force. The SVP is in favour of an immigration ceiling that would violate the bilateral agreements with the EU.

Elections

With pronounced plebiscitarian Elements in a stable representative system, Switzerland is close to the democratic ideal. To a great extent, decisions are taken by referendum in Switzerland. This results in a high level of satisfaction and strong identification with the political system within the population.

Freedom of speech

The freedom and independence of public and private media is enshrined in the constitution. The increasing conglomeration of private media is critically observed, but the diversity of the media landscape is still great.

Civil rights protection

Civil rights are guaranteed by the constitution. There is no traditional constitutional court, but the judiciary at cantonal and federal level reliably protects citizens’ rights. There is some debate over the question of whether plebiscites can potentially restrict certain civil rights.

Social inclusion

The social security provided by the state is effective and comprehensive. As a result, the country has largely managed to prevent poverty, and income disparities are also moderate. Tensions exist because parts of the population perceive the social system as abused by migrant workers.

Corruption prevention

Corruption is rare. Switzerland is a world leader in the prevention of corruption. Efficient controls, the unambiguous legal framework and high wages for public sector employees reduce the attractiveness of office abuse.

Look up the detailed SGI 2017 country report on Switzerland here:

www.sgi-network.org/2017/Switzerland