

# Will Covid-19 pave the way for more business responsibility? Evidence from Switzerland

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Our current economic system is facing [growing challenges](#) that lead people to call into question its social acceptance and legitimacy. The global economy is harshly criticized for its contribution to environmental damage, the neglect of human rights, and growing levels of social and economic inequality. As a result, [societal trust](#) in business firms and the [free market economy](#) is declining. Yet, while business firms increasingly embrace corporate social responsibility and related concepts, the impact on actual working practices and ways of organizing the economy is marginal. Most citizens continue supporting the current social and economic system and do too little to change the status quo. Even though fair trade and sustainable products are more fashionable, [consumption in these segments remains relatively low](#). Most consumers still value low prices over human rights and environmental sustainability.

Will the Covid-19 pandemic change peoples' opinions and demands concerning business responsibility? There are conflicting predictions. A first scenario suggests that the pandemic may accelerate the transition towards a sustainable economy and can help establish [alternative forms of doing business](#). It construes the pandemic as breaking [routines](#) and, as a result, generating new thinking and worldviews. Citizens can learn from the pandemic to adapt their consumption and focus more on solidarity. Moreover, the pandemic put many issues of the economic system in the spotlight, which could also motivate stronger and more persistent demands for change.

Conversely, a second scenario suggests that the Covid-19 pandemic will slow down or even prevent demands for business responsibility. In this view, the pandemic and its social and [economic](#)

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[consequences](#) will make it harder to mobilize the necessary resources to facilitate change. Many people lost their job during the pandemic, and for the unemployed it is now more challenging to find a new job. Hence, many people might negate risky investments for the unforeseeable future, even if they are necessary for the transition towards a sustainable future. In addition, research from political psychology suggests that system threats, such a pandemic, mostly lead to a [stronger justification and support of the existing system](#). The pandemic is thus believed to [stabilize and perpetuate the status quo](#); even worse, it may resurrect old habits and extinguish emerging demands for changes in the business system.

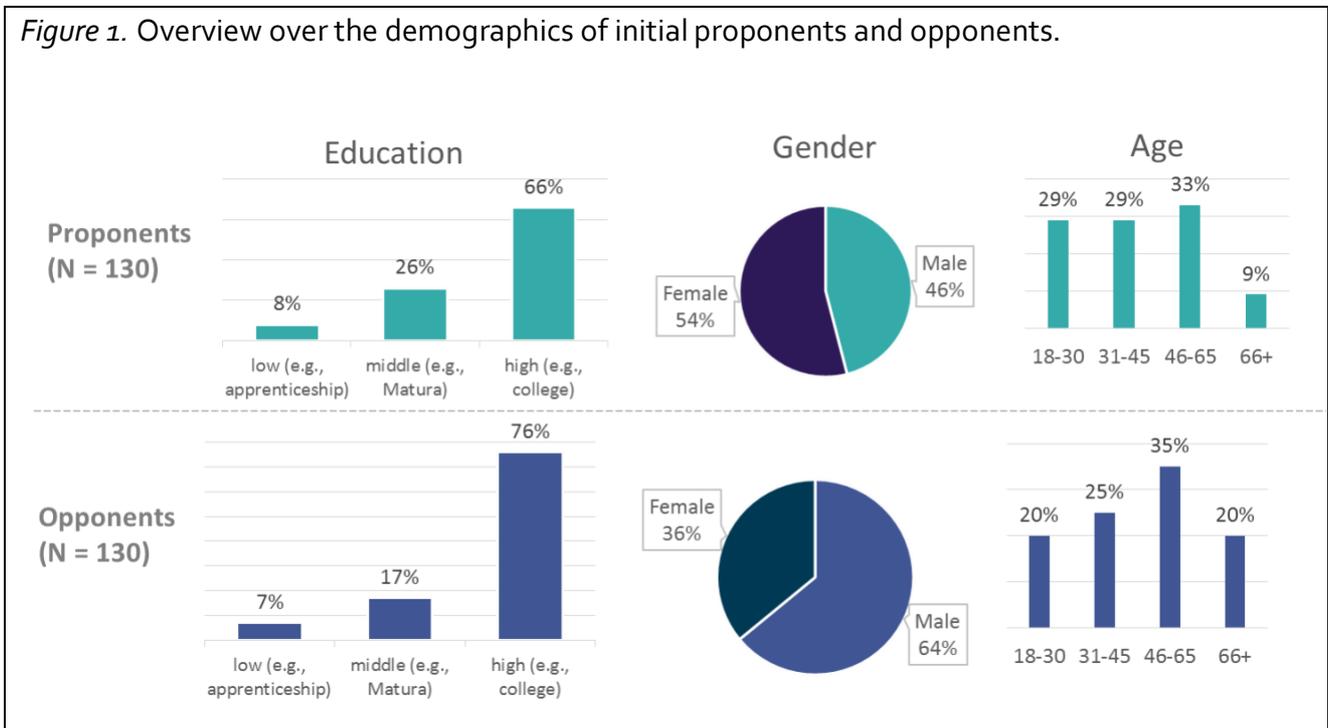
Which scenario is more likely? What will citizens, consumers and employees expect from business firms in the near future?

### ***Case in point: The responsible business initiative***

The [responsible business initiative](#) in Switzerland offers a unique opportunity to understand how citizens' expectations and support for responsible business has shifted in the wake of the pandemic. Switzerland's direct democracy allows its citizens to vote for or against changes in federal regulations that are brought up by popular initiatives. The responsible business initiative demands that Swiss-based firms conduct due diligence and must be liable for human rights abuses and environmental violations caused abroad. In an international comparison, this proposition would join the ranks of few [comparable regulations of other countries](#), such as in France or the UK. However, the initiative's demands are among the strictest and could make Switzerland a pioneer in the business and human rights context. In November 2020, Swiss citizens can vote in favor or against these regulatory changes. Accordingly, for Switzerland, the year of the Covid-19 pandemic is also the year of a very important business responsibility decision. A vote in favor of the initiative could trigger a seismic shift both nationally and internationally.

We conducted a survey to explore how Covid-19 affects the way Swiss citizens see business responsibility and specifically the responsible business initiative. In cooperation with the Swiss market research institute [intervista](#), we conducted the survey in two waves, one shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic started in Switzerland (January 2020) and another one during the pandemic (May 2020). We recruited 266 participants from both the supporting (N = 130) and opposing camps

(N = 136; see Figure 1 for more details on the samples) and measured how their judgements about the initiative shifted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, we asked them in both waves to indicate their personal legitimacy judgement (i.e., propriety<sub>5</sub>) and their beliefs about Swiss citizens' collective approval (i.e., validity beliefs<sub>5</sub>) about the initiative. Moreover, we presented 6 popular arguments in favor and 6 popular arguments against the initiative and asked the participants to choose the arguments they would use in a conversation about the initiative (see table A1-A2 in appendix for a list of all arguments). In the second wave, we additionally inquired about perceived Covid-19 risks (e.g., economic and health related risks) and general expectations regarding the role of executive management in the Covid-19 pandemic (e.g., allocation of financial resources; contribution to the common good).



Overall, our analysis reveals a shift towards more favorable propriety judgements of the responsible business initiative ( $M_{w1} = 3.54$ ;  $M_{w2} = 3.66$ ;  $p = .07$ ). Nearly 30% of the participants had a significantly better judgement during the pandemic than before the pandemic. In turn, only 15.8% judged the initiative to be less legitimate during the pandemic. Interestingly, especially the initial

<sup>5</sup> [Academic research on legitimacy](#) differentiates between propriety judgments and validity beliefs, when analyzing legitimacy evaluations. Hereby, propriety judgments are defined as individual evaluations of a legitimacy object's appropriateness (i.e., whether an individual privately endorses the object). Validity beliefs are defined as individual beliefs about the general evaluation of the object in society (i.e., what others generally perceive to be appropriate).

opponents changed their minds and became less extreme in their negative propriety judgements of the initiative ( $M_{w1} = 2.33$ ;  $M_{w2} = 2.83$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Of the initial opponents, 39% had a positive change and only 8.1% a negative change. However, there was also a small yet significant negative shift in legitimacy judgements among the initial proponents ( $M_{w1} = 4.79$ ;  $M_{w2} = 4.53$ ;  $p = .01$ ). In this initially supportive group, 23.8% had a negative change and 18.5% a positive change in propriety judgements. Figures 2 and 3 summarize the changes in propriety judgements about the responsible business initiative before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Figure 2. Change in mean scores of propriety judgements about the responsible business initiative before (January) and during the Covid-19 pandemic (May).

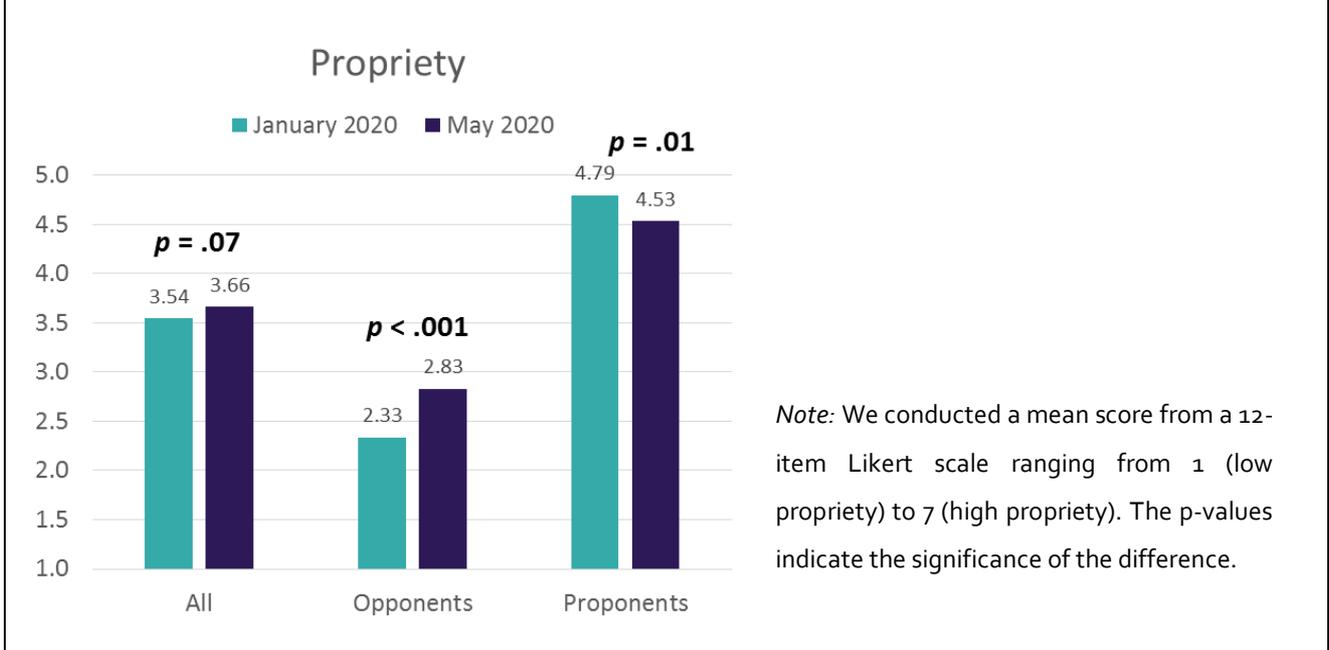
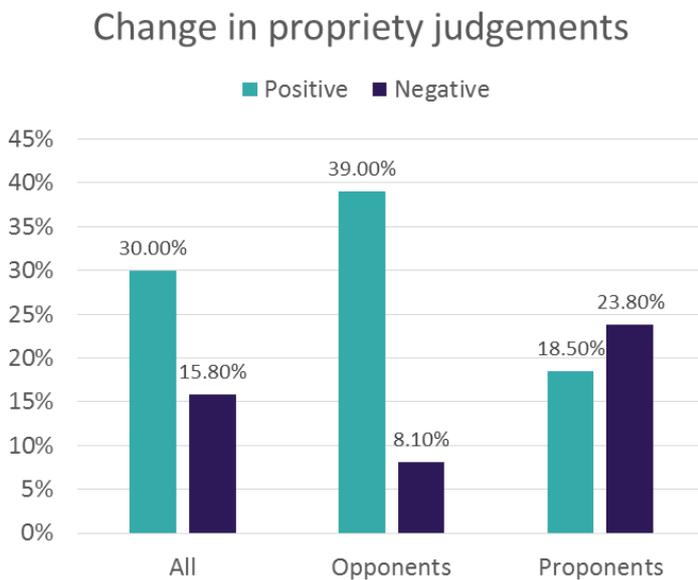


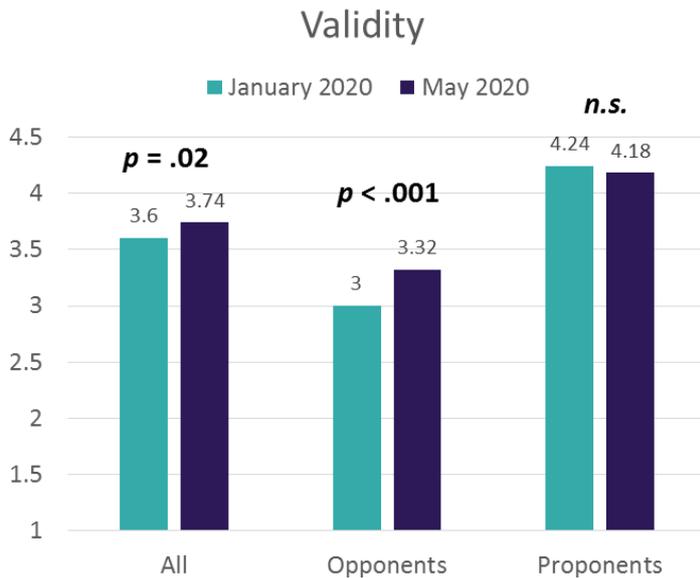
Figure 3. Positive versus negative change in propriety judgements about the responsible business initiative before (January) and during the Covid-19 pandemic (May).



Note: To aggregate change scores we subtracted the mean of the January evaluation from the May evaluation. All change scores with a change above +0.50 were interpreted as positive change and all change scores below -0.50 were interpreted as negative change.

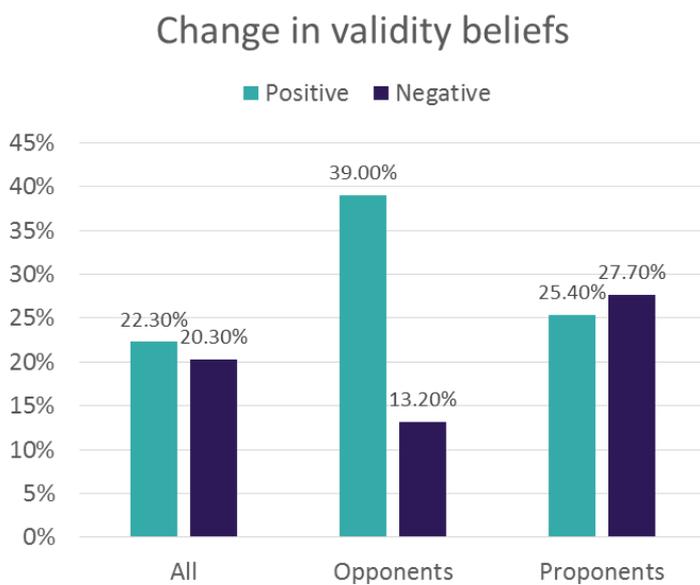
Moreover, we asked participants to indicate their beliefs about the collective Swiss approval of the responsible business initiative. Apart from individual propriety judgments, validity beliefs can be consequential for the formation and change of propriety judgments. Beliefs about the majority opinion affect an individual's own opinion formation and can silence the dissemination of deviant opinions, especially if individuals are uncertain about their own judgments. Comparable with changes in propriety judgements, the validity beliefs also became more positive ( $M_{W1} = 3.60$ ;  $M_{W2} = 3.74$ ;  $p = .02$ ). Overall, 32.3% had a positive change in their validity beliefs and 20.3% a negative change. Again, the change in validity beliefs was stronger for initial opponents ( $M_{W1} = 3.00$ ;  $M_{W2} = 3.32$ ;  $p < .001$ ) compared to initial proponents ( $M_{W1} = 4.24$ ;  $M_{W2} = 4.18$ ; *not significant*). Of the initial opponents, 39% had a positive change and 13.2% a negative change in validity beliefs. In turn, 25.4% of the initial proponents had a positive change and 27.7% a negative change in validity beliefs. Figures 4 and 5 summarize the changes in validity beliefs about the responsible business initiative before and during the Covid-19 pandemic. Overall, our data implies a positive shift in propriety judgements and validity beliefs, especially for initial opponents.

Figure 4. Change in mean scores of validity beliefs about the responsible business initiative before (January) and during the Covid-19 pandemic (May).



Note: We conducted the mean score from a 12-item Likert scale ranging from 1 (low validity beliefs) to 7 (high validity beliefs). The p-values indicate the significance of the difference.

Figure 5. Positive versus negative change in validity beliefs about the responsible business initiative before (January) and during the Covid-19 pandemic (May).



Note: To aggregate change scores we subtracted the mean of the January evaluation from the May evaluation. All change scores with a change above +0.50 were interpreted as positive change and all change scores below -0.50 were interpreted as negative change.

The individual perception of different Covid-19 risks, moreover, influenced the shift in opponents' and proponents' propriety judgements differently. The more the initial opponents were concerned about losing their job or having difficulties finding new employment, the more negative their legitimacy judgment. By contrast, initial proponents' propriety judgements were mostly influenced by health risks. The more they feared that someone close to them could get infected, the more supportive their judgement of the initiative.

In addition to changes in opinion, we also discerned that the choice of arguments changed during the pandemic. The choice of specific arguments sheds light on the mindsets and narratives underlying individual convictions and judgement formations. Furthermore, the popularity of certain arguments can predict the predominant narratives within a public discourse that eventually may influence voting behavior and policy outcomes. As anticipated, overall, proponents chose more positive arguments, whereas opponents chose more negative ones in both waves. However, opponents chose significantly less negative, relative to positive, arguments during the pandemic ( $M_{W1} = -1.99$ ;  $M_{W2} = -1.54$ ;  $p = .02$ ). The popular argument that the initiative would endanger the Swiss economy and jobs, in particular, was chosen significantly less among opponents during the pandemic than before ( $M_{W1} = 68\%$ ;  $M_{W2} = 51\%$ ;  $p = .001$ ; see argument C2 in Table 1). We also examined the type of pro and contra arguments the participants chose (see Table 1 for top 3 arguments on each side and Table A1 and A2 in appendix for an overview of all arguments). Theoretically, one could assume that proponents think mostly morally (i.e., "responsible business is the right thing to do"), whereas opponents think mostly economically (i.e., "it costs too much to implement responsibility"). However, this pattern did not materialize in our data. Interestingly, the opponents chose a moral counter-argument most often that criticizes the "legal imperialism" of the initiative (see argument C1 in Table 1). By contrast, the proponents relied mostly on a rather economic pro-argument that the initiative could improve the reputation of Switzerland and thereby strengthen its attractiveness and competitive position (see argument P1 in Table 1).

Table 1. Top arguments of opponents and proponents.

Top 3 contra arguments of opponents	Top 3 pro arguments of proponents
<p><b>C1) Swiss judges would have to decide on matters abroad under Swiss law.</b> It is very difficult or even inappropriate to enforce Swiss law on matters in other countries where other rights and values prevail. Some even criticize this process as "legal imperialism", whereby Switzerland forcibly imposes its rights on other countries. The initiative thus contradicts central criteria of an international application of law. (M1= 65%; M2= 63%)</p>	<p><b>P1) Swiss business firms that disregard human rights and environmental standards harm Switzerland's reputation.</b> As the home base of many international companies, Switzerland has a great responsibility to contribute to international efforts to strengthen human rights and environmental protection. Implementation of the initiative would strengthen Switzerland's reputation as a pioneer in social issues. (M1= 61%; M2= 61%)</p>
<p><b>C2) The initiative endangers the Swiss economy and jobs.</b> Many companies could relocate their headquarters abroad from Switzerland for fear of high costs due to legal action. Many jobs would also be lost as a result. In addition, Switzerland as a business location would lose much of its attractiveness. The initiative therefore endangers the prosperity of the Swiss. (M1= 68%; M2= 51%)</p>	<p><b>P2) The preservation of human rights and an environment worth living in should always come before commercial interests and is therefore considered a duty - not a voluntary addition.</b> Opponents of the initiative advocate a voluntary approach to responsibility. However, this is not enough when fundamental human rights and environmental standards are threatened. After all, voluntariness also enables economic interests to be given priority over human and environmental rights. The initiative aims to transform the voluntary nature of adhering to minimum ethical standards into an indispensable obligation. (M1= 55%; M2= 57%)</p>
<p><b>C3) The implementation of the initiative would require enormous financial and time resources from some companies, which would also distort competition.</b> Companies that have many foreign operations (for example, many foreign producers) would have to invest millions to be able to control them sufficiently. These companies would also be subject to many burdensome bureaucratic requirements, which would take a lot of time to process. This would put companies that would be particularly affected by the corporate justice initiative at a severe competitive disadvantage. (M1= 55%; M2= 50%)</p>	<p><b>P3) Swiss companies violate human rights and ignore environmental standards abroad.</b> Swiss companies can violate fundamental human and environmental rights without being prosecuted, especially in economically weak or corrupt states. The initiative endeavours to change this and make the disregard of fundamental human rights and environmental standards punishable. (M1= 37%; M2= 33%)</p>

Last but not least, we asked our participants during the pandemic (i.e., second wave) about the general role of business and management in a crisis like the Covid-19 pandemic. Does the society expect business firms to proactively contribute to the pandemic or should they rather focus on their core business and on making profit? In such unusual and complex times, managers might struggle to find a fitting approach. The societal demands and expectations of the allocation of financial resources might change drastically and harm the corporate legitimacy and reputation of the business firm if this firm is not able to respond appropriately.

Overall, our study shows that 79.7% agree that business firms have the responsibility to contribute to the common good. Nearly 80% also agreed that, in times of social and economic crisis, business firms should first make cuts in the remuneration of top management and that managers should refrain from a large portion of their bonus payments. Nearly 70% agreed that business firms should not be allowed to pay dividends to their shareholders during a crisis as long as they take advantage of state support.

We also asked how Swiss business firms should invest their financial resources in the next 12 months. Participants distributed 100% of a firm's budget to different potential business actions. On average, the participants suggested spending...

- 23.06% of the budget to support Swiss employees (e.g., pay full salaries even if business is lost; provide solutions for safe and healthy working conditions)
- 12.21% of the budget to support employees of foreign subsidiaries/suppliers, especially if they are located in developing countries (e.g., pay full salaries even if business is lost; provide solutions for safe and healthy working conditions).
- 14.30% of the budget to support research and development of products or services that could help to deal with Covid-19.
- 15.08% of the budget to support research and development in the field of sustainability to tackle the climate crisis.
- 20.27% of the budget to boost the core business to remain profitable (e.g., investment in advertising and marketing).
- 15.08% of the budget to save and set aside in order to better survive during business slowdowns.

### ***Implications for managers***

Our research demonstrates that demands and support for greater business responsibility have increased in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Managers need to be aware of and prepared for these changing demands and treat them as an opportunity to carry out transitions within their businesses. Moreover, our findings emphasize the importance of securing jobs and minimizing health risks to uphold the support for responsible business in society. In the case of Switzerland, where [short-time work](#) is more common than layoffs, citizens worry, even less than before the pandemic, that business responsibility might harm the economy. Hence, if the economic system manages to uphold responsibility in the workplace during a crisis such as Covid-19, it could be all the more rewarded and supported by employees and society as a whole.

The time may now be ideal for developing and implementing transformative business strategies which acknowledge that companies have a responsibility that goes beyond making a profit. Surely the Covid-19 pandemic bears many risks, but [solutions to grand societal challenges will never be easy](#). The time is ripe to spearhead the transition toward a more inclusive, environmentally responsible and resilient economy.

### **Further academic readings**

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APPENDIX

Table A1. Overview of the 12 arguments used in the study.

Contra arguments of opponents	Pro arguments of proponents
<p><b>Swiss companies are already acting very responsibly abroad and investing increasingly in social concerns.</b> Companies can no longer afford to disregard human rights and environmental standards. The probability of disclosure in the media and the risk of significant financial losses is too great. Numerous Swiss companies are already investing heavily in their social responsibility and reporting transparently on their corporate social responsibility measures. In recent years, more and more investments have been made in social concerns. The Corporate Social Responsibility initiative is therefore unnecessary.</p>	<p><b>Swiss companies violate human rights and ignore environmental standards abroad.</b> Swiss companies can violate fundamental human and environmental rights without being prosecuted, especially in economically weak or corrupt states. The initiative endeavours to change this and make the disregard of fundamental human rights and environmental standards punishable.</p>
<p><b>No other country has such strict laws as those proposed by the Responsible Business Initiative.</b> It is true that other countries have laws that also address corporate responsibility. But no other law is as strict and demands as much from companies as the Responsible Business Initiative. The European Union's Accounting Directive, which has been in force since 2016, also goes less far. It only requires companies to report transparently on human rights and environmental concerns. So, in comparison, the initiative seems excessive.</p>	<p><b>Almost all OECD countries are already considering ways to limit the negative effects of the business activities of global corporations.</b> In France, a law on the protection of human rights similar to the demands of the initiative, has been in place since 2017. Measures in a similar direction have also been taken in the Netherlands and England. The Responsible Business Initiative could be an important step towards greater economic responsibility at the global level.</p>
<p><b>The Responsible Business Initiative is leading to a juridification that could reduce voluntary ethical corporate behavior.</b> To protect themselves from legal action, companies would have to remain legally unassailable. This means that they would possibly refrain from open dialogue and possible cooperation with potential victims or society in order to protect themselves. This is because any errors admitted here could be used against them in the event of a lawsuit. The initiative would thus severely restrict voluntary ethical corporate behavior.</p>	<p><b>One should not allow any competitive advantage through irresponsibility.</b> Currently, it is often a competitive advantage for companies to disregard human rights and environmental standards, for example, because it allows them to produce more cheaply. This puts companies that act ethically at a distinct disadvantage in the market. The initiative can reverse this unfair competitive advantage in the right direction.</p>

<p><b>The initiative endangers the Swiss economy and jobs.</b> Many companies could relocate their headquarters abroad from Switzerland for fear of high costs due to legal action. Many jobs would also be lost as a result. In addition, Switzerland as a business location as a whole would lose much of its attractiveness. The initiative therefore endangers the prosperity of the Swiss.</p>	<p><b>Swiss business firms that disregard human rights and environmental standards harm Switzerland's reputation.</b> As the home base of many international companies, Switzerland has a great responsibility to contribute to international efforts to strengthen human rights and environmental protection. Implementation of the initiative would strengthen Switzerland's reputation as a pioneer in social issues.</p>
<p><b>Swiss judges would have to decide on matters abroad under Swiss law.</b> It is very difficult or even inappropriate to enforce Swiss law on matters in other countries where other rights and values prevail. Some even criticize this process as "legal imperialism", whereby Switzerland forcibly imposes its rights on other countries. The initiative thus contradicts central criteria of an international application of law.</p>	<p><b>The preservation of human rights and an environment worth living in should always come before commercial interests and is therefore considered a duty - not a voluntary addition.</b> Opponents of the initiative advocate a voluntary approach to responsibility. However, this is not enough when fundamental human rights and environmental standards are threatened. After all, voluntariness also enables economic interests to be given priority over human and environmental rights. The initiative aims to transform the voluntary nature of adhering to minimum ethical standards into an indispensable obligation.</p>
<p><b>The implementation of the initiative would require enormous financial and time resources from some companies, which would also distort competition.</b> Companies that have many foreign operations (for example, many foreign producers) would have to invest millions to be able to control them sufficiently. These companies would also be subject to many burdensome bureaucratic requirements, which would take a lot of time to process. This would put companies that would be particularly affected by the corporate justice initiative at a severe competitive disadvantage.</p>	<p><b>The Responsible Business Initiative merely proposes what the UN Human Rights Council has been demanding for years.</b> The United Nations Organization (UN) has developed guiding principles that oblige companies to observe human rights. They state that states must protect human rights and that victims are entitled to reparations. The UN Human Rights Council already adopted these principles in 2011. The initiative aims to implement these important principles.</p>

**Table A2. Arguments in the original German version.**

<b>Contra-Argumente</b>	<b>Pro-Argumente</b>
<p><b>Schweizer Unternehmen handeln bereits sehr verantwortungsvoll im Ausland und investieren immer mehr in soziale Anliegen.</b> Unternehmen können es sich nicht mehr leisten, Menschenrechts- und Umweltschutzstandards zu missachten. Die Wahrscheinlichkeit der Offenlegung in den Medien und das Risiko erheblicher finanzieller Einbussen ist zu gross. Sehr viele Schweizer Unternehmen investieren bereits sehr viel in ihre soziale Verantwortung und berichten transparent über ihre Corporate Social Responsibility Massnahmen. In den letzten Jahren wurde immer mehr in soziale Anliegen investiert. Deshalb ist die Konzernverantwortungsinitiative unnötig.</p>	<p><b>Schweizer Unternehmen verletzen Menschenrechte und ignorieren Umweltstandards im Ausland.</b> Besonders in wirtschaftlich schwachen oder korrupten Staaten können Schweizer Unternehmen grundlegende Menschen- und Umweltrechte verletzen, ohne rechtlich belangt zu werden. Die Initiative möchte das ändern und die Missachtung von fundamentalen Menschenrechten und Umweltstandards strafbar machen.</p>
<p><b>Kein anderes Land hat so strenge Gesetze, wie es die Konzernverantwortungsinitiative vorschlägt.</b> Zwar gibt es in anderen Ländern Gesetze, die ebenfalls auf die Verantwortung von Unternehmen eingehen. Jedoch ist kein Gesetz so streng und verlangt von Unternehmen so viel, wie die Konzernverantwortungsinitiative. Auch die Bilanz-Richtlinie der Europäischen Union, die seit 2016 gilt, geht weniger weit. Hier wird lediglich verlangt, dass Unternehmen transparent über Menschenrechte und Umweltanliegen berichten. Vergleichsweise scheint die Initiative also übertrieben.</p>	<p><b>Nahezu alle OECD-Staaten machen sich bereits Gedanken, wie man negative Auswirkungen der Geschäftstätigkeit globaler Konzerne eindämmen kann.</b> In Frankreich gibt es seit 2017 ein Gesetz zum Schutz von Menschenrechten, dass den Forderungen der Konzernverantwortungsinitiative ähnelt. Auch in den Niederlanden und England gibt es Massnahmen in eine ähnliche Richtung. Die Konzernverantwortungsinitiative könnte ein wichtiger Schritt zu mehr wirtschaftlicher Verantwortung auf globaler Ebene sein.</p>
<p><b>Die Konzernverantwortungsinitiative führt zu einer Verrechtlichung, die freiwilliges ethisches Verhalten von Unternehmen vermindern könnte.</b> Um sich vor Klagen zu schützen, müssten Unternehmen juristisch unangreifbar bleiben. Das bedeutet, dass sie eventuell zum Selbstschutz auf offenen Dialog und mögliche Kooperation mit potentiellen Opfern oder der Gesellschaft verzichten würden. Denn hier eingestandene Fehler könnten, im Fall einer Klage, gegen sie verwendet werden. Somit würde die Initiative freiwilliges ethisches Verhalten von Unternehmen stark einschränken.</p>	<p><b>Keinen Konkurrenzvorteil durch Verantwortungslosigkeit zulassen.</b> Derzeit ist es für Unternehmen oft ein Konkurrenzvorteil, Menschenrechte und Umweltstandards zu missachten, da sie so zum Beispiel billiger produzieren können. Dadurch haben Unternehmen, die ethisch handeln einen deutlichen Nachteil auf dem Markt. Die Initiative kann diesen unfairen Konkurrenzvorteil in die richtige Richtung umkehren.</p>

<p><b>Die Initiative gefährdet die Schweizer Wirtschaft und Arbeitsplätze.</b> Viele Unternehmen könnten aus Angst vor hohen Kosten aufgrund von Klagen ihren Hauptstandort aus der Schweiz in das Ausland verlegen. Dadurch würden auch viele Arbeitsplätze verloren gehen. Ausserdem würde die Schweiz als Wirtschaftsstandort insgesamt deutlich an Attraktivität verlieren. Daher gefährdet die Initiative den Wohlstand der Schweizer.</p>	<p><b>Schweizer Unternehmen, die Menschenrechte und Umweltstandards missachten, schaden dem Ansehen der Schweiz.</b> Die Schweiz hat als Domizil vieler internationaler Unternehmen eine grosse Verantwortung, die internationalen Bemühungen zur Stärkung der Menschenrechte und des Umweltschutzes mitzutragen. Die Umsetzung der Initiative würde den Ruf der Schweiz, als Vorreiter in sozialen Themen, stärken.</p>
<p><b>Schweizer Richter müssten nach Schweizer Recht über Anliegen im Ausland entscheiden.</b> Es ist sehr schwierig oder gar unangebracht, Schweizer Recht über Vorgänge in anderen Ländern durchzusetzen, wo andere Rechte und Werte vorherrschen. Manche kritisieren diesen Vorgang sogar als „Rechtsimperialismus“, bei dem die Schweiz ihre Rechte anderen Ländern zwangsweise vorordnet. Die Initiative widerspricht damit zentralen Kriterien einer internationalen Rechtsanwendung.</p>	<p><b>Die Bewahrung von Menschenrechten und einer lebenswerten Umwelt sollte immer über kommerziellen Interessen stehen und gilt daher als Pflicht – nicht als freiwillige Zugabe.</b> Gegner der Initiative plädieren für eine freiwillige Verantwortungsübernahme. Diese reicht bei der Gefährdung von grundlegenden Menschenrechten und Umweltstandards jedoch nicht aus. Denn Freiwilligkeit ermöglicht auch den Vorzug von wirtschaftlichen Interessen zum Nachteil von Menschen- und Umweltrechten. Die Initiative möchte die Freiwilligkeit, minimale ethische Standards einzuhalten, in eine unabdingbare Pflicht umwandeln.</p>
<p><b>Die Umsetzung der Initiative würde von einigen Unternehmen enorme finanzielle und zeitliche Ressourcen fordern, was auch den Wettbewerb verzerrt.</b> Unternehmen, die viele Auslandsgeschäfte haben (zum Beispiel viele Produzenten aus dem Ausland), müssten Millionen investieren, um diese ausreichend kontrollieren zu können. Für diese Unternehmen würden auch viele aufwändige bürokratische Auflagen in Kraft treten, deren Bearbeitung sehr viel Zeit kosten würde. Dadurch wären Unternehmen, die von der Konzernverantwortungsinitiative besonders betroffen wären, im Wettbewerb stark benachteiligt.</p>	<p><b>Die Konzernverantwortungsinitiative schlägt nur das vor, was der UNO-Menschenrechtsrat seit Jahren verlangt.</b> Die Vereinten Nationen (UNO, United Nations Organization) haben Leitprinzipien entwickelt, die Unternehmen zur Einhaltung von Menschenrechten verpflichten. Sie besagen, dass Staaten Menschenrechte schützen müssen und Opfer Anspruch auf Wiedergutmachung haben. Bereits 2011 verabschiedete der UNO-Menschenrechtsrat diese Prinzipien. Die Initiative möchte diese wichtigen Prinzipien endlich umsetzen.</p>