

sgv  *usam*

Dachorganisation der Schweizer **KMU**
Organisation faitière des **PME** suisses
Organizzazione mantello delle **PMI** svizzere
Umbrella organization of Swiss **SME**

sgv – Number 1 in the Swiss
SME economy



Swiss Federation of Small and
Medium Enterprises (sgv)



sgv – Number 1 in the Swiss SME economy

The sgv is Switzerland's leading federation of SMEs and the **largest umbrella organization within the Swiss economy**, representing around 250 trade associations with some 300,000 individual businesses.

The **Swiss Federation of Small and Medium Enterprises sgv** promotes and defends the interests of SMEs and entrepreneurs throughout Switzerland.

As such, the sgv takes the lead in defining the political and economic framework needed to support a market and growth-driven SME economy in Switzerland. It advocates the principles of personal responsibility and guarantee of ownership, together with a lean and efficient State offering the freedom of trade and commerce enshrined in the Swiss Constitution.



An effective SME policy

Remaining true to its original **core mission of «SME policy»**, the sgv works to ease the legislative and bureaucratic burden on small and medium-sized businesses in general and to lower taxes, duties and administrative fees. To defend and protect these interests, the sgv lobbies the federal government permanently and professionally.

The Swiss Federation of Small and Medium Enterprises is not affiliated to any political party, maintaining thus its independence. Its work in favour of Swiss SMEs aims at optimizing the economic and political framework and creating a business-enabling environment.

The sgv's **priority areas** are:

- Economic policy
- Energy and environmental policy
- Fiscal and tax policy
- Mobility and spatial policy
- Social and labour market policy
- Vocational training policy

Demonstrating its thought-leadership, the sgv is not only active in the process of political decision-making but also able to lead referendum-campaigns (popular vote against laws). This makes the sgv a major agenda-setting agent in the Swiss political discourse.



A leading representative

As an umbrella organization with some 250 member associations, the **sgv** benefits from an extensive network of contacts.

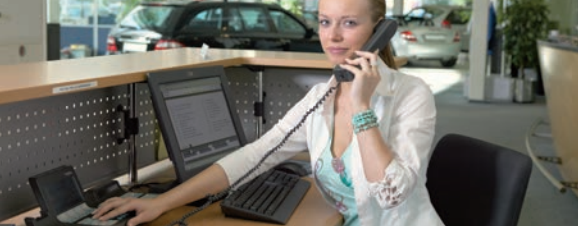
With representatives in the Federal Parliament – particularly the parliamentary group (caucus) for trade and commerce – and in the cantons and municipalities, as well as in cantonal trade associations and industry associations, the **sgv** has a presence at all levels of discussion – from national politics straight down to the grassroots level.

Outside of Switzerland, the **sgv** also has a network of international contacts, including the UEAPME, the employer organization representing the interests of European craft, trades and SMEs.

The **sgv**'s governing body, the **Swiss Congress of Trade and Commerce**, brings together around a thousand delegates every two years and defines the federation's long-term orientation.

The **Swiss Chamber of Trade and Commerce** acts as the **sgv**'s parliament. With its 100 delegates, it defines the **sgv**'s policy direction and, in particular, determines its standpoint on federal votes.

The fifteen-member **Executive Board** is responsible for managing day-to-day business, while operations are run from the **sgv office** at 26 Schwarztorstrasse in Berne.



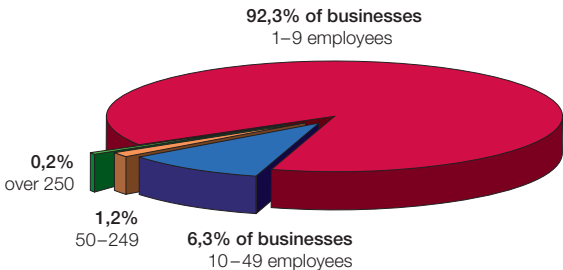
SMEs – the backbone of the Swiss economy

99.8% of all businesses in Switzerland are SMEs with less than 250 employees. These firms account for some two-thirds of all jobs.

70% of all apprentices in Switzerland learn their trade in SMEs.

SMEs act as an **economic buffer** in times of recession, retaining more jobs than their larger counterparts. Their socio-political contribution in this respect is crucial and is only possible by continuously

optimizing the framework conditions and easing the administrative burden on SMEs. With their high **sector productivity** (measured per employee), SMEs also make a substantial contribution to Switzerland's economic prosperity. Thus, with its policy and commitment, the SGV helps to safeguard jobs, promote growth and ensure SMEs become or stay competitive, both in Switzerland and internationally.



Source: STATENT 2013, Swiss Federal Statistical Office



A strong voice for SMEs

The sgv adopts a particularly liberal, business-oriented stance in its communication media, in contrast to most other Swiss publications.

With its trademark journals, published in German as **Schweizerische Gewerbezeitung** and in French as **Journal des arts et métiers**, the sgv lends a powerful voice to Swiss SMEs, directly reaching the decision-makers in business, politics and the public sector as well as SME management.

The website **www.sgv-usam.ch** provides information about the sgv's political focal points, its position on various issues and about its members. It also gives access to the sgv's media releases, presentations by representatives and its press service.

Opinion-building communication platforms

Communication platforms such as the **Gewerbliche Winterkonferenz in Klosters** and the **Journées romandes des arts et métiers in Champéry** give the Swiss SME economy a wide opportunity for image-building and for lobbying and networking.

Switzerland's most important one-day forum for SMEs is **synergy**. This event, organized by Stiftung KMU Schweiz, brings together representatives of trade and politics to discuss topical issues concerning SMEs.

www.synergy-schweiz.ch



SME-specific institutions – strength in numbers

The foundation **Stiftung KMU Schweiz** fosters the dissemination of entrepreneurial know-how. It encourages young people to take entrepreneurial responsibility and to take the leap towards independence.

www.stiftung-kmu.ch

The insurance company **proparis** offers SMEs direct and unbureaucratic access to occupational pension plans, in a secure environment with the most appropriate framework conditions. It supports associations, professional organizations, firms and insured members with new solutions for first-pillar State pensions and second-pillar occupational pensions.

www.proparis.ch

SIU, the Swiss Institute for Executive Training, is the country's leading training body for managerial staff in small and medium-sized companies and the retail trade.

www.siu.ch

As a group within the *sgv*, the organization **KMU Frauen Schweiz** promotes the interests of businesswomen. Female partners working within an SME, managerial staff or independent businesswomen in an SME belonging to an *sgv* member organization are automatically also members of this organization.

www.kmufrauenschweiz.ch



Jean-François Rime
National Councillor, Chairman of the board

Hans-Ulrich Bigler
National Councillor, CEO

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Swiss Federation of Small and Medium Enterprises
Schweizerischer Gewerbeverband
Union suisse des arts et métiers
Unione svizzera delle arti e mestieri

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