

Press release

Swiss chocolate manufacturers under import and cost pressures

Bern, 27 March 2023 – Domestic sales of Swiss chocolate in 2022 have not yet recovered from the pandemic low. Thanks to the export business, more Swiss chocolate was sold overall than in the previous year, but high raw material prices are posing value creation challenges for Switzerland as a manufacturing nation.

Domestic business remains below pre-pandemic levels

The volume of Swiss chocolate sold domestically decreased by 4.0% in 2022 compared to the previous year, while sales increased overall by 4.0%. On balance, the domestic market has not yet recovered from the pandemic slump: the volume of Swiss chocolate sold domestically (-4.7%) and the turnover generated by it (-4.9%) remained lower in 2022 than in 2019. Following the previous year's dramatic increase in chocolate imports – in excess of more than 10% – imports declined only marginally (-1.5%) in 2022. *“The pressure from cheaper goods produced abroad remains high, and Swiss consumers’ loyalty to domestic products is limited,”* says Daniel Bloch, Vice-President of CHOCOSUISSE.

Price of Swiss sugar has doubled

In 2022, 73.1% of Swiss chocolate was exported. The export volume increased by 8.3%, while export revenues grew by 8.4%. *“The increased turnover in the export market was unable to compensate for the rise in costs. The price of Swiss sugar more-or-less doubled in 2022,”* says Beat Vonlanthen, President of CHOCOSUISSE. *“This is an even clearer demonstration that the border and price protection for sugar set by Parliament is not fit for purpose.”*

Export as a driver of growth; regulatory challenges

Overall, the volume of Swiss chocolate sold on the domestic market and abroad increased by 4.7% in 2022 compared to the previous year thanks to exports, and the turnover generated by it rose by 6.4%. The export business thus once again proved to be a pillar of support for Swiss chocolate manufacturers. But competitive pressure internationally is high. *“Swiss chocolate manufacturers are all the more dependent on non-discriminatory access to procurement and sales markets and on the compensation of border protection disadvantages,”* says Urs Furrer, Director of CHOCOSUISSE.

Organised as a cooperative company, CHOCOSUISSE is the Association of Swiss chocolate manufacturers and unites the industrial producers of Swiss chocolate and chocolate products. CHOCOSUISSE member companies employ 4,508 people in 16 factories in Switzerland and process around 7% of the milk produced in Switzerland and around 30% of the sugar produced there.

Annex:

Key figures on the Swiss chocolate industry in 2022

Annex to the press release of 27 March 2023

Key figures on the Swiss chocolate industry in 2022				
Number of companies			16	
Number of workers 2022			4,508	
- of which women			2,143	
- of which men			2,365	
Sales of Swiss chocolate (in t)				
	2022	22 vs. 21	22 vs. 19	
Overall	206,347	+ 4.7 %	+ 3.0 %	
- of which domestic	55,567	- 4.0 %	- 4.7 %	
- of which export	150,780	+ 8.3 %	+ 6.2 %	
Turnover (in mio. of francs)				
Overall	1,819	+ 6.4 %	+ 1.8 %	
- of which domestic	815	+ 4.0 %	- 4.9 %	
- of which export	1,004	+ 8.4 %	+ 7.9 %	
Per capita consumption (in kg)				
	2022	22 vs. 21		
Overall	11.0	- 2.7 %		
of which Swiss chocolate	6.3	- 4.5 %		
of which imported chocolate	4.7	+ 0.6 %		
				Leading export markets (in t)
				1. Germany
				29,854
				2. Canada
				13,719
				3. France
				12,982
				4. United Kingdom
				9,945
				5. USA
				9,195
				Shares of product category volume
				(in the overall sales)
				- bars
				50.0 %
				- semi-finished products (incl. powder)
				20.9 %
				- chocolate confectionery
				18.6 %
				- mini formats
				6.4 %
				- other (festive articles, etc.)
				4.1 %
				Export to domestic market ratio
				(volume shares in the overall production)
				exportation
				73.1 %
				domestic market
				26.9 %