Anyone seeking to defeat the Corporate Tax Reform through a referendum is "playing with fire", according to Markus Ritter of the CVP. Photo: Keystone

Swiss francs a year to federal government, the cantons and the communes. The tax reform will secure this tax base over the long term. The short-sighted referendum called by the left jeopardises locational advantages and puts many jobs at risk. The companies subject to special taxation today employ around 150,000 people in Switzerland."

After the railway fund now the roads fund

On 9 February 2014, the Swiss people approved the proposal to fund and expand the railway infrastructure (FERI) with 62 % voting in favour. This means the operation, maintenance and expansion of the railways can be funded uniformly from a new railway infrastructure fund. It is now the turn of the roads on 12 February. A fund solution is also being sought for motorised transport. The Motorways and Agglomerations Fund is intended to secure the long-term funding of the motorways and the federal contributions to transport projects in urban agglomerations.

Swiss roads are often congested and reports of traffic jams are heard ever more frequently on the radio. Some 85 to 90 % of all tailbacks occur on motorways in urban regions. Private motor vehicles have increased over five-fold in Switzerland since 1960, the infrastructure is being pushed to the limit and operating and maintenance costs are soaring. As with the railway infrastructure fund, all existing and new revenues would be fed directly into the Motorways and Agglomerations Fund in future on a ring-fenced basis. In contrast to the current infrastructure fund, the Motorways and Agglomerations Fund would be permanent and therefore enshrined in the Federal Constitution. Thus the Swiss people will also have to vote on it.

The current funding is only sufficient for the increasingly costly maintenance but not for the completion of the motorway network or the elimination of bottlenecks. A funding shortfall of over one billion Swiss francs a year is predicted. The new fund would finance operation, maintenance and the completion of the motorway network as well as transport projects in urban agglomerations. The mineral oil surtax would be raised from 30 to 34 cents. The Motorways and Agglomerations Fund would enable the investment required to be better planned and financially secured.

Simplified naturalisation

The path to naturalisation is to be made easier for young, third-generation immigrants. While the issue addressed by a parliamentary initiative put forward by the Vaud SP National Councillor Ada Marra was adopted by Parliament, the National Council and Council of States decided on rigorous requirements. There should be no automatic naturalisation in future either. The grandchildren of immigrants should only be granted citizenship after applying. An application would have to be made before the age of 25 and by 35 during a transitional period. Parliament fears that foreigners could avoid compulsory military service through later naturalisation.

At least one grandparent must have been born in Switzerland or have the right of residence, and one parent must have been born in Switzerland, have lived there for 10 years and attended school there for five years. The applicants themselves must in turn have been born in Switzerland and have completed at least five years of mandatory schooling there. The proposal must now be definitively adopted by the Swiss people and cantons because as well as the Swiss Citizenship Act the Federal Constitution will have to be amended.

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