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Switzerland: Think Tanks and Vested Interests in Swiss Policy Making

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This paper analyses the role of think tanks in Swiss policy making. Starting from the relationship between interest groups and the state, which has been shaping Swiss policy making for a long time, we hypothesize that these structures offer good possibilities for scientific arguments and ideas to influence the process of policy making. Our observations from a recent example indeed illustrates that think tanks can use the same channels as vested interests to bring in their know-how. Furthermore, we conclude that the characteristics of the political system, e.g. direct democracy and the consensual alignment particularly influence the chances of think tanks to intervene. In this exchange vested interests and think tanks do not really interfere with each other, but rather they complement each other both having their strong points at different stages of the policy making process.

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