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**Abstract**

Academic freedom, a deep-rooted right in the Swiss Constitution, is endangered. Private sponsorship agreements, secretly negotiated between university leaders and big companies, become increasingly vital for universities in Switzerland. Swiss authorities are pushing this development: not only are they taking austerity measures, but also rewarding growth in private third-party funding with even more federal subsidies. This essay presents, after citing a few examples, a short overview of the state of academic freedom with regard to private monies in Switzerland. Introducing academic freedom as a constitutional obligation, it analyses the dangers of private sponsorship for independent universities and then tries to give some insight into the development of necessary framework conditions.. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)