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Hans Marti, head, economic promotion, Department of Economic Affairs, Canton of Zug

You are a strong believer in the promise that India holds. Can you share a few specific details as to why you think so?

India is a fast growing market and has an excellent and well-educated workforce. Due to the fact that India is a democracy and entrepreneurs are thinking in a very business-oriented manner, there will be a huge expansion potential for innovative companies. Due to the fact that labor costs in India are much lower than in Europe, manufacturing companies have a great chance to export their products to Europe. We assume that in the future, the sales and distribution activities will be organized by subsidiaries of Indian companies in Switzerland.

Can you briefly share three main reasons as to why the Canton of Zug would be an attractive investment destination for Indian companies?

Zug offers a lot of well-known advantages. That's why many international companies have chosen Zug as a hub for their activities in Europe. Most companies consider the low taxes for companies and individuals as the most important factor. The availability of well-trained and international experienced managers, a central and good reachable location and an extremely high quality of life are also very important reasons for companies to move here.

While economic considerations seem strong enough, one of the inhibitors for Indian companies to set up operations in Switzerland comes from a social issue and that is a lack of sufficiently large Indian community in Switzerland (8000 Indians is

a small number). What are the specific steps that you would recommend in that direction?

This is a fact which cannot be changed immediately. More and more companies hire Indian experts and there is also a growing population of expatriates from other countries. But we will never get an Indian community as it exists in New York or London. Because it is so easy for Indians to integrate in our region, it seems that an economic driven company can easily overcome this obstacle.

What were the main benefits from the two conferences held in Bangalore and Hyderabad recently?

We could establish some very interesting contacts and have in total three concrete prospects. In addition we got some other interesting leads from a seminar, which the Canton of Zug has held in Mumbai in cooperation with the CII. We are in further discussions and I assume that a few firms will establish here in Zug soon. It was important to show Indian entrepreneurs specific business cases, so that the Indian companies could learn about their possibilities of doing business in Switzerland and specifically in Zug.

Do you get the impression that the Indian life sciences sector would be interested in investment in Switzerland? Or is the potential more in some of the other sectors and if so, which one?

There are already some very interesting companies in Zug. As an example we can mention Wockhardt, which has just recently set up their European headquarter in Canton. We are in contact with other very promising companies. The life sciences sector is growing very rapidly in the areas such as sales organizations, intellectual property companies and finance structures etc. We see also a huge potential in the medical device industry and in trading activities. The Canton of Zug belongs to the top three or four locations worldwide for commodity trading (metals, oil and coffee).

Over the next decade, what is the trend that you are able to visualize in terms of association between Swiss and Indian companies?

Many Swiss companies already have subsidiaries in India. This number will grow over the next decade. But we assume also that more and more Indian companies, which are successful now in India, will expand internationally to Europe. And for those companies, Switzerland is an ideal hub for starting business in Europe. So the number of Indian companies investing in Switzerland will definitely increase over the next decade.

E Abraham Mathew