

2025 STUDY  
SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS &  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

©© Ethos, November 2025

Reproduction in full, or in part, is prohibited without the consent of the Ethos Foundation, Geneva. Quotations are authorised with an indication of the source.

Printed on recycled paper, 100% waste paper, certified « Blauer Engel ».

[www.ethosfund.ch](http://www.ethosfund.ch)

The **Ethos Foundation** is composed of more than 250 tax-exempt Swiss pension funds and institutions. Founded in 1997, its aim is to promote socially responsible investment and to foster a stable and prosperous socio-economic environment.

*Signatory of:*



**Ethos Services** provides advisory services in the field of socially responsible investments. Ethos Services offers socially responsible investments funds, analyses of shareholders' general meetings with voting recommendations, a program of dialogue with companies as well as environmental, social and corporate governance ratings and analyses. Ethos Services is owned by the Ethos Foundation and several members of the Foundation.

**Certified**



**Corporation**

# Table of contents

<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 CONTEXT	4
1.2 ETHOS REQUIREMENTS	4
1.3 VOTES AT 2025 AGM	5
1.4 QUALITY OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS	6
<b>2. BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b>	<b>11</b>
2.1 COMPOSITION	11
2.2 (RE-)ELECTIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS	13
<b>3. CONCLUSION</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1 : UNIVERSE</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2 : ETHOS REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE CONTENT OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS</b>	<b>24</b>

# List of abbreviations

- AGM: Annual General Meeting
- BoD: Board of directors
- CEO: Chief Executive Officer
- CO: Swiss Code of Obligations
- ESRS : European Sustainability Reporting Standards
- ExE: Executive Management
- GRI : Global Reporting Initiative
- SMI: Swiss Market Index
- SMIM: Swiss Market Index Medium
- SPI: Swiss Performance Index
- TCFD : Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures

# Introduction

For the second consecutive year, Ethos has published a study on the non-financial reporting of companies listed in Switzerland. Level of transparency, data quality, external verification: this study focuses not only on the environmental and social information published, but also on corporate governance practices and, in particular, the composition of companies' boards of directors.

This study is published in the context of a legislative shift that has resulted in an increasing number of companies now publishing information on how they manage environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues. As a reminder, since 2024, Swiss listed companies of a certain size are required to publish a sustainability report and to submit it to a vote by their shareholders at the annual general meeting (AGM). These same shareholders must also elect or re-elect all members of the board of directors each year.

But this year's study also comes at a time when an anti-sustainability and anti-ESG movement has been gaining traction, particularly in the United States. This movement would like to leave it up to companies to manage their ESG issues without necessarily having to report on them in a substantiated and systematic manner. This vision is obviously not shared by Ethos, which, since its creation in 1997, has advocated for corporate transparency precisely to enable shareholders and all stakeholders to assess how companies manage their ESG issues and, more generally, their extra-financial performance.

It is in this context that, for the second consecutive year, Ethos has undertaken to analyse the quality and degree of transparency of the sustainability reports submitted by Swiss listed companies for shareholders' approval. For investors concerned about sustainability and good governance issues, ESG indicators are essential because they have a direct impact on the resilience and future value of companies. However, in order to assess how companies manage these issues and enable investors to make informed decisions, it is essential to be able to have access to comprehensive, reliable and verified data. High-quality information makes it possible to compare companies' practices, measure their progress from one year to the next and verify whether or not they are

achieving their objectives. Conversely, incomplete or unverified information can undermine investor confidence and prevent them from thoroughly assessing the ESG risks and opportunities facing the companies in which they invest.

In order to ensure that the analysis is objective and comparable, Ethos uses public and transparent criteria. The requirements used by Ethos to assess the quality of sustainability reports or the composition of boards of directors are set out in its voting guidelines and corporate governance principles, which are updated and published annually on its website.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study, which is based solely on information published by the companies analysed, is divided into two chapters. The first chapter focuses on the quality and level of transparency of sustainability reports. It is based on a detailed analysis of all companies in the SPI index that submitted their sustainability reports to a shareholder vote between 1 January 2025 and 30 October 2025, either on a mandatory or voluntary basis. This represents a total of 141 companies.

The second chapter focuses on the composition and independence of boards of directors. It is based on an analysis of all companies that were included in the SPI index at the beginning of the year and that have held or will hold an AGM in 2025, i.e. 197 companies (see Appendix 1).

All information and data available as of 30 October 2025 was taken into account in this study.

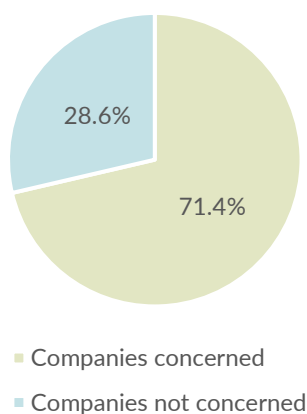
Finally, it should be noted that information on executive remuneration and voting results during the 2025 AGM season, which was included in last year's report, was the subject of a separate study this year, which was published in August and can be consulted on our website.

# 1. Sustainability reports

## 1.1 CONTEXT

Since the 2024 financial year, Swiss listed companies that employ at least 500 full-time staff and have annual turnover in excess of CHF 40 million (or a balance sheet total in excess of CHF 20 million) are required to submit their sustainability report to a shareholder vote. Of the 192 companies in the SPI with voting rights that had held their 2025 AGM before the end of October, 137 were affected by this requirement.

CHART 1 : PERCENTAGE OF SPI COMPANIES AFFECTED BY ART. 964A FF OF THE SWISS CO



As a reminder, this requirement stems from the entry into force in 2024 of Art. 964a-c of the Swiss Code of Obligations (CO). Its provisions state that the companies concerned must publish information on environmental issues, in particular CO<sub>2</sub> targets, social issues, employees issues, respect for human rights and the fight against corruption. Although the Federal Council clarified the obligations of companies regarding the climate information they must publish in a decree of December 2022 (which came into force in 2025) and specified that they must follow the TCFD recommendations, the law remains vague on the number of indicators to be published.

However, in June 2024, the Federal Council launched a consultation procedure to amend the CO once again in order to strengthen it and bring it into line with developments in European law, particularly the CSRD. But on 21 March 2025, after reviewing the results of this consultation process, the Federal Council asked the Federal Department of Justice and Police to develop pragmatic options for revising the law until there is more

clarity on the simplification process regarding sustainability regulations currently being developed within the European Union (the 'Omnibus' package). The Federal Council nevertheless announced that it would follow up on this project by spring 2026 at the latest.

## 1.2 ETHOS REQUIREMENTS

The Ethos Foundation, for its part, did not wait for regulations to encourage companies to publish relevant information about their environmental, social and governance (ESG) policies. In fact, it has been doing so since its creation in 1997 and its first shareholder dialogue activities.

Since 2004, Ethos has been asking Swiss listed companies to participate in the CDP and to publish their total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Ethos has also been encouraging companies with a significant environmental impact to submit their sustainability reports and/or climate strategies to a shareholder vote for many years. In that context Ethos has also specified its requirements for approving such reports in its voting guidelines (see Appendix 2) as of 2021.

For Ethos, the main criteria for assessing the quality of a sustainability report are as follows:

- Recognised international standard: the report must be prepared in accordance with a recognised extra-financial standard. The adoption of a common framework is an essential criterion for effectively assessing and comparing corporate practices.
- Independent verification: the report (and its key indicators) must be verified by an independent third party to ensure the reliability of the information. It is essential that shareholders can access reliable and verified information.
- Material issues and objectives: the report must include quantitative indicators for all material ESG issues that are relevant to the company. The environmental aspect must include data on water consumption, waste management, biodiversity and the company's climate strategy. The social aspect must include information on the company's impact on local communities and the measures it is implementing to ensure respect for the human rights of its own staff and those of its external service providers. Finally, with regard to governance, in addition to the standard information required in the governance report (capital structure, shareholder rights, composition of the board of directors and management, remuneration policy and information



on the auditing body), the sustainability report must include information on the management of business ethics by the governing bodies and the policies put in place on issues of importance to the company, such as corruption, money laundering and clinical trials, as well as the implementation of these policies.

- The main material issues must be accompanied by targets and contain quantitative indicators that enable progress to be measured over a period of at least two years. The absence of targets for a key ESG issue or the continued deterioration of an indicator is considered problematic.
- Transparency: the report must be published sufficiently in advance of the AGM and must not conceal any major ESG controversies. Concealing significant issues or communicating unreliable data would undermine shareholder confidence.

Finally, Ethos expects companies to submit their sustainability reports to a binding – rather than advisory – vote by their shareholders. This is in line with the spirit of Swiss law.

### 1.3 VOTES AT 2025 AGM

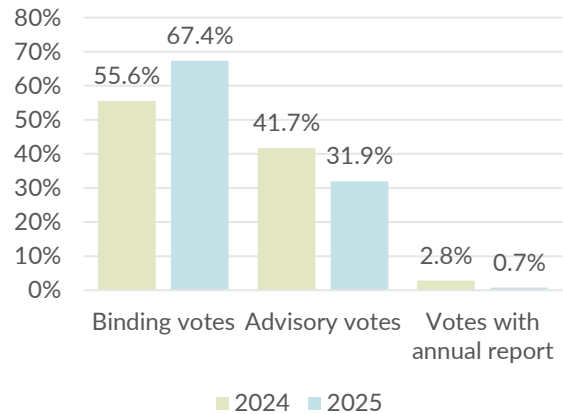
As mentioned above, 137 companies listed in Switzerland were therefore required, due to their size, to submit their sustainability reports to a shareholder vote this year. This is three companies fewer than in 2024<sup>1</sup>. It should also be noted that four companies in the SPI that were not directly affected by this requirement chose to hold such a vote on a voluntary basis. These were EPIC Suisse, Glarner Kantonalbank, HIAG Immobilien and Intershop.

Since the introduction of this voting requirement in 2024, a recurring question has been about the nature of the vote: should it be considered a binding vote, as Ethos and many observers believe, or, conversely, should it be considered a purely consultative vote, as a relatively small number of companies, particularly within the SMI, would like? This question is all the more important given that an advisory vote obviously does not carry the same weight or significance as a binding vote, especially in the event of a shareholder dispute.

It is therefore with some satisfaction that we note that Ethos's commitment and dialogue on this issue is bearing fruit, as the proportion of companies that have opted for a binding vote has increased significantly this year to 67.4 % compared to 55.6 % in 2024. Sixteen companies have changed their minds and switched from an advisory vote last year to a binding vote this year (see Appendix 1). However, two companies (CPH and Richemont) have made the opposite choice, while Swiss Prime Site, which submitted its sustainability report for a joint vote with its annual report last year, has opted for a separate but advisory vote this year.

<sup>1</sup> Some companies have been removed from the index, such as Orascom Development and Elma Electronic, while others, such as GAM Holding,

CHART 2 : BINDING VS ADVISORY VOTES (SPI COMPANIES)



Unfortunately, it should also be noted that a majority of SMI companies continue to consider this to be an advisory vote. Twelve of the 20 companies included in the country's largest capitalisation index opted for an advisory vote this year, the same number as in 2024. While Sonova changed its mind in favour of a binding vote this year, Richemont did the opposite by opting for an advisory vote, having held a binding vote last year.

Finally, it should be noted that Holcim is the only company to have submitted its sustainability report and climate report to two separate votes this year, as it did last year. Unfortunately, both votes were advisory in nature.

Secondly, shareholder support has declined noticeably this year. While sustainability reports submitted to a vote for the first time in 2024 were approved by an average of 97.4 % of votes, the average approval rate this year stands at 95.2 % for both SPI companies as a whole and SMI companies alone. This relative increase in opposition probably reflects a more thorough analysis of the content of the reports by some shareholders, as well as a greater willingness to penalise reports whose quality still falls short of expected best practices.

There were 22 sustainability reports that received less than 90 % support this year, compared with only five in 2024. The sustainability report with the lowest result was that of DocMorris, which was approved with only 69.3 % of the votes, ahead of those of Komax (82.8 %) and Swiss Life (83.4 %). By way of comparison, the remuneration reports of SPI companies were approved with an average rate of 86.9 % this year, and those of SMI companies alone with an average rate of 88 %.

For its part, Ethos recommended that its members and clients approve only 56 of the 141 sustainability reports submitted to their shareholders for approval by Swiss listed companies this year. Ethos's support rate thus fell from 45.7 % in 2024 to 39.7 % in 2025. The picture is

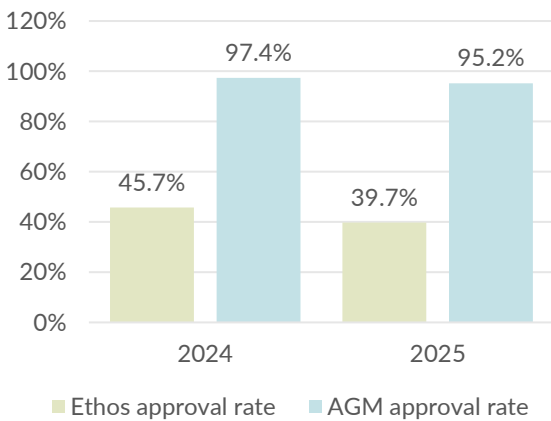
no longer meet the criteria for being subject to the requirement to submit their sustainability report to a shareholder vote..

hardly more encouraging for SMI companies, as Ethos recommended approving only 11 out of 20, the same as last year.

In detail, Ethos recommended approving 12 sustainability reports that it had rejected in 2024. Half of these relate to companies active in the finance or insurance sectors (Baloise Holding, Luzerner Kantonalbank, Partners Group, St. Galler Kantonalbank, Valiant, Zurich Insurance Group). Conversely, Ethos recommended rejecting 19 reports that it had approved last year<sup>2</sup>. These changes can be explained not only by the fact that the quality of some reports has improved or deteriorated, but also because some companies have not fulfilled their past commitments. In 2024, when companies had to submit their sustainability reports to a shareholder vote for the first time, Ethos recommended approving some of them while asking the companies to improve on key points. This progress was not necessarily achieved, prompting Ethos to review its voting recommendations.

Among the main reasons for Ethos' opposition were a lack of transparency, the insufficient quality of the data published and the absence of sufficiently ambitious targets. Here too, by way of comparison, it should be noted that Ethos recommended approving 39.6 % of the remuneration reports of SPI companies that were submitted to a consultative vote by shareholders this year, including only 25 % of the remuneration reports of SMI companies.

**CHART 3 : AGM VS ETHOS SUPPORT RATE FOR SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS**



### 1.4 QUALITY OF SUSTAINABILITY REPORTS

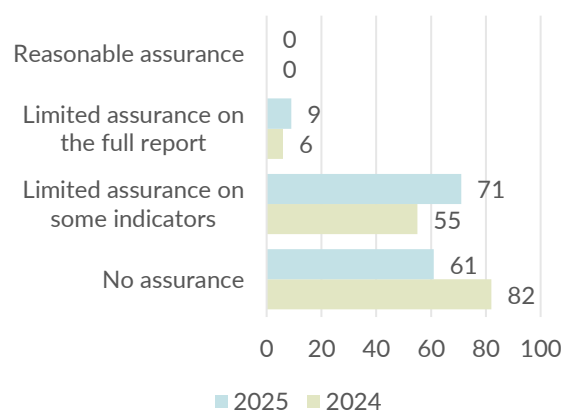
As mentioned above, the use of a recognised reporting standard facilitates the assessment and comparison of sustainability reports, enabling investors to gain a clearer picture of how companies manage their ESG issues.

Conversely, the absence of a standard can cast doubt on the completeness and comparability of the indicators published.

With regard to sustainability reports for the 2024 financial year, Ethos notes that several companies in the SPI, such as ABB and Nestlé, are in the process of transitioning to align their non-financial reporting with the new European ESRS standards. Although the GRI standard remains the most widely used at present, often in combination with SASB, the shift towards ESRS seems to be accelerating. However, as this transition has not yet been fully completed or implemented in its entirety by companies, and given the uncertainties that remain around the evolution of the European framework, Ethos has chosen not to list the standards used by companies this year in this study.

Another fundamental requirement of Ethos is that sustainability reports be audited and receive at least limited assurance from an external and independent auditor. In this respect, there has been a clear improvement this year compared to last year. Among the SPI companies that voted this year, nine had previously submitted their entire sustainability report to an external audit, while 71 had submitted some of their extra-financial indicators to such external scrutiny, compared with six and 55 companies respectively last year. It should also be noted that all SMI companies had their 2024 sustainability reports externally verified; five of them had their reports fully audited and 15 had them partially audited.

**CHART 4 : REPORTS SUBJECT TO FULL AND LIMITED ASSURANCE**



As in 2024, however, no company has submitted its sustainability report for full verification ('reasonable assurance') by an external auditor. Only Zurich Insurance Group has submitted some of its environmental

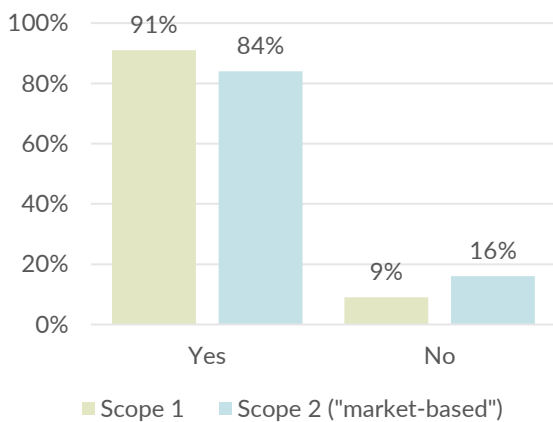
<sup>2</sup> [1] Find all of Ethos' voting recommendations at [www.ethosfund.ch/fr/prestations/exercice-droits-vote/dates-positions-vote](http://www.ethosfund.ch/fr/prestations/exercice-droits-vote/dates-positions-vote).



indicators, namely GHG emissions related to its own operations, for reasonable assurance.

With regard to climate, 91 % of the companies analysed published their direct GHG emissions (known as Scope 1 emissions) and 84 % published their indirect emissions related to their energy consumption (Scope 2), compared with 94 % and 85 % respectively last year. It is also noted that only 62 % (2023: 58 %) publish their location-based Scope 2 emissions, i.e. emissions that reflect energy consumption based on the energy mix of the countries in which they operate (without taking into account any renewable energy purchase certificates).

**CHART 5 : COMPANIES THAT PUBLISH THEIR SCOPES 1 AND 2 GHG EMISSIONS**



When it comes to emissions occurring in companies' value chains, i.e. Scope 3 emissions, the level of transparency is unfortunately still significantly lower. Only 59.6 % of companies publish GHG emissions related to their supply chain (2024: 54.9 %) and only 27.7 % publish emissions related to the use of their products (2024: 22.2 %). This result is all the more problematic given that Scope 3 emissions often represent by far the largest share of companies' GHG emissions.

On the positive side, there has been some progress among financial companies, which are becoming more transparent about the GHG emissions associated with their financing, investment and insurance activities. Examples include the Lucerne Cantonal Bank, which published its financed emissions (for 93 % of its lending volume) for the first time, the Cantonal Banks of St. Gallen and Vaud (BCV), which have expanded their reporting, and Zurich Insurance Group, which has also published, for the first time, the emissions insured for its largest commercial clients in the areas of accidents and real estate.

CHART 6 : COMPANIES THAT PUBLISH THEIR SCOPE 3 GHG EMISSIONS (BY CATEGORY)

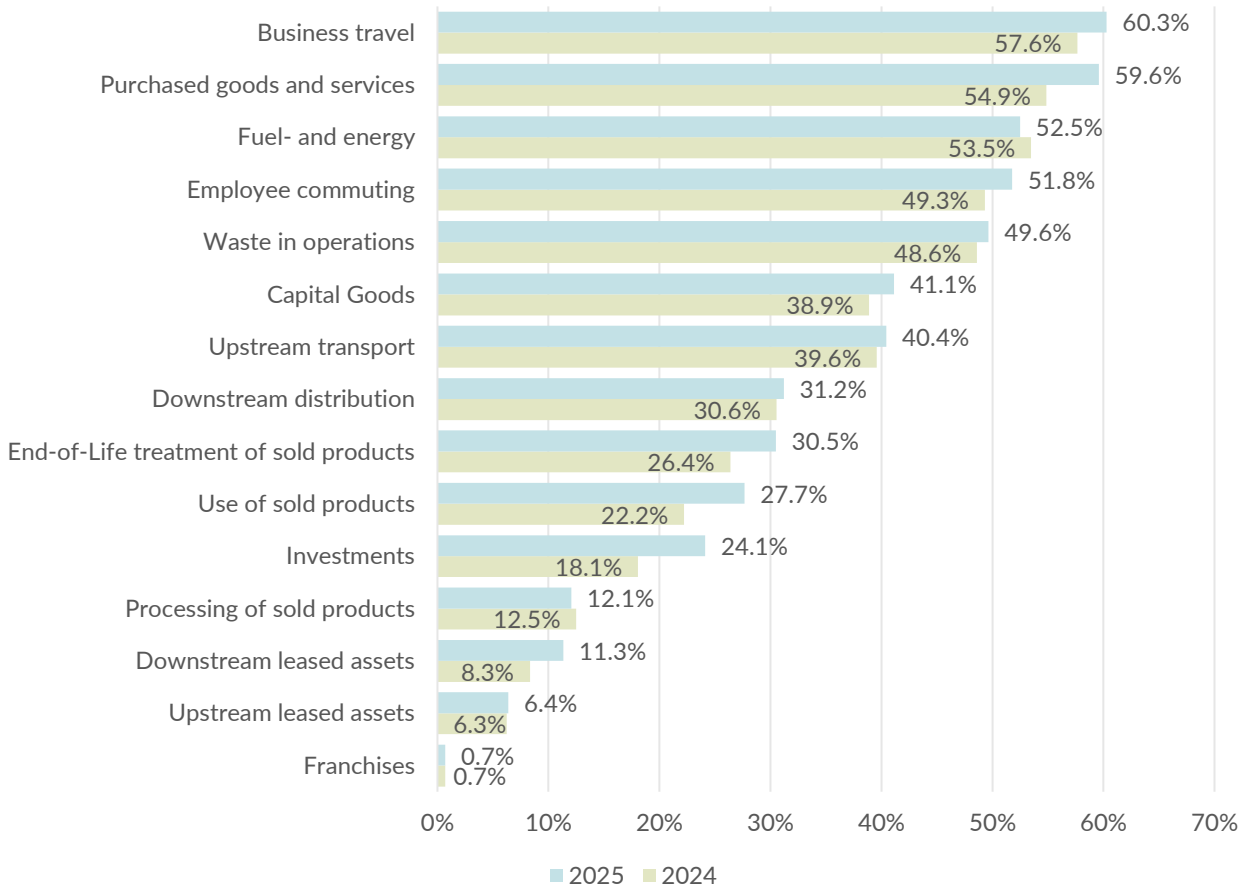
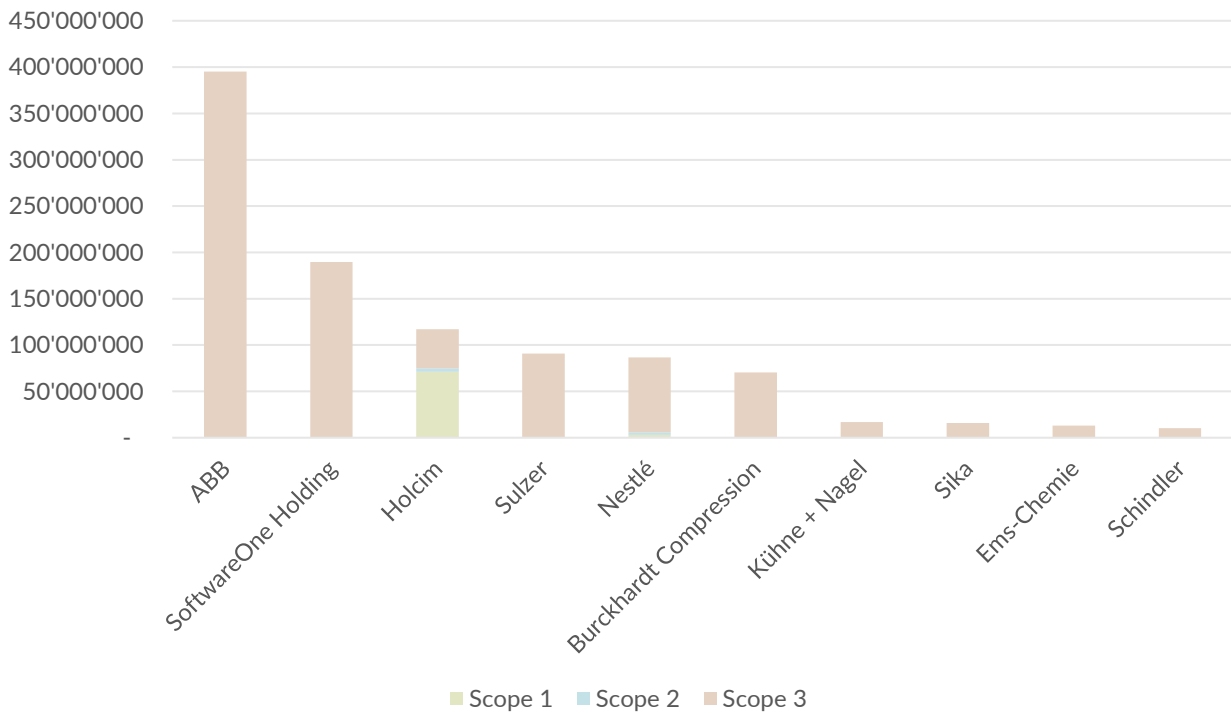


CHART 7 : TOP 10 INDUSTRIAL COMPANIES WITH THE HIGHEST GHG EMISSIONS (IN TONNES OF CO2)

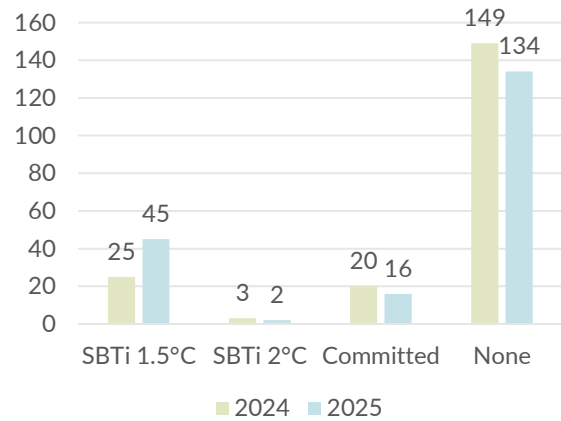


The publication of GHG emissions is essential because it allows investors to assess the progress made by a company over the past year in reducing its emissions, but also to compare companies operating in the same sectors. However, it does not in itself guarantee that a company is pursuing an effective environmental and climate policy that is aligned with global climate objectives.

To do so, the company must also set ambitious emission reduction targets and implement a credible climate strategy to achieve them. In this regard, progress has been made by SPI companies, as 47 of them, 19 more than a year ago, have now set GHG emission reduction targets that have been validated by an independent body (SBTi or equivalent) as being science-based. Among them, 45 have set climate targets aligned with a scenario of maximum 1.5°C warming by 2050 – compared to pre-industrial temperatures – while two companies (Autoneum and Kühne + Nagel) have set targets considered to be consistent with a scenario of less than 2°C global warming. It is also worth noting that 16 additional companies have committed to setting such climate targets in the near future.

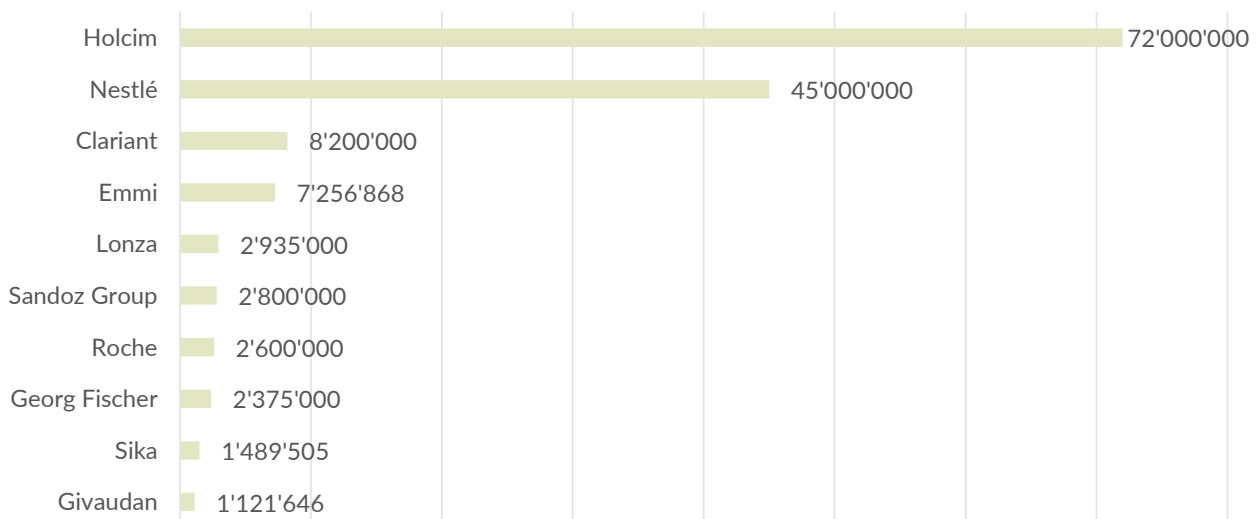
More worryingly, however, there are still five companies in the SMI (Alcon, Geberit, Partners Group, Swiss Life and UBS), the index that includes the largest companies by capitalization but also the largest GHG emitters listed in Switzerland, that have still not set science-based climate targets or even committed to doing so. As for Swiss Re and Zurich Insurance Group, both have decided in recent weeks to simply withdraw their commitment to have their climate targets validated by SBTi.

**CHART 8 : COMPANIES WITH SCIENCE-BASED CLIMATE TARGETS**



In addition to GHG emissions, sustainability reports include other important environmental and social data that enable investors to better understand how companies manage their ESG issues. These include, for example, the amount of waste (in tons) they have produced during the year, or water consumption (in m3). On these two points, there has been a very slight increase compared to last year. 67.3 % of companies publish the amount of waste produced, compared with 65.3 % a year earlier, and 50 % publish their water consumption, compared with 46.6 % a year earlier. On the other hand, a significantly higher number of companies, 87.2 % (compared with 84 % in 2024), publish their energy consumption (in MWh).

**CHART 9 : TOP 10 LARGEST INDUSTRIAL WATER CONSUMERS (IN M3)**

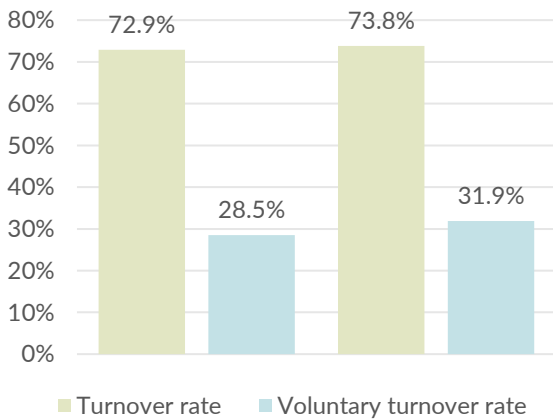


When it comes to social indicators, one of the most important is employee turnover. More specifically, voluntary turnover, which, unlike overall turnover, only takes into account employees who resign and therefore provides an insight into a company's ability to retain its employees. A high voluntary turnover rate is therefore a negative indicator that may signal a certain level of dissatisfaction among employees.

However, here again, the overall level of transparency has not really changed, as only 31.9 % of the companies analysed published their voluntary turnover rate for the past year, compared with 28.5 % a year earlier. On the other hand, 73.8 % published their total staff turnover rate, compared to 72.9 % in 2024. It should be noted that among the voluntary turnover rates published this year, the highest was recorded by Dätwyler with 21.3 % of staff, ahead of DKSH (15 %) and SGS (13.7 %).

Zurich Insurance Group) and that 10 companies, including only one SMI company, had a female CEO.

**CHART 10: COMPANIES THAT PUBLISH THEIR VOLUNTARY/INVOLUNTARY TURNOVER RATE**



Another important social indicator for Ethos is the gender pay gap, which measures the average difference in gross hourly wages between men and women, expressed as a percentage of men's wages. It can reveal persistent disparities due to factors such as occupational segregation, motherhood (child penalty), discrimination and gender stereotypes. In this regard, only 12.7 % of the companies analysed publish this indicator. However, some companies are more transparent, such as Sandoz, which publishes several indicators relating to pay equality and staff remuneration (average and median pay gap, number of remuneration-related studies, etc.).

Finally, with regard to workforce diversity, 93.6 % of the companies covered by this study (2024: 93.1 %) publish the percentage of women in their workforce and 97.9 % publish the percentage of women in their management teams. In this regard, it should be noted that eight SPI companies had at least 50 % women in their senior management in 2024 (Ascom, Carlo Gavazzi, Logitech, MCH Group AG, MedMix, Sandoz Group, Temenos and

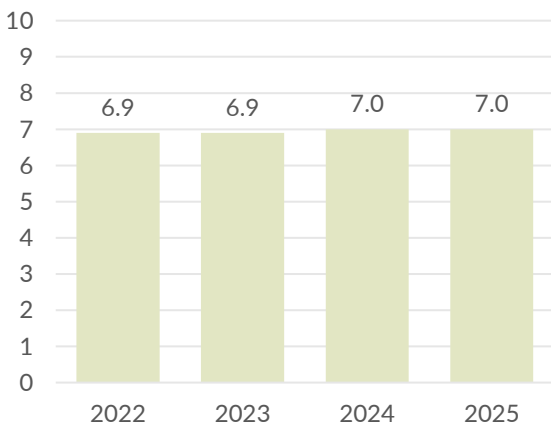
# 2. Board of directors

## 2.1 COMPOSITION

The size of corporate boards is an important element of governance. Indeed, a board with too many members loses its effectiveness, while a board that is too small may lack competent members and diversity and may not be able to form separate specialised committees composed of sufficiently independent and diverse members, which constitutes a risk for the company and its minority shareholders. Ethos believes that the size of a board of directors of a large listed company should range from eight to a maximum of fifteen members, while for medium-sized companies it should be between seven and nine, and for small companies between five and seven members.

In general, the size of the boards of directors of SPI companies (with voting rights) has remained relatively stable in recent years, hovering around seven members. Richemont's board of directors remains the largest with 15 members - three fewer than a year ago, however - ahead of Helvetia and Nestlé (13 members each). Conversely, this year there are seven boards of directors with only three members (Carlo Gavazzi, Intershop, Perrot Duval Private Equity Holding, Schlatter, U-blox and Zwahlen & Mayr), which Ethos considers to be insufficient to properly perform their duties.

CHART 11 : AVERAGE SIZE OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS



In terms of diversity, SPI boards had an average of 28.7 % women in 2025 (2024: 27.3 %), while SMI companies had 36.3 % women (2024: 36.0 %).

As a reminder, from 2026 onwards, Swiss listed companies will have to have at least 30 % women on their

boards of directors or explain why they have not managed to reach this threshold on the basis of the 'comply or explain' principle. In this regard, while the number of SPI companies with at least 30 % women has indeed jumped over the last ten years, from 5.1 % in 2015 to 51.3 % in 2025, the fact remains that nearly half of the companies have still not achieved this target, including two SMI companies (Sika and Kühne + Nagel). Worse still, 25 SPI companies still had no women on their boards of directors in 2025.

CHART 12 : BOARD OF DIRECTORS WITH AT LEAST 30% FEMALE REPRESENTATION



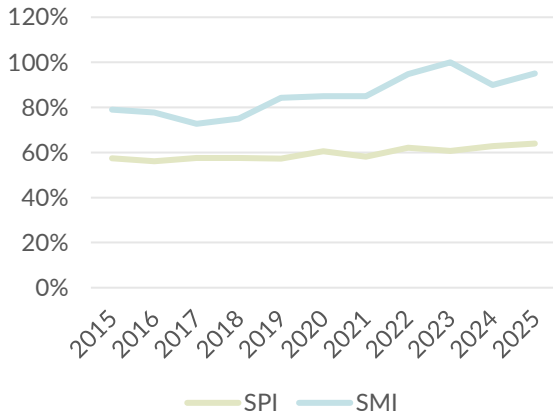
The level of independence of a board of directors is another key element of good governance. Ethos believes that at least 50 % of a board's members should be independent so that it can fulfil its mandate objectively and in the interests of all shareholders. According to Ethos' criteria, which go significantly further than those of the *economiesuisse* code of best practice, the level of independence of the boards of directors of SPI companies has increased slightly from 56.0 % in 2024 to 56.8 % in 2025.

The main reasons for non-independence remain, by far, the representation of a major shareholder generally holding at least 3 % of the company's share capital (22.2 % of directors in 2025) and the length of the term of office exceeding 12 years (13.9 % of directors). In this regard, the average term of office is 6.4 years for all SPI companies and 6.3 years for SMI companies alone. The average age is 59.8 years (SMI: 61.4 years).

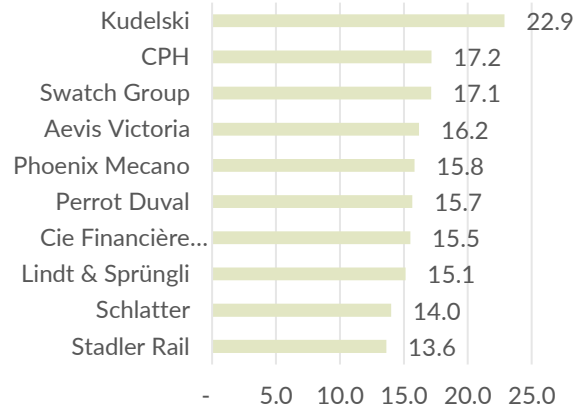
Lack of independence is also the main reason why Ethos opposes the re-election of a board member. This year,

nearly two-thirds (64 %) of SPI boards had at least 50 % independent members according to Ethos' criteria, which represents a slight increase from the 62.8 % recorded in 2024. It should also be noted that among the 20 companies in the SMI, 19 have at least half of their board members who can be considered independent.

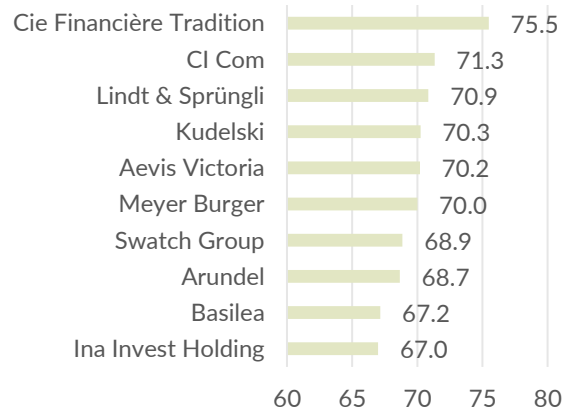
**CHART 13 : BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF AT LEAST 50% INDEPENDENTS**



**CHART 14 : TOP 10 AVERAGE TERM OF OFFICE OF BOARD MEMBERS (IN YEARS)**



**CHART 15 : TOP 10 AVERAGE AGE OF BOARD MEMBERS (IN YEARS)**





## 2.2 (RE-)ELECTIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS

With regard to the results of the AGM votes, it can be seen that the 1343 members of the boards of directors of SPI companies who have been subject to (re-)election so far this year have obtained, on average, a 95.6 % support rate from shareholders, compared with 95.7 % in 2024. It should be noted that, unlike last year, no candidate was rejected for failing to obtain a majority of the votes. The least successful candidate, who sits on the BCGE board, obtained 59.3 % of the votes.

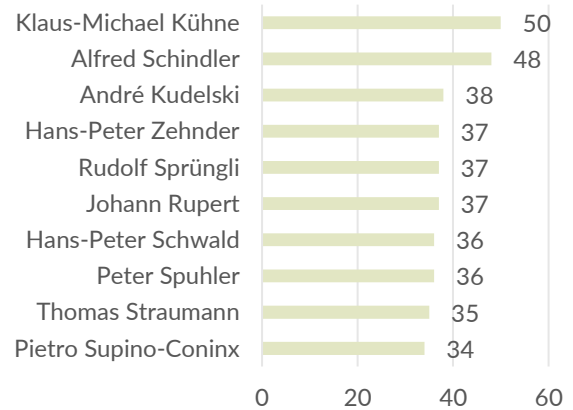
For its part, Ethos approved the election or re-election of 79.8 % of the members proposed by the boards of directors this year, slightly less than in 2024 (80.4 %). This rate rises to 87.7 % for members of the boards of directors of SMI companies, which shows that these companies are taking Ethos' criteria into account to a certain extent.

Ethos opposed the re-election of 44 chairmen of nomination committees (or of the board of directors if no such committee existed) due to a lack of diversity within the board of directors, compared with 21 times in 2024. This increase is due to the fact that Ethos has tightened its requirements this year and now opposes the re-election of the chair of the nomination committee when there are not at least 30 % women on the board of directors without satisfactory justification, compared to at least 20 % previously.

Ethos also opposed the (re-)election of 39 CEOs as permanent members of the board of directors, which is contrary to good governance practices, including nine who held the dual role of chairman/chief executive officer of the company on a permanent basis (Compagnie Financière Tradition, Dottikon ES Holding, Highlight Event and Entertainment, Kudelski, OC Oerlikon Corporation, Rieter, Sulzer, Villars Holding and WISeKey).

Finally, Ethos opposed the re-election of 32 individuals on the grounds that they were over the age limit of 75 set out in its guidelines, three more than in 2024.

CHART 16 : TOP 10 DIRECTORS WITH LONGEST TERMS OF OFFICE (IN YEARS)



# 3. Conclusion

Published last year, Ethos's first study on the sustainability reports of Swiss listed companies highlighted their insufficient quality, both in terms of content and transparency. It also showed that, despite this, shareholders did not mind and approved, by a large majority, all the sustainability reports that were submitted to them for the first time.

One year on, with the publication of this second study, the results remain mixed. On the one hand, there is momentum towards greater alignment of practices and transparency, with more companies submitting their sustainability reports to a binding vote by their shareholders (67.4 % compared with 55.6 % in 2024), external auditing of non-financial information is becoming more widespread (nine reports fully audited and 71 partially audited, compared to six and 55 last year) and the transition to more robust reference frameworks is accelerating (with the development of the European ESRS). On the other hand, investor expectations are rising and tolerance for relatively poor-quality reports is declining. The average support rate is falling slightly (95.2 % compared to 97.4 % in 2024) and, more importantly, the number of reports approved with less than 90 % of the vote is increasing significantly (22 compared to 5). Following the introduction of this voting requirement in 2024, this trend reflects a more rigorous approach to voting, involving more thorough analysis and the application of more stringent criteria.

This tightening of criteria is also reflected in Ethos' voting positions, with an approval rate of only 39.7 % this year (56 reports out of 141), compared with 45.7 % in 2024, and only 11 out of 20 companies in the SMI. In other words, despite procedural improvements (voting, verification), the intrinsic quality of a large proportion of the reports remains insufficient in terms of content, materiality and ambition.

Looking more specifically at climate issues, progress is tangible but uneven. The publication of direct GHG emissions (scope 1) and indirect energy-related emissions (scope 2) remains high but is showing a slight decline, while transparency on the value chain (scope 3) is improving but is not yet widespread. Nearly six out of ten companies now publish their suppliers' emissions, but less than three out of ten publish those related to product use. At the same time, 47 companies listed in Switzerland now have science-based reduction targets (SBTi or equivalent), 19 more than a year ago, including 45 aligned with 1.5°C; 16 others have committed to having their targets validated.

Financial institutions are also sending positive signals of transparency (financed/insured emissions). However, the

absence of validated targets among several large-cap companies and the withdrawal of certain commitments reflect the backlash observed on the international market, particularly in insurance (disengagement from SBTi) and the temptation to reduce certain aspects of reporting, particularly on inclusion and diversity. The next step is clear: we need to extend the coverage of Scope 3 emissions, move from 'limited assurance' on a few indicators to reasonable or limited assurance across the entire report, and translate the 1.5°C trajectories into sector-specific, quantified implementation plans.

Furthermore, while technical difficulties in obtaining certain data, particularly within the supply chain, may explain the absence of precise environmental indicators, it is more surprising that certain social indicators are still not included in sustainability reports. The publication of voluntary turnover rates has only increased marginally, while the gender pay gap is reported by only a minority of companies (12.7 %). Yet these indicators are essential to understand companies' ability to attract and retain talent, as well as the extent to which they treat their employees equally. Above all, these reports are a key tool for capital allocation, as they aim to enable investors – but also other stakeholders – to evaluate the extra-financial performance of companies in a comparable way and, as a result, to redirect capital more effectively to those that manage their ESG issues with conviction.

On governance, the picture is also mixed. While the proportion of women on boards of directors is increasing (SPI: 28.7 %; SMI: 36.3 %) and the proportion of companies reaching the 30 % threshold has risen sharply over the past ten years, the 'comply or explain' requirement from next year onwards will mean that nearly half of the companies in the SPI will have to step up their efforts, while a significant number still have no women on their boards. The level of independence of boards of directors is also progressing slowly (56.8 % compared to 56.0 % in 2024) and nearly two-thirds of boards now have a majority of independent members according to Ethos' criteria, but the over-representation of major shareholders and long-term mandates continue to weigh heavily. Certain bad practices also persist, such as the presence of CEOs on the board (or even the combination of chairman and CEO) and boards that are too small to function optimally.

Finally, this edition illustrates the growing importance of regulation. The adoption of ESRS is often less a matter of choice than of indirect exposure to European regulation (value chains, subsidiaries, financing, export markets). In this context, the regulatory framework acts as a safeguard against the risk of dilution of practices,

particularly under the influence of the anti-ESG counter-current observed elsewhere.

In summary, 2025 marks a trajectory of professionalisation – more binding votes, more external control, more validated climate targets and measurable progress on board diversity – but the credibility of reports now relies less on the simple publication of indicators than on the quality of the audit, the completeness of the data published (particularly on Scope 3 GHG emissions), the 1.5°C alignment of the climate strategy and the management of material social issues. For the next AGM season, Ethos will call for the following priorities: making voting on sustainability reports (and, where applicable, climate reports) binding; subjecting the entire sustainability report, rather than just certain indicators, to an external audit; expanding the disclosure of material Scope 3 emissions and critical social indicators, with multi-year targets and trajectories; reaching the 30 % threshold for women on the board without delay and strengthening independence ( $\geq 50$  %), by limiting the number of positions held and the length of terms of office. It is under these conditions that transparency will translate into trust – and trust into sustainable value creation.





# APPENDICES

# Appendix 1 : Universe

NAME	INDEX AT 30.06.2025	AGM DATE	TYPE OF VOTE
ABB	SMI	27.03.2025	Advisory
Accelleron Industries	Other	06.05.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
Addex Therapeutics	Other	24.06.2025	No obligation
Adecco	SMIM	17.04.2025	Advisory
Adval Tech	Other	15.05.2025	Advisory
Aevis Victoria	Other	21.05.2025	Binding
Airesis**	Other	NR	NR
Alcon	SMI	06.05.2025	Advisory
Allreal	Other	25.04.2025	No obligation
Also	Other	19.03.2025	Binding
ams-Osram	SMIM	26.06.2025	No obligation
APG SGA	Other	24.04.2025	No obligation
Arbonia	Other	25.04.2025	Binding
Aryzta	Other	30.04.2025	Binding
Ascom	Other	16.04.2025	Advisory
ASmallWorld	Other	25.04.2025	No obligation
Autoneum	Other	02.04.2025	Advisory
Avolta	SMIM	14.05.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
Bachem	Other	30.04.2025	Binding
Baloise Holding	SMIM	25.04.2025	Binding
Banque Cantonale de Genève	Other	29.04.2025	Binding
Banque Cantonale du Jura	Other	29.04.2025	No obligation
Banque Cantonale du Valais	Other	03.06.2025	Binding
Banque Cantonale Vaudoise	Other	08.05.2025	Binding
Barry Callebaut	SMIM	10.12.2025	- (binding in 2024)
Basellandschaftliche Kantonalbank	Other	No voting rights	NR
Basilea	Other	16.04.2025	No obligation
Basler Kantonalbank	Other	No voting rights	NR
BB Biotech	Other	19.03.2025	No obligation
Belimo	SMIM	24.03.2025	Advisory
Bell Food Group	Other	08.04.2025	No obligation
Bellevue Group	Other	18.03.2025	No obligation
Bergbahnen Engelberg-Trübsee-Titlis	Other	19.02.2025	No obligation
Berner Kantonalbank	Other	13.05.2025	Binding
BioVersys*	Other	27.06.2025	No obligation



NAME	INDEX AT 30.06.2025	AGM DATE	TYPE OF VOTE
BKW	SMIM	29.04.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
BNS	Other	25.04.2025	No obligation
Bossard	Other	11.04.2025	Advisory
Bucher Industries	Other	16.04.2025	Binding
Burckhardt Compression	Other	05.07.2025	Advisory
Burkhalter Holding	Other	13.05.2025	Binding
BVZ Holding	Other	09.04.2025	Binding (joint vote with the annual report in 2024)
Bystronic	Other	22.04.2025	Advisory
Calida	Other	08.04.2025	Binding
Carlo Gavazzi	Other	29.07.2025	Binding
Cembra Money Bank	Other	24.04.2025	Binding
Cham Swiss Properties*	Other	31.03.2025	No obligation
CI Com**	Other	NR	NR
Cicor Technologies	Other	17.04.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
Clariant	SMIM	01.04.2025	Advisory
Coltene	Other	23.04.2025	Binding
Comet Holding	Other	10.04.2025	Binding
Compagnie Financière Tradition	Other	22.05.2025	No obligation
Cosmo Pharmaceuticals	Other	30.05.2025	No obligation
CPH	Other	18.03.2025	Advisory (binding in 2024)
Curatis Holding	Other	23.05.2025	No obligation
Dätwyler	Other	18.03.2025	Binding
DKSH	Other	27.03.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
DocMorris	Other	08.05.2025	Binding
dormakaba	Other	21.10.2025	Binding
Dottikon ES Holding	Other	04.07.2025	Binding
Edisun Power Europe	Other	02.05.2025	Advisory (binding in 2024)
EFG International	Other	21.03.2025	Binding
Emmi	Other	10.04.2025	Binding
Ems-Chemie	SMIM	09.08.2025	Binding
EPIC Suisse	Other	28.03.2025	Joint vote with the annual report (voluntary)
EvoNext	Other	27.03.2025	No obligation
Feintool International	Other	29.04.2025	Binding
Flughafen Zürich	SMIM	14.04.2025	Binding
Forbo	Other	04.04.2025	Binding
Fundamenta Real Estate	Other	09.04.2025	No obligation
Galderma Group*	SMIM	23.04.2025	Binding
Galenica	SMIM	10.04.2025	Binding
GAM Holding	Other	14.05.2025	No obligation (advisory in 2024)
Geberit	SMI	16.04.2025	Binding
Georg Fischer	SMIM	16.04.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)

NAME	INDEX AT 30.06.2025	AGM DATE	TYPE OF VOTE
Givaudan	SMI	20.03.2025	Binding
Glarner Kantonalbank	Other	25.04.2025	Voluntary advisory vote (no vote and no obligation in 2024)
Graubündner Kantonalbank	Other	No voting rights	NR
Groupe Minoteries	Other	20.05.2025	No obligation
Gurit	Other	15.04.2025	Binding
Helvetia	SMIM	25.04.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
HIAG Immobilien	Other	17.04.2025	Voluntary advisory vote (no vote and no obligation in 2024)
Highlight Event and Entertainment	Other	25.06.2025	Binding
Holcim	SMI	14.05.2025	Advisory
HT5*	Other	23.04.2025	No obligation
Huber+Suhner	Other	02.04.2025	Binding
Hypothekarbank Lenzburg	Other	15.03.2025	No obligation
Idorsia	Other	28.05.2025	Advisory
Implenia	Other	25.03.2025	Advisory
Inficon	Other	08.04.2025	Advisory
Interroll	Other	06.06.2025	Binding
Intershop	Other	01.04.2025	Advisory (voluntary)
Investis	Other	06.05.2025	Binding
IVF Hartmann	Other	15.04.2025	No obligation
Julius Bär	SMIM	10.04.2025	Binding
Jungfraubahn	Other	12.05.2025	Advisory
Kardex	Other	24.04.2025	Advisory
Klingelberg	Other	21.08.2025	Binding
Komax	Other	16.04.2025	Binding
Kudelski	Other	17.04.2025	Binding
Kühne + Nagel	SMI	07.05.2025	Binding
Kuros Biosciences	Other	15.04.2025	No obligation
Landis+Gyr Group	Other	25.06.2025	Binding
lastminute.com	Other	25.06.2025	Binding
Lem	Other	26.06.2025	Advisory
Leonteq	Other	27.03.2025	Advisory
Liechtensteinische Landesbank	Other	16.04.2025	No obligation
Lindt & Sprüngli	SMIM	16.04.2025	Advisory
Logitech	SMI	09.09.2025	Advisory
Lonza	SMI	09.05.2025	Binding
Luzerner Kantonalbank	Other	14.04.2025	Binding
MCH Group AG	Other	27.05.2025	Advisory
Medacta Group	Other	07.05.2025	Binding
Medartis Holding	Other	25.04.2025	Binding
MedMix	Other	23.04.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)

NAME	INDEX AT 30.06.2025	AGM DATE	TYPE OF VOTE
Meier Tobler	Other	07.04.2025	Binding
Metall Zug	Other	09.05.2025	Binding
Meyer Burger**	Other	NR	NR
Mikron	Other	16.04.2025	Binding
mobilezone	Other	02.04.2025	Advisory
Mobimo	Other	31.03.2025	No obligation
Molecular Partners	Other	16.04.2025	No obligation
Montana Aerospace	Other	20.05.2025	Advisory
Nestlé	SMI	16.04.2025	Advisory
Newron Pharmaceuticals	Other	23.04.2025	No obligation
Novartis	SMI	07.03.2025	Advisory
Novavest Real Estate	Other	24.03.2025	No obligation
OC Oerlikon Corporation	Other	01.04.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
Orell Füssli	Other	13.05.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
Orior	Other	21.05.2025	Binding
Partners Group	SMI	21.05.2025	Binding
Peach Property Group	Other	23.05.2025	No obligation
Perrot Duval	Other	25.09.2025	No obligation
Phoenix Mecano	Other	22.05.2025	Advisory
Pierer Mobility	Other	23.06.2025	No obligation
Plazza	Other	02.04.2025	No obligation
PolyPeptide Group	Other	09.04.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
Private Equity Holding	Other	24.06.2025	No obligation
PSP Swiss Property	SMIM	03.04.2025	No obligation
R&S Group Holding	Other	14.05.2025	Binding
Relief Therapeutics	Other	12.06.2025	No obligation
Richemont	SMI	10.09.2025	Advisory (binding in 2024)
Rieter	Other	24.04.2025	Advisory
Roche	SMI	25.03.2025	Advisory
Romande Energie	Other	14.05.2025	Binding
Sandoz Group	SMIM	15.04.2025	Binding
Santhera Pharmaceuticals	Other	20.05.2025	No obligation
Schindler	SMIM	25.03.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
Schlatter	Other	06.05.2025	No obligation
Schweiter Technologies	Other	09.04.2025	Advisory
Sensirion Holding	Other	12.05.2025	Binding
SF Urban Properties	Other	09.04.2025	No obligation
SFS Group	Other	30.04.2025	Binding
SGS	SMIM	26.03.2025	Binding
SHL Telemedicine	Other	28.05.2025	No obligation
Siegfried	Other	10.04.2025	Binding
SIG Group	SMIM	08.04.2025	Binding

NAME	INDEX AT 30.06.2025	AGM DATE	TYPE OF VOTE
Sika	SMI	25.03.2025	Binding
SKAN Group	Other	07.05.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
SoftwareOne Holding	Other	16.05.2025	Binding
Sonova	SMI	10.06.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
St.Galler Kantonalbank	Other	30.04.2025	Binding
Stadler Rail	Other	07.05.2025	Advisory
StarragTornos Group	Other	17.04.2025	Binding
Straumann	SMIM	10.04.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
Sulzer	Other	23.04.2025	Binding (advisory in 2024)
Sunrise Communications*	Other	13.05.2025	Binding
Swatch Group	SMIM	21.05.2025	Binding
Swiss Life	SMI	14.05.2025	Advisory
Swiss Prime Site	SMIM	13.03.2025	Advisory (joint vote with the annual report in 2024)
Swiss Re	SMI	11.04.2025	Advisory
Swisscom	SMI	26.03.2025	Binding
Swissquote	Other	08.05.2025	Binding
Tecan	SMIM	10.04.2025	Binding
Temenos	SMIM	13.05.2025	Binding
Thurgauer Kantonalbank	Other	No voting rights	NR
TX Group	Other	11.04.2025	Binding
U-blox	Other	16.04.2025	Advisory
UBS	SMI	10.04.2025	Advisory
Valiant	Other	14.05.2025	Advisory
Varia US Properties	Other	30.04.2025	No obligation
VAT Group	SMIM	29.04.2025	Advisory
Vaudoise Assurances	Other	12.05.2025	Binding
Vetropack	Other	23.04.2025	Binding
Villars Holding	Other	14.05.2025	No obligation
Vontobel	Other	02.04.2025	Binding
VP Bank	Other	25.04.2025	No obligation
VZ Holding	Other	09.04.2025	Binding
V-Zug Holding	Other	08.04.2025	Binding
Warteck Invest	Other	21.05.2025	No obligation
WISeKey	Other	27.06.2025	No obligation
Xlife Sciences	Other	24.06.2025	No obligation
Ypsomed	Other	02.07.2025	Binding
Zehnder Group	Other	03.04.2025	Binding
Züblin Immobilien	Other	26.06.2025	No obligation
Zug Estates	Other	10.04.2025	No obligation
Zuger Kantonalbank	Other	10.05.2025	No obligation
Zurich Insurance Group	SMI	09.04.2025	Advisory

<b>NAME</b>	<b>INDEX AT 30.06.2025</b>	<b>AGM DATE</b>	<b>TYPE OF VOTE</b>
Zwahlen & Mayr	Other	08.04.2025	No obligation

\* Companies that were listed and included in the SPI index during 2025.

\*\* Companies whose listing was suspended or which were delisted during 2025.

# Appendix 2 : Ethos requirements regarding the content of sustainability reports

In general Ethos recommends to oppose the sustainability report at the AGM if one of the following conditions applies:

- The report has not been established according to a recognised standard in terms of extrafinancial reporting.
- The report and/or relevant indicators were not verified by an independent third party.
- The report does not cover all material topics.
- The company does not publish quantitative indicators for material topics.
- The company has not set ambitious and quantitative targets for material topics and does not report on its progress against these targets.
- The company does not consistently meet its targets or there is a deterioration in key indicators on material issues over a three-year period.
- The company abandons previous commitments to its sustainability strategy without adequate justification.
- The company has stopped publishing key quantitative indicators on its material topics without adequate justification.
- The climate strategy is not aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement.
- The company does not take adequate measures to reduce its CO2e emissions.
- There are significant doubts on the quality, veracity and completeness of the information provided.
- The sustainability report was not made available sufficiently in advance of the general meeting.
- The board of directors refuses to disclose important information or responds to legitimate requests for supplementary information in an unsatisfactory manner.
- The company is subject to serious controversies which are not addressed in the sustainability report.





**Siège**

Place de Pont-Rouge 1  
Case postale 1051  
1211 Genève 26

**Bureau de Zurich**

Glockengasse 18  
8001 Zurich

[info@ethosfund.ch](mailto:info@ethosfund.ch)

[www.ethosfund.ch](http://www.ethosfund.ch)

T +41 58 201 89 89