



# foresight

Summary  
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## VAUD 2040 REPORT SUMMARY OF THE FORESIGHT COMMITTEE

In a complex and rapidly evolving world scarred by a pandemic and now preoccupied by the war in Ukraine, where uncertainties prevail, it seems a priori difficult to attempt to identify trends so as to prepare for the future. Nevertheless, the canton of Vaud has undertaken this challenging exercise for the third time (after 2012 and 2017). The purpose of this report is the same as for the previous ones: to fuel the canton's legislative programme for the 2022-2027 period. The main issues pinpointed in this report form the general framework which the political authorities will incorporate into their future discussions. The four scenarios, developed to highlight the issues at stake for the canton, are summed up at the end of this synthesis. They are intentionally contrasted and schematic in order to envision the possible situations and challenges that may be in store for the canton.

2-3 The challenges for  
the canton

4 The scenarios

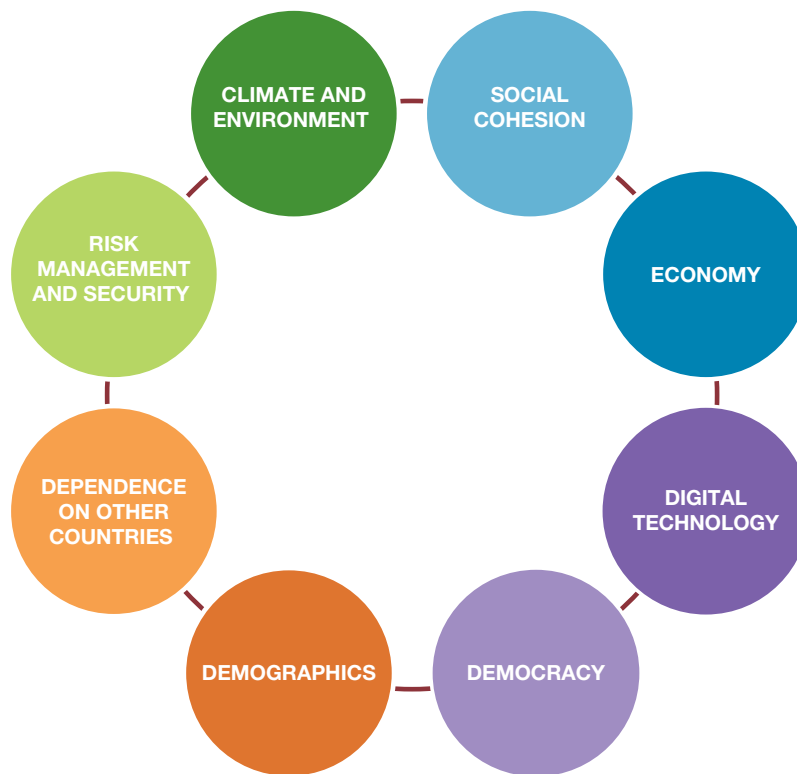
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## THE CHALLENGES FOR THE CANTON



### CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENT

The intensive exploitation of resources and the transformation of natural habitats by human societies have enabled us to improve considerably our standard of living, but have significantly altered the Earth’s climate, thus causing a decline in the world’s biological diversity. The dramatic consequences of climate change on nature and mankind are gathering momentum and will become even more tangible in the next decades.

**Breakdown of issues:**

- carbon footprint and climate change
- adaptation to climate change
- preservation of biodiversity.

### SOCIAL COHESION

Social cohesion is built by establishing common values and goals that favour social integration. Societies in which there are strong divisions and inequalities prove to be unable to ensure long-term stability. And if the Covid-19 pandemic has had a major social and economic impact, the heavy trends (population ageing, climate changes, digital transitions) may accentuate the pre-existing divisions.

**Breakdown of issues:**

- economic, social and cultural rights
- poverty and social exclusion
- inclusive society and diversity
- social polarisation
- intergenerational solidarity.

### ECONOMY

The canton of Vaud, together with its neighbouring territories, forms a region that is well integrated into global economy. By international standards, its vitality is demonstrated by a high annual production of wealth, a diversification of the economic fabric, an innovative ecosystem that can rely on a dense network of higher education institutions, a continued job growth and a strong resilience in the event of an economic crisis. However, this vitality is not due to a miracle but results from a chemistry that needs to be cultivated.

**Breakdown of issues:**

- economic backlash of the Covid-19 pandemic and future economic crises
- framework conditions, including access to markets and foreign workers
- technological innovation
- long-term economic changes
- diversity of the economic structure and well-balanced regional development.

### DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Digital technologies are overwhelming all the social and economic sectors by transforming the relations of individuals to time, space and one another. Digital technologies (big data, Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, blockchain, virtual reality, robotics and 3D printers, for example) cover many realities and feed into each other. Yet, technological developments go well beyond digital technology with which they often inter-

act. They include innovations in the health field (personalised treatments) or in the energy sector.

**Breakdown of issues:**

- *technological expectations*
- *digital transition of companies and public authorities*
- *acquisition of skills required for a more digital society*
- *data security and protection*
- *regulations and infrastructures*
- *sustainability and energy transition.*

## DEMOCRACY

On a global scale, demands for an extension of democracy are increasing, including in democratic regimes. Significant proportions of the population do not trust the institutions and governments, which they deem incapable of meeting their needs or expectations. Although the mechanisms of direct democracy considerably reduce the distrust of political systems and institutions, the polarisation affecting western societies also concerns Switzerland. Furthermore, demands for a greater participation in decisions are increasing in Switzerland as well.

**Breakdown of issues:**

- *closeness between the authorities and the population*
- *relations between public administration and the population*
- *broad and integrative approach of reality*
- *resorting to court actions for social relations*
- *threats to democracy.*

## DEMOGRAPHICS

The population growth of the canton, almost continuous since 1970, will carry on in the next decades, and the population should reach approximately 980 000 inhabitants in 2040. The rise is thus estimated to be +165 000 inhabitants, or +20%, compared to 2020. The extent of the rise will result mainly from the importance of migration which, alone, has accounted for 70% of population growth in the last 50 years. Whilst the growth of population will most certainly concern all age categories, there is no doubt that the number of seniors will grow the fastest, especially when the large numbers of baby-boomer generations reach retirement age.

**Breakdown of issues:**

- *infrastructures, population growth and other evolutions*
- *land use*
- *urban sprawl and pressure on natural environments*
- *ageing and public policies*
- *social insurances.*

## DEPENDENCE ON OTHER COUNTRIES

The Covid-19 health crisis has caused us to ponder on the interdependence of countries and on the dependence of Switzerland and the canton of Vaud on other countries, often far away, to where the production of strategic goods was relocated. It is now evident that the current models of supply chains are vulnerable. However, the events likely to impair these chains are becoming more frequent, as shown by the war in Ukraine or the diffi-

culties in foodstuffs supply, which will be aggravated by the climate change. The question of reliance on the exterior also exists at the national level, since the federal organisation implies a distribution of tasks between the different institutional levels.

**Breakdown of the issues:**

- *strong supply dependence on other countries*
- *international collaboration*
- *tasks allocation between the different institutional levels.*

## RISK MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY

The public policies which have been implemented in the field of security aim to anticipate the varied risks threatening the population (e.g. public, social and supply security, etc.) and to organise an efficient response, when these occur. These issues focus on the risks linked to catastrophes (including pandemics), to public security (military, crime and violent extremism, feeling of insecurity), to cyber risks and to misinformation. These risks, which could multiply, raise the issue, in a more general manner, of the population's attitude towards the potential occurrence of such risks, and to the resources which the community allocates to prepare for such an event.

**Breakdown of issues:**

- *issue of military security*
- *catastrophes and emergency situations*
- *misinformation and influence activities*
- *fight against cyber risks*
- *fight against violent extremisms, crime and feeling of insecurity.*



## THE SCENARIOS

### TOWARDS A SOCIETY FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS

In 2040, the inhabitants of the canton of Vaud feel concerned by the climate cause without, however, in a somewhat contradictory way, being prepared to change their lifestyles or habits. Technologies are considered to be the main tools to meet the climate challenge, as well as other important issues such as elderly care or the economic competitiveness of the canton. In a society which has remained consumer-oriented and individualistic, climate targets are not met and the consequences of climate changes are more and more undeniable (extreme weather and heat waves, migration, biodiversity loss, etc.). The economy of the canton continues to grow in a context marked by strong technological progress and where the level of exchanges, investments and capital flow remains high. The canton of Vaud has 950 000 inhabitants.

### TOWARDS AN OPEN SOCIETY

In 2040, international collaboration is important, especially to face climate, migration or digital transition issues. Switzerland has an open policy, which translates into a sharp population growth, bringing the inhabitants of the canton up to 1 million. Society is inclusive, whilst being driven by self-realisation respecting other lifestyles and ways of thinking. In this multicultural context and with economic prosperity, the public policies strive to guarantee social cohesion. Actions of the population, companies and public authorities have not been sufficient to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Yet, this objective should be achievable within a few years, thanks to a good international collaboration and greater efforts.

### TOWARDS AN AUTHORITARIAN SOCIETY

In 2040, the society, overcome by an increasing polarisation and unable to make compromises, has ended up accepting an authoritarian government, notably in response to the increase in economic and social insecurity. Order is maintained via tracing measures, or even surveillance, and technology is mainly developed for this purpose. The population is characterised by its risk aversion and strong tendency to adhere to policies that ensure its security.

In the lack of sufficient measures in Switzerland and worldwide, global warming is accelerating: society merely adapts to changes induced by global warming rather than fight against it. Both the authorities and population aspire to self-sustaining policies. International collaborations are reduced and economic growth is consequently slowed down. Having significantly limited immigration, the canton has 900 000 inhabitants. There are now more elderly than young people.

### TOWARDS AN ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

In 2040, public authorities have acquired major skills to speed the advent of a climate-sustainable society. To this end, they gather significant financial means and lay down stringent rules for the consumption and production of goods and services. The population adheres to a large extent to these actions and progressively turns to lifestyles that are sounder in terms of energy consumption. Stimulated by vast investment plans in favour of the ecological transition and by technological innovations, the economy of the canton remains oriented towards growth. Yet, the latter is restrained, as global economy has decelerated following the relocation of some activities and the transition to circular production models. The world economy is now partitioned among regional powers. The canton of Vaud has 1 million inhabitants.