Press release issued by FNG – Forum Nachhaltige Geldanlagen
Berlin/Vienna/Zurich, 1 June 2017

Sustainable Investment Market Report 2017

Sustainable investment market in Germany, Austria and Switzerland makes significant gains yet again

Berlin/Vienna/Zurich, 1 June 2017 – Sustainable investments are continuing to increase in importance. In 2016, this market again saw disproportionately high growth in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, with overall growth standing at 29 per cent. The latest annual statistics from FNG – Forum Nachhaltige Geldanlagen for these three countries put a figure of almost 420 billion euros on investments in which not only financial but also environmental and social criteria are taken into account. If investments which factor in one or more sustainability aspects or strategies are also included, the total comes to over four trillion euros.

The strongest growth in sustainable investments was recorded in Switzerland (+39%), followed by Austria (+24%) and Germany (+15%). "Each year, we see increasing numbers of investors opting for sustainability in the management of their assets," says Volker Weber, Chair of the Board of Directors at FNG, commenting on the latest market figures. "Institutional investors, in particular, are increasingly being won over, while we know from asset managers that more and more of them see factoring in non-financial criteria as a normal part of their fiduciary duties."

The current FNG market report shows that public pension and reserve funds are ahead of the field among institutional investors in Germany and Switzerland, with market shares of 43 per cent and 47 per cent respectively. In Austria, by contrast, pension insurance funds are out in front (59%). However, insurance companies, occupational pension funds, religious institutions and charities, as well as foundations, all to varying degrees account for considerable volumes, depending on the country.

This year’s FNG market report includes a special focus on human rights issues. Asset managers see the following sustainable investment strategies as being particularly effective in this regard: excluding companies and countries from the investment universe, exercising voting rights and engaging in dialogue with companies (engagement), as well as checking investments for their compliance with standards. The ILO’s core labour standards and the UN Global Compact are particularly relevant here.

"The survey shows that large numbers of asset managers already see human rights as an intrinsic part of their responsibility," explains Claudia Tober, FNG’s Executive Director. "Further important motives include reputational management and customer demand. Overall, human rights are more and more being systematically taken into account in the financial sector, a development driven to a great extent by the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, published in 2011.

This year, the annual statistics on sustainable investments are being published to coincide with European Sustainable Development Week.

FNG collects the data for the FNG Market Report itself. The chapter and the separate publication relating to the Swiss market were produced by FNG in collaboration with Swiss Sustainable Finance. The FNG market report could not have been produced without the support of a few very committed association members. Particular thanks are due to the following sponsors and supporters: Union Investment, oekom research AG, BIB – Bank im Bistum Essen eG, Deutsche Bildung AG, FondsDISCOUNT.de, GES Switzerland, NKI – Institut für nachhaltige Kapitalanlagen, KlimaGut Immobilien AG, Pictet Asset Management, Qualitates GmbH, Raiffeisen Kapitalanlage GmbH, RobecoSAM and South Pole Group.
FNG Forum Nachhaltige Geldanlagen, the industry association for sustainable investment in Germany, Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, represents more than 170 members which are working to promote sustainability in the financial sector. These include banks, investment companies, rating agencies, financial advisers and academic institutions. FNG promotes dialogue and the exchange of information between the worlds of business, academia and politics and has been working to improve the legal and political framework for sustainable investments since 2001. FNG awards the Transparency logo for sustainable mutual funds, publishes the FNG Sustainability Profiles and has developed the FNG Label for sustainable mutual funds. FNG is also a founding member of the European umbrella organisation Eurosif. Further information can be found at www.forum-ng.org and Twitteraccount @FNG_eV.

The Sustainable Investment Market Report – Germany, Austria and Switzerland is FNG’s main annual publication. It provides industry insiders, journalists, scholars and politicians with a source of up-to-date market data. Besides volume figures, which we have been recording since 2005, the market report offers a wide range of supplementary data and information that can be used to derive current trends and developments. An English version of the chapter on Switzerland is also published separately. Both publications can be downloaded free of charge from the FNG homepage.

Contacts

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Publications:

- Marktbericht Nachhaltige Geldanlagen 2017 – Deutschland, Österreich und die Schweiz (in German)
- Sustainable Investment in Switzerland – Excerpt from the Sustainable Investment Market Report 2017

Press materials:

- Switzerland: Dynamic growth in sustainable investments driven by greater interest from institutional investors
- Germany, Austria and Switzerland: Sustainable investment market in Germany, Austria and Switzerland makes significant gains yet again

Diagrams

- All the diagrams from the FNG Market Report 2017 can be downloaded here.