



THE VIEW FROM PORRENTRUUY

Jean-Paul Periat and Nikolay Karpenko of Herculis Partners SA reveal the secrets of medieval Porrentruy

Why are you based in Porrentruy?

Before we launched in 2009, we spoke to authorities in the Economic Promotion Office of the canton Jura. We managed to obtain a tax ruling that reduced the corporate tax rate for a period of five years, with the option to extend it for another five. Then we bought a building in a prime location in Porrentruy, right in the centre of the old town. It was much cheaper than in Geneva or Zurich. As Porrentruy is not far from Basel (less than an hour by train) it is not difficult to hire high calibre personnel who speak at least three languages: English, French and German.

Do you have other branches?

We opened a branch in Geneva in 2015 to be close to the European clients who visit the city often. Part of our office in Geneva is designated as the Honorary Consulate of Kazakhstan, as Jean-Paul was recently named as the country's honorary consul to the French-speaking region of Switzerland. We also have a company in Zurich – Herculis Trustees – for the administration and management of onshore and offshore structures, tax, legal and succession planning, migration support and accounting. This splits the risk in our business activity and allows us to be close to our Russian-speaking clients, who prefer to come to Zurich.

What are the advantages of being based outside a major financial centre?

In a small canton like Jura, we have rapid and easy access to the main people managing the canton: ministers, heads of the Office of Economic Promotion, heads of the tax office and the mayor of Porrentruy. We can even spend time with them at the sports and entertainment events we sponsor. It builds trust. We encourage people

and companies from Switzerland and abroad to relocate to Jura because of the tax advantages. Confidentiality is also key: our clients from Geneva or Zurich will never bump into their neighbours here!

What is the biggest challenge you face being based in Porrentruy?

Convincing clients that we are not so far from other parts of Switzerland. When clients have been here once, they are always happy to come back. For key clients we provide helicopter services from the airports at Geneva, Zurich and Lugano.

Who is your average client?

Our clients are mainly from Europe and the Russian-speaking countries.

Are you bullish or bearish at the moment?

We don't like the terms bullish or bearish. We are opportunistic and invest on a long-term basis. We are sceptical about the valuation of the stock markets and the high P/E ratios, but as long as interest rates stay at this level, there is no other alternative.

If you were in Porrentruy on a business trip for 24 hours, what would you do?

First I would visit Porrentruy Castle, and then I would do the 'Secret Tour' downtown. This gives you the keys to the city and opens gates to little charming streets and the rooftops, with a magnificent view of the medieval town. Even the people who live here don't have access to it.

Jean-Paul Periat, president and chairman at Herculis Partners SA, has worked in investment banking, private equity and venture capital since 1972. He studied economics in San Diego and New York. Herculis board member Nikolay Karpenko has been in private banking, M&A, IPOs and private equity since 1996. He is a lawyer and holds both a PhD and an executive MBA.

Herculis Partners

Date opened:
**December
2009**

Size of team:
**TWELVE
people**

Cash position
(balanced portfolio):
30%

