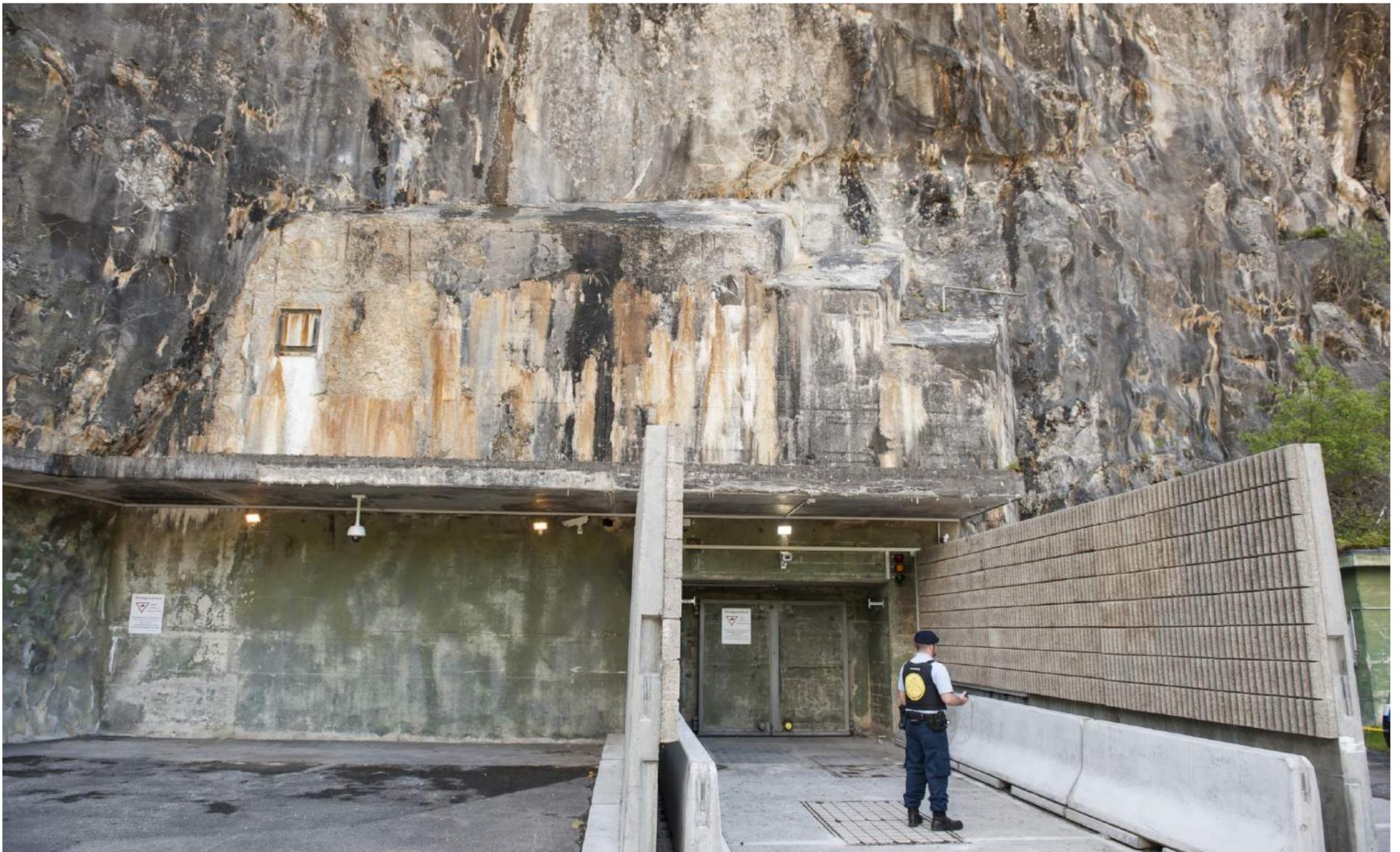


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Highest level of data protection offered by Swiss alpine bunkers



Entrance gate outside one of the bunkers, © MOUNT10

Storing data securely and safely ranks among the absolute top priorities of any company and organisation. A computer virus, human error, software corruption or theft can wipe out data in a few seconds. Data protection in a secure environment is thus crucial. This sought-after service is offered in one of the safest places on earth: former military bunkers located deep inside the Swiss Alps.

In today's modern world, staggering amounts of information, ranging from client details, financial transactions and employee records to loyalty schemes, are created and stored by authorities, companies and individuals on a daily basis. And these records must be securely protected. "People have realised that everything can be rebuilt and replaced after a cyber-attack, server crash, vandalism or fire – with the exception of data," says Thomas Liechti, the CEO of Mount10, a company specialized in data protection. The loss of data creates huge damage and costs a lot in both time and money. "It can ultimately lead a company out of business," he adds.

Data safely stored in server halls in bunkers

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not only resistant to nuclear, chemical, biological and terror attacks, but also to sabotage. “We protect the businesses of our clients and exclusively focus on our data protection services – to make sure we never lose the data of our clients,” explains Liechti.

Switzerland’s stability, an attractive asset

Political and legal stability, a stable and strong currency, an attractive tax environment – particularly for assets and inheritances – attracts a lot of money from abroad. Strong data protection laws (see adjacent text box) and related services – as those offered by Mount10 – gives the country another competitive edge. So does Switzerland’s competitive investment climate and its modern infrastructure, renowned for its trains running on time, but also for its flawless fibre-optic network and fast internet connection speeds. “Switzerland is a bulletproof package, not just for finance or gold trading. The combination of services that the country provides, makes Switzerland an ideal and unique place to invest in,” Liechti underlines.

Heterogenous client base

Mount 10’s clients are a mixed bag. The company’s more than 3,000 customers range from public administrations such as the Swiss Parliament and large logistics companies, to banks, SMEs and some individuals. Comprehensive background checks are always carried out to avoid dodgy clients. “And yes, we sometimes have to reject clients. But it has only happened once during our 20 years in business that we’ve been contacted by a public prosecutor and ordered to hand out the data of a client,” Liechti notes. “We of course complied, copied the requested data on a portable device and sent it in. But the data we store is always encrypted, so the prosecutor was unable to access the files. We could only advise him to contact the person suspected of crime and ask the suspect to reveal his password.”[MOU1] Mount10 does not have access to the password of their clients. “If they lose it, they lose access to their data,” Liechti underlines.

Data protection market booms

Data has over the years slowly but surely turned into the new gold. “Data is the only commodity beside gold that will be infinitely valuable in the future. Data should therefore always remain yours, and always be stored safely,” Liechti underlines. The rising number of data breaches worldwide boosts the demand for data protection. The global market for data protection services is currently growing by 15 percent annually and set to exceed 120 billion US dollars by 2023. It is easy to understand why companies and individuals alike are ready to pay large for amounts to rest assured that their data at all times is safe. when looking at latest cost of data breaches. IBM’s most recent “Cost of Data Breach Report” estimates that the average data breach costs a company nearly 4 million dollars, and in some cases up to 400 million dollars to remedy.

Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection

The Swiss Federal Act on Data Protection (FADP) has a very wide scope. It not only applies to personal data file activities carried out by Federal authorities and private organisations, but also by individuals (excluding those for normal private purposes). Data collected and kept by journalists do, however, benefit from several exemptions linked to the freedom of the press and speech. Both electronic data processing (EDP) as well as manual files are covered by the FADP. Transferring data abroad is only allowed if adequate data protection is assured. The European Union recognizes Switzerland as a country that offers an adequate level of data protection, which means data transfer is expressly permitted.