

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

JUNE 2006 / NO. 3



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How much should a top manager earn?

SWISS ABROAD are showing a growing interest in politics back home, and their political influence is steadily rising. At the end of 2005, no fewer than 105,212 expatriate Swiss were listed on electoral rolls in Switzerland. This is four times the number estimated in 1992, when Switzerland introduced postal votes for Swiss nationals abroad. Ballot papers from foreign countries now account for 2.2 percent of all votes cast. In the canton of Geneva the figure is as high as 5.7 percent, and in Basle City 4.4 percent. The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) hopes that expatriates' political commitment and active participation at the ballot box will continue to grow. The OSA aims to continue its campaign and has high hopes for electronic voting, scheduled for introduction in 2010.

Swiss industry is booming: all the indicators are pointing upwards, and consumer buying is again on the rise. Yet the topic that is grabbing Swiss headlines is not so much excellent year-end figures as the exorbitant salaries earned by the country's top managers. Marcel Ospel, Chairman of the Board of Directors at UBS, receives CHF 24 million per annum; Daniel Vassella, CEO of the Novartis Group, earns around CHF 30 million (depending on how it is calculated); and the six-strong top management team at Credit Suisse pocket no less than CHF 280 million in total bonuses in return for their efforts.

The media debate questions whether any job can possibly be worth that much. Politicians and level-headed members of the business community are warning of a divided society and are calling on CEOs and Chairmen to exercise more restraint. While shareholders defend themselves at Annual General Meetings, simple wage-earners like us shake our heads in disbelief at the fact that a senior manager can earn CHF 65,000 a day, and with an income on this scale be obliged to set up home in a Swiss tax haven as a tax exile. Does it really matter whether you have ten million or 15 million francs a year to live on and provide for your old age? The answer appears to be Yes, otherwise the mega-rich would not move from Basle or



Heinz Eckert

Zurich of their own free will to take up residence in remote rural areas like Wollerau in the canton of Schwyz.

Having subjected the "Sixth Switzerland" to close scrutiny, Rolf Ribi has discovered some interesting statistics. The term was coined by Basle economics professor Silvio Borner to describe the part of Switzerland's economy that earns revenue abroad. One in five Swiss companies operates subsidiaries in other countries. In total, Swiss firms have created 1.8 million jobs outside Switzerland. Despite its size Switzerland invests billions in other countries every year, is one of the world's most highly globalised countries, and in economic terms is a little giant.

As June 13 draws ever closer, the tension is mounting ahead of the Swiss football team's first World Cup match in Germany, when our top footballers meet the French national team in Stuttgart. Never before has a Swiss squad enjoyed such high credit as the 2006 World Cup team, pictured here on pages 12/13. Whether the hype is justified and the players measure up to the country's high expectations will soon be revealed. HEINZ ECKERT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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Lavaux with vintners Francine and Jean-Luc Blondel.
Photo: Andreas Oberlein

IMPRESSUM: "Swiss Review", the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 33rd year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 21 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 380 000. Regional news appears four times a year.

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Proud of Tom Lüthi

Thank you for the report about Tom Lüthi. Our warmest congratulations to him as Sportsman of the Year. My father, Armin Scheurer, was the first ever Sportsman of the Year in 1950. I wasn't even born then, but of course I am now very proud of his achievements in athletics and football. We have lived in Western Australia for 18 years, but still look forward to the "Swiss Review" and are proud of what "our" Swiss people accomplish.

VERENA HAENNI-SCHEURER
AND FAMILY, GINGIN, WESTERN
AUSTRALIA

Education System

I was happy to see that the Swiss are finally going to harmonise their education system. We moved from Lucerne to Geneva in October, 1959. Overnight my daughter went from being a German-speaking kindergarten to a French-speaking first grader. In those days Lucerne began the school year in April and Geneva began in September. I spent several weeks before the move teaching her to read – in French – so she would fit in to the more advanced class in Geneva. Fortunately she handled this well, but some students would suffer from moving from a German to a French education. You're either six months ahead of your former school or six months behind. Those poor kids.

JANE BERNARD, BEAVERTON,
OREGON

Destroyed for good?

Thank you for your excellent magazine. The article "The other face of Switzerland" which states that 11 ha of land are developed every day, should read: destroyed for good. The concreting of the best farming land and scenic jewels goes on unabated. For me a train journey from Zurich to Berne after an interval of a few years makes this fact quite obvious. People in higher authority don't seem

to notice. For them it is progress, good for business and employment. J. Gotthelf wrote somewhere that if road constructions continued, peasants would have to grow potatoes on their head! Future generations will curse their ancestors for the destruction of their heritage. To replace farms with huge shopping centers and then import food might work at the moment, but for how long?

HANSRUEDI SCHMID, TASMANIA,
AUSTRALIA

The Pillars of Switzerland

I refer to the entertaining reader's letter by Eric Haywood from Dublin, and would like to join in the exchange of ideas about Swiss "Must-haves". I too am a homesick Swiss national, living near Vienna and operating an active "cultural exchange" with Switzerland. I bring my sons, who are now back living in Basle, reminiscences from childhood, and I always have a long list for Migros or Coop. However, my wants are a bit different from Mr Haywood's. I can't live without kirsch batons, plenty of Swiss chocolate, veal sausages, Buendnerfleisch, fondue mix, and Raclette, Emmentaler, Gruyère, Tilsit and Vacherin cheeses. And everything has to be somehow "safely stowed away", because the customs people are always so nosy. That is what annoys me most, because we are able to carry such "luxury goods" back and forth all over Europe. I would expect a bit more tolerance from the Swiss in that respect. As it is, I drive across into Feldkirch three times a year with my heart in my mouth, but everything has been fine nearly every time.

SUZANNE DYSZKANT,
MARIA ENZERSDORF,
AUSTRIA

The Beginning of All Things

The surprising announcement was issued by Rome at the beginning of October last year: Pope Benedict XVI, elected to the papacy just a few months previously, received eminent Swiss theologian Hans Küng for a private audience. Benedict's predecessor, John Paul II, never offered the professor of theology at Germany's University of Tübingen an audience. It was the Polish Pope who in 1979 rescinded the critical Swiss theologian's authority to teach Catholic theology. Küng had challenged papal authority and the Pope's infallibility on matters of faith and custom and questioned Catholic teaching on other fundamental issues, such as sexuality, the enforced celibacy of priests and the right of women to join the priesthood. Yet at their meeting in the Pope's summer residence in Castelgandolfo, Benedict and Küng talked for four hours "on the question of global ethics and the rational dialogue between the natural sciences and Christian faith."

Hans Küng's new book, "Der Anfang aller Dinge" ("The Beginning of All Things") discusses the relationship between natural science and religion and the rapprochement between reason and Christian faith. From the standpoint of an enlightened theology he asks such questions as: In the beginning God? Creation or evolution? Is everything random? His highly acclaimed work ranges from the Big Bang - the gigantic cosmic explosion 13.7 billion years ago - to modern research on the brain. For Küng, mathematical natural science is fully justified and no theologian can question it by citing God and the Bible. But natural science provides no answer to humanity's eternal questions: Where did we come from? Where are we going? Why is the world as it is? The ultimate reason, the eternal secret of our existence, is "God". Because: "Whoever accepts the existence of God knows about the origin and ancient mystery of reality."

Life has been evolving on earth for 3.5 billion years, but humans have only existed for the past 200,000 years. The chapter on "Creation or Evolution" is one of the most thought-provoking in the entire book. Darwin's theory of plant and animal evolution contradicts the Bible and to this day is rejected by Christian fundamentalists. Küng discusses scientifically proven evolution up to and including the structures of higher forms of plant and animal life. He can identify no special intervention by a God of creation. "The evolution of life is an event that must be explained in physical-chemical terms." However: "Man appears to be a unique product of evolution, and due to his consciousness, language and freedom enjoys a unique relationship with his environment - with "heaven and earth."

Both natural science and religion, according to Küng, have their legitimacy and unique characteristics. Religion can ascribe

a sense to all evolution which natural science cannot. "Faith allows us to recognise that the world has been created by the word of God." A serious, enlightened trust in God as the creator and ender of the world and of human beings - this is Hans Küng's key motto.

ROLF RIBI



Hans Küng: Der Anfang aller Dinge. Naturwissenschaft und Religion. Piper Verlag, Munich 2005. CHF 33.40, EUR 18.90. The complete works of Hans Küng are available from Piper Verlag: www.piper.de

Invitation to the 2006 General Meeting on the Rhine

Soliswiss members are cordially invited to the Ordinary General Meeting in Basle on Friday 18 August, 2006, at 12:15.

Our ship will be ready for boarding from 11:45 at the Basle quay by the Middle Rhine Bridge. It will cast off at 12:15 and return to the same mooring by 14:00. *We look forward to offering you an on-board snack.*

Due to limited space, registration (by letter or e-mail) is required.

Agenda for the 2006 General Meeting

1. Explanations to the 2005 Annual Report
2. Explanations to the 2005 balance sheet and 2005 income statement
3. Report of the auditors
4. Votes:
 - a) Approval of the 2005 Annual Report
 - b) Approval of the 2005 financial statements
 - c) Appropriation of retained profit for 2005
 - d) Discharge of the Council
5. Election to the Council and the Appeals Commission
6. Election to the Presidency: Dr Barbara Rigassi-Schneeberger, former ambassador
7. Appointment of new auditors: Ernst & Young AG, Basle
8. Amendments to Statutes 2006*
9. Miscellaneous

- * Significant content of proposed amendments to statutes:
- Purpose of cooperative society, supplement: Participation in other companies
 - Deletion of all articles related to saving
 - Deletion of the Technical Regulations

As usual, you can find explanations on the planned statutory amendments on our web site www.soliswiss.ch. Members can also request the documents from Soliswiss, Gutenbergstrasse 6, CH-3011 Berne, or through info@soliswiss.ch.

For supervisory and regulatory reasons, Soliswiss can no longer accept savings deposits. Accordingly, the society has founded a subsidiary which will be responsible for operation of the asset management and insurance brokering business areas and will personally serve its clients.

As soon as the new official permits are available, Soliswiss will inform its members individually and advise them on investing their credit.

Soliswiss: Living abroad – with Swiss security

Berne, June 2006

Ulrich Pfister, President

Dr Felix Bossert, Director

soliswiss

Living abroad –
with Swiss security

Lump sum compensation Membership

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Société coopérative Fonds de solidarité des Suisses de l'étranger
Società cooperativa Fondo di solidarietà degli Svizzeri dell'estero
Sociedad cooperativa Fondo de solidaridad de los Suizos en el extranjero
Cooperative Society Solidarity Fund for Swiss Nationals Abroad

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General Assembly 2006

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- I eat meat or fish
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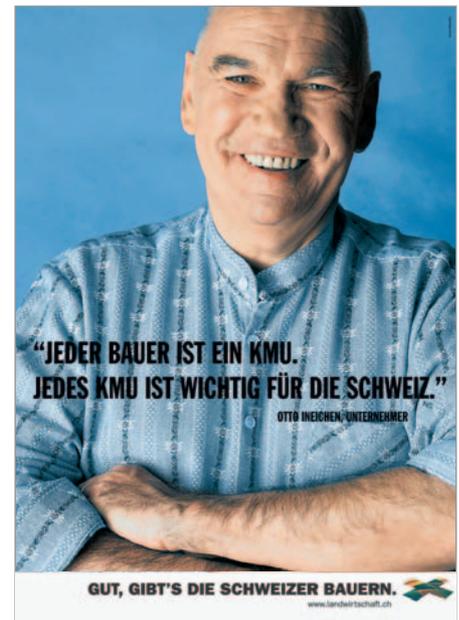
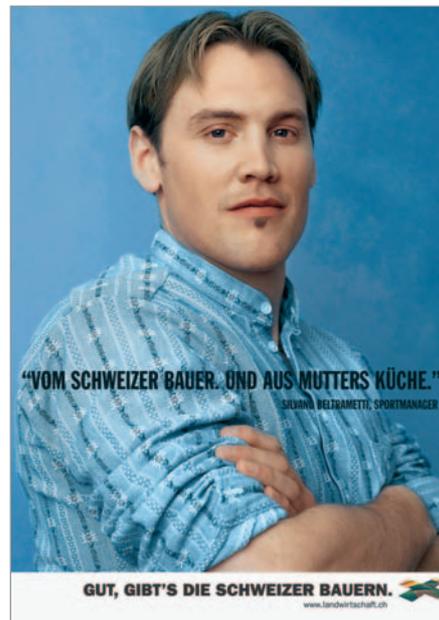
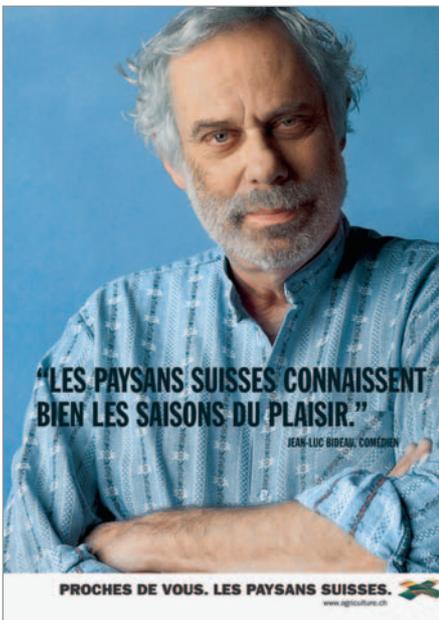
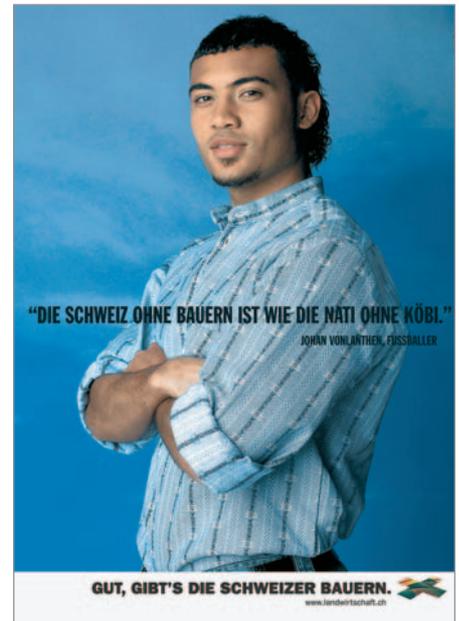
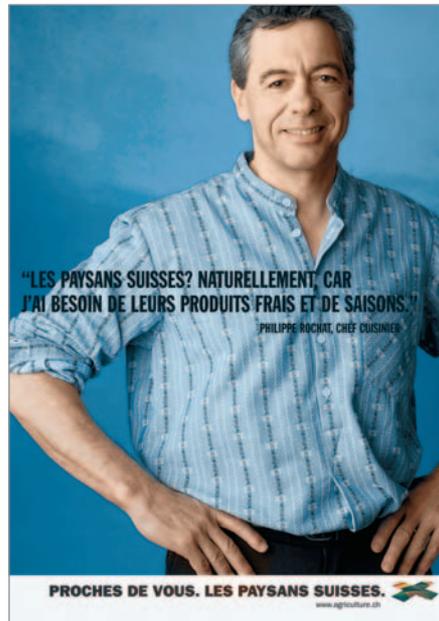
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“Thank heaven for the Swiss farmers.” At the end of April, the Swiss Farmers’ Union launched an image campaign featuring Swiss celebrities that has attracted a great deal of public attention. Prominent Swiss including TV presenter Michelle Hunziker, businessman Otto Ineichen, actor Jean-Luc Bideau, disabled former ski racer Silvio Beltrametti, footballer Johann Vonlanthen, tennis player Patty Schnyder and master chef Philippe Rochat donned traditional, edelweiss-patterned farmers’ shirts to do some world-scale promotion for agriculture, farm produce and the dialogue between farmers and non-farmers



The Sixth Switzerland

One in five Swiss companies conducts business abroad. Swiss companies are responsible for creating no fewer than 1.8 million jobs outside our country. Switzerland ranks in the top league when it comes to direct investments abroad. But is this good or bad for the country itself? By Rolf Ribl

The Fifth Switzerland is, of course, the 635,000-strong community of Swiss Abroad in all corners of the globe. But what is the Sixth Switzerland? Silvio Borner, professor of economics at Basle University, coined this phrase some time ago to describe the contributions to the Swiss economy earned abroad. One in five Swiss companies is active elsewhere in the world through subsidiaries, collaborations or joint ventures (according to the Swiss trade promotion organisation Osec).

Switzerland cannot escape the current trend towards globalisation. Liberalised trade with Europe and the world is a necessity for our small country and its national economy. Even now Switzerland is "one of the most globalised countries in the world," according to Philipp M. Hildebrand, member of the governing board of the Swiss National Bank. As an example of close-knit economic ties with other countries, he cites the high percentage of gross domestic product accounted for by exports, the worldwide presence of many Swiss companies, the attractiveness of Switzerland as the European headquarters of foreign companies – and Switzerland's leading position in terms of direct investments abroad.

In the premier league

International capital movements are a typical characteristic of economic globalisation. Every day, funds in the order of USD 3.5 billion flow

around the world in the form of direct investments and equity investments. Since 1990 these international capital flows have grown at twice the rate of global trade and four times faster than the global production of goods and services. Switzerland is heavily involved in global capital exports and plays in the premier league when it comes to direct investments by companies as well as investments in securities by private investors (see box on Portfolio).

The Swiss National Bank records statistics on direct investments by the Swiss business community in foreign ventures (capital ex-

ports) and foreign direct investments in our country (capital imports). According to its definition, direct investments "exercise a lasting and direct effect on a company's business activities abroad." In addition to equity capital, the bank collects statistics on loans granted by Swiss companies and income earned and re-invested by foreign subsidiaries.

According to the latest report, direct Swiss investment abroad amounted to CHF 33 bil-

lion in 2004, of which acquisitions and intra-group lending accounted for more than two thirds. Between 2000 and 2005, direct investment abroad developed as follows: CHF 75 billion in 2000, CHF 31 billion in 2001, CHF 13 billion in 2002, almost CHF 21 billion in 2003, CHF 33 billion in 2004 and an estimated CHF 53 billion in 2005.

Of the more than CHF 33 billion invested in 2004, almost CHF 22 billion flowed into the industrial sector. At CHF 12 billion, the heaviest investor was the chemical industry, mostly accounted for by acquisitions abroad. The food and construction industries as well as metal and engineering industries also undertook sizeable investment abroad. Direct investment in the service sector amounted to CHF 12 billion or CHF 2 billion less than the previous-year figure. The heaviest Swiss investors abroad, i.e. Nestlé, Novartis, Roche, UBS and Holcim, are also among the world's 100 largest investors.

Capital flow to Europe

Which countries are the main focus of these billions in Swiss direct investment? As in the previous three years, Swiss companies invested most heavily in the European economic area.

At CHF 16 billion, more than half of all direct investments were made in the 25 EU member states. The most favoured countries were the UK (CHF 5 billion), the Netherlands (CHF 4 billion) and France (CHF 3 billion). A total of CHF 6 billion was invested in the USA and CHF 3 billion in Canada. The chemical industry was by far the largest Swiss investor in both countries. The main focus of Swiss direct investment in Asia was Singapore

(CHF 4 billion) and Japan (CHF 1 billion). At CHF 34 billion in direct investments, North America was the most favoured region in the world in 2000.

Even more impressive than the annual direct investments is the amount of capital stock built up abroad over a century. At the end of 2004, the stock of direct Swiss investment abroad amounted to more than CHF 448 billion, of which CHF 159 billion was in the industrial sec-



Global Player Credit Suisse: Head office at Paradeplatz, Zurich

tor and CHF 289 billion in the service sector. More than half of Swiss capital stock (CHF 230 billion) was located in European countries (CHF 47 billion in the UK alone), followed by North America, Central and South America at CHF 85 billion each, and Asia at CHF 34 billion.

Three yardsticks

The true dimensions of the Swiss economy's global capital involvement are reflected in the ratio of direct investments abroad to gross domestic product, the importance of capital earnings, and the number of jobs created:

- The global stock of CHF 448 billion in direct Swiss investments abroad is virtually on a par with Switzerland's gross domestic product of CHF 446 billion. Capital invested by Switzerland abroad therefore corresponds to the total annual domestic economic performance. Measured on the basis of its economic strength, Switzerland ranks second to Luxembourg and ahead of other comparable national economies such as Sweden, Netherlands and Ireland. In absolute figures, Switzerland ranks sixth in terms of direct investments abroad. "Switzerland is one of the most important direct investors in the world," says Monika Engler of the Economic Research Unit of Credit Suisse.

- Income from direct Swiss investments abroad amounted to CHF 51 billion in 2004, thanks to good business performance by foreign subsidiaries. This corresponds to 11 percent income measured on the basis of capital stock. Of this income, CHF 29 billion flowed back to Switzerland and CHF 22 billion was re-invested locally. Income earned on capital from direct investments abroad makes up four-fifths of Switzerland's positive balance of payments of CHF 63 billion, and a remarkable 0.5 percent of economic growth. By way of comparison, the balance of goods (export surplus) accounted for just under CHF 7 billion of the balance of payments, while services contributed CHF 27 billion (thanks to tourism and bank commission in-

come). "Direct investments were and are of major importance for Switzerland," comments Niklaus Blattner, Vice Chairman of the Governing Board of the Swiss National Bank.

- A surprising and less well-known yardstick is provided by the labour market. At the end of 2004, the 5,000 or so Swiss companies with capital holdings abroad employed more than 1.8 million persons: 1 million in the industrial sector and 0.8 million in the service sector (according to the Federal Office of Statistics); half the number of persons employed in Switzerland (3.6 million). The 39 Swiss companies in the Association for Industrial Holding Companies, whose members include most multinational groups, employed some 100,000 persons in Switzerland and almost one million abroad.

This raises two fundamental questions: Why are Swiss companies transferring some of their operations abroad? And: Do such outsourcing moves reduce the number of jobs available in Switzerland, thereby reducing prosperity at home?

Reasons for investments abroad

In the past, some Swiss companies outsourced parts of their company abroad for cost reasons.

ing as well as rapidly growing home markets. According to Simone Hofer of UBS, the textile industry leads the way in outsourcing production to countries with cheap labour costs. But the same trend can be seen in the fields of electronic equipment, pharmaceuticals, software and hardware.

In addition to this defensive response on account of cost considerations, outsourcing is also prompted by offensive reasons i.e. the opportunity to penetrate new sales markets. Gaining new market shares abroad is now the dominant motive behind direct investment, says Serge Gaillard, Head Economist for the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions. While this poses a threat to jobs in Switzerland, demand for Swiss goods and services would quickly grow in these new production countries. Local presence is becoming increasingly important in order to hold on to market share, emphasises Simone Hofer of UBS. "Even in new markets, customers are choosy when it comes to service and customer care."

Two practical examples illustrate this point: The large and attractive US market cannot be penetrated on the strength of exports alone. Success on the American market calls for local presence, coupled with a proximity to innovative industries and leading research institutes. These were the reasons behind Swiss pharma giant Roche's decision to build a strong presence in San Francisco's Bay Area, a bastion of biotechnology. And Swiss pharma Group Novartis spent CHF 1 billion building another biotech centre in Massachusetts, on the east coast of the USA.

Yet another example is textile equipment manufacturer Rieter of Winterthur: "The

markets have undergone a dramatic shift away from northern Europe and North America and towards Asia. To be closer to the customer and for cost reasons, we are expanding our production and development capacities in China and India. This has repercussions for our locations in western Europe and in Winterthur," explains CEO Hartmut Reuter.

Good or bad?

Direct investments abroad can result in a loss



Global Player UBS: Head office in Bahnhofstrasse, Zurich

More than half of the 1.8 million persons employed by foreign branches of Swiss companies work in the industrial sector. This is indicative of the trend towards transferring labour-intensive production abroad. The target markets are countries in Eastern Europe, with their attractive production conditions, cheap labour costs and market potential. China and India are in the process of building up enormous industrial capacities and offer cost-effective manufactur-

of jobs and income at home. Factory and workshop closures, redundancies and an increase in social cases in municipalities are the other side of the globalisation coin. But there are compelling arguments in favour of direct investment in industrialised countries and developing countries:

- Three quarters of Swiss direct investments abroad flow to Europe and North America. The main aim is to penetrate new markets and establish service and sales networks – not to outsource production.

- More than half of Swiss direct investments are undertaken by banks and insurance companies, as well as the chemical industry. “These are branches of industry in which Switzerland is among the world’s strongest players,” says Monika Engler of Credit Suisse.

- The majority of key export branches are also important direct investors. This points to the fact that direct investments abroad and export activities are often complementary.

- Outsourcing production abroad for cost reasons can boost an industrial sector. “Relatively

unproductive manufacturing operations are outsourced, while areas with higher added value remain,” comments economics professor Franz Jaeger in a reference to the textile industry.

- According to economics professor Silvio Borner, “The past twenty years have shown that companies which engage in a high level of direct investment also create a relatively high level of jobs in Switzerland.”

- “To refrain from transferring jobs abroad out of local considerations and accept that such a decision may weaken the company may in the long run turn out to be an ‘unpatriotic’ move”, comments Gerhard Schwarz, Business Editor of the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung”.

Constraints and risks

Naturally there are constraints and risks involved with direct investment abroad. Switching to a different, foreign culture often means having to deal with different business customs and with problems of communication. The cost of entering foreign markets is usually high,

and such investments frequently have to bear fruit within only a few years. The attractiveness of a production location can diminish if labour costs rise, if customers favour local providers, or ecological problems crop up. According to Serge Gaillard, unsuccessful outsourcing projects account for roughly one third of direct investments abroad.

Globalisation can also falter if policy makers accede to appeals for protectionist measures in key countries. Against this backdrop, comments Philipp M. Hildebrand of the Swiss National Bank, “a reverse trend away from globalisation is not out of the question.”

DOCUMENTATION

Swiss National Bank: Development of Direct Investment in 2004. www.snb.ch/en/publikationen/publi.html
 Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce and The Boston Consulting Group: Foreign Companies in Switzerland. January 2006. www.amcham.ch/publications/m_publications.htm
 Credit Suisse: Direct Investments: At the employee’s expense? January 2005 (and other publications on the subject). www.credit-suisse.com/research

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN SWITZERLAND

Foreign direct investment in Switzerland was less dynamic than capital exports but shows significant fluctuations: In 2000 the figure amounted to CHF 32 billion, CHF 22 billion in 2003 and a mere CHF 1 billion in 2004 (mainly accounted for by capital and loan repayments abroad). The National Bank anticipates some CHF 7 billion in capital imports from foreign companies for 2005.

The stock of foreign direct investment in Switzerland amounted to CHF 222 billion (i.e. half the stock of Swiss direct investments abroad), of which CHF 109 billion was held in finance and holding companies, followed by far less significant amounts invested by trade, banks and the industrial sector. More than half of foreign capital stock in Switzerland (CHF 125 billion) was attributable to EU countries. The biggest investor in our country was the Netherlands, followed by Germany and France. Investors from the USA held CHF 89 billion or 40 percent of foreign capital stock.

Investment income of CHF 19 billion yielded returns of 9 percent in relation to the foreign capital stock. CHF 8 billion of this amount was reinvested in Swiss subsidiaries, and CHF 11 billion was transferred to parent companies abroad. One interesting statistic recorded by the National Bank is the 167,000 personnel employed by foreign subsidiaries,

of which 75,000 were employed in the manufacturing sector and 92,000 in the service sector. More than three-quarters of these persons in Switzerland were employed by European companies, and 34,000 by North American investors.

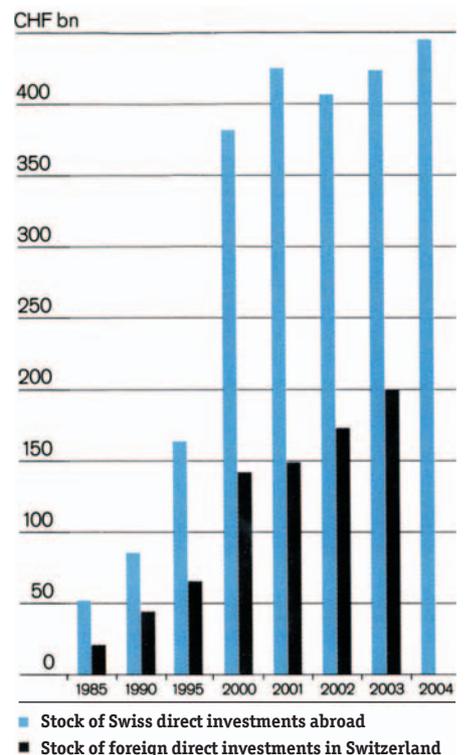
Strong foreign presence

More than 6,500 foreign companies operate their own branch offices in Switzerland, and the trend is growing. A study by the Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce examined the economic significance of these foreign companies. The key findings: foreign companies in Switzerland contribute some 10 percent or CHF 40 billion to Switzerland’s gross domestic product (roughly as much as the canton of St. Gallen or the entire engineering industry), employ 210,000 persons (including 35,000 in international headquarters in Switzerland), and have accounted for virtually one quarter of economic growth over the past eight years.

More than one hundred leading foreign companies in Switzerland were questioned about Switzerland as a business location. The survey found that 90 percent would still decide on Switzerland as a location. In addition to tax considerations, Switzerland’s political stability, skilled workforce, liberal job market and “economic neutrality” are highly valued

factors. Respondents wanted to see an improvement in the procedure for issuing work permits, a simplification of VAT, and an expansion of international flight connections. RR

Direct Investments 1985–2004



Green light for Switzerland-wide education system.

85.6 percent of the people and all cantons have voted for the harmonisation of the Swiss education system. From the first year of primary school to university graduation, a single educational area is to be formed for the whole of Switzerland. Attendance at the polls hit an all-time low: just one in four registered voters took part in the vote. By René Lenzin

The result could not be clearer: the people and cantons have approved the Federal Constitution's framework article on education by an overwhelming majority. In most cantons the share of 'yes' votes was between 80 and 90 percent. Six cantons actually topped the 90 percent mark: Berne (92.9), Neuchâtel (92.6), Basel-Stadt (92.1), Vaud (92.0), Solothurn (91.4) and Basel-Landschaft (90.7). The chorus of approval fell short of 80 percent in just six cantons: Appenzell Ausserrhoden (79.8), Schaffhausen (79.3), Uri (75.6), Schwyz (74.5), Ticino (59.7) and Appenzell Innerrhoden (59.2). There was no urban/rural divide and no significant difference between German- and French-speaking Switzerland.

This unequivocal vote reflects the history of the draft law's development and the broad agreement of all major parties as well as industrial associations, trade unions and educational organisations. The new articles in the Constitution have arisen out of a parliamentary initiative whose implementation has been addressed by parliament in close collaboration with the cantons and the Federal Government. Because only one left-wing and one right-wing splinter group opposed the bill, there was virtually no voting campaign. The downside of this "total harmony" can be seen in the poor turnout: only 27.2 percent of registered voters took part, the second-lowest figure since the Swiss Confederation was founded in 1848.

And now to implementation

The new constitutional provisions will basically change nothing in the allocation of educational authority. The cantons will continue to be responsible for compulsory schooling. However, the Confederation will be able to intervene if the cantons cannot agree on a harmonious solution in certain areas. Those cited include the school entry age, the length of compulsory school attendance and the individual levels, educational targets and mutual recognition of qualifications. In the case of universities and colleges of higher education, the Confederation and cantons have to set up joint bodies that

will ensure standardised levels of studies, transitions and final qualifications. Such managing bodies will be provided for in the new Higher Education Act currently being prepared by the Federal Government. The desired interchangeability and transparency are intended not least to provide the Confederation with a clearer basis for its subsidies to cantonal further education establishments.

In the area of compulsory education, too, standardisation is in train. Under the title 'Harmos', the Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education has been working for quite some time now on an agreement that will give substance to the general formulations of the constitution's mission. Following the unequivocal 'yes' from the people, Hans Ulrich Stöckling, St.Gallen Executive Council member and President of the Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education, assumed on the day of the poll that Harmos could now soon be implemented.

Two foreign languages in primary school

Stöckling's confidence is based on cantonal referendum on the teaching of foreign languages. The Ministers of Education had agreed that every canton should start instruction in a new foreign language in years three and five. At least one of the two languages must be one of the Swiss official languages. This so-called 3/5 model has been opposed by popular initiatives in five cantons. In Schaffhausen, Thurgau and Zug, voters rejected the initiatives and thus confirmed the linguistic compromise. Voting is still pending in Lucerne and Zurich. The Zurich result is of central importance, since no harmonisation can be achieved without the most densely populated canton, in German-speaking Switzerland at least.

Commentary *The work begins here*

The vote on the Federal Constitution's new education article has not exactly made great waves. There was too much consensus among political parties, cantons and educational associations for that. The opposition of a very few dissidents from the SVP and extreme left-wing politicians from French-speaking Switzerland was too weak. The people and cantons followed the Federal Council and parliament and gave unequivocal consent. The fact that there was no major controversy among the people either is demonstrated by the extremely low turnout at the polls of 27.2 percent.

The education article establishes the framework for Switzerland as a single educational area from primary school to university. That is an important basis for the successful future of education, research and innovation in our country. The solution the country has opted for also takes account of the historically grown education system: the cantons will retain their autonomy, and the Confederation will only intervene if they do not voluntarily ensure interchangeability and transparency. The quite emphatic popular vote should be sufficient incentive for them to address harmonisation with all promptness. The general happiness and satisfaction concerning the vote's success should not blind us to the fact that what has been created is really just a shell, which now has to be filled with content. It seems likely that this clear consent was achieved partly because the vote was only a declaration of intent that puts the formalities in place. There is very little in the articles about real content.

The real work is therefore only just beginning. And the truly controversial decisions that will be painful for those involved still need to be taken. At higher education level, in particular, a pruning of subjects is indicated. For the Swiss universities to hold their own by international comparison, they have to join forces and focus in a more targeted way on specific disciplines. The Confederation and cantons have to initiate a process of coordination and concentration without strait-jacketing the individual universities' autonomy. At the compulsory education level, formal harmonisation should not be permitted to lead to a rigid one-size-fits-all system. The challenge will lie in creating enough scope for children's individual development within a single organisation with unified objectives.

RENE LENZIN

Hopp Schwiz! Allez les



2006 Football World Cup in Germany: The Swiss national team and support staff

Front row from left: Philipp Degen, Christoph Spycher, Ludovic Magnin, Alexander Frei, Raphael Wicky, Fabio Coltorti, Pascal Zuberbühler, Diego Benaglio, Johann Vogel, Patrick Mueller, Ricardo Cabanas, Daniel Gygax, Johan Vonlanthen. Middle row from left: Christian Meissgeier (physiotherapist), Ruedi Roder, Marco Streller, Philippe Senderos, Pierluigi Tami, Jakob Kuhn (coach), Michel Pont (assistant coach), Erich

Swisses! Forza Svizzera!



Burgener (goalkeeper coach), Tranquillo Barnetta, Mauro Lustrinelli, Cuno Wetzel (doctor), Roland Grossen. Back row from left: Daniel Griesser, Xavier Margairaz, Johan Djourou, Valon Behrami, Martin Suter (equipment), Fredi Haener (medical supplies), Jean-Benoit Schuepbach (equipment), Stephane Grichting, David Degen, Blerim Dzemaili, Stephan Meyer (physiotherapist).



Staff changes

The following staff changes took place in spring at the Service for the Swiss Abroad (Auslandschweizerdienst, ASD) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). At the end of May 2006, Ambassador Markus Börlin succeeded Ambassador Peter Sutter, who now represents the interests of the Confederation in the Philippines. Ambassador Börlin is head of Political Division VI (PD VI), which looks after the concerns of Swiss abroad, and the ASD, which is attached to PD VI.



Markus Börlin, born in Basle in 1960, is a citizen of Bubendorf / BL. He graduated from Basle University with a degree in law (lic.iur.). After working as a court registrar at the Liestal administrative and insurance court and the district court in Arlesheim, and as an assistant for penal law at Basle University's Faculty of Law, he joined the DFA in 1990 and served as an intern in Berne and Ottawa. From 1992 he worked as a diplomatic officer at the Section for International Cultural and UNESCO Affairs, part of the former Directorate for International Organisations. In 1995 he was assigned to Political Division II, where he was responsible for Latin America. In 1997 he was transferred to Nairobi as First Secretary to the Head of Mission, where

he was promoted to Counsellor in 1999. In mid-2000 he became Head of the Special Crisis Unit in Berne (with the title of Minister) and Deputy Head of Political Division VI. Since mid-2004 Markus Börlin has been Counsellor and First Secretary to the Head of Mission in Stockholm.

Voluntary AHV/IV in EU/EFTA countries

As a result of the revision of the voluntary old age, survivors and disability insurance scheme (AHV/IV), Swiss nationals resident in EU and EFTA member states can no longer join the voluntary AHV/IV scheme.

The agreement on free movement of persons between Switzerland and EU/EFTA states has been in force since 1 June 2002. Among other things, the agreement governs the coordination of social security in member states. In 2001, ahead of the coming into force of this agreement, the Swiss parliament voted to amend the provisions governing voluntary AHV/IV contributions. This means that since 1 April 2001 Swiss nationals resident in an EU member state and, since 1 June 2002, those resident in an EFTA state, no longer have the option of joining the AHV/IV scheme on a voluntary basis.

Insured persons resident in the EU countries

Insured persons who reached the age of 50 before 1 April 2001 can still be insured under the voluntary AHV/IV scheme until they reach the statutory retirement age. In Switzerland the statutory retirement age is 64 for women and 65 for men.

From 1 April 2007, insured persons born on or after 1 April 1951 can no longer pay contributions to the voluntary AHV/IV. This regulation applies to in-

sured persons resident in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the UK.

Insured persons resident in EFTA countries

Persons resident in Norway, Iceland or the Principality of Liechtenstein who were born on or after 1 June 1952, can remain insured under the voluntary AHV/IV scheme only until 31 May 2008. Insured persons who reached the age of 50 before 1 June 2002 can remain insured until they reach the statutory retirement age.

New EU member states

On 25 September 2005, the Swiss electorate voted in favour of the extension of the agreement on free movement of persons. The extension protocol to the agreement between Switzerland and the EU came into force on 1 April 2006.

The extension of the agreement to include the ten new EU member states also means that insured persons resident in these countries can no longer contribute to the voluntary AHV/IV scheme. The new EU countries are as follows: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia. Persons who were insured in these countries under the voluntary AHV/IV scheme until the protocol came into force, can remain insured for another six consecutive years (maximum), i.e. until no later than 31 March 2012. Persons who had reached the age of 50 by the date on which the protocol came into force (i.e. 1 April 2006) can remain insured under the voluntary AHV/IV scheme until they reach the statutory retirement age.

Under the terms of the agreement on free movement of persons, those who were insured in two or more EU/EFTA states

and reach retirement age or become disabled, receive a partial pension from each involved state. Due to this so-called pro rata system, every EU/EFTA state guarantees a share of the pension indexed to the period during which the insured person has been resident in the country and paying contributions, provided contributions have been paid for at least one year to the relevant national social security scheme. Entitlement to a Swiss AHV/IV pension is also calculated according to this system, and paid to Swiss nationals as well as EU and EFTA citizens abroad if they have been paying contributions for the minimum period.

Insured persons are free to supplement their state retirement pension with private insurance. In this context we also refer you to Soliswiss, the Solidarity Fund for Swiss Nationals Abroad, which offers a range of retirement products for Swiss nationals living abroad.

Persons residing or taking up residence outside the EU/EFTA area can continue to contribute voluntarily to the Swiss AHV/IV scheme if they were insured with the AHV/IV for an uninterrupted period of at least five years immediately prior to leaving Switzerland.

Additional information:
www.avss-ai-international.ch
www.soliswiss.ch

New telephone prefix for the Zurich region

From the end of March 2007, the prefix 01 will be replaced by 044 for all telephone numbers in the Zurich region. The rest of the telephone number remains unchanged. If you are calling from abroad, you must dial +41 44 instead of +41 1.

The prefix 044 can be used as of now. Until March 2007, numbers beginning with 044 can still be dialled using either prefix 044 or 01. After this date, num-

bers with prefix 01 will no longer be valid. Anyone who dials a number with prefix 01 will hear a recorded message.

For more information, contact:

www.bakom.admin.ch
(Topics – Telecommunication)

“The Swiss Confederation – a brief guide 2006”

The brochure entitled “The Swiss Confederation – a brief guide 2006” was published in March 2006 in the four national languages as well as in English. The publication, issued by the Federal Chancellery, is available free of charge.

This year’s brochure covers 84 pages. As usual, it begins with an interview with the Federal President of Switzerland. This year Moritz Leuenberger was interviewed by Konrad Mrusek, a correspondent with the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”.

tion on when these parliamentarians were elected and the committees on which they sit. The brochure also explains in simple terms how new laws are created, and describes the tasks of the Federal Council, departments and federal offices, parliamentary services, the Federal Chancellery, Federal Court and Insurance Court.

Once more the information is enhanced with the aid of photos, diagrams and organisational charts. The photographs for this year’s edition were taken by Zurich photographer Stefan Walter.

The brochure is available free of charge from:
Federal Office for Construction and Logistics (BBL), Publications, CH-3050 Berne
Fax: +41 031 325 50 58
Internet: www.bbl.admin.ch/bundespublikationen



The natural course of the river Töss, downstream from Embrach (ZH).

ter levels artificially caused by hydroelectric plant operators, since this damages the ecosystem of flowing waters (bed erosion through swell and sink effects).

The cantons would be responsible for restoration measures and the related financing, and would set up renaturation funds. If the resultant costs cannot be charged to the polluters, the measures would be financed from these funds.

The initiative also calls for an extension of the right to appeal of directly affected organisations or nation-wide fishing, nature conservation and environmental organisations. Such organisations would be able to petition the Confederation and cantons to implement water renaturation projects.

You still have until 4 July 2006 to sign this initiative.

CURRENT POPULAR INITIATIVES

The following initiative has been launched since the last issue:

■ “For a solidarity tax (against a two-tier society”); until 28 September 2007

You can download signature forms for current initiatives from www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/vi/vis10.html.

VOTING:

Federal Referendum:

24 September 2006

■ People’s initiative of 9 October 2002: “National bank profits for the AHV”

■ Federal law of 16 December 2005 on foreigners (provided the request for a referendum is successful)

■ Amendment of 16 December 2005 to the asylum law (provided the request for a referendum is successful)

Date of forthcoming referendum in 2006: 26 November

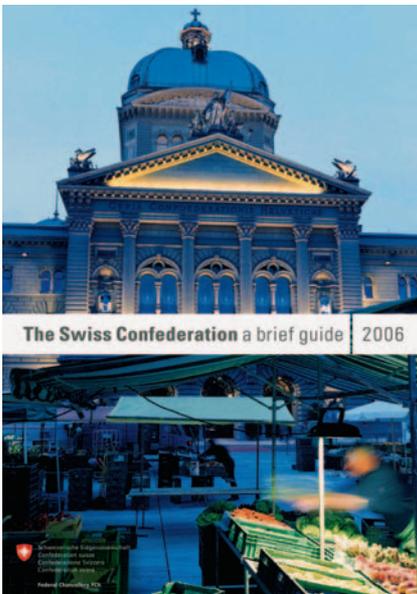
Healthy Swiss waters

The Swiss Fishing Federation has launched a people’s initiative entitled “Living water (renaturation initiative)”.

The initiative calls for a new Article 76a to be incorporated in the federal constitution, along with a new transitional provision, Article 197 Para. 6.

The new constitutional article would oblige the cantons to take steps to promote the renaturation of public waters such as

lakes and rivers and their shores and banks. The aim is to improve and expand connections between waterways and to replant banks and shores. The cantons would also be obliged to implement measures to reactivate the bed-load balance. They would also be responsible for reducing the differences in wa-



“The Swiss confederation – a brief guide 2006” provides an explanation of Switzerland’s political system, people’s rights, and the composition of the National Council and Council of States. As always, the brochure includes photographs of members of both Councils. The new issue also contains informa-

RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OFFICIAL DFA INFORMATION PAGES:
GABRIELA BRODBECK, SERVICE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD/DFA

Advertisement

swissworld.org
Your Gateway to Switzerland

The three suns of Lavaux The picturesque viticultural region of Lavaux is situated between Lausanne and Montreux. The terraced vineyards at the foot of the Alps on the shore of Lake Geneva, nestling in a landscape blessedly free from urbanisation, are home to some noble wines – reason enough for the citizens of Lavaux to submit their region for inclusion on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. By Alain Wey.



Fascinating Lavaux: view to the East

In this small corner of the world, Man and Nature have joined forces to create the nectar of the gods. Bacchus would be proud of the diligence shown by the people of Lavaux. The vintners we met have been practising their art for more than four generations. Wine growing is inextricably linked with the region that stretches from Pully to Montreux. The steeply terraced vineyards are a feast for the eyes and the senses. Row upon row of vines rise from the

lakeside like a gigantic fortress: immense steps leading to the highlands of the Vaud. Assets like these (the region is already protected by cantonal law) have prompted the citizens of Lavaux to apply for inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List. An overview of a region where Chasselas is king.

The application documents for the World Heritage List were submitted in Paris in December 2005, with the approval of the Federal

Office for Culture. Florence Siegrist (47), Prefect of Lavaux and member of the registration committee, explains the history behind the project and the motivation behind it. Following a feasibility study conducted by the canton of Vaud, the baton was handed over to the district of Lavaux. Lavaux submitted a project to the region and set up a committee. "It's a project involving the entire region," stresses Florence Siegrist. And what makes the location so original and extraordinary? "You only have to look around you: A landscape shaped by human hand over the centuries, architectural uniformity; the conservation and strong protection of the region have ensured the harmony of Lavaux." The object of the application is a cohesive, lively cultural landscape where wine growing continues to be practised. Everything in Lavaux revolves around the vine. The terraces – an ideal example of a specific type of wine-growing – were retained at the same time as wine-growing techniques were enhanced. "We are presenting not only a landscape," says Florence Siegrist, "but also a cultural whole. This summer, experts from Icomos (International Council on Monuments and Sites) are to visit Lavaux. The decision will be made in 2007." The vitality and social life of Lavaux that revolves around wine are reflected not only in the vintners' know-how and the brand image of the appellations of origin (Epresses, Saint-Saphorin, Villette, Dezaley, Calamin etc.), but also in another attractive characteristic: every village in Lavaux runs a wine cellar where the products can be tasted and purchased.

11 a.m., and it's time for an aperitif. In Cully, vintner Mélanie Weber (29) welcomes us to the wine cellar of Francis Weber & Daughter. The young woman is a member of the Confrérie des vigneron-tâcherons (Association of Vintners and Wine Workers), which grades the vines three times a year and organises the huge Fête des Vignerons every 25 years. The young vintner runs a vineyard in the commune of Riex, selling her produce to other vintners and preparing wine for the family cellars. Mélanie



Vintners of Lavaux: Florence Siegrist, Bernard Chevalley, Mélanie Weber, Jean-Luc Blondel (from left)

Weber represents the fifth generation of this family of vintners. Over a glass of wine her father talks about the hard work in the terraced vineyards, particularly following severe weather conditions. Some 15,000 bottles of Epesses, Calamin and Dézaley are produced here each year. The wine cellar dates from 1900. "It used to be the village byre," smiles Mélanie Weber, who has been a vintner for twelve years. "The love of wine runs in our family's blood!" Is it rare for a woman to be a vintner? "No. More and more women are joining the profession. I personally know more than ten..." What does Lavaux mean to you? "Something wonderful. A very special landscape from any perspective – whether you're in the vineyards or approaching it from the lake or from Berne. You can never get enough of it."

At the heart of the wine-growing region on the terraces of Lavaux sit the Blondel vineyards, which have produced five acclaimed appellations of origin: Villette, Epesses, Saint-Saphorin, Calamin and Dézaley. Jean-Luc (45), fourth-generation vintner, and Francine Blondel, whose family has been tending vines since 1453, produce award-winning quality wines. "We grow mainly Chasselas. With this grape we set ourselves apart from other regions and produce superior wines. Chasselas is the workhorse of Lavaux." The high quality standards apply throughout the growing season until harvest time and the decanting of the wine. "Here we don't re-invent the wheel, but maintain strict discipline from planting of the grapes until the bottled end product." Jean-Luc Blondel, a member of the Candidacy Committee for UNESCO World Heritage Sites, emphasises that the canton of Vaud has protected the Lavaux region for

more than thirty years through a law that imposes restrictions on construction. "We live in an exceptionally beautiful landscape. I often travel around Switzerland. It's a beautiful country but no region can match Lavaux."

On the steep slopes of Saint-Saphorin only a few kilometres from the Blondel vineyards is the Domaine des Fosses run by Bernard Chevalley (33). This muscular blue-eyed young man, the fourth generation of a vintner family, is studying oenology. Situated on a gradient of almost 50%, his vineyard starts at a height of 430

producing Saint-Saphorin for more than a hundred years." Our hosts live in a house built in 1734 in the timeless little village of Saint-Saphorin. Bernard Chevalley uses scientific terminology – a strange jargon to the layman's ear – and speaks of wine with an undying passion.

The vintner's symbiotic relationship with Nature, the terraced slopes of Lavaux and the weather is clearly revealed when Bernard Chevalley talks darkly of the heavy hailstorm of 18 July 2005: "It happened at exactly 3.32 p.m.: we'll never forget it."



Fascinating Lavaux: view to the West

metres and rises to 650 metres. Bernard Chevalley talks of the "green harvest" in July, when the vines are pruned back. "Our family has been

www.lavaux-unesco-inscription.ch / www.lavaux.ch
www.domaine-blondel.ch (Lavaux mit einer Webcam bereisen) / www.lesfosses.ch

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

■ The sunny vine-growing slopes of the Lavaux were formed by the Rhône glacier. The glacier hollowed out the depression now filled by Lake Geneva, in the process shaping not only the region's physiognomy but also the underlying flesh – the soil – of Lavaux. This subterranean alchemy produces a soil of fascinating diversity. Nature's handwork has been crafting this region since time immemorial, but what about Man? Wine growing was introduced by the Romans, but only in the twelfth century did monks

make use of the steepest slopes, cutting terraces on which to grow the vines. After centuries of painstaking labour, and following a few decades which saw the inexorable advance of concrete, the wine-growing region of Lavaux successfully turned its back on urbanisation. Lavaux now boasts some 830 hectares of vineyards i.e. 5.5 percent of Switzerland's total wine-growing land. The wines are heavily characterised by the special qualities of the soil. Loam exerts a significant influence on the flavour. Another special characteristic of the re-

gion is provided by the three suns of Lavaux: The actual sun that bestows light and heat on the steep vine terraces; the sun reflected by Lake Geneva, which acts as a giant mirror and at certain times of the year casts a second shadow on the terrace walls like a second sun; and the solar heat stored in the stone walls, which is slowly released during the cool of the night and creates a unique microclimate.

APPELLATIONS OF ORIGIN

■ Vintners in Lavaux primarily produce white wine from the

Chasselas grape. The region is home to eight controlled appellations of origin and grapes: Lutry, Villette, Epesses, Saint-Saphorin, Chardonne, Calamin, Dézaley and Vevey-Montreux. Each grape has its own special characteristics and flavour, depending on the soil qualities (more or less loamy) and situation (near the lake, bordering the forest, or on terraces with thick load-bearing walls).

The Greens as a centre-right alternative. The Social Democrats (SP) and the Greens are going from strength to strength. Switzerland's five biggest cities are ruled by red-green majorities – at the expense of the Radical Free Democrats (FDP) and the Christian Democrats (CVP). “The Greens are now positioning themselves for many voters as a centre-right alternative,” says political scientist Hans Hirter in an interview with Heinz Eckert of the “Swiss Review”.

Are you surprised at the great success enjoyed by the Left and the Greens in most of the recent local elections?

No, not really. On the one hand, the Social Democrats and the Greens have always been very well represented in major urban areas, and the FDP and CVP have been losing voters steadily for several years.

So it's not really down to a new environmental consciousness?

No, that's not the way I see it. That used to be the case in the 1980s. Today, all parties include a set of environmental or “green” principles in their manifestos. And it's not as if the concept of environmental protection was exactly enjoying a boom right now.

So why is the FDP losing so many votes to the Greens? Are they turning slowly but surely into a political force of the middle ground?

The Greens certainly cover a very broad political spectrum, ranging from the extreme left to the political centre, particularly in urban areas. But most voters appear not to realise this. For them, the Greens are simply a viable alternative to the FDP – unlike the SP, which is not an option for many voters due to its close association with the unions. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) is too right-wing for these voters and the CVP too Catholic. So, the moderate wing of the Greens is the only possible option left.

On the one hand, the left camp is growing, and on the other hand, the SVP is the only party with a clearly outlined centre-right policy. Is there really a need for a political middle ground any more?

Of course. Not only is it needed – it actually exists. In Berne and the canton of Vaud, moderate Greens in particular chalked up major successes, and they represent the political middle ground.



Dr Hans Hirter is a political scientist with the University of Berne's Institute of Political Science.

So, do the Greens attribute their success to the FDP's lack of identity? What role does a party's European policy play at the polls nowadays?

Yes, the FDP's current weak position is certainly benefiting the Greens. Many voters no longer know where exactly radical free democratic liberalism stands or the direction it is taking, or they are afraid it is getting too close to the SVP. EU accession does not play a big role at the ballot box. But the European question might still be important for the SVP, since many people supported the party on the strength of it.

In which areas do the Greens and the SP differ? After all, the Social Democrats also cover a broad spectrum.

The SP has always been a workers' party and therefore not an option for those with

centre-right leanings. The SP is widely regarded as an anti-capitalist party that wants to nationalise everything. Similar, fundamentally religious considerations mean that the Catholic CVP is not a viable option for many Protestant FDP supporters. In contrast, you have the Green Party: an ideologically untainted party representing concerns that are worth supporting.

Does the basic traditional attitude of voters or their sense of family and background still play a significant role in their choice of party?

Whether or not someone is a member of the Reformed Church, a Catholic or a trade unionist, is just as important as his or her position on how much power the state should have and how much responsibility the individual ought to bear. The Greens are not affiliated with any trade union or religion, nor do they have a reputation for being great believers in State control.

Having lost ground in all its former strongholds, the FDP is now in free fall. Looking back, what was probably their biggest political and tactical mistake?

It's very hard to say exactly why the electorate have turned their backs on the FDP. The political parties have increasingly become a kind of self-service store. These days the traditional fundamental values of the FDP and CVP are no longer automatically sought after. Voters now tend to decide on a case-by-case basis. The old FDP slogan “More freedom, less state” is now just as ineffective an argument as campaigning for a socially-conscious free market economy conscience or advocating Christian values.

Hasn't the globalisation of the FDP as a business party also damaged it, even making it superfluous for the business community?

It's true that the networks between politics and industry no longer work as they used to, and Zurich's economic liberalism no longer plays a major role. Moreover, many top managers of Swiss companies are from abroad and have only a limited interest in Swiss politics, and it's some time since Swiss captains of industry were automatically members of the FDP. Joining the FDP used to be a means of boosting one's career; this is no longer the case. Liberalism is no longer the road to success.

But the globalised Swiss economy also benefits from the Swiss education system and other political factors. So a business-focused party that can

build bridges between business and politics is still needed. Can the SVP take on this role?

No, the SVP definitely can't do this because many of its supporters are dependent on state support. Take agriculture and retired people, for example. It's not as though the FDP no longer represents business interests. But perhaps it doesn't really advocate them forcefully enough: a criticism often levelled at it by Economiesuisse.

Might the general feeling of uncertainty about job security and the future of social security mechanisms also be a contributory factor in the success of the left-wing parties?

I don't think so. Those who voted left/green are not in a bad way financially. No, the vacuum left by the FDP and CVP is the reason for the success of the left/greens. Anyone who is worried about their livelihood and intends to make this known at the ballot box will vote either SP or CVP and not take a detour via the Greens. In any case, the most socially disadvantaged are foreigners, and Swiss who are not financially secure do not vote. This has been clearly proven by a number of studies.

How do you see the future of the FDP and CVP?

Since the CVP has increasingly focused on family, the community and education, a stabilising trend appears to have emerged. Whether this policy is succeeding with the rural population is open to question. The CVP will find it difficult to attract enough new supporters, since it is still only popular with Catholics. It will be able to continue on a small scale but there is no doubt that it is in the most difficult position of all the parties. The FDP will win back votes if it manages to project itself as the party for business, and if it succeeds in once more representing the interests of younger high earners. In other words, it has to take a distinctive stand on transport and education and have its own policy on family issues. Much of today's younger generation see no reason why they should vote for the FDP.

What changes will emerge during the 2007 elections?

I think the Greens will increase their share of the votes at the next general elections by 1

RED-GREEN MAJORITIES ONLY IN BIG CITIES

While the cities of Zurich, Basle, Lausanne, Berne and Geneva are governed by red-green majorities, the SVP continues to make inroads into the governments and parliaments of smaller and medium-sized towns. Women now account for around 25 percent of the membership of municipal executives, and 31 percent in legislative bodies. These are the findings of a study by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office on elections to municipal authorities between 1983 and 2005.

■ Over the past 20 years, the FDP and CVP have lost a considerable percentage (4.5 percent and 2.7 percent respectively) of seats in the executives of Switzerland's 121 largest towns and cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants, while the SVP has gained 2.5 percentage points. Despite these losses, the FDP remains the biggest party with 28.5 percent of all seats, ahead of the SP (23.9 percent, the CVP (16.7 percent) and the SVP (12.4 percent). Centre-right parties (FDP, CVP, SVP, LP) together

account for almost 61 percent of all seats on the executives. ■ The SVP was successful only in the executives of towns with between 10,000 and 49,999 residents, and has lost all its seats in larger towns with a population above 50,000. ■ The Greens (+2.2 percent) have also benefited from the FDP's and CVP's losses. Red-green parties held more than 27.9 percent of seats in municipal executives in 2005 (SP 23.9 percent, Greens 2.7 percent, PDA/Sol 1.3 percent).

or 2 percentage points at the expense of the FDP. A party needs more than just two years to reposition itself and communicate a new approach. And the FDP has not even made a start yet on defining its new direction.

And what will happen to the other major parties?

The SP, CVP and SVP will emerge from the elections on roughly level terms. The SVP cannot grow any further because there is precious little left on the right-wing margins of the political spectrum and it is intrinsically difficult to hang on to protest voters. In addition, right now the party patently lacks a charismatic figure like Christoph Blocher, who as a member of the Federal Council is unable to campaign as actively as before.

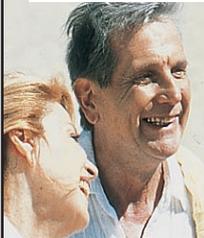
Just how important for success is the style cultivated by the SVP: a style that has repeatedly been the subject of controversy?

Very important when it comes to mobilising protest voters. Of the 26 percent who

vote SVP, one third comes under the category of protest voters. They can only be mobilised through pure polemics and hackneyed arguments about what the country needs. Many loyal SVP voters disagree with this policy, but factual arguments alone are not enough to achieve success on the far right. You have to use sledge-hammer tactics. The SVP should be pleased if it can maintain its present strength, since it has no new issues with which to create a big stir. There is about as much prospect of finding new protest voters as of finding a new crowd-puller in place of Christoph Blocher. Consequently, the voter base might start to crumble. And herein lies the opportunity for the FDP.

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Electoral roll: “Sound barrier” of 100,000 broken

The Swiss Abroad Council (SAC) convened in the National Council chamber in Berne on 1 April. More than 120 representatives of the Fifth Switzerland attended the spring session of the SAC and, before representatives of governing parties, consolidated the importance of Swiss Abroad participation in Switzerland’s political life. The event, described by the President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) at the opening of this symbolic convention as “an important gesture by parliament towards the Fifth Switzerland”, also celebrated the breaking of the “sound barrier” of 100,000 registered Swiss Abroad voters in the electoral roll.

Swiss expatriates are playing an increasingly important role in Switzerland’s political life. Of the 634,216 Swiss nationals resident abroad, 485,105 are registered on the electoral roll. Of those registered, 105,212 or 21.69% exercise their political rights. By breaking the “sound barrier” of 100,000, Swiss Abroad have exceeded all expectations. This number is four times higher than the number forecast by the Federal Council when the postal vote was introduced in 1992 – proof of the growing interest shown by Swiss Abroad in Swiss politics and the opportunity to advocate their interests. “An important success for the OSA, which has campaigned for the rights of Swiss citizens abroad ever since it was founded during the First World War,” emphasised OSA President Georg Stucky. The OSA hopes to see a further rise in this favourable trend over the next few years, particularly with e-voting, which it would like to see introduced before 2010. Swiss Abroad make an important contribution to Switzerland’s political life. “Thanks to their dif-



Swiss Abroad Council convene in the special atmosphere of the National Council chamber

ferent experiences and cosmopolitan outlook, they add new impetus and an international dimension that enriches the political debate. This is why we rely on them,” said National Councillor Thérèse Meyer-Kaelin, President of the “Swiss Abroad” parliamentary group founded in 2004 and consisting of 85 members of parliament. The growing number of Swiss Abroad registered on the electoral roll makes them a political force that should not be underestimated, and one that has the potential to tip the scales during elections.

Parties woo the Fifth Switzerland

At the SAC spring session, representatives of the four Federal Council parties stressed the importance of Swiss Abroad in the political debate. The chairman of the Swiss People’s Party (SVP), Ueli Maurer, spoke out in favour of a “sovereign and independent” Switzerland and against a closer relationship with the EU. Hans-Jörg Fehr, chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (SPS), took the opposite view, describing Swiss Abroad as an “important political factor”, adding that our compatriots abroad expected Switzerland to be “an open-minded and hospitable country”. Marianne Kleiner-Schlöpfer, Vice Chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party (FDP), emphasised that her party sup-

ported “electronic voting and swissinfo” and was in favour of an “open and intelligent” Switzerland. Thérèse Meyer-Kaelin, representative of the Christian Democratic People’s Party (CVP), described Swiss Abroad as part of the “large Swiss family”, adding that this is why “communication among its members is accorded the highest importance.” Claude Longchamp, political scientist and head of the gfs.bern research institute, highlighted the characteristic socio-political aspects of Swiss Abroad. According to the findings of a study conducted by his institute, Swiss resident abroad regard the ability to exercise their political rights not merely as an opportunity to honour their civic duty, but also, more particularly, as an identifying element that demonstrates their sense of belonging to Switzerland.

No to cutbacks in the consular network

For economic reasons, several consular representations have already had to be closed, and plans are in place for further closures. The Swiss Abroad Council cannot accept this move and warns against such cutbacks, which would prove highly damaging for Switzerland. Parliament must consider the price it will pay for these closures in the long term. This issue triggered heated discussion between mem-

bers of the Swiss Abroad Council and representatives of government parties.

No to foreign indexing of pensions

Equally unacceptable in the view of the Swiss Abroad Council is the most recent decision by the National Council to index invalidity pensions in future to living costs in the destination country if Switzerland has no reciprocal social security agreement with the relevant country. This measure would primarily affect Swiss citizens living abroad. Moreover, it contravenes international conventions. For this reason the Swiss Abroad Council passed a resolution on this issue.

RTVG/swissinfo: Satisfaction for the Swiss Abroad Council

With regard to the revision of the Radio and Television Law (RTVG), the National Council followed the Council of States and finally opted in favour of a federal subsidy equivalent to at least 50% of the annual budget of swissinfo. The Swiss Abroad Council expressed satisfaction at this decision in the interests of the Fifth Switzerland.

Congress of the Swiss Abroad:

Offerings for kids and young people

The seminar entitled “Partnership between business and



HELVETIA PATRIA JEUNESSE

The Helvetia Patria Jeunesse Foundation is contributing CHF 25,000 in support of the children's and young people's programme associated with the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Basle. The Foundation's 2006 donation will give many children and young people the pleasure of visiting Switzerland and participating actively in the Congress. We would like to



thank the Stiftung Helvetia Patria Jeunesse warmly for their commitment to this cause.

culture: "The secret of Basle" is aimed at young people seeking to gain an insight into the exciting world of Basle's global conglomerates. At the same time you will get to know Basle and its many museums, and find out the origins of patronage in Basle and how the system functions nowadays. You can discover all about study opportunities in Switzerland and, armed with your experience of the seminar, contribute to the debate at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad. Federal Councillor Blocher will be giving the welcoming address to Swiss Abroad, after which he will take time to answer your questions. The Congress of the Swiss Abroad seminar will be held from 14 to 20 August 2006.

There are also some spaces left in the language course to be held in Basle from 14 to 25 August 2006. Learn German in the morning alongside other Swiss Abroad, enjoy an attractive social programme and practice your new-found language skills on your host family. As part of the Basle language course you are also invited to attend the Congress of the Swiss Abroad and take part in the discussions and celebrations.

Children attending the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (S-JAS) holiday camp will be accommodated in St. Ursanne, Jura, from 12 to 26 August 2006. The 40 children will also travel to Basle on the weekend of the congress and present a small production to congress participants. Children of congress participants also have the opportunity to join this group. Things are a lot more fun when you're among others your own age!

Register now: spaces still available

There are still a few spaces available for the second summer camp in Kandersteg. Register now! If it's too late, we also offer young Swiss Abroad the opportunity to enjoy an exciting holiday in Switzerland in August and September.

The Valais trip (Switzerland mobile – the mountains of the Valais) is once more a jewel in the crown in the Youth Service's summer arrangements. We offer young Swiss Abroad aged 18 or older a variety-filled week in the Valais Alps, featuring lots of action, adventure and fun. Activities range from an introduction to alpine sport to the ascent of an easy 4000-metre peak, wellness in the spas of the Valais Alps, and lots of fun with outgoing young people from all over the world (dates: 21 to 27 August 2006).

This year the Federal Youth Session is celebrating its 15th anniversary. To mark the occasion, a special programme has been organised in Laax/GR from 30 September to 2 October 2006. Participants over the years have expressed nothing but enthusiasm for Switzerland's Youth Parliament. The OSA will introduce you to Switzerland's political landscape and prepare you for the session and the topic of debate. You can then take an active part in shaping Swiss policy and meet important Swiss MPs.

As always, information on these offers can be requested at: *The Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, Youth Service or Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad, Alpenstr. 26, 3006 Berne*
Tel.: ++41 (0)31 356 61 00
Fax.: ++41 (0)31 356 61 01
youth@aso.ch or sjas@aso.ch

Leo Schelbert awarded 2006 Swiss Abroad prize

The international chapter of the Swiss Radical Free Democratic Party (FDP) has awarded the fifth Swiss Abroad prize to Chicago-based Leo Schelbert. The Swiss history professor was honoured for his excellent work on the history of Swiss-American emigration.

From a list of 21 nominees, the jury headed by Dr Hugo Butler chose Leo Schelbert as the fifth recipient of the award. Schelbert, who was born on 16 March 1929, has lived and worked in the USA since the 1960s. In the course of his career, Professor Schelbert has authored a wide range of publications that have been instrumental in promoting

and fostering an understanding of Swiss living in the USA.

The FDP International chapter is delighted to award the fifth prize to someone who has shown such outstanding dedication to the Swiss expatriate community and whose work has a strong impact both at home and abroad.

The award ceremony was held in the Swiss Re Centre for Global Dialogue, in the presence of prominent figures from the world of politics, business and culture. History professor Urs Bitterli delivered the laudation. In his guest speech entitled "The appeal of the image and the power of curiosity – the 'NZZ' and structural change in the international media market", Markus Spillmann, editor-in-chief of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", addressed a topic that appeals equally to Swiss nationals at home or abroad. pd

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“Oyez oyez, the bell has struck ten...” The night watchman of Lausanne Cathedral is one of the last seven representatives of this historic guild in Europe. For more than 600 years he has been tolling the hours. A custom that is now more akin to folk tradition was for centuries a vital service for Vaud’s capital city. An encounter with the ‘Guet’ Renato Häusler. By Alain Wey.

Lausanne: Ten times the bell rings out in the night air. The cathedral watchman’s lodge vibrates with the ringing of the Marie-Madeleine bell. With felt hat firmly in place, Renato Häusler paces the balcony of the cathedral’s North Tower, the “Beffroi” (belfry), at a dizzying height. “C’est le guet! Il a sonné dix... Il a sonné dix!”, he calls to all corners of the earth. After his tour he disappears back into the tower. This ritual is repeated four times every night: a journey back in time to the Middle Ages. But the night watchman of Lausanne Cathedral is a 21st century man and a creature of his time. We meet him in his lodge, at the top of a flight of 153 steps and thirty metres above the ground.

We are at the top of the belfry above the cathedral’s main portal. “It’s a unique feeling being here alone in the still of the night. I’m in the city and surrounded by its inhabitants, but like a lighthouse keeper, I’m isolated in a small, confined space,” enthuses Renato Häusler. In former times every large marketplace had a night watchman whose task was to alert the residents to fires. “Fire, disease and war were the bogeymen of the Middle Ages. Five or six fires were recorded in Lausanne between the building of the cathedral in 1275 and the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, claiming hundreds of victims and destroying entire districts of the city. The duties of the night watchman of Lausanne were laid down in a decree dated 4 November 1405. The night watchman performed his duties throughout the Middle Ages and right up to 1880, regularly making his rounds and sounding the alarm at the slight-

est hint of danger. He also sounded the death knell. And in addition to standing watch, he tolled the hours.”



RENATO HÄUSLER

- Personal details Renato Häusler, 47 years old, married, father of two daughters, met his wife during a humanitarian trip to Sri Lanka.
- Profession Part-time (50%) night watchman, 5 to 7 days; PE teacher (swimming) in a facility for the visually impaired (blind or visually impaired with mental disabilities). Renato Häusler has been a night watchman since 2002, but started deputising for the previous night watchman in 1987 and can himself call on seven deputies as required.
- Cycling. “I’ve never had a car. I always cycle.”
- Speaks five languages: French, Swiss-German, English, Italian and Spanish.
- Humanitarian involvement. In 1999 he and a paediatrician founded the ARES (Actions Recherche Enfant Sida) Association to promote AIDS research for children. Project: Sponsored endurance cycling to collect donations. In 1999 he cycled the “24 hours of Léman” i.e. 3.5 times around Lake Geneva. The following year he cycled four times round the lake, a distance of 720 kilometres. The Association has 220 members and supports 500 children in Rwanda. www.deepblueart.ch/ares



In 1880, thanks to progress, disastrous fires were consigned to history and watchmen were no longer needed. But in Lausanne the office of night watchman was literally saved by the tower clock, which had to be wound regularly in order to keep the bell ringing. So the city decided to continue the tradition of hourly calls by the night watchman. From 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. he cried out the hour. The clock was electrified in the 1950s, and from 1960 the time was only called from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m. Nowadays there are only seven historic night watchmen left in all of Europe. The oldest is in England; his post dates back to the 9th century. Sweden and Poland still have one night watchman, Germany three and Lausanne one.

“Over the years you get used to the special atmosphere, different moods and noises like creaks and groans,” explains the night watchman, who knows the cathedral like the back of his hand. “When I’m here I gain distance from everyday concerns and simply go with the flow. Here I gather the strength to go on. This place is a source of energy: beams and joists that have not moved for centuries, and the sense of permanence conveyed by the 700-year-old cathedral: all this gives me stability and a fixed point of reference.” How does Renato Häusler fill in the hours between his rounds? He devotes himself to his humanitarian organisation ARES (administration and charity appeals) and to meditation. “In good weather I go outside, sit on a balustrade and contemplate the absurdity of the world...”. Our night watchman is a philanthropist and more – in his opinion “everything living or inanimate is an expression of the Creator.”

A night watchman in the 21st century? “For me, the centuries-old continuity of the night watchman tradition is like an unbroken chain. Right now I am the last link. But I sincerely hope that someone will follow me so that the night watchman remains an undying tradition for his descendants and for forthcoming generations.”



Federal Councillor Deiss: office fatigue

To the nation's complete surprise, Federal Councillor Joseph Deiss announced his resignation at the beginning of May. CVP President and National Councillor Doris Leuthard is tipped to succeed him in mid-June.

Free movement

On 1 April 2006 Switzerland opened its labour market to citizens of the new EU member states. Last autumn the Swiss electorate voted to extend free movement of persons to these countries. Workers from Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Slovakia are subject to restrictions on immigration and salary controls.

Swiss Roots

The Federal Charter of 1291 will be on show in a Philadelphia museum from 10 to 30 June. This exhibition is part of the "Swiss Roots" project under the aegis of Presence Switzerland, the aim of which is to familiarise Americans with Swiss roots with their forefathers' home country.

Rise in overnight stays

Last year the Swiss hotel industry registered 857,000 more overnight stays than in 2003. According to the Federal Office of Statistics, the overall rise of 2.7% is primarily accounted for by an increase in visitors from abroad (+6.8%).

Doctors take to the streets

For the first time ever, Swiss doctors and medical staff demonstrated on Berne's Bundesplatz to protest against poor working conditions. The 301,000 signatures to the petition

"Against cutbacks in GP health-care and the growing lack of GPs" were brought on stretchers to the Houses of Parliament. One week later the monitoring unit of santésuisse, the umbrella organisation of Swiss health insurers, reported that in 2004 some 4% of doctors presented bills that were up to one third higher than bills from colleagues in the same canton.



Acrobatics on ice

Stéphane Lambiel was crowned World Figure Skating Champion for the second consecutive year. After winning a silver medal in the Winter Olympics in Turin, the skater from Saxon in the canton of Valais outshone the competition at the World Championships in the Canadian city of Calgary.

FC Basle out of the UEFA Cup

The Swiss champions failed by a whisker to qualify for a historic UEFA Cup semi-final. In the home game FC Basle won 2:0 against Middlesbrough, but was unable to seize the offensive in England, losing by 4:1.

Flooding

Due to heavy rainfall, several Swiss lakes and rivers burst their banks at the beginning of April. Dozens of cellars were under water, and roads and rail routes were closed off. In the canton of Schaffhausen, a three-year-old girl drowned in a stream swollen with rainwater. According to MeteoSwiss, the Swiss Meteorological Institute, the amount of

rain that fell within the space of 36 hours was equivalent to the normal rainfall for the entire month of April.

Crystal for the Red Cross

The red crystal, the new emblem of the Red Cross, will soon be a protected brand in Switzerland. The National Council approved a protocol that recognises this symbol, along with the red cres-

cent and the red cross, as a protected Red Cross emblem.

World cheese champion

Switzerland came first in the World Cheesemaking Championships in the USA, thanks largely to a Bernese Emmentaler and a Fribourg Gruyère. Although this competition has been held for the past fifty years or so, this is the first time Switzerland has won.

Pasta lovers

Last year the Swiss consumed 75,348 tons of pasta – 3.2 percent more than in 2004 – equivalent to 10.06 kilograms or some one hundred portions per person. Within Europe, Switzerland comes second only to Italy (annual per capita consumption of 24 kilograms) in the pasta stakes.

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Doctor honoris causa

Claude Nobs, founder of the Montreux Jazz Festival, was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Federal Institute of Technology of Lausanne for his services "in promoting the Lake Geneva region". This year the 70-year-old, a chef by profession, will be attending the 40th Festival, whose initial budget was only CHF 8000 (now the budget is CHF 17 million!).

New special "Houses of Parliament" coin

As the seat of the government and parliament, the Houses of Parliament in Berne are a national monument sine qua non, and for the past 104 years have played a key role in Swiss political affairs. Now the building has been immortalised in silver. A special "Houses of Parliament" coin with a denomination of CHF 20 has just been issued. The coin was designed by Bernese graphic artist Benjamin Pfäffli and minted in swissmint, the Federal Mint in Berne. The artist's aim was to convey as authentic and detailed an image of the building as possible.



FC Sion once more cup-winners

If ever a victory confirmed a series, it was FC Sion's win against FC Young Boys in the Swiss Cup final. The current leader of the Challenge League beat one of the best teams in the Super League in a penalty shoot-out. Sion has made it to the final ten times and never lost.

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