

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

NOVEMBER 2011 / NO. 5



**50 years of development aid:
prospects needed,
not good intentions**

**The Swiss political landscape
after the elections**

**Swiss literature –
constantly restricted**



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The course has not yet been set

SWITZERLAND HAS VOTED, and we now know the winners and losers. However, the results of the elections on 23 October do not tell the whole story of Switzerland's political future. The situation will become clearer after 14 December following the Federal Council election. The key issue at the moment is whether the system of concordance will be revived by a newly negotiated magic formula or whether it will be abandoned. In the September edition of "Swiss Review", Professor Georg Kohler outlined how this could result in political deadlock with unforeseeable consequences for Switzerland. One thing is for sure and that is that ever since CVP Federal Councillor Ruth Metzler was voted out of office in 2003 the magic formula that had existed with stability since 1959 has been consigned to history. Read about the possible scenarios for the Federal Council election and how the parties and candidates are positioning themselves on page 13 onwards.

This election also raises the question of what the parties actually understand by concordance. Is the magic formula a purely mathematical model according to which Federal Council seats are distributed by share of the vote? Or does concordance require a degree of agreement on issues, values and ideas about how a state should function?



The de-selection of Federal Councillor Christoph Blocher in 2007 resulted in considerable intense and sometimes absurd debate in Switzerland and ultimately led to an initiative for the popular election of the Federal Council. Blocher has still not come to terms with the humiliation of this defeat. In an interview with the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" two months before the elections, when asked to comment on his present frame of mind,

he said: "Of course I am bitter." This bitterness has provided him with the incentive to carry out a tireless campaign over the past four years and he has succeeded in making himself the centre of attention, whatever happens in politics. Blocher provides his party with political ideas and principles and – together with his extremely wealthy friends – he possesses the financial means to engulf Switzerland, from Romanshorn to Geneva, with propaganda. The Swiss People's Party (SVP) is increasingly adopting the approach of playing popular rule off against the rule of law. Opponents are defamed and simplistic solutions are put forward to complex problems. Populism is experiencing a boom. This was one of the main issues for debate at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lugano in August (page 24).

Much was written during the election campaign about how right-wing conservative politicians, with the support of industry federations, were specifically setting out to bring about a fundamental transformation of Swiss politics. A book by Oswald Sigg and Viktor Parma (page 5) provides an insight into this. The loss of solidarity within society and the egotism of a decadent upper social stratum – not just in Switzerland but worldwide – should not be overlooked. This has already led to revolt and unrest in many places. Let's hope the new and re-elected politicians comprehend that the growing number of disillusioned and frustrated who have no prospects is also a threat to social harmony and prosperity in Switzerland.

BARBARA ENGEL

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Cover image: The construction of bridges is part of Swiss development aid work. Ghana, where this photograph was taken, is a priority country for Switzerland. Photo: Keystone

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MY SWISS CHOCOLATE



Fukushima: warning sign and wake-up call

The conservative parties and right-wing journalists always focus on costs when it comes to the issue of abandoning nuclear power. Whatever the cost of decommissioning a nuclear power plant, that is only part of the problem. The permanent disposal of nuclear waste still has to be resolved, but the advocates of nuclear power do not tell us about that, let alone what a disaster would cost Switzerland. The right-wing and conservative groups are also reticent to reveal how many new jobs withdrawal from nuclear power would create.

Progress means demonstrating the courage and desire to embrace innovation. A responsible government finds this courage and desire for the good of the people. Perhaps it is not by chance that the Federal Council is dominated by female members at this time. Perhaps it is providence that Switzerland has a government able to read the signs of the times.

JACQUELINE ZWAHLEN,
AMLAPURA, INDONESIA

"Swiss Review" and the nuclear debate

Rene Lenzin's article on nuclear power in Switzerland in your September issue was interesting but didn't really tackle what it means for an energy policy to work in the medium to long term. The only way to seriously slash transport emissions is to massively increase the production of clean electricity and electrify transportation. The same applies to heating oil emissions. So electricity production in Switzerland must increase not just a little, but probably double or even triple in the next few decades. Germany's flirta-

tion with solar has been so deep and dismal a failure that it's hard to understand people taking it seriously.

GEOFF RUSSELL, AUSTRALIA

Offensive

It is fantastic that "Swiss Review" keeps us up to date about the latest developments and events in Switzerland. However, I was outraged at the picture on page 19 in the September 2011 edition. It is not only offensive and distasteful towards our female Federal Councillors but also towards women in general. This was very inappropriate for "Swiss Review" and indeed any other magazine.

MARGRET ZINGG, TAIWAN

Scapegoats

I unfortunately have to correct you with regard to the article on the Germans being the new scapegoats. The Germans have always been scapegoats, this is nothing new. This may not have been expressed so publicly and vociferously in the past but they have always been "die chaibe Dütsche" or "d Sauschwobe". When I married a German almost 50 years ago, it was seen as disastrous not only by my family but also by the wider community. If you look at Swiss history, this has been the case since time immemorial. The Swiss fought the Habsburgs hundreds of years ago. This deep-seated attitude will never change.

On that note, greetings from beautiful Ravensburg,

ANNA HELLERMANN

Charges for bank customers domiciled abroad

Without prior warning, Credit Suisse has charged account management fees of CHF 192 for three months for my nine-year-old son, a Swiss

From inside the circle of power

A FEDERAL COUNCIL SPOKESMAN AND A JOURNALIST – two people who are extremely familiar with the workings of the Federal Palace in Berne – have written a book together. However, this is not a title full of anecdotes about Bernese political life. Instead, Oswald Sigg and Viktor Parma focus on the mechanisms behind Swiss politics that few know about. The book's final chapter begins: "Whether we are talking about lobbying, sleaze or the political class, anxiety over the corruptibility of democracy is spreading." Even the Federal Council is concerned about democratic deficits, otherwise why would it have declared the "challenges to democracy in the 21st century" a national research priority?

The chapter on the Federal Council's meetings and the meeting room makes entertaining reading (see page 16). Few people have better knowledge of this than Sigg, who first worked under several Federal Councillors before later becoming Vice-Chancellor and Spokesperson for the Federal Council. In his view, the tradition of open debate where joint solutions are sought and decisions taken collegially has been completely eroded in recent years. Voting has become increasingly commonplace on the Federal Council, like a small-scale parliament, and everyone is eager to conclude meetings before lunch if possible.

In the chapter entitled "Parliament", Viktor Parma provides an astonishing insight into the lengths the business community goes to in order to exercise influence over politicians in Berne. The business federation Economiesuisse and the Trade and Industry Group, to which 130 of the 246 Council members belong but which is not officially registered, play a key role in this. Through these two organisations, Members of Parliament apparently receive clear instructions on how to vote. Voting is closely observed and anyone who flouts the instructions must explain why, writes Parma. This practice violates the prohibition of voting instructions enshrined in the Federal Constitution, which states: "No member of the Federal Assembly may vote on the instructions of another person." The 2008 referendum on corporate tax reform also highlights the Federal Council's willingness to submit to the wishes of the business community. The referendum documents of FDP Federal Councillor Rudolf Merz said at the time that the loss of tax revenue would be

limited, totalling less than a billion Swiss francs. It is now evident that the true figure is at least seven billion. The Federal Supreme Court is now looking into the statements that Merz made against his better knowledge.

The authors also take a critical view of popular initiatives. Today, this instrument is primarily used for commercial purposes and to generate media attention. Indeed, Sigg believes a "pseudo-democratic coup attempt by the SVP" lies behind the recently submitted initiative for the election of the Federal Council by the people.

The title of the book, "Die käufliche Schweiz" (Corruptible Switzerland), is not particularly subtle, and the authors' indignation is a little too obvious in some passages. It is nevertheless well worth reading, especially in an election year.

BARBARA ENGEL



VIKTOR PARMA, OSWALD SIGG. "Die käufliche Schweiz", Für die Rückeroberung der Demokratie durch ihre Bürger; Verlag Nagel & Kimche 2011; CHF 23.90.

citizen living abroad in Graz. The Aargauische Kantonalbank will also be introducing high quarterly fees for Swiss living abroad from October but at least they have provided sufficient warning to enable accounts to be closed or transferred. I think it is outrageous that banking conditions can be changed without informing customers. This also constitutes clear discrimination against the Swiss abroad. I am well aware that the legal framework has been tightened to prevent money laundering, etc.

Despite my patriotism, I will now close my son's savings account in Switzerland as I am not prepared to pay directly for the speculative mistakes of the banks. The extra taxes that

I am involuntarily paying to sort out this mess are quite sufficient.

ANDREA REICH, GRAZ, STYRIA,
SWISS SOCIETY BOARD MEMBER

Swiss "service" at the airport

We have lived in England for a very long time but, like most Swiss abroad, are sometimes plagued with "Heimweh". We return quite frequently to visit friends and family. Unfortunately our last trip, together with our sons and daughters-in-law, was not the most memorable, and my husband and I felt quite ashamed about the Swiss attitude and service we got. At the airport in Zurich the Fondue Cheese and the "Birnenweggen-Fuellung" purchased from Migros were taken away during the security checks

and thrown in the bin. The reason: there might be juice in it.

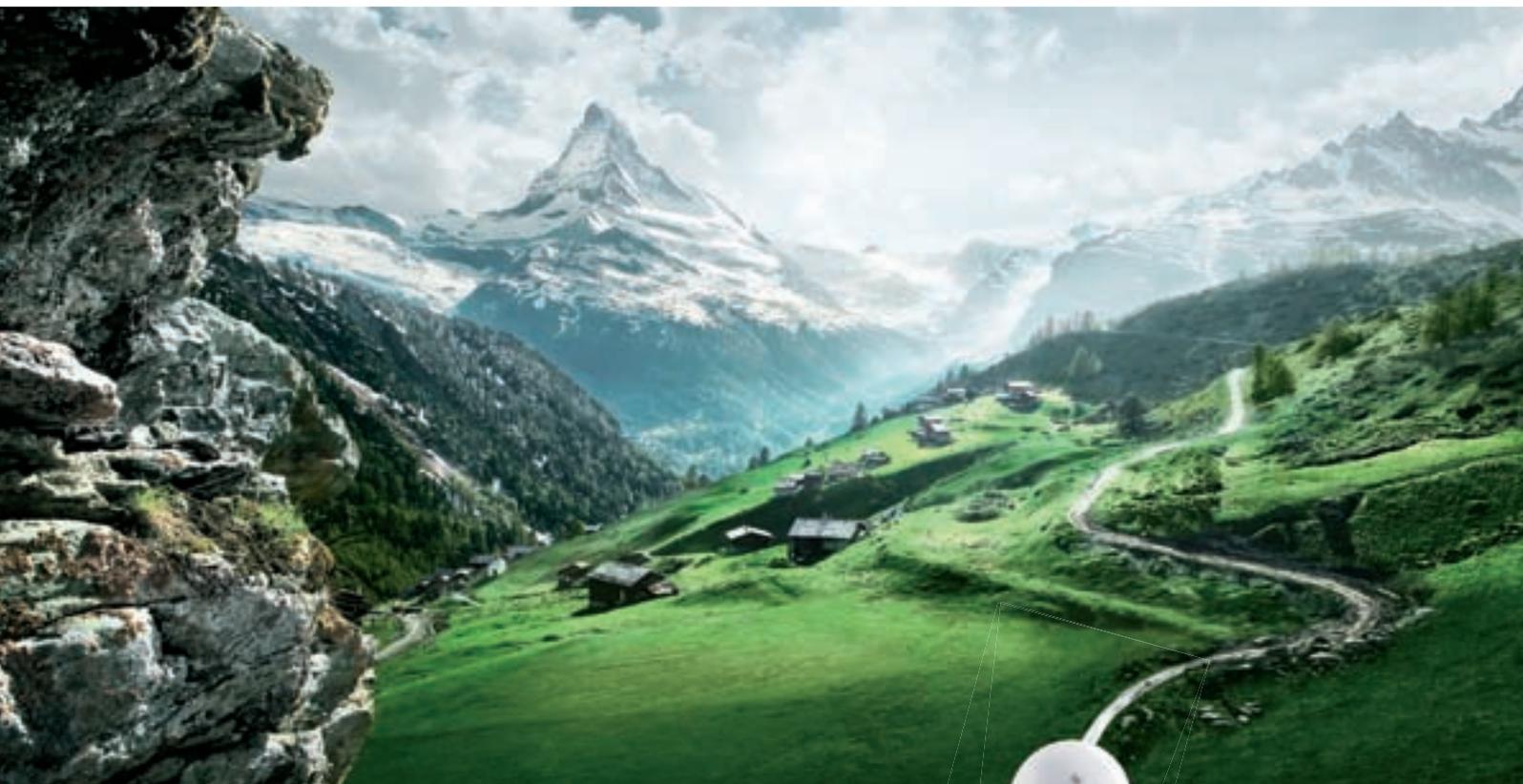
NOWHERE at the airport does it say that food items are not allowed that contain the smallest amount of juice. We explained to the security staff that we do this very regularly, but to no avail. It is very astonishing, given that there are shops before the security gate, selling all sorts of delicatessen from Switzerland – just for them to land in the bin at the security checkpoint! We were all infuriated and we saw other passengers querying this. This has nothing to do with our security, but plainly rules and regulations are being taken too far and are turning the law into a laughing-stock. This is not in the spirit of the regulations but taken to the utmost and plainly

a power game. It leaves a bitter aftertaste. Given the economic climate and the high value of the Swiss Franc we thought Switzerland could ill afford such service.

ESTHER ZUGER, MOORE, CHESHIRE

You can avoid problems at the security checkpoint by packing Swiss specialities you would like to take with you in your suitcase, which you will hand over when you check in. Anyone shopping at the airport should think about the liquid contained in all foodstuffs. A list of what is and is not permitted can be found at: www.zurich-airport.ch
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SWISS NEWS, WORLD WIDE

China in transition

Swiss photographer, Marco Paoluzzo, observes and documents – with fascination and sometimes dismay – how the Middle Kingdom is changing, customs are being lost and people are increasingly preoccupied with “trying to survive or get rich”. Accompanied by his Chinese wife, he has visited China several times a year since 1998. In his book “China Memories”, he impressively illustrates the most diverse aspects of this country with which he has a self-confessed love-hate relationship in black-and-white images.

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Anhui, Huangshan 2009



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Xizang Lu, Shanghai 2008

Swiss solidarity faces an acid test

Switzerland has constructed bridges in Nepal, supported educational campaigns in Burkina Faso, provided clean drinking water in Haiti and helped to cultivate more resistant varieties of corn in Mozambique. Swiss development aid has contributed more to the image of a humanitarian, benevolent Switzerland over the past 50 years than virtually any other government activity. But Swiss solidarity now faces an acid test.

By Marc Lettau

A filigree suspension bridge sways in the wind at a dizzying height above the melting Trift glacier in the Bernese Oberland. Depending on the weather conditions, the crossing is not for the faint-hearted. This is just one of a whole series of new suspension bridges providing for thrills and adrenaline kicks in the alpine region. The fact that Swiss development aid workers have been building similar bridges in Nepal for over 50 years is often forgotten. Around 3,000 bridges have been built there but never to provide adrenaline rushes. The bridges connect people on one side of the valley with those on the other. They shorten routes, foster exchange, enable development and contribute to greater prosperity.

Expression of openness and compassion

There is much talk in Switzerland this year of bridges that overcome great divides as the nation looks back on 50 years of development aid. However, this is more of an opportunity for reflection than celebration as global poverty has not been eradicated despite half a century of extensive aid efforts by wealthy industrial nations. That said, Switzerland's decision in 1961 to provide development aid is a cause for celebration.

The states granted independence in the southern regions of the world after the Second World War were heavily dependent on aid because they had previously been exploited by colonial powers that had impeded their development. But Switzerland was not a colonial power and therefore not plagued by a bad conscience. The decision to contribute to the rebuilding of shattered states was therefore primarily an expression of general compassion and of the increasing openness of the nation. It is not least thanks to its development aid that Switzerland is today regarded as an open, empathetic state that

wants to do what it can to help solve global problems.

No idealisation of the beginnings

However, the state moved less quickly than many of its citizens, who set up civil and church-run aid organisations. Modern-day Helvetas was founded in 1955. Swiss Interchurch Aid (HEKS) commenced its work in 1956. It was not until 1961 that state development aid embraced larger-scale activities. There have been many "fundamental changes" since then, explains Martin Dahinden, Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in an interview with "Swiss Review". Switzerland initially operated on a local scale. It has since recognised "that little can be achieved at local level if efforts are not made simultaneously to fundamen-

tally improve the framework conditions". Or, in other words, "the focus was on the activities in the beginning, whereas today it is clearly on the impact". The basic principles nevertheless remain the same: "Switzerland does not pursue any geostrategic interests with its aid. Instead, this is shaped by pragmatism. The strategy of enabling people to help themselves is also a constant."

The retrospective assessment by Swiss non-governmental organisations is more critical. According to Peter Niggli, Switzerland was initially reluctant to recognise its shared responsibility for the nations that had been granted independence. Niggli is head of the development organisation Alliance Sud, which lobbies on behalf of the six major Swiss aid organisations. He also believes that it was too much a case of



Development aid in practice: a bamboo bridge in Nepal and two employees of a company manufacturing hammocks in Nicaragua, which is supported by Switzerland

good intentions but poor implementation in the early days. For example, for an electricity station redevelopment in Mozambique, Switzerland simply delivered the entire project: “The order was placed with Swiss companies. The money went from Berne to Baden, thereby remaining in our economy.” Development aid that involves full order books for domestic industry is neutrally termed “tied aid”. Critics call it “export promotion with a charitable coating”. Niggli says: “Tied aid prevents developing countries from learning and denies them economic benefits.” Switzerland has now abandoned tied aid. Niggli believes this was one of the most important changes ever in Swiss development aid. Martin Dahinden also feels it was “definitely a step in the right direction”.

Not a united nation of philanthropists

The southern regions of the world were ravaged by poverty in 1961. In 2011, the picture is still one of poverty despite significant successes. The purpose of development aid is therefore fundamentally scrutinised on a regular basis in Switzerland and even challenged. Right-wing conservative members of parliament in particular, such as Christoph Mörgeli of the Swiss People’s Party (SVP), claim

that aid trickles away ineffectively in many places: “Development aid has failed in Africa especially.” More moderate critics say aid should at least not be granted too altruistically: development aid could benefit both sides if, for example, it helped to reduce migration to Switzerland. Here Dahinden warns the idea that Switzerland could simply stop immigration through aid to a developing nation is naive. Development aid may help reduce poverty, he says, but the practice of only providing aid if a country took back its asylum seekers would “often be destined to fail”.

Great challenges and a major test

Fierce debate over the purpose and extent of development aid is expected in Parliament in Berne next year. For the first time ever, Parliament will take a decision on all the major multi-annual lines of credit for foreign aid en bloc. These include block credits for assistance to countries of the south, assistance for Eastern Europe, humanitarian aid (emergency aid in disaster situations) and technical development cooperation by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO). This amounts to a package of around 11 billion Swiss francs on which the newly elected Parliament

must decide – doing so at a time of economic uncertainty. However, Martin Dahinden expects Parliament to pledge to continue providing aid at the envisaged level. The bundling of the block credit lines for the first time also has benefits. It compels the proposal of an overall strategy.

Grave concerns about the climate

Niggli is less optimistic. He fears the great financial challenges will see Parliament question the increase in development aid resolved at the start of the year (see box on page 10) and possibly cause Switzerland to renege on pledges made. He believes the current international consensus that poor countries must receive financial support in addition to development aid to overcome the impact of climate change is in jeopardy. Switzerland may also succumb to the temptation find the funds required to contribute more to climate projects by cutting back on traditional means of fighting poverty. Dahinden believes the focus on climate is essential because climate change hits the weakest hardest. It is causing deserts to grow, flooding risks to increase, harvests to shrink and the return of diseases believed to have been eradicated, such as malaria. Yet Dahinden does not see this as a trade-off: “Climate adaptation projects are extremely closely linked to the fight against poverty in many cases.”

Dahinden has concerns about regions where the political climate is unstable. He says: “Development aid has achieved great success worldwide but there is still major poverty and misery in unstable, fragile countries blighted by conflict.” Switzerland therefore plans to do more in such fragile states in future. Today, it is already active in Africa to the south of the Sahara “where instability is increasing”. Dahinden estimates that “we will primarily operate in such regions in five to ten years’ time”.

“Swissness” in development aid?

Looking to the future, Dahinden is calling for “Swissness” in Swiss aid and more “innovation”. The general public may well be baffled by this and may wonder whether the fight against extreme poverty perhaps needs cash and food rather than Swissness and innovation. The SDC Director admits the



MEDIOCRE SWITZERLAND, EXEMPLARY CANTON OF GENEVA

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) regularly gives Switzerland good marks for the quality of its aid but criticises the volume of Swiss aid as being too small. It is average by international comparison but significantly below UN recommendations. The UN recommends that wealthy industrial nations contribute at least 0.7% of their gross domestic product (GDP) to development aid because this is the only way of achieving the key goals in the fight against poverty. In 2010, Switzerland contributed “official development assistance” of 2.88 billion Swiss francs, which corresponds to 0.41% (2009: 0.45%). At the beginning of 2011, Parliament decided to increase aid gradually to 0.5% by 2015.

“Official development assistance” includes the voluntary contributions of communes and cantons. Geneva is an anomaly here. Geneva’s cantonal parliament decided in 2001 that the canton would contribute at least 0.7% of its budget each year “to financing international solidarity”.

The popular belief that the Swiss contribute at least as much aid as the state in total through their donations to private aid organisations is disproved by the statistics. The funds available to the around 400 aid organisations included in the statistics constitute around 0.07% of GDP. This means that 70 cents in every 1,000 Swiss francs of income are donated to the southern regions of the world, which is a modest amount by international comparison. (MUL)



concepts require definition but they have also triggered “a constructive debate”. By Swissness he means the ethos that Switzerland must deploy its comparative advantages if it is to achieve maximum impact. It should focus on areas in which it possesses great credibility and expertise, such as health promotion, water management – water supply, energy generation and sanitation – and the promotion of democracy. “Innovation in development aid” means “leveraging knowledge if we are to achieve a major impact with modest resources”. This kind of “knowledge-based aid” requires that knowledge is conveyed, developed and deployed to produce tailored solutions.

Steadfast? Altruistic? Idealistic?

As a representative of Alliance Sud, Niggli wants Switzerland to show steadfastness above all. He says: “Pressure on development aid is growing worldwide. Donor countries are succumbing to the temptation to spend their money on the promotion of their own economic and geopolitical interests.” Switzerland must resist this trend. It has not previously exploited aid for the pursuit of its own interests: “Switzerland cannot turn up with gunboats.” Not that he regrets the absence of martial pressure. Quite the opposite: “Switzerland’s political and military in-

nocuousness – in other words, the general cordiality of our state – is a much-appreciated characteristic in development aid.” Dahinden sees this as perfectly in line with how Swiss aid views itself: “Our development aid is a major part of altruistic Switzerland and its humanitarian tradition.”

So, is there any truth to the theory that aid influences how Switzerland is seen in the world? Development aid is actually currently restricted to 14 priority countries, while SECO’s economic development cooperation focuses on just seven priority countries (see box on page 11). The visibility of Swiss efforts is therefore limited. It is further restricted by the fact that 40% of Swiss development aid does not go towards projects of its own but rather large-scale, multilateral projects where Switzerland is but one of many donor countries. Dahinden does not regard this as an issue since Switzerland is also seen in multilateral organisations “as a country with a strong voice; as a country that does not act egoistically; as a country with a strong international network that recognises that the wellbeing of others plays a major role in its own wellbeing”. Switzerland also represents in the principle that “it is important to be involved, to tackle problems and to help devise solu-

Health promotion in Mali (one of the SDC's priority countries) and an electricity power plant in Khorog, Tajikistan, constructed with support from SECO



tions instead of simply handing out charity”.

Niggli agrees: “When aid comes from Switzerland, partners know that it is a firm commitment because the aid workers do not disappear at the first opportunity.” However, it is not just government action that contributes to Switzerland’s image as a humanitarian country. The Swiss abroad also determine how Switzerland is perceived: “Some Swiss people who have spent two or three years abroad set up small aid organisations upon their return to Switzerland.” These individual initiatives contribute “a great deal towards how the world sees our country” and make many of those supported feel that they have not been abandoned in their suffering.

Consumer behaviour is decisive

Are aid providers all altruistic idealists? Is it that the aura of doing good deeds simply makes them feel good? There are various motives for providing development aid, and these are changing in Switzerland too. The Zurich-based philosopher and ethicist Barbara Bleisch presents a contrasting perspective to the view that development aid is a “philanthropic concept” that turns aid providers into moral heroes as their support is voluntary. The author of a doctoral thesis on the subject of “global poverty and individual

responsibility” sees development aid as a duty. She says: “Some people justify this obligation to provide aid by saying that it is morally reprehensible to allow people to starve when we could prevent this suffering. They focus on righteousness. They argue that it is unjust for people to go hungry and demand the redistribution of goods, in other words social justice. Others say we should forget all the fine talk about aid and redistribution. What is unjust is that we as wealthier people are contributing to this misery. And because it is partly our fault we should also bear responsibility.” The “justice not charity” approach represents a paradigm shift that has been taking place over the last ten years, says Bleisch.

But what obligations do individuals have to assume if they subscribe to the “justice not charity” principle? Bleisch points to three duties: “The civic duty to support efforts aimed at more global justice; the duty to help, in other words to contribute some of their own wealth – in the form of donations but also taxes; and, finally, the challenging duty of rethinking our purchasing decisions.” She also identifies a radical change here. “Until recently I would have said that we just needed another form of consumption. But I am now convinced that this is not enough and that we actually need to limit our con-

sumption”, she recently wrote in the SDC magazine “Eine Welt”. The consumer behaviour of Swiss citizens is also accelerating climate change, for example, which in turn is having a negative impact on developing countries.

FOCUS ON PRIORITY COUNTRIES

To achieve greater impact, Switzerland is focusing its aid on specific priority countries. The SDC’s priority countries are currently Bangladesh, Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Chad, Laos, Mali, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Peru and Tanzania. In addition, special programmes also exist in other countries. The priority countries for SECO’s economic development cooperation are Columbia, Egypt, Ghana, Indonesia, Peru, South Africa and Vietnam. (MUL)

Swiss foreign policy is looking for a new figurehead

Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey is stepping down at the end of the year after nine years. Her departure is adding to the anticipation ahead of the Federal Council elections on 14 December.

By René Lenzin

“The unyielding patriot” – “Her ambition was greater than the nation” – “Between escapades and commitment” – “The achievements of an iridescent sphinx” – “Micheline Calmy-Rey, an unconventional figure” – “Cruella, the Swiss queen of Brussels”. These are just some of the headlines used by the Swiss media to report Micheline Calmy-Rey’s decision to stand down. They show that the Geneva politician born in Valais is a colourful yet controversial figure. She will remain in charge of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), which she took over after her election to the Federal Council, until the end of the year.

Social Democrat Calmy-Rey was elected as the successor to Ruth Dreifuss by the Federal Assembly in December 2002. She then had to take over the FDFA against her wishes. Nevertheless, she made every effort to raise Switzerland’s and her own profile internationally and to give Swiss foreign politics a new image. With the concept of “active neutrality” she attempted to give a new dimension to a traditional value popular with the majority of Swiss people. Her goal was an “active foreign policy focusing on the promotion of peace, international law, human rights and the fight against poverty”, as she put it herself. Her greatest achievements, she says, include the UN Human Rights Council, which Switzerland played a major role in establishing, and mediation in the conflicts between Russia and Georgia and between Turkey and Armenia.

Ambiguous position on the EU

In Brussels, Calmy-Rey was a dedicated representative of Swiss interests vis-à-vis the European Union. Despite her repeated pledges of commitment to the bilateral route, her position on possible EU acces-

sion has ultimately remained ambiguous. Her opponents in Parliament reproach her for secretly pursuing a policy of rapprochement that would inevitably end in accession. They also level criticism at her often ill-considered activism in the world that does Switzerland more harm than good. In contrast, Calmy-Rey’s supporters praise her pragmatic approach to policy on Europe. They say she also recognised that Switzerland could only pursue and protect its interests through a greater international presence.

The Swiss abroad also see Calmy-Rey as a controversial figure. In order to implement her foreign policy priorities while at the same time meeting restrictive financial targets, she reorganised the diplomatic and

consular service, resulting in a reduction in services, particularly in Europe, and even the closure of some consulates (see also page 27). The FDFA under Micheline Calmy-Rey also cut the budget for “Swiss Review”.

The Foreign Minister has twice served as President of the Confederation, in 2007 and again this year. Her charm is well-received at public engagements. She has a good relationship with the people and was one of the most popular members of national government until recently. Immediately after taking up office, she won public approval by positioning herself as an opponent of the Iraq war. However, her reputation suffered during the Swiss hostage situation in Libya, though the entire national government and particularly the then President, Hans-Rudolf Merz, emerged from this with a tarnished image. Internally, Calmy-Rey is regarded as a demanding and capricious head who expects absolute loyalty from her staff. “That’s what I want!” is a turn of phrase she is said to often use. At the start of her term of office, in particular, there was a high turnover in her inner circles.

First grandmother on the Federal Council

Micheline Calmy-Rey grew up in Valais but studied for her degree and started her political career in Geneva. After several years on the Great Council, the Geneva electorate voted her into the cantonal government in 1997, where she was in charge of the finance department until her election to the Federal Council.

The promotion of women is a key issue for Calmy-Rey both inside and outside her department. The mother-of-two was the first grandmother on the Federal Council. At the age of 66, she will now find more time to devote to her three grandchildren. She is also said to harbour ambitions of a role with an international organisation. Parliament must first decide on her successor – the favourites for the post are all men. Her retirement has created added anticipation ahead of the complete re-election of the Federal Council on 14 December.



Politics is set to become more issue-based, but also more complicated

The trend towards political polarisation came to a halt in the National Council elections. The electorate boosted the numbers of the solution-oriented centre, but also fragmented it.

By René Lenzin



Sunday, 23 October in the television studio: Martin Bäumle (left), President of the Green Liberals, and Hans Grunder, Conservative Democratic Party (BDP) President, are delighted with their parties' good results.

“Who has reason to celebrate?” the TV presenter asked the assembled party presidents, none of whom were women, in the evening on election day, 23 October. Three of the seven immediately raised a hand, providing a reasonably good indication of the mood. The following are entitled to see themselves as winners in the National Council elections:

- Martin Bäumle of the Green Liberals, whose number of seats increased from 3 to 12 with their share of the vote standing at 5.4%.
- Hans Grunder of the Conservative Democratic Party (BDP), which also won a 5.4% share of the vote and saw its number of seats

rise from 5 to 9. (The BDP stood for election for the first time after breaking away from the SVP during the previous legislature.)

- Christian Levrat of the Social Democratic Party (SP). Like all the traditional parties, the SP's share of the vote declined (now 18.7%), but it gained three seats, mainly thanks to its success in French-speaking Switzerland.

The other four party presidents had to explain losses but, of course, attempted to put their setbacks into perspective:

- The SVP's share of the vote fell for the first time since 1987 (now 26.6%) and it also

lost seats. The Swiss People's Party nevertheless remains “by far the strongest force”, as Toni Brunner stated. The loss of seats compared to the 2007 election is partly explained by the departure of four party members to the BDP during the last legislature.

- FDP. The Liberals (FDP) continued its decline, a trend that has endured in parallel to the rise of the SVP since 1987. However, Fulvio Pelli said that the losses were lower than predicted, and he stressed that the FDP remains the third-strongest party with a 15.1% share of the vote.

■ The Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP) is following a negative course similar to that of the FDP, winning 12.3% of the vote. Christophe Darbellay was consoled by the fact that the losses were at the hands of the BDP and Green Liberals, centre parties with which solution-oriented policies can be sought.

- After two successful elections, the Greens suffered a setback. Their share of the vote stands at 8.4%. Ueli Leuenberger spoke of his party's misfortune under proportional representation and the appeal of the young Green Liberals.

Victory for the “new centre”

The gains by the BDP and Green Liberals were hailed as a victory for the “new centre” in the media. In terms of policy and agenda, both small parties in fact belong to the political faction between the poles that generally

RECORD PARTICIPATION

A total of 3,458 candidates from the 20 cantons with proportional presentation stood for 200 National Council seats, according to the Federal Chancellery after the expiry of the registration deadline in September. As only one seat is allocated to each of the six cantons or half-cantons of Obwalden, Nidwalden, Glarus, Uri, Appenzell Auser rhoden and Appenzell Innerrhoden, there is no proportional presentation here and therefore no obligation to register with the Federal Chancellery. A total of 14 people had officially put their names forward in these cantons, according to the Swiss Press Agency. That adds up to a total of 3,472 – a 10.7% increase on 2007. Of the registered candidates, 1,132 were women and 2,326 men. The proportion of women fell

from 35.2% in 2007 to 32.7%. There were 365 electoral lists altogether and numerous list and sub-list combinations.

The number of candidates from the Swiss community abroad increased enormously. There were 75 this year, compared with 44 in 2007 and just 17 in 2003. The exact election results for the candidates from the Swiss community abroad were not known at the time of going to press for this edition of “Swiss Review”. However, they are published on the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad's website. This also contains details of the voting behaviour of Swiss citizens abroad where the cantons release this information. www.aso.ch

All results are updated on the following website - www.ch.ch. (BE)

seeks solutions acceptable to a majority of the people. One example is an issue that Switzerland will focus on intensively over the coming years: the BDP and Green Liberals are unconditionally committed to the bilateral agreements with the EU and, above all, to the free movement of persons – accomplishments that EU opponents on the right and some advocates of EU accession on the left call into question.

In the past, the FDP and CVP were the political forces that put their stamp on legislation with their solution-oriented, pragmatic policies, sometimes cooperating with the left and sometimes with the right. Both parties made up for their numerical inferiority in the National Council with their dominance in the Council of States. Together with direct democracy, the characteristics of the Swiss bicameral system ensure that radical proposals are hardly ever adopted.

Now, the BDP and Green Liberals also belong to this consensus-oriented centre, which has become broader overall. In combination with the weakening of the poles, this strengthening of the centre should ensure more issue-based politics. However, at the same time the centre is at risk of fragmenting, which may make the search for solutions more difficult. Aside from personal animosity between the party representatives, different interests and priorities exist, which will be reflected in the Federal Council elections on 14 December (see page 16).

There are issues for which common solutions are not possible because differences on policy are so great. These include nu-

clear power, on which the FDP holds a different view to the CVP, BDP and Green Liberals, which all favour withdrawal. A centre-left alliance, which has been strengthened overall by the elections, will have a major bearing on this issue over the coming four years. In addition to energy policy, Europe, old-age pension provision and the future of the financial centre will be among the big issues of the forthcoming legislature. Healthcare will also remain a key project. Foreigners and immigration will continue to be topical, not least because of the SVP's popular initiative in this area. It remains to be seen whether majority support can be achieved for these issues, and in what form.

The political poles retain the power to block proposals

In light of the ongoing international financial and economic crises, the new Parliament will have to act quickly to deal with the strength of the Swiss franc and the problems this is causing many export companies. The election results suggest that the electorate will seek concrete, implementable solutions in this difficult situation rather than back parties with absolute demands. The trend towards party-political polarisation, which had been ongoing since the 1990s, has come to a halt. The bottom line is that both the left-green camp and the SVP were losers on 23 October. However, both political factions continue to hold around 60 National Council seats each and can block projects together, albeit for different reasons. This occurred during the previous legislature



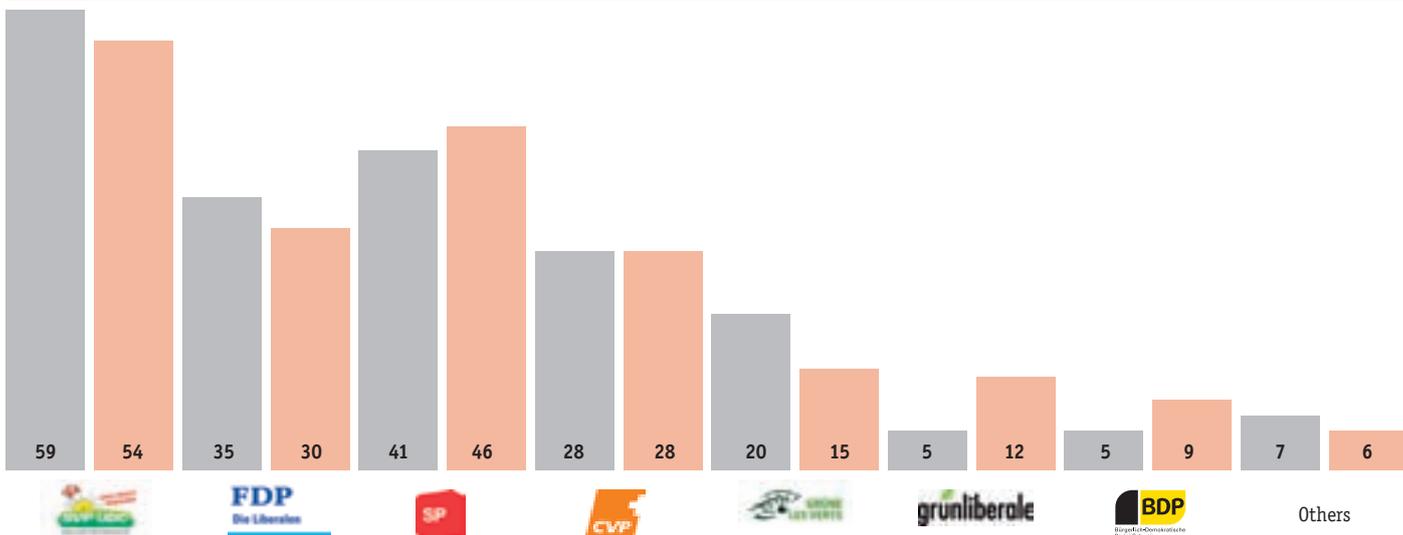
A look at the National Council chamber: the new distribution make government easy.

with the planned reform of the old-age pension system.

The appeal of new, fresh parties

The question remains as to why two traditional parties, the FDP and CVP, are continuing to decline while the “new centre” gains ground. Certain shifts, such as from the FDP to the Green Liberals, can be explained by environmental reasons. But overall the differences are negligible. In some cantons the BDP is a kind of protestant

DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL BEFORE AND AFTER THE ELECTION ON 23 OCTOBER 2011





ution of seats with numerous centre parties will not

CVP, whereas in others it can hardly be differentiated from the FDP in terms of policy. The Green Liberals previously belonged to the CVP faction without any significant conflicts arising. So, there can be only one conclusion: the winning parties are appealing particularly because they are new and fresh.

Together, the BDP and Green Liberals have almost an 11% share of the vote. That is significant, yet their success should be put into perspective. These parties started virtually from zero, which makes the gains appear large. Their success is also partially explained by bold list combinations. New parties that achieve astonishing short-term success have often appeared in Switzerland. For example, the Alliance of Independents (Landesring der Unabhängigen) won more than a 9% share of the vote and 16 seats in 1967 – in the same area as the BDP and, above all, the Green Liberals today.

The Green Liberals and BDP are not yet established parties. They are still developing structures and agendas. In some cases, they will be sending representatives with little or no political experience to Parliament. The next election and the one after that will show whether they can set themselves apart from the competition over the long term and consolidate or even build on their success.

Council of States: SVP offensive fails

Only 27 of 46 Council of States seats were decided in the first round. However, it has already become apparent that the Swiss People's Party is unlikely to be able to increase its number of seats.

By René Lenzin

The Swiss People's Party (SVP) put forward its top candidates to contest the seats on the Council of States, including former Federal Councillor Christoph Blocher in Zurich, faction leader Caspar Baader in Baselland, Party President Toni Brunner in St. Gallen and former Federal Council candidate Jean-François Rime in Fribourg. None of the four was successful. Baader and Rime have been eliminated, while Blocher and Brunner must enter the second round of voting. As the SVP has lost its seat in Grisons and is also in danger of losing the one in Aargau, it may actually end up with fewer seats in the smaller chamber than in the previous legislature.

The SVP refused to concede it had failed. Party officials said that greater presence in the Council of States was a long-term project. However, the fact remains that the party struggles to get its candidates elected in majority elections based on personality.

Second round of voting in 13 cantons

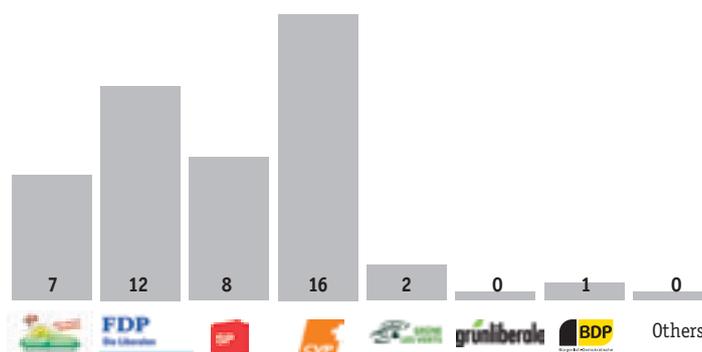
The final result of the Council of States elections and therefore the exact distribution of power in Parliament will not be known until 4 December when the second round will have taken place in Solothurn. A second round will be held in 13 cantons in all between 6 November and 4 December, when the electorate will decide on 19 of the 46 seats. This additional round is required because the Council of States election is based

on a majority system rather than proportional representation, except in the cantons of Jura and Neuchâtel. Candidates have to win over half of all votes cast to be elected in the first round of voting. The hurdle of achieving an absolute majority is not removed until the second round.

Even before the second round of voting, it is evident that the Social Democratic Party (SP) is one of the winners in the Council of States election. They have already won eight seats, which is more than any other party. Former National Council President Pascale Bruderer helped the SP to break the conservative dominance over Aargau and to take a Council of States seat there for the first time in 60 years. As the SP looks set to hold its seat in the canton of Vaud, it should win nine seats in the smaller chamber.

The Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP) will win 12 to 15 seats, and the FDP. The Liberals 10 to 13. Together the two parties are likely to continue to make up the majority. The CVP and FDP often represent the same positions, particularly on the issues of finance, economics and social policy. The Greens and Green Liberals could win up to five seats. A centre-left majority will therefore continue to exist in the Council of States, above all on family and energy policy. The definitive make-up of the smaller chamber may also have a major impact on the complete re-election of the Federal Council on 14 December (see page 16).

DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE COUNCIL OF STATES BEFORE THE ELECTION ON 23 OCTOBER 2011



More candidates than seats in the Federal Council elections

Vote out Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf or smash the concordance system and principle of proportionality – this is the choice facing Parliament on 14 December. The second option looks to be the more likely.

By René Lenzin

On 5 December the newly elected members of the National Council and Council of States will commence their first session, and nine days later they will elect the new Federal Council. Six of the seven Federal Councillors are standing for re-election. These are, in order of term of office: Doris Leuthard (CVP), Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf (BDP), Ueli Maurer (SVP), Didier Burkhalter (FDP), Simonetta Sommaruga (SP) and Johann Niklaus Schneider-Ammann (FDP). Micheline Calmy-Rey (SP) is stepping down at the end of the year, leaving a vacant seat (see page 12).

The fact that there are more claims to seats than there are seats makes the situation both tense and exciting. This has primarily to do with Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf. The former finance director from the canton of Grisons forced Christoph Blocher out of office four years ago. Because she accepted her election against the will of her then party, the Swiss People's Party (SVP), she was expelled from the SVP and subsequently joined the newly founded Conservative Democratic Party (BDP). This party has now increased the number of seats it holds on the National Council from five to nine. However, this is far

from enough for representation on the Federal Council. Widmer-Schlumpf can therefore only remain in office if other criteria are taken into account.

Two seats each for the right and left, three for the centre

If the Federal Assembly abides by the rules of the concordance system on 14 December and integrates the parties in line with the number of votes they received at the National Council elections, three things are clear:

- Still by far the strongest fraction, the SVP is entitled to two seats.
- The left-green camp is also entitled to two seats. The Greens, however, decreased their share of the vote and lost seats, meaning that they must bury their ambitions to participate in government for the time being.
- FDP. The Liberals (FDP) continues to command a higher share of the vote than the Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP) and therefore has a better claim to two seats.

It is the last point that raises questions. Is the FDP's reduced share of the vote at 15.1 percent really enough for two Federal Councillors? Yes, if you interpret concordance

from a purely arithmetic point of view, as both the FDP themselves and the SVP do. According to their formula, the three strongest parties should each receive two seats, and the fourth strongest one seat. The other parties, however, are not so happy with this approach. Firstly, because the centre-right block would then have a majority in government despite holding only around 100 of the 246 seats in the Federal Assembly and secondly, because the concordance system needs to take content into account.

Based on all the statements of the party representatives following the elections, the starting position on 14 December is as follows: in principle, the entitlement to two seats by the far right and left, the SVP and SP, is beyond dispute. That would leave three seats for the parties in between, who at the moment have four Federal Councillors. This allows for three possible scenarios. The Federal Assembly can:

- replace Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf with a representative of the SVP.
- confirm the re-election of Widmer-Schlumpf and grant the SVP a second seat at the expense of the FDP or the SP.
- confirm the re-election of Widmer-Schlumpf and refuse to give a second seat to the SVP or SP.

When this edition went to press directly after the elections on 23 October, there were signs indicating the likely re-election of Widmer-Schlumpf: The two election winners, the BDP and the Green Liberal Party, are in favour of Widmer-Schlumpf. Also, the CVP would like to join forces with Widmer-Schlumpf and the BDP – not least in order to inherit her seat one day on the Federal Council. Finally, Widmer-Schlumpf is one of the four Federal Councillors to push through the decision in government to abandon nuclear power. As a result, she enjoys a great deal of goodwill among the SP and the Greens, who – together with the CVP – had helped her into office four years ago.



The Federal Council chamber: the future occupants of these seats will be decided on 14 December. Pictured are Federal Councillors Simonetta Sommaruga, Doris Leuthard and Johann Schneider-Ammann; between them are the Vice-Chancellor, the Federal Chancellor and the Federal Council spokesperson.

Cuche – the star of Swiss downhill skiing

The king of downhill has started his 16th World Cup season. At the age of 37, Didier Cuche has never been so strong. The spearhead of the Swiss ski team will defend two crystal globes this winter. Will it be for the last time? Destiny will decide.

A profile by Alain Wey



Didier Cuche with the silver medal in Garmisch-Partenkirchen on 12 February 2011.

He has never let the side down. A warrior of the slopes, Didier Cuche has shown incredible resilience to overcome some major setbacks. His maxim is: "Pick yourself up and go again." At the start of his 16th season, the runner-up in the overall 2011 World Cup rankings is in the twilight years of his career. Last March, after lengthy consideration, he decided to continue for another year. At the age of 37, the Neuchâtel skier has won practically all the most prestigious titles. But above all he has equalled the achievements of one of his idols, the legendary Austrian Hermann Maier, by returning to the top after two serious injuries

(1997 and 2005). The oldest champion in World Cup history is like a good wine – he has improved with age and has achieved his best results after the age of 32.

60 podium finishes

Adored by the public, the man with the trademark end-over-end ski flip at the finishing line has shown unbending character over the years, refusing to be bowed by his critics. He is a man of great tenacity, prone to the odd falling-out and outburst. But it's thanks to him that the Swiss team is enjoying success once again. In 2006, Didier Cuche came back from surgery on

"A great champion is emerging in him. His character has shown one vital thing – to be successful you must have desire." Lara Gut

torn cruciate ligaments in his right knee and finished third in the overall rankings in the following season. The skier from Les Bugnenets has since achieved many podium finishes, 60 in all to date, including 17 victories. When he won the legendary Kitzbühel downhill (Austria) for the fourth time, he equalled the record of the Austrian Franz Klammer, further enhancing his status as a skiing legend. He clearly has some regrets about Olympic medals and he has yet to finish top of the overall rankings, but the speed king's exploits are not over yet.

Adrenaline rushes and what else?

What is he going to do after skiing? He is going to put his incredible drive to good use and is already looking towards the next chapter in his life. "I am already planning my post-skiing career with my brother and another person. We have contacts with sponsors and things are already in motion", he revealed in March. He enjoyed his best season in 2011. What does he have in store for us this winter? Victories, podium finishes and adrenaline rushes – what else? There are also those last remaining challenges. Used to finishing in second place on several descents on the circuit, he will seek to finally emerge victorious in classic races such as Wengen, Val Gardena (Italy), Beaver Creek (USA) and Bormio (Italy). Will this definitely be his final season? In March he mused philosophically: "I had great difficulty in deciding to continue for another year. We'll see what happens next spring."

OUTSTANDING LIST OF HONOURS

Overall Ski World Cup rankings. 3rd in 2002, 5th in 2003, 3rd in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, 2nd in 2011.

Crystal globes. Four in downhill (2007, 2008, 2010 and 2011) – only Austrian Franz Klammer has won more with five globes between 1975 and 1983. One in super-G (2011) and one in giant slalom (2009).

World Championships. Bronze in the giant slalom in Are (Sweden) in 2007, gold in the super-G and silver in the downhill at Val d'Isère (France) in 2009 and silver in Garmisch-Partenkirchen (Germany) in 2011.

Olympic Games. Silver in Nagano (Japan) in 1998.

“Switzerland is becoming more ignorant of world affairs”

The Zurich-based media scientist Kurt Imhof has been carrying out research into the Swiss media landscape for years and is the co-editor of the yearbook “Qualität der Medien” (Quality of the Media). He is seeing an alarming fall in the quality of information journalism and is calling for free products to be eliminated.

Interview by Manuel Gnos

“SWISS REVIEW”: *Mr Imhof, we live in an information age. So, this begs the question: What state is the Swiss media in?*

PROFESSOR KURT IMHOF: It is much worse than even 20 years ago. There has been a tremendous increase in the share of soft news, of human interest and sport stories. There is also less structure to our journalism. Reporting has become more episodic, and current affairs are broken down into individual events that are no longer connected to one another. The cause and effect process is neglected, and the formation of public opinion is restricted. Politicians with provocative messages today have far greater opportunity for inclusion in editorial content than before. And, last but not least, there is also an ongoing decline in the coverage of foreign issues. Switzerland is becoming less outward-looking and more ignorant of world affairs.

What reasons has your research identified for this trend?

Until the 1970s it was party newspapers that conveyed political messages. Party newspapers are about political opinion; they do not focus primarily on sales. This was followed by the heyday of the “forum newspapers”, which took over from party newspapers in communicating with the public. The public were regarded as citizens first and foremost and not media consumers. This changed radically in the 1980s.

In what way?

A media system emerged that focused on media consumers and attempted to win them through sensational stories. Journalism became morally and emotionally charged, which saw private and personal issues become relevant at the expense of matters of public concern. Today, populist politicians from all parties have a greater presence in the media than

Private and personal issues have become relevant at the expense of matters of public concern.

those who seek to conduct politics through argumentation. The gentle force of a better argument is being ousted by the cultivation of outrage. Because they have lost their own newspapers, the parties must work with the most sensational and provocative messages possible.

What are the political consequences of this for Switzerland?

Wherever there has been a sharp rise in free products, political populism has also enjoyed paralleled success. The consequences of this are more serious in Switzerland than in countries with a system of government and opposition. The Swiss system of concordance fares badly with a form of public communication where brute force rules over the presentation of superior argument. Democracy suffers when dramatic bloodletting in the press becomes the most important means of political communication.

This is the old chicken and egg conundrum – what changed first, the media approach or public interest?

No, this is not a chicken and egg situation. It is more a matter of civilisation and culture versus barbarism. People have always been able to sell trash, that’s nothing new. In the days of the Ancien Régime, tens of thousands of people went to public executions to satisfy their thirst for scandal, gossip, bloodshed and violence. For democracy, an elite project, the general level of education had to be raised to enable citizens to participate in democratic public life using arguments. We are not simply at the mercy of a current trend. We are talking about a conscious decision.

How did you see the role of the media in the recent election campaign?



Kurt Imhof, born in 1956, studied history, sociology and philosophy and is now a Professor of Journalism and Sociology. He has been head of the “Research Institute for the Public Sphere and Society” at the University of Zurich since 1997. He has published numerous books. “Die Krise der Öffentlichkeit – Kommunikation und Medien als Faktoren des sozialen

This was an extraordinary election campaign. Since the 1990s, the Swiss People’s Party (SVP) has generally been able to assert itself through its campaigns, particularly in 2007 when it focussed on criminality among foreign youths. This resulted in youth criminality, in particular that caused by foreigners, taking first place in the GfS worry barometer prior to the elections, together with the issue of immigration. This then led to the success that the SVP enjoyed at the ballot box.

Were things different this year?

Yes, the parties’ campaigns were disrupted by major events, such as Fukushima, the strong Swiss franc, the economic crisis and, more recently, the latest UBS scandal. All of this diverted from the SVP’s

campaigning on mass immigration. The real world still has an impact on the political and media systems, which is reassuring at least.

It is precisely these processes that you are researching at the "Research Institute for the Public Sphere and Society" at the University of Zurich. The second "Qualität der Medien"



Wandels" (Campus, 2011) and the second "Qualität der Medien" yearbook (Schwabe, 2011) came out recently. The yearbook can also be found online at www.qualitaet-der-medien.ch. It is financed by the "Stiftung Öffentlichkeit und Gesellschaft" (Foundation for the Public Sphere and Society). www.oeffentlichkeit.ch

(Quality of the Media) yearbook was published in Switzerland in October. How do the results differ from those of the previous year?

The use of all forms of information media has decreased compared to 2010. This has been the case for a while now with subscription newspapers. There has also been a particularly dramatic decline in radio and television information channels over the past 10 years. However, the fall in the use of online news sites from 2009 to 2010 is a new development. By contrast, there has been an increase in the use of other service portals, such as Bluewin and GMX.

These are quantitative changes, but are there also qualitative differences?

There is even more soft news and less structure in reporting. This is explained by editorial redundancies and the fact that journalists are leaving the media. Reporting is therefore becoming even more episodic. And finally there has also been restructuring – the number of foreign correspondents has been reduced, with resources re-deployed to cover stories like Kachelmann and Hirschmann.

In a special chapter, you examined the business coverage of companies. You developed a piece of plagiarism software for this purpose.

Yes. This enabled us to demonstrate that an alarmingly high proportion of business reporting is simply PR. Newspapers take corporate press releases and sell these specific interest stories as general interest. We found this in all print products but to varying degrees. The highest proportion was found in the free newspapers.

Another chapter looks at how foreigners are presented as a problem. Why is this so effective in Switzerland?

Switzerland has a strong tradition in this respect dating back to the 1960s. Using the expulsion and minaret initiatives, we were able to illustrate how a campaign has to be managed to produce as much editorial coverage as possible. Money and a provocative message are required. The SVP spent 3.3 million Swiss francs on the expulsion initiative in paid-for media, such as posters. By comparison, the FDP only spent 180,000 Swiss francs, the Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP) 45,000 and the Social Democratic Party (SP) 5,000. No other country has the kind of wealthy, populist, right-wing group found in Switzerland. Thanks to its provocative message, the SVP achieved the greatest response and its presentation of foreigners as a problem was upheld by a majority. These factors go a long way towards explaining the success of the initiatives.

What has to change if the quality of public communications is to be improved?

We need to focus on three areas: firstly, the public and, above all, teenagers and

young adults. For example, it no longer matters in terms of social conventions

whether someone reads a quality newspaper or a free product. We need to target schools and develop greater media awareness. Secondly, we should introduce a rating system to indicate

media quality. This would allow us to show on an annual basis which media products are performing well in terms of diversity, professionalism, topicality and relevance. And thirdly, the government needs to create conditions that enable quality journalism to remain financially viable. For this to work, there needs to be fewer free products because the public has almost zero cost awareness.

How would you achieve this?

We must eliminate free products at all costs. The relationship between advertising revenues and editorial content, which has long sustained journalism, is breaking down. Support measures are therefore needed, which may include public funding. Media companies that have free products in their portfolio and therefore distort the market ought to be excluded. This would of course have to be done outside government control via a foundation awarding funding based on clear quality criteria. Citizens would have to dig deeper into their pockets as there would be no other solution. It is important here to recognise that journalism is democracy's most important public service, even more important than public transport. If public communication is left exclusively to the market, we will lose the cultural values that enlightenment brought us and we will move towards barbarism.

Is that politically feasible?

There is no viable alternative. If, for example, one of the major media companies is sold abroad, Switzerland will lose its publishing infrastructure and the opportunity to maintain and develop democracy. And it appears highly likely that a major crisis is on the horizon. While crises are terrible, they do always present the opportunity to emphasise to people how important the quality of public debate is.

Quadrilingual or multilingual? Swiss literature and the world

The Swiss literary scene is incredibly small on the global stage, but it is far from insignificant. However, the creation of literary works, with their division into linguistic regions, would hardly be feasible without the involvement of countries abroad that share the same language because the barriers within Switzerland are too high.

By Barbara Villiger Heilig

Agota Kristof died in Neuchâtel at the end of July. Her books were world literature in the truest sense of the term. They included the trilogy of “The Notebook”, “The Proof” and “The Third Lie”, which was followed by the novel “Yesterday”. This was unfortunately to be this great author’s last work. Agota Kristof wrote in Switzerland, where she lived since fleeing Hungary in 1956. Her work was influenced by the major impact this flight had on her life as the native Hungarian was existentially uprooted. The experience of emigration accounted for the power of her literature and took her far beyond the realm of the personal biography, making her universally relevant in a world that has often been confronted with the phenomenon of migration and will certainly continue to face it in the future.

A godsend for Swiss literature

It comes as little surprise that Kristof’s work has now been translated into over 30 languages. This immigrant, an outstanding writer, has helped Swiss literature achieve global prominence. Is this a paradox or a symptom? Probably neither. Switzerland is tiny, and literature is an art. Really great works are extremely rare. In this respect, more than anything, Hungarian-born Agota Kristof was a godsend for the Swiss literary scene.

Through her new home, where she never really settled, Agota Kristof found a unique form of literary expression with the French language she struggled to learn. The result was a sparse, minimalistic language whose apparent naivety concealed a subtle art. Her four novels were all published by Le Seuil in Paris, one of the leading publishing houses for fiction. France – and above all Paris – continues to exercise great influence over literature written in French, even if it comes from French-speaking Switzerland. French-speaking Swiss authors who do not make it in Paris face a tougher challenge. While they may well get their work published thanks to the large number of Swiss publishing houses, it will usually only reach a domestic readership.

French literature from Switzerland only reaches French bookshops to a very limited extent. This is explained by distribution, the workings of the press and, above all, proverbial French chauvinism. Authors who do manage to be published in France are also held in higher esteem and receive more attention at home. This is a well-established tradition – even Charles Ferdinand Ramuz, the grand old man of lettres romandes, had to go via Paris to achieve fame in Switzerland. Jacques Chessex, another great author from French-speaking

Switzerland who passed away recently, also had his books published in Paris – and was proud of the fact. In 1973, he received the Prix Goncourt, the most prestigious prize in French literature, for his work “L’Ogre”. He was the first recipient from outside France and remains the only Swiss winner.

Ticino poetry for Italians

Switzerland, with its four national languages, is also an anomaly in literature. Each linguistic region – apart from Romansh, an exception in this exceptional situation – borders a neighbouring country that shares the same language: German-speaking Switzerland has a border with Germany and Austria; French-speaking Switzerland with France; Ticino and Italian-speaking Grisons with Italy. Writers from each of these linguistic regions naturally look beyond national borders to where there are not only more publishing houses, but also, above all, a sizeable potential reading public.

While this only opens up opportunities to a limited extent for French-speaking Swiss, as explained above, authors from Ticino do actually find their readership in neighbouring Italy. Ticino authors tend to write poetry rather than novels, and the poetry collections of leading Ticino writers are published by renowned Italian publishing houses. The Limmat publishing house in Zurich has shown an ambition for some time to make this literature accessible to a native German-speaking audience as well and continually publishes translations of poetry collections from Ticino. It is no secret that such works are not bestsellers. Even in its original language, poetry has to content itself with a readership of devotees. This is diluted even further when poetry is transported across language barriers in a translated form.

It is well known that these barriers also exist within Switzerland despite manda-



Visitors in front of a wall featuring portraits of writers at the Solothurn “Literary Days” festival.

tory language lessons in schools. The great divide between French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland is as strong as ever. Attempts to overcome this language barrier have nevertheless been made recently in the literary world. A group of young writers have united under the slogan "Bern ist überall" (Berne is Everywhere). They appear at festivals and even in schools with animated musical spoken-word performances in various formations and have received accolades from across the generations. The members of "Bern ist überall" come from Berne, Lausanne, Geneva, Zurich and Romansh Surselva. They speak in their local tongues confidently and successfully too: it is thanks to them that Swiss German is suddenly being seen as cool by youngsters in French-speaking Switzerland, much to the chagrin of their German teachers. Unpopular High German, as taught in schools, is still another story altogether.

Pro Helvetia finances translations

Noëlle Revaz from Valais belongs to "Bern ist überall". Her first novel "Von wegen den Tieren", a shocking, raw portrayal of the farming community depicted with linguistic brutality, was a sensation in 2002. The book hit a nerve in our high-tech civilisation. The fact that the agricultural world is currently in vogue is also highlighted by another member of "Bern ist überall", the young author Arno Camenisch. He wrote his first novel "Sez Ner", set in the Grisons Alps, in two languages, Romansh and German. Published in 2009, it has sold extremely well, with around 6,000 copies purchased. It has already been translated into French, Italian and even Romanian, and other versions are currently being produced. Top-quality translation is provided by the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. This not only supports primary literary production, but also pays special attention to translation. Besides seeing to the distribution of Swiss literature abroad, it facilitates the transfer from one national language to the others.

Pro Helvetia has apparently even launched a "Der Goalie bin ig" project to translate the successful novel written in dialect by Bernese author Pedro Lenz, who is also a member of "Bern ist überall", into High German. That promises to be quite a challenge. "Der Goalie bin ig" was nomi-

Pedro Lenz, author of "Der Goalie bin ig", during a reading at the Solothurn "Literary Days" festival on 5 June 2011.



nated in 2010 for the Swiss Book Prize, a relatively new institution associated with the "BuchBasel" book fair. However, last year's award went to Melinda Nadj Abonji with her second novel "Tauben fliegen auf" (Falcons without Falconers). She had won the German Book Prize with the same title just before, and this was celebrated as recognition and a shot in the arm for literature in German-speaking Switzerland. Gaining a foothold in the German-speaking market as a whole is no mean feat for writers from German-speaking Switzerland either, although it is easier to penetrate than the French market.

Melinda Nadj Abonji was fantastically well received thanks to the two high-profile prizes. Her award-winning novel interweaves autobiographical detail with contemporary history and is set in both Serbia, her country of origin, and Switzerland. She came to Zurich as a child from rural, Hungarian-speaking Vojvodina. Although, in contrast to Agota Kristof, she has developed a breezy, poetic style, there are parallels between the two writers. Alienation in a new environment also pervades "Tauben fliegen auf" and at times the almost gentle tone fails to conceal the harsh experience of emigration which was given new resonance by the war in the

former Yugoslavia. Melinda Nadj Abonji will now become the first artist in residence at the Swiss Institute in Rome – a newly created position for promoting art and, in this case, literature.

Writers also have to make a living. Since 2006, many have earned some of their income by lecturing at the Swiss Institute of Literature in Biel, which, as a university, offers courses in literary writing in German and French. The list of lecturers there reads like a who's who of the newer generation of Swiss authors and includes Silvio Huonder, Francesco Miceli, Urs Richle, Ruth Schweikert, Michael Stauffer, Beat Sterchi, Claire Genoux, Eugène Meiltz, Ilma Rakusa, Peter Stamm and Raphael Urweider. But the lecturing staff is not restricted to Swiss talent. There is intensive exchange and contact with literary figures abroad, particularly in German-speaking countries. In the theatrical world, Lukas Bärfuss, Switzerland's leading young dramatist, is popular in Germany and Austria, where his works are often performed and even premiere. And he is not alone. National patriotism is not a literary criterion. Thankfully.

BARBARA VILLIGER HEILIG is editor of the "NZZ" review section and a critic on the "Literaturclub" programme on Swiss television.

Switzerland as seen by the travellers of bygone ages

The popularity of the mountains owes much to the passion that travelling romantics, writers and artists, had for Switzerland. The “Viatimages” database contains more than 2,000 pictures illustrating accounts of journeys in Switzerland and the Alps from the Renaissance to the 19th century. An interview with Claude Reichler, professor at the University of Lausanne and head of the project.

By Alain Wey

The “ViaticAlpes” project with its thousands of images of Switzerland in bygone days invites us to discover the early stages of tourism in Switzerland and the forgotten history of our mountains. The travelogues reveal foreigners’ fascination with Switzerland since the 18th century. The wealth of images that illustrate them have been stored in the “Viatimages” online database. This infatuation with the Alps contributed to the aura of the alpine region that has become part of Swiss mythology.

Claude Reichler, head of the project and professor of French literature and cultural history at the University of Lausanne, takes a journey back in time through the soaring enthusiasm generated by our “unspoiled island”, which is richly illustrated in pictorial and literary works. The remarkable appeal of the high mountains, where the Alpine Arc can be traversed or crossed, has transformed the sphere of leisure activities from the time of the Renaissance.

“SWISS REVIEW”: How did alpine travel become fashionable?

PROFESSOR CLAUDE REICHLER: There are various reasons but a key factor is the tradition among young English aristocrats of making an educational journey around Europe known as the “Grand Tour”. In 18th-century England a new way of looking at nature emerged, which spawned an aesthetic ideal known as picturesque. Great significance was attributed to unspoiled nature. At first, the flatlands, parks and gardens were all the rage. Then all of a sudden, adventure and vertical ascents took centre stage. This interest spread from the UK to all European cultures, to the French and German, then to the Nordic cultures with the Romantic Movement.



Was this infatuation with the Swiss alpine region also linked to political thought?

The philosophers and thinkers of 18th-century Europe saw models of fundamental democracy in the small alpine cantons with their local assemblies. These places and the peasants who lived there were seen as heralding a new form of politics and popular freedom that contrasted with the monarchical Europe of the time.

Which literary works marked this shift towards idealisation of the alpine landscape and unspoiled nature?

Two fundamentally important works played a major role: the poem “The Alps” (1732) by Albrecht von Haller and “Julie, or the New Heloise” (1761) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau. They were read by all the European elites and possessed the quality of masterpieces that transform the thinking of the time.

And what about authors in the rest of Europe?

There was great interest in the Alps, particularly the Swiss Alps, in all European cultures. The great romantics came to Switzerland and wrote alpine works. The English with George Gordon Byron, William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley, the Germans with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Friedrich Hölderlin, and the French with Alexandre Dumas, the author of the “Three Musketeers”, Victor Hugo and George Sand.

The “Viatimages” project is based on accounts of alpine journeys. How significant is this literary trend?

According to the British historian Gavin de Beer, around five books on Switzerland

were published every year in Europe in the second half of the 18th century. After the Napoleonic Wars, from 1815 until 1850, 40 works on travels in Switzerland sometimes appeared in one year. This represented an extraordinary success for the period.

What types of images appeared in these travelogues, which were very often illustrated?

They were often engravings, which were later coloured, transforming watercolour engravings into a popular craft. Artists also sold miniature watercolour pictures to wealthy travellers. These schools depicting the Alps were called “the small Swiss masters”. The most important of them was Caspar Wolf. He worked outdoors and in his studio in winter. He also produced larger-sized oil paintings. In the 19th century, painters turned depicting the Alps into a profession, among them Alexandre Calame (1810-1864) from Geneva, who enjoyed enormous success. His paintings were commissioned by the Russian court. In the 19th century, the Geneva landscape school was fond of portraying the Alps. This continued until Ferdinand Hodler, who devoted a lot of time to landscapes.

What developments can be identified in the illustrations over the centuries?

There were different fashions and sensibilities over the ages. A distinction can be made, for example, between the picturesque style of the 18th century – which depicts scenes from rural life in the valleys – and the style associated with the sublime nature of the very high mountains, with their glaciers, rocks, precipices and great waterfalls, which characterised the 19th century.

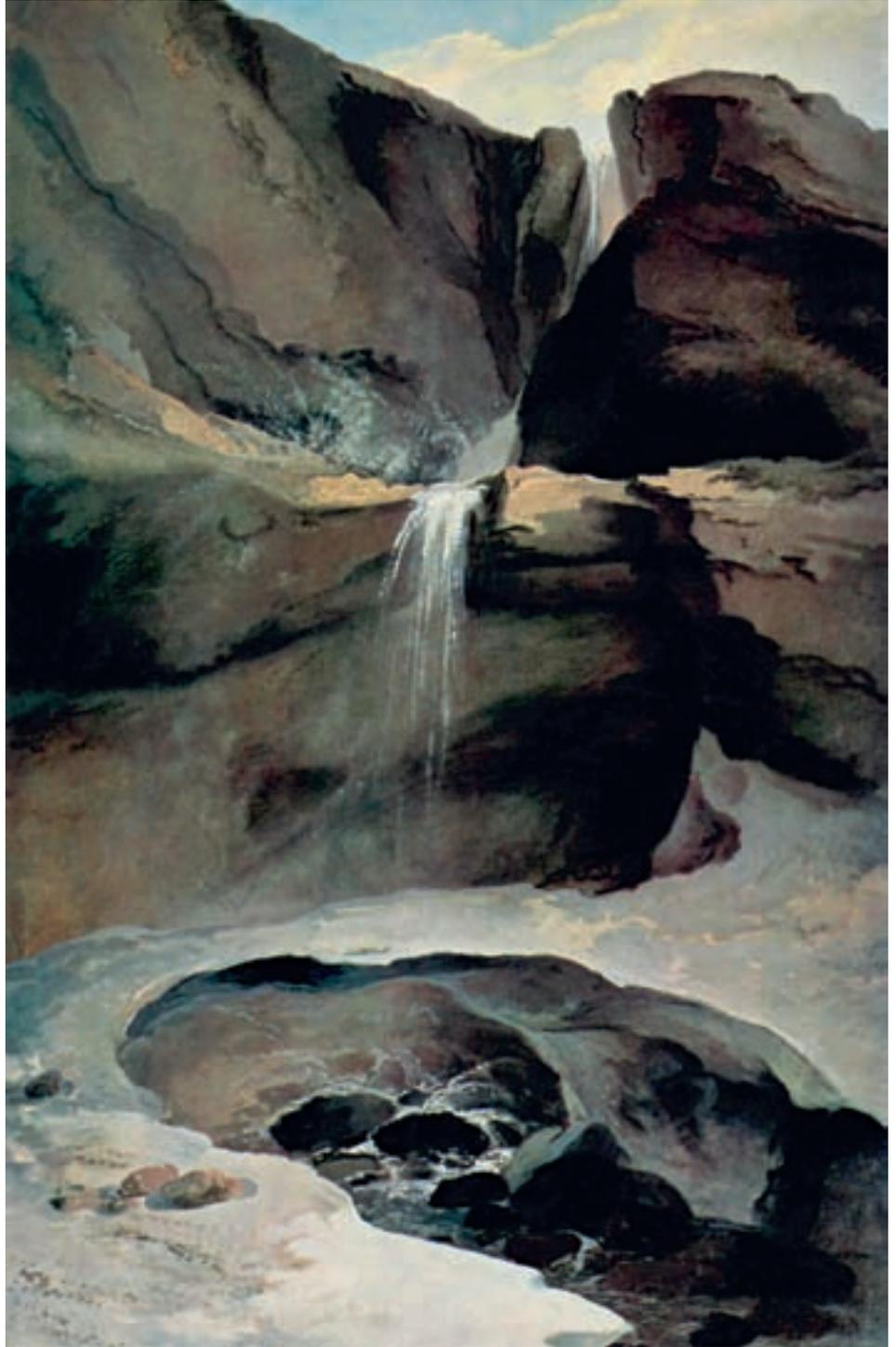
How did the passion for travel in Switzerland develop?

In the 18th century, these travellers were the European urban elite from London,

Paris and German cities as well as philosophers, painters and aristocrats. After the Napoleonic Wars, Europeans started to travel again and businessmen and merchants gradually joined the movement. They copied the behaviour of the aristocrats because it enhanced their status. The number of travellers increased when the transport revolution (steam trains and boats) got underway. Preindustrial forms of tourist accommodation were developed with the construction of large hotels on the shores of the lakes and even in the Alps. This was the beginning of tourism, with the English travel agency Cook offering the first organised trips around 1860. The popularity of the Alps was also boosted in the 19th century by doctors treating tuberculosis who advocated the quality of the pure alpine air and the benefits of the sun.

What do you mean by “unspoiled island” in relation to Switzerland?

This is a major Swiss theme that is often covered by the press. It dates back to the 18th century when Switzerland made a name for itself outside historical trends with travellers who came here to see models of democracy at work. They saw these as a relic that had survived since time immemorial, but this was an error of judgement. The concept of unspoiled island was not invented by the Swiss but by people from elsewhere. The Swiss subsequently adopted it partly to justify their neutrality.



“Der Geltenbachfall im Winter” by Caspar Wolf (1735-1783).

Wolf was a pioneer of the painting of alpine scenery. Under a commission from

the Bernese publisher Abraham Wagner, he produced his magnum opus –

a gallery with almost 200 oil paintings of the Swiss Alps.

THE “VIATIMAGES” DATABASE

A comprehensive encyclopaedia of travel writing in the Swiss Alps, “Viatimages” is a database containing over 2,000 illustrations from travel literature on the Alps dating from the 16th to the 19th century. Claude Reichler and the “Viatimages” project team have reviewed over 10,000 iconogra-

phies from 800 little-known books, which are often confined to library archives.

These illustrations also provide depictions of clothing, people, minerals, plant life, plans, maps, monuments and scenery.

All the illustrations on the “Viatimages” website are linked

with the corresponding texts (in French, German, English and Latin), artists, engravers and authors (with biographies). The most enjoyable feature is geographical research. An interactive map enables images, which can be enlarged with a zoom function, to be localised. Those

who appreciate detail will enjoy this because they contain small scenes that allow you to explore the customs of the day, encapsulating the enthusiasm of travellers for alpine landscapes. www.unil.ch/viatimages



Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lugano

This year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad focused of course on the parliamentary elections of 23 October. The theme of the congress was "direct democracy in an international context". There was much debate about how the Swiss abroad could obtain greater political influence.

Over 400 guests from all over the world took part in the 89th Congress of the Swiss Abroad. In keeping with tradition, the Congress, which was held at the Palazzo dei Congressi in Lugano, began on the Friday with the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA). One of the most important issues discussed by the Council was the creation of a law governing the Swiss abroad designed to ensure that federal government adopts a strategy on all issues concerning the Swiss abroad.

The free movement of persons, an issue put forward for debate by people on the right politically, was also on the agenda. The members of the CSA passed a motion by 65 votes to 3 calling for the political parties to work towards maintaining and extending the free movement of persons. This was not surprising since 420,000 of the 700,000 Swiss abroad live in a European Union country and are directly affected by the free movement of persons. This was also a key issue in the electoral manifesto drawn up by the CSA in spring.

Visit of the Federal Councillor

A packed programme awaited visitors on the Saturday. In his welcome address, Jacques-Simon Eggly, OSA President, once again emphasised that Swiss citizens abroad should have more weight politically. Electronic participation in elections and referenda plays a key role here. Both the CSA and OSA intend to place special emphasis on this issue in future. Achille Casanova, former Vice-Chancellor and Federal Council spokesperson, then gave an extremely interesting speech on the challenges of direct democracy and concordance. He said that the Swiss system of concordance government was incomprehensible to most foreigners. However, he explained that there is a proud history of democracy and concordance in Switzerland "because our forefathers always rejected an excessive concentration of power". This resulted in a "subtle distribution of power", said Casanova. Another major benefit of direct democracy is that the people and government have to engage in constant dialogue. Casanova reminded the Swiss abroad of one factor in particular that has made Switzerland strong – respect for others. He added: "This strength is measured by the wellbeing of the weakest and respect for other cultures and religions. Unfortunately, such values seem to be losing their relevance."

Experts then voiced their views on "democracy in an international context" in a discussion session. The debate focused on Switzerland's relationship with the EU as well as on whether popular decision-making was always the right approach. Andreas Auer, a professor at the University of Zurich and head of the Centre for Democracy Studies in Aarau, forcefully put forward the argument that democracy and popular decision-making cannot take precedence over everything else. He explained: "Democracy cannot be above universal values such as human rights."

The event highlight was Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard's visit to Lugano. She spoke mainly about economic issues and vehemently defended the Federal Council's policy on the strength of the Swiss franc. She described the Swiss abroad as ambassadors for the nation.

A gala dinner on the Saturday evening and various excursions and visits on the Sunday rounded off the programme.

BARBARA ENGEL



The OSA executive board at the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad



Enjoying good company over lunch on Saturday



Agnes Parodi-Coray (aged 98), the oldest participant of the congress, together with OSA employees



OSA advice

I am a Swiss citizen abroad and I have great difficulty communicating with the Central Compensation Office promptly owing to the length of postal delivery times. Wouldn't it be easier to communicate by e-mail?

It is true that postal delivery times can cause problems when communicating with authorities in Switzerland and, in this Internet age, asking whether communication by e-mail would be easier is a legitimate question. We contacted the Central Compensation Office and learned that the situation is more complicated than it may appear at first glance. In countries where delivery takes a long time and is less reliable, the Office works with the local Swiss representations, which are given the task of passing on mail to member organisations. Anyone who wants to contact the Central Compensation Office by e-mail can do so via its website at www.zas.admin.ch (under "The CCO" – "Addresses").

However, not all correspondence can be carried out by e-mail. For example, this is not permitted by law for declarations of income and assets required for setting old age and survivors' insurance/disability insurance contributions, or for supporting documentation and general benefit applications, etc. Furthermore, the Central Compensation Office cannot systematically respond by e-mail in all circumstances. Judgements, judicial correspondence and income and asset declarations have to be sent to insured persons by post. Upon the express request of an insured person, copies of some documents can be sent by e-mail. So, while some communication can be carried out by e-mail, postal communication is required in some circumstances for legal reasons.

SARAH MASTANTUONI,
HEAD OF THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT

OSA's Legal Department provides general information on Swiss law in areas which specifically concern the Swiss abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law or intervene in disputes between private parties.

Young people from all over the world

You too have Swiss roots. But do you know Switzerland? Would you like to find out more about the land of your forefathers? We organise opportunities for you to meet other Swiss abroad and come into contact with local people.

The coming together of different cultures and backgrounds is one of the most exciting aspects of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad's offers for young people. This year, 60 young people from 25 countries will meet at the New Year Camp in Lantsch. A mishmash of languages while queuing at the chair lift; different experiences of weather conditions, of snow and of wearing sports equipment on their feet; different temperaments, dietary habits and ways of life – all these come to light during the ten days. Tolerance and a good sense of humour are the key to having a good time and getting on well together. We know from experience that this is not only possible but also lots of fun. All participants take home very special and valuable experiences.

We would be delighted for you to take advantage of one of our offers. There are plenty of reasonably priced options available.

Sport offers

Are you already a free rider, able to ski down slopes covered in fresh powder snow? Or do you not know what a stem turn is yet? It doesn't matter! The instructors on the OSA team will take your abilities and preferences into account and provide you with individual support. You will of course also gain an insight into your homeland. There are still places available for the following camps:

Winter sports week in Wengen from 25 Feb to 3 March 2012 – a camp for Swiss abroad aged 18 and over;

Easter camp in Fiesch (Valais) from 7 to 15 April 2012 – a unique camp with plenty of sports opportunities. Indoor halls, outdoor activities, summer sports, winter sports and a fantastic group of people from all over the world. Aged 13 and over.

Learning during your holidays

OSA knows that young people enjoy experiencing new things during their holidays.

However, action-packed holidays can be combined wonderfully with learning. There are still places available on the language courses in Berne and Fribourg in January 2012. You go to school in the morning, and in the afternoon you can enjoy a fringe programme, spend time with your host family or explore Switzerland on your own by train.

Our "Training in Switzerland" offer primarily aims to provide you with advice on training and educational opportunities. After your stay, you may decide to take a vocational training course in Switzerland, spend a semester abroad at a Swiss university or do a professional apprenticeship. For this offer too you can stay with a host family from whom you will learn a great deal and who can offer you a comfortable home.

Information on offers for young people can be found under "Offers" at www.aso.ch.

Study grants – harmonisation needed

The National Union of Students in Switzerland (VSS) is launching an initiative for the harmonisation of the grant system.

Parents in Switzerland are obliged by law to meet the costs of their children's initial education. If they do not have the means to do so, they can apply to the authorities for support in the form of grants. Swiss residing abroad from low-income families who are undertaking vocational training or a degree course in Switzerland are also entitled to apply to their canton of origin for a grant. Among the many Swiss abroad who take educational courses in Switzerland, there are some who would be unable to do so without the financial support of their canton of origin.

Given that in Switzerland it is the cantons that decide on the award of educational assistance, grants are not issued according to uniform criteria. Both the conditions for support and the amounts differ. The National Union of Students in Switzerland has therefore launched an initiative for the harmonisation of the grant system. It wants to transfer responsibility for educational grants in higher education to federal government.



100,000 signatures need to be collected by 20 January 2012.

Further information on this issue and the full text of the initiative can be found on the following website: www.stipendien-initiative.ch

For information on educational opportunities in Switzerland:

AJAS – Association for the Promotion of Education for Young Swiss Abroad
Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne
Tel. +41 31 356 61 04, Fax +41 31 356 61 01
E-mail: ajas@aso.ch

Swiss schools abroad with quality seal

Thanks to their high educational standards, Swiss schools abroad will be entitled to carry a Swiss government quality seal in future.



Swiss schools abroad provide education to Swiss standards on four continents. This high-quality education is now to receive an official quality seal. Only Swiss schools abroad recognised by federal government and evaluated by sponsor cantons may carry it in accordance with specially issued guidelines. The logo contains several symbols: the Swiss cross stands for official authorisation from Switzerland, while the red squares represent the school locations abroad and their important relationship with Switzerland.

The office for the Swiss schools abroad has also adapted its name and logo. The "Committee for Swiss Schools Abroad" is now called "educationsuisse".

The name highlights Switzerland's linguistic diversity. It is intended to be easy

to understand and to underline the schools' key role – the provision of Swiss education.

SWISS SCHOOLS THAT PROVIDE EDUCATION TO SWISS STANDARDS CAN BE FOUND IN THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

Brazil:	São Paulo and Curitiba
Chile:	Santiago
Columbia:	Bogotá
Ghana:	Accra
Italy:	Bergamo, Catania, Como, Milan and Rome
Mexico:	Cuernavaca, Mexico City and Querétaro
Peru:	Lima
Singapore:	Singapore
Spain:	Barcelona and Madrid
Thailand:	Bangkok

Winter camps for children aged 8 to 14



There are still **some places left** on our two New Year ski camps in Arolla and Sedrun!

Winter camp in Arolla (Valais) Winter camp in Sedrun (Grisons)

Date: Tuesday, 27 December 2011 to Thursday, 5 January 2012

No. of participants: Arolla 36, Sedrun 48

Cost: CHF 900 (contribution to the camp)

Ski or snowboard hire: approx. CHF 150

Registration

Precise details on the winter camps and the registration form are available at www.sjas.ch ("Our forthcoming activities"). Reduced contribution rates are available in justified cases. The form required can be requested on the registration form. We are also happy to post you our information brochure on request. The two winter camps in Arolla and Sedrun will be the only FYSA offers available during the 2011/12 winter season.

Summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

Registration for the summer camps will begin in February 2012.

Precise details on the various summer camps in 2012 (dates, locations and age groups, etc.) and the registration form will be available from February 2012 at www.sjas.ch ("Our forthcoming activities"). If you would prefer to look through our offers on paper, you can order a brochure from the office from February 2012.

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne

Tel. +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01

E-mail: sjas@aso.ch, www.sjas.ch

ORGANISATION OF THE SWISS ABROAD

Our services:

- Legal Department
- Youth Service
- Association for the Promotion of Education for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS)
- Committee for Swiss Schools abroad (CSSA), new: [educationsuisse](http://educationsuisse.ch)
- Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

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New Consular Directorate at the FDFA

The Federal Council approved the revised FDFA Organisational Ordinance in spring 2011, establishing the legal basis for the foundation of a new Consular Directorate (CD).

The creation of the new FDFA directorate is the last step in a long process. It officially began its activities on 16 May 2011 under the management of Ambassador Gerhard Brügger. A highly motivated team has since been endeavouring to ensure constant improvement in public service in the field of consular affairs. The new “FDFA Helpline”, which handles over 1,000 enquiries from citizens every month and which has been available seven days a week since October 2011, plays a key role in the improvement of services for Swiss people at home and abroad. The next step is to upgrade the helpline to a 24-hour operation over the next few months.

Consular services have always been one of the FDFA’s key mandates. The requirements that Swiss representations abroad have to meet in the field of consular affairs as a whole have increased significantly over recent years. This is explained, in particular, by the growing mobility of the Swiss. This trend is confirmed not just by travel statistics but also by the constant growth in the Swiss community abroad, which will soon reach the 700,000 mark. In order to meet future challenges, the FDFA has been focusing intensively over the past two years on bringing consular services into line with the requirements, travel behaviour and lifestyles of the Swiss in the 21st century.

Two divisions at the FDFA, from the Directorate for Resources (DR) and the Directorate of Political Affairs, managed consular services previously. However, the distribution of responsibilities to various organisational units proved increasingly disadvantageous. This is why Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey decided to transfer the former divisions to a new directorate, thus strengthening consular services and making better use of synergies. Thanks to this reorganisation, which has now been completed, the Swiss representations abroad receive support from a single, highly efficient directorate at head

office for the handling of demanding consular tasks. This directorate provides them with assistance, advice and relief with all matters concerning consular affairs. The bundling of consular activities also facilitates contact between citizens and the department, whereby all parties concerned should benefit from a significant improvement in public service.

The new directorate contains three divisions:

- The Relations with the Swiss Abroad division, which is run by the FDFA Delegate for Relations with the Swiss Abroad. This division serves to represent the interests of the Swiss community abroad within the federal administration. In addition to supporting and promoting these

SCHENGEN REPRESENTATIONS ESTABLISHED

Member State (MS)	Switzerland represents MS in	Switzerland is represented by MS in
Austria	Santo Domingo (Dom. Rep)	
	Pristina (Kosovo)	
	Tiflis (Georgia)	Sofia (Bulgaria)
		Tirana (Albania)
		Zagreb (Croatia)
Hungary	Bogotá (Columbia)	Minsk (Belarus)
	Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia)	Chisinau (Moldova)
	Santiago de Chile (Chile)	
	São Paulo (Brazil)	
	Sydney (Australia)	
Sweden	Manila (Philippines)	
Belgium	Accra (Ghana)	
France	Pristina (Kosovo)	Kingston (Jamaica)
Slovenia	Quito (Ecuador)	
	Montevideo (Uruguay)	
	Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)	
Estonia	Ramallah (Palestine)	
Norway	Antananarivo (Madagascar)	



interests, the delegate's responsibilities include implementing the policy of comprehensive information on issues specific to the Swiss abroad. The delegate and his team work closely with institutional players – such as the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) and the Solidarity Fund for Swiss Nationals Abroad (Soliswiss) – which deal with matters concerning the Swiss abroad. He is also responsible for helping to shape and to implement policy on the Swiss abroad that ensures a good balance between the interests of all Swiss people. The management of legislative projects and parliamentary business relating to issues concerning the Swiss abroad and the vision of a single point of contact at federal level for all matters relating to the Swiss abroad should be mentioned in this respect.

■ The Citizens' Service Centre, which supports the network of Swiss representations abroad with all consular matters. It provides efficient consular services and ensures coordination between representations abroad and organisations, authorities and individuals in Switzerland. It contains the two sections Consular Protection and Citizens' Service and Representation Support. While the experts at the Consular Protection section provide support for Swiss citizens abroad in emergency situations, the Citizens' Service and Representation Support section operates the new FDFA Helpline, the central point of contact for all matters and information concerning the consular services. This key service can be contacted on telephone number +41 (0)800 24 7 365, via the e-mail address helpline@eda.admin.ch or by post.

■ The Consular Strategies, Development and Agreements division, which deals with the expansion of eGovernment solutions, among other issues. The setup of an online contact point through which the Swiss abroad will, in the future, be able to process various consular transactions independently (ID cards, changes of address, changes of marital status, etc.) is one key project. This will meet the demand from citizens for simplification in their dealings with Switzerland's representations abroad and the administration within the country.

This division is also responsible for the development and provision of tools to enable Swiss representations abroad to perform consular services for Swiss citizens abroad, travellers and foreign customers worldwide. The division devises solutions for the modernisation and optimisation of consular services and represents consular interests in major projects at federal and cantonal level, particularly vis-à-vis the Federal Office for Migration with regard to Schengen, visas, entry and borders.

The division is also responsible for ensuring a regular exchange of information and experiences between Switzerland and the other Schengen Member States, and it develops and concludes cooperation agreements with selected partners. Such agreements represent a priority for the division as well as for the Consular Directorate. The legal basis of the Schengen agreement enables Member States to represent one another in the issuing of Schengen visas. Switzerland has so far concluded such agreements with eight Member States (see table on page 27) and is in negotiation with others. Switzerland currently represents other Schengen states in 16 countries while it is itself represented in six cases. Further Schengen representation agreements are to be concluded in the future, primarily for locations where Switzerland has no representation or places and countries where Switzerland is no longer represented as a result of the reorganisation of the representation network.

The employees of the Consular Directorate, in cooperation with the entire FDFA, look forward to tackling interesting challenges on behalf of their fellow citizens travelling or living abroad and will endeavour to provide outstanding service on a daily basis.

+41 (0)800 24-7-365



The FDFA Helpline is available 7 days a week, 365 days a year from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Intense efforts are being made to provide a 24-hour operation.

The FDFA Helpline is the central point of contact for all matters relating to consular services. However, the embassies and general consulates remain the first point of contact for the Swiss abroad.

Federal Council announcement on 07.09.2011 concerning the retirement of Swiss President Micheline Calmy-Rey

On Wednesday, 7 September 2011, the Federal Council acknowledged the decision by Federal Councillor Micheline Calmy-Rey to step down from the Federal Council at the end of this year. The President of the Confederation informed the Federal Council of her decision not to stand at the complete re-election of the government on 14 December.

Since her election to the Federal Council on 4 December 2002, Micheline Calmy-Rey has held the office of head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs for nine years.

During this period, Ms Calmy-Rey has shown tremendous commitment to Switzerland, its people and its institutions. She has conducted Swiss diplomacy with great tenacity and dedication. She has made great efforts to raise Switzerland's profile on the international stage. She has also focused heavily on ensuring that Switzerland actively participates in political dialogue and in the search for solutions to the great challenges of our age. She has always regarded international cooperation as a priority. At the same time, Ms Calmy-Rey has strengthened Switzerland's relations with the international community.

In domestic politics, Ms Calmy-Rey has implemented important reforms in her department, assisting greatly with the work on government reform.

During her two years as President of the Confederation in 2007 and 2011, Ms Calmy-Rey has placed much empha-

sis on the importance of the principle of collegiality and the constant search for compromise. She has always defended our nation's institutions and democratic values.

The Federal Council will remember Micheline Calmy-Rey as an extremely dedicated politician and a much-valued colleague. It would like to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to her and to wish her and her family well for the future.

Warning issued by the Swiss Federal Tax Administration (FTA): Phishing

Fraudsters try on various occasions to obtain information concerning accounts and credit cards, as well as copies of taxpayers' passports, by sending e-mails. These e-mails use false sender addresses. Consequently, the Federal Tax Administration (FTA) has been improperly listed as the sender in several of these e-mails. The FTA is now issuing a warning not to respond to these e-mails or ones of a similar nature.

Any FTA claims are sent to taxpayers solely by letter and indicate the dossier number. The FTA never makes enquiries about taxpayers' confidential information via e-mail.

Should you receive fraudulent e-mails, please report this to the FTA and forward the e-mails to the following address: kommunikation@estv.admin.ch

Thank you.

Publications



Video: 50 Years SDC – More than aid

Since it was established in 1961, Swiss development cooperation has experienced many changes and has been forced to tackle new challenges on the thematic, methodological and geographical levels (see pages 8 to 11). Using interviews with contemporaries and archive material, this film recounts the history of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) from its early days to the present.

See video: http://www.deza.admin.ch/en/Dossiers/50_years_SDC/History/Videos

The SDC also published a special edition of its magazine "Eine Welt" at the

start of 2011 to mark its 50th anniversary. It can be ordered via the SDC website. The SDC's full list of publications can be found under the following link: <http://www.deza.admin.ch/de/Home/Dokumentation/Publikationen>

Elections and referenda

The next date for a federal referendum will be 11 March 2012. The Federal Council will decide later which proposals will be put to the people on this date.

Important:

Please do not forget to inform your Swiss representation of your current postal and e-mail address. We also recommend that you notify the embassy or consulate of your mobile telephone number in countries exposed to natural disasters or political instability.

Please register at www.swissabroad.ch to ensure you do not miss any communications ("Swiss Review", newsletter, etc.) from your representation.

The current edition of "Swiss Review" as well as previous editions can be read and/or printed out at www.revue.ch.

POPULAR INITIATIVES:

By the time of going to press, the following popular initiatives had been launched since the last edition of "Swiss Review" (deadlines for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- Federal popular initiative "Kernkraftwerke sind abzuschalten" (Decommission nuclear power stations) (19.01.2013)
- "Millionen-Erbschaften besteuern für unsere AHV" (Tax on inherited millions to fund old age and survivors' insurance) (inheritance tax reform) (16.02.2013)

The complete list can be found in German on the Federal Chancellery's website, www.bk.admin.ch, under Themen > Politische Rechte > Volksinitiativen.

FDFA OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER:
JEAN-FRANÇOIS LICHTENSTERN, RELATIONS WITH THE SWISS ABROAD
BUNDESGASSE 32, CH-3003 BERNE
TELEPHONE: +41 800 24 7 365
WWW.EDA.ADMIN.CH, MAIL: HELPLINE@EDA.ADMIN.CH

Inserat


swissworld.org
Your Gateway to Switzerland

Swiss celebrities reminisce

The Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, one of Switzerland's best-known TV presenters, a world record holder and pioneer in aviation, a teller of fairy tales and a cycling legend: five famous Swiss people provide an insight into their lives in the "erlebt&erinnert" series of audio books. These prominent figures recall anecdotes, talk about their childhood memories and reveal key moments and major highpoints in their lives. There are tales about life under police protection, being parents and role models, hypnosis as a secret weapon, being one of Switzerland's first female politicians and overall victory in the Tour de France.

Listening to the voices of Carla del Ponte, Bernard Thurnheer, Bertrand Piccard, Trudi Gerster and Ferdy

Kübler is sure to awaken very personal memories.

"erlebt&erinnert" audio book series, swissandfamous verlag, Zurich.
Order CDs: www.erlebtunderinnert.ch
Download as MP3 files: www.audible.de and www.apple.com/itunes

It's back

The Pestalozzi Calendar, the popular and information-packed Swiss school pupils' organiser is now available again. More than 100,000 calendars were sold each year between 1930 and 1950. The little linen-bound book, with the "little treasure chest" as an added bonus for many years, was on the wish list of generations of Swiss school children year in year out. New sizes and formats were experimented with in the 1980s but without success. The Pestalozzi Cal-

endar is now available again in its traditional format, linen-bound with a pencil inserted and full of information including details of children's rights, card tricks, world religions and the Olympic Games.

Sales: Stämpfli Verlag, Wölflistrasse 1, CH-3001 Berne
Price: CHF 15.80 excluding delivery costs
<http://www.buchstaempfli.com>



The other Bürgenstock

Villa Honegg on the Bürgenstock has awoken from a deep slumber. The small hotel, situated on the southern slope of the mountain and not in the gigantic resort above Lucerne, offers tranquillity and, above all, magnificent views of Lake Lucerne and the mountains. The renovation of the building, which was constructed in 1905 in the Belle Époque style, took three years to complete. The hotel has been welcoming guests again since the summer. It offers everything you would expect from a 5-star hotel: 23 taste-

fully furnished rooms, conference rooms with all the necessary technical facilities, a large spa area and an excellent restaurant where the chef has a fondness for Lebanese cuisine. However, hotel manager Peter Durrer is also keen to maintain its old tradition as an inn for tourists and hikers with children. Anyone who can afford to can also hire out the hotel exclusively for themselves and their family or for a corporate event. The price: 24,000 Swiss francs a day.

www.villa-honegg.ch

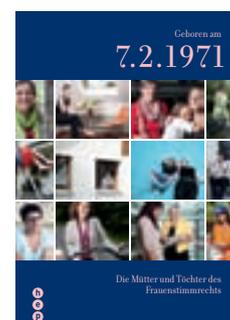
"Born on 7 February 1971"

They are 40 this year. They were born on 7 February 1971, an historic day in Swiss politics when the vote for women was approved by a two-thirds majority. Around a hundred girls came into the world in Switzerland on this date. They are now entering middle age at a time when voting and political participation are taken for granted.

"Geboren am 7.2.1971" (Born on 7.2.1971) is the title of a book in this anniversary year edited by Barbara Ritschard, who worked as an advisor to Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger for many years. Seventeen of the women born on 7 February 1971 have their say individually, in dialogue or in a three-way conversation with their mothers and the next generation. Two are Swiss citizens living abroad: Christa Cantieni Cunin, who grew up in Schamserberg in Grisons and is now a lawyer in Brussels and a mother of three children with whom she still speaks Romansh (Sutsilvan), and Catherine Heinzlmann from Ludwigsburg, an HR consultant and mother-of-two who was born in Berne and grew up in Geneva. Her twin sister Laurence, who also features in the book, still lives there today.

The accounts are illustrated with numerous photographs and, as an additional feature, interspersed with information on referenda over the past 40 years where Swiss women have voted differently to men. The outcome is an extraordinary anniversary publication, which is engaging, touching, insightful, carefully produced and without the usual retrospective views of leading politicians.

"Geboren am 7.2.1971"; edited by Barbara Ritschard; hep verlag Berne, 180 pages, paperback; CHF 29; Order: info@hep-verlag.ch



Geboren am
7.2.1971

Die Mütter und Töchter des
Frauenstimmrechts

■ After 15 victories and one defeat, boxer Aniya Seki from Köniz near Berne fought her first **world title fight in the super-flyweight division** and defeated her opponent from Germany, Natascha Guthier, on 20 August. Seki, aged 32, who has a Japanese father and a Swiss mother, was clearly technically superior to her opponent and scored a unanimous points victory (100:91, 100:90, 98:92).

■ At the end of 2010, **Switzerland's population stood at 7,870,100** according to the results of the latest census published by the Federal Statistical Office. This meant an increase of 84,300 people or 1.1% compared to the previous year. In 2008, there had been a 1.4% increase. The number of foreign nationals permanently residing in Switzerland totalled 1,766,300 million. This is 22.4% or 52,300 people more than in 2009. Of the foreign resident population, 62.4% came from EU or EFTA member states. The place of birth of persons residing in Switzerland was also recorded for the first time: 73.6% were born in Switzerland; of these 93.6% are Swiss citizens.

■ The **"Grande Dixence"** dam in Valais celebrated its 50th anniversary on 22 September. Standing at 285 metres, the "Grande Dixence" is the world's second-highest dam, after the Nurek dam (300 metres) in Tajikistan. It holds back 400 million cubic metres of water and weighs around 15 million tons. Over 3,000 construction workers, geologists, hydrologists and engineers spent 15 years working at the building site at an altitude of 2,400 metres above sea level.

"In times of adversity, it is vital that we stand together. That is what I am appealing for in the spirit of our forefathers who stood together in 1291 – back then it was against the Habsburgs, the challenge today is the exchange rate."

Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann

"Switzerland is set to become German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble's largest tax collection agency."

Peter Bodenmann, former President of the Swiss Social Democratic Party on the tax agreement between Switzerland and Germany signed on 21 September

"After the many issues we had to iron out, this agreement represents a major achievement."

Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf on the same topic

"Life is unjust, particularly when it comes to major banks that have been the target of public outrage for years with no sign of punishment."

Roger Köppel, editor-in-chief of "Weltwoche" after the revelation that a UBS employee lost 2.3 billion US dollars through speculation

"If you're asking whether I feel to blame, then the answer is no."

Oswald Grübel, former CEO of UBS on the machinations at his bank

"This group of morons says we should cut the tax rate for all companies."

Christophe Darbellay, President of the Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP), on the Swiss People's Party (SVP)

"Federal councillors should not conduct election campaigns. This would be disastrous for the institution of the Federal Council. I believe it is of greater benefit to my FDP party if I just do my job well."

Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter before the elections

"In the current line-up I too may face de-selection. But that wouldn't bother me."

Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer on the Federal Council election of 14 December

"I is often more important than 'we'. 'More and more' overrides 'I have enough'."

Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard in her speech on the Day of Prayer and Repentance



Beating the favourites to be crowned champion – Daniel Bösch won the legendary Unspunnen wrestling tournament in Interlaken on 4 September. "I am a quiet but ambitious person who can be uncompromisingly tough sometimes", is how the butcher from Sirmach in the canton of St. Gallen, who is 193 cm tall and weighs 125 kg, describes himself.

Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga was also thrilled by Bösch. At the Unspunnen festival she explained that all seven Federal Councillors had wanted to travel to Interlaken before in the end agreeing to "send someone nice from the left to see some rough action".

The bottom of the dam is 200 metres thick – twice the length of a football pitch.

It narrows as it rises such that the top of the dam wall measures just 15 metres. If the reservoir is full, the top of the dam moves by 11 centimetres under the pressure. A fifth of the stored energy generated in Switzerland is produced by the Grande Dixence plant. The storage power station provides around 400,000 households with electricity.

■ The **performance of Swiss industry** in the second quarter of this year was excellent, according to the Federal Statistical Office. Production was 2.3% higher and revenues even 3.1% up on the same period in the previous year. There was also a significant increase in orders.

■ Switzerland has introduced a new award for **the best schnapps distilleries** in the country. They will be known as "Gold Distillers" according to an announcement by the Swiss federal authorities. A jury under the supervision of Destisuisse, the research institute Agroscope Changings-Wädenswil and the Swiss Alcohol Board has presented the first awards. The following methods were applied: the sensory consensus method for the description of the schnapps and the internationally recognised 100-point system for colour, fragrance, aroma, taste and harmony. The experts tasted 410 varieties of spirit on 9 and 10 June. With an eight-hour working day, the judges had to assess a different schnapps every two and a half minutes on both days. Five distilleries may now use the title "Gold Distiller 2011". (BE)



Chetzeron, Crans-Montana, Valais

A place in the sun.

More snow, more sun, more fun: the snow-capped mountains are calling you for a superlative winter experience.

Ski down from the highest Alpine summits on endless pistes. Then, after the adrenaline rush of the downhill run, idle your time away on the terrace of a high altitude restaurant in the gentle warmth of the radiant winter sun. Or why not hike through sparkling landscapes where only the sound of the snow crunching under your steps disturbs the tranquillity of the natural setting around you? In winter, Switzerland gives you a place in the sun in magnificent natural spaces to savour the delights of the cold season of the year.

Winter is at its finest here
Climb still higher, benefit from a longer ski run, enjoy the pleasures of dolce far

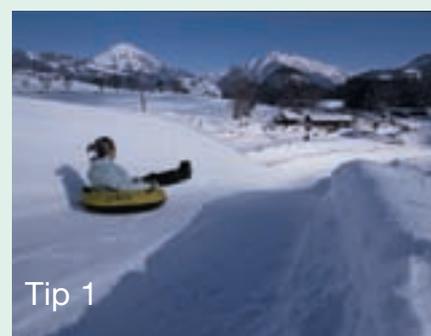
niente and local gastronomic delights on the sunlit terrace of an alpine restaurant. Then, when night falls, sleep in the welcoming bed of a hotel high up on the mountainside. Experience the finest moments of winter here in Switzerland:
www.MySwitzerland.com/winter

Network Switzerland
Register at www.MySwitzerland.com/aso by 31 December 2011 and win a 2 nights stay for 2 persons at the Parkhotel Schoenegg*** in Grindelwald.

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **300**

Leysin all schuss

Ski, snowboard, cross-country skiing, Leysin and its ski domain are a veritable paradise for alpine sport lovers. Here, you can even test your skills on a glacier at an altitude of more than 3000 metres or on an inner tube in the Tobogganing Park. Adrenaline rush guaranteed.



Tip 1

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **28376**

Above the lake

Klewenalp, near Lake Lucerne, is the ideal venue for ski lessons and winter pleasures for the family in sunny central Switzerland. Ski school, hiking trails and a 9 km luge track – so many delights!



Tip 2

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **28491**

Ski experience in the Jura

One of Europe's most extensive domains awaits cross-country ski lovers here. To benefit from the magnificent Jura landscapes, why not exchange your cross-country skis for snowshoes or even skates across Lake Joux.



Tip 3

MySwitzerland.com
Webcode: **28378**

A collaboration between Switzerland Tourism and the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)



Auslandsschweizer-Organisation
Organisation des Suisses de l'étranger
Organizzazione degli Svizzeri all'estero
Organisaziun dals Svizzers a l'ester

Switzerland Tourism.
MySwitzerland.com

