

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

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REVIEW

APRIL 2009 / NO. 2



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A craving for alpine
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Does Switzerland need nuclear power stations and, if so, how many?

THERE ARE CURRENTLY FIVE NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS in operation in Switzerland: Beznau I and Beznau II in the Canton of Aargau, Mühleberg in the Canton of Berne and two larger plants at Gösgen in the Canton of Solothurn and Leibstadt in the Canton of Aargau. These nuclear power stations will have to be decommissioned between 2020 and 2045 in line with legislation. Plans for new nuclear power stations are therefore in full swing. Three planning applications have been submitted, and the heated debate between the advocates and opponents of nuclear power has begun in earnest.

Let us not forget the Swiss people set the course for energy policy years ago in two highly controversial referenda. On 23 September 1990, the people and the cantons rejected the popular initiative “for the withdrawal from nuclear power” by a narrow margin with a No vote of 52.9%. At the same time, the referendum on the moratorium “stop the construction of nuclear power stations” was approved with 54.4% of the people and cantons voting in favour. On the same day, 71.1% of the people and cantons endorsed the incorporation of the new energy article into the Federal Constitution.

On 18 May 2003, two energy policy proposals were soundly rejected by the people and the cantons: 58.4% voted against the popular initiative “Moratorium Plus – for an extension to the halt on construction of nuclear power stations and the limitation of nuclear risk”, and 66.3% said No to the popular initiative “electricity without nuclear energy – for a change in energy policy and gradual decommissioning of nuclear power stations”. The Swiss people kept open the option of nuclear power through these decisions.

For the Federal Council and the energy industry the case is clear: they consider the construction of new nuclear power stations absolutely necessary. However, environmental



Heinz Eckert

politicians are of the opposite opinion and have branded the Federal Council’s proposals for energy efficiency and renewable sources as “feeble”. They are pinning all their hopes of a green future on state-subsidised renewable sources and the carbon dioxide tax on fossil fuels.

The potential of alternative energy is clearly far from being exhausted and there is still plenty of scope for saving electricity. Whether future electricity requirements can and should be met without nuclear power stations is a subjective issue. While the supporters of nuclear power champion the “cleanest energy” and regard the issue of permanent storage for nuclear waste as resolved, opponents quite simply see highly radioactive waste as a huge problem for mankind.

The question of whether Switzerland needs nuclear power stations and how many will emotionally preoccupy and divide the people as long as it remains relevant to energy supply. It is clear that electricity must be saved and alternative energy promoted intensively in all areas. If energy consumption is excessive, politicians will have little choice but to approve new nuclear power stations. Unfortunately, in the time since the moratorium too little has been done in Switzerland to promote alternatives to nuclear energy on a wide scale.

HEINZ ECKERT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



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Cover photo: The Cavagnoli dam holds back Lago dei Cavagnöö near Fusio in the Canton of Ticino. Behind is the Lago di Robieie dam (photo: Keystone)

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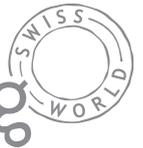
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SWISS NEWS, WORLD WIDE



swissinfo special on largest ever wave of emigration from southern Switzerland

The 19th and early 20th centuries saw tens of thousands of people emigrate abroad from remote areas of Ticino and the Italian-speaking valleys of the Graubünden. They journeyed to other countries in search of a new homeland.

swissinfo.ch is devoting a multimedia special to this wave of emigration. It is available in English and Italian. The dossier explains the historical reasons behind the outflow of people from Switzerland. Background information and documentary features give readers a clear impression of southern Switzerland then and now.

In addition, a blog provides a platform for people with Swiss-Italian roots to swap family stories in text and photo form. A genealogy database enables users to search for people and families.

www.swissinfo.ch

It's not just Swiss people abroad who enjoy "Swiss Review"

I have been living on Easter Island in Chile for 18 years. I am an avid reader of "Swiss Review", which enables me to keep in touch with my homeland.

The Spanish version of "Swiss Review" is on my table and all of my visitors, even children, flick through and read with great interest about what is going on in our famous alpine nation.

I bundle up the year's editions and pass them on to the Easter Island's school library where more than 1000 pupils can benefit from them.

"Swiss Review" is not just read by the 10% of the Swiss population living abroad, it is also enjoyed by their friends and acquaintances. By transferring it to the Internet, all of this interesting information loses its value, as it can no longer be read by the friends of Swiss people abroad. Switzerland's profile will also be reduced as a result. It is ridiculous that parliamentarians want to "save" CHF 500,000, but agree to give billions to companies that have left entire countries facing ruin.

J. W. SCHMID, HANGA ROA, CHILE

Rich and poor in Switzerland

The article entitled "Rich and poor in Switzerland" in the December edition was very insightful, but this situation is in fact nothing new. It is the nature of capitalism that social extremes are polarised over the years at the cost of the middle. However, there is one aspect about the rich and superrich that was overlooked. The middle classes generally complain that the rich do not pay enough tax, but they do not consider the amounts of money the superrich donate to charity, the

arts and non-profit organizations. This is all money that would otherwise have to be found by the state or the public.

I do not believe any tax legislation could achieve equilibrium between the rich and poor, but more compassion could be shown towards the poor.

E. HAUSKNOST,
MONTREAL, CANADA

More than just a newsletter

"Swiss Review" is more than just a newsletter. It is a magazine specifically produced for the 700,000 Swiss people abroad. It is not just any daily or weekly newspaper. "Swiss Review" is a newspaper especially for me with information that concerns me as a Swiss citizen abroad, an association president and a member of the Council of the Swiss Abroad. I can use the magazine specifically for exchange with other Swiss people abroad. I am disappointed that the various resolutions on this matter failed to have an impact.

A. HAUENSTEIN, MERZENICH,
GERMANY

No electronic media

I am an avid reader of "Swiss Review", which provides me with quality information on various topics. The magazine is sent to me from the Ivory Coast and is my only source of information from Switzerland.

In the north of Niger, where I work with semi-nomadic people, there are no electronic media. I travel to Maradi every 10 weeks to pick up my post. The electronic version of the magazine may be easier and quicker for many Swiss people abroad, but it is not an option for me. I would therefore be extremely grateful if you could continue providing me with the paper version in future. S. DÜRRENMATT,

MARADI, REPUBLIC OF NIGER

Strike in Bellinzona – a canton rebels

The one-month strike at the Bellinzona site of the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) was one of the most significant events in Swiss politics in 2008. On 7 March, around 400 workers at the "Officine" went on strike indefinitely to protest against what they saw as the SBB's unfair and misguided restructuring proposals. Politicians from all sides and almost the entire population of the canton came out in support of the strikers and their passionate class struggle in a remarkable show of solidarity. "Giù le mani dalle officine" – "Hands off our workshop" was the slogan that echoed thousands of times throughout southern Switzerland and in the rest of the country as well. On 19 March, thousands of people from Ticino travelled to Berne to take their protest to the federal capital. Exactly one month after the beginning of the strike, the railwaymen ended

their industrial action after the SBB withdrew its restructuring plans. The future of the site has since been discussed around a table. The aim is to maintain the "Officine" while, at the same time, significantly increasing its cost efficiency.

Radio journalist and writer of radio plays Hanspeter Gschwend has produced a chronicle of the eventful and emotional days of the strike, which is highly recommended reading. As a reporter, Gschwend followed the events from the front line. This provided him with a rich pool of sound recordings and other material that he was able to use for his book. Gschwend also conducted interviews with the key players after the strike and trawled through reports from other media.

He has produced a book that sets out the facts and the background to the action. Gschwend sheds light on the historical roots of the strike movement, the events leading up to the industrial action and the complex relationships between the workers at the site, strike leaders, unions, politicians at all levels, the Church and the people. The book contains over 100 images, five short profiles of strikers and a tabular chronology. It has been published in German and Italian.

Gschwend writes from the standpoint of the critical sympathiser. With great empathy, he explores the motives, anger and fears of the strikers and their families. But he also shows how the strike leaders under Gianni Frizzo deliberately stirred up the mood time and again when they believed this was necessary for the action to succeed. This is particularly true at the start of the strike. When Nicolas Perrin, head of SBB Cargo, tried to explain the restructuring plans to the workers, he was shouted down at Frizzo's instigation and had to flee from the building through a back entrance. Hanspeter Gschwend provides

great descriptions of these anxious moments as well as of the many events, demonstrations and gestures of solidarity that took place during the month-long strike.

RENÉ LENZIN



Hanspeter Gschwend, *Streik in Bellinzona – ein Kanton revoltiert*. Verlag Huber, Frauenfeld 2008, 190 Seiten, CHF 36.00, EUR 23.90.
Hanspeter Gschwend, *Sciopero a Bellinzona – il Cantone si rivolta*. Rezzonico Editore, Locarno 2008, 200 pagine.

Swiss Press Photo 2008

This year, the jury viewed and judged 1791 pictures from 135 photographers. They were assisted by two representatives from Germany and France who are responsible for the photography in the magazines "Stern" and "Geo". The competition helps raise the profile of Swiss press photography. "Swiss Review" has decided to parade a small selection of the winning photographs.



Alessandro Della Bella: Banking crisis. Marcel Ospel, head of UBS, stepped down after heavy criticism at the AGM in April.



Didier Ruef: Railway workers on strike. The restructuring plan of SBB Cargo in Bellinzona involves 200 job cuts.



Michael Buholzer: Alexander Frei, captain of the Swiss football team, limps out of the opening game of Euro 2008 against the Czechs.



Stefan Wermuth: Roland Nef, Swiss army chief, stepped down in summer amid media allegations of criminal prosecution for harassment.



Charles Ellena: A counter-demonstration halts the SVP's march through Berne, giving Christoph and Silvia Blocher a closely guarded break.



Peter Klaunzer: The political left in the Council applauds the news of Christoph Blocher's failure to get elected.

Are the lights set to go out in Switzerland?

Words of warning from the electricity industry: the nation's power supply could be in jeopardy without new large-scale power stations. Do we really need new nuclear or gas-fired power plants, or can "green" electricity secure future energy supply? By Rolf Ribi



The Beznau project submitted

"The cheapest and most sustainable energy is energy we don't use", in the words of Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger, which have been used hundreds of times in speeches by politicians and managers on the issue of energy. However, this sentiment has had no lasting effect: total energy consumption in Switzerland climbed by 3.5% between 2000 and 2006 (latest figures). The greatest rise was in electricity consumption, which increased by a full 10%. The Swiss have used 1 to 2% more electrical energy each year since 1990. The reasons for this are obvious - more people, greater economic growth and prosperity and silly little things like coffee machines with a keep-warm setting, power-guzzling electric heaters and the stand-by mode of countless electrical products.

Total energy supply in Switzerland in 2006 paints the following picture: four fifths is made up of fossil fuels for heating, industrial process heat and transport, while electricity accounts for one fifth. Around 53%

of domestic electricity is generated by hydraulic power stations and reservoir power plants in the mountains, while 42% comes from the five nuclear power stations (the remainder from recycling, small power stations and renewable sources). At the socket, the reality is quite different: as Switzerland trades in electricity internationally, exports clean hydraulic power and imports uneconomical nuclear and carbon-generated power, only 34% of hydraulic energy is retained compared to 60% of nuclear and carbon-based power.

Shortfalls in power supply?

Walter Steinmann, Director of the Swiss Federal Office of Energy, says: "Switzerland's supply of fossil fuels, in other words crude oil and natural gas, is assured until 2020." And the same timeframe applies to the supply of electrical energy. Looking to the future, pro-business circles and the SFOE have identified a shortfall between

domestic production and domestic demand after 2020. There are two key factors at play - the gradual decommissioning of the oldest nuclear power stations from 2020 and the increasing demand for electricity. The expiry of long-term supply contracts with France from 2018 also has to be taken into account. According to the Association of Swiss Electricity Companies (VSE), there will be a shortfall in electricity of 13 to 22 TWh (1 terawatt hour corresponds to 1 billion kilowatt hours) in 2022 and of 17 to 31 TWh in 2035. The Federal Office of Energy estimates shortfalls of 14 to 17 and 12 to 21 TWh respectively for the same years.

Anxious Swiss citizens are wondering whether the lights in Swiss homes will one day go out. Heinz Karrer, head of the power giant Axpo, anticipates "interruptions to supply in an extreme scenario" and greater dependence on other countries. Giovanni Leonardi, head of Switzerland's largest power company Alpiq, warns that "power cuts in individual regions would be catastrophic for the entire country". Avenir Suisse, a

pro-business institute, forecasts a "greater probability of power cuts if there are also production capacity shortages in neighbouring countries".

Controversy over power shortages

The "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" comments: "The expression 'electricity shortfall' is inappropriate." It argues that this "mechanistic view" overlooks the fact that a power shortage will lead to higher prices and therefore a reduction in demand. It also says that rising energy prices would have the "welcome side-effect that previously uneconomical sources of energy and technologies would become marketable". The article's author also reminds the reader of the market-economy maxim "scarcity is the mother of invention".

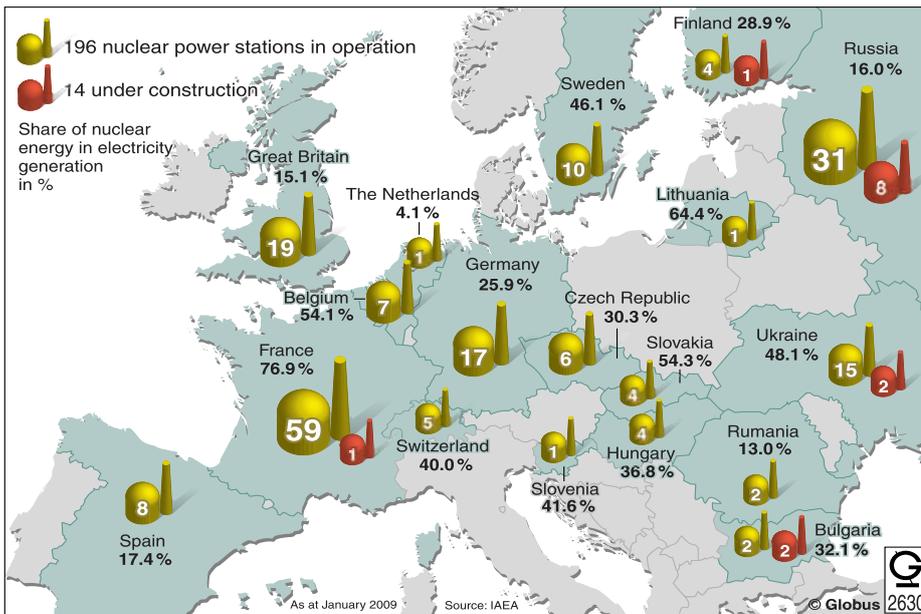
With the impending shortfall in the electricity industry, green critics are taking a hard line. The Swiss Energy Foundation (SES) believes the industry is scaremonger-

ing to keep the five existing nuclear power stations in operation as long as possible. After all, each extra year in operation beyond the authorised lifespan produces high additional income. WWF Switzerland adds: “The power companies are more concerned about the lucrative peak electricity business with countries abroad than about ensuring power supply for Switzerland.”

giant Atel wants to construct Gösigen II, and power companies Axpo and Bernische Kraftwerke have plans for new nuclear reactors in Beznau and Mühleberg. A new nuclear power station with an output of 1600 MW would enable Beznau I, Beznau II and Gösigen to be replaced at the same time.

The three projects share similarities – the European pressurised water reactor

A core meltdown of the reactor with serious consequences for the human population and the environment would be the worst-case scenario in the operation of a nuclear power station. Swiss companies operating this kind of plant have to take out liability insurance with cover up to CHF 1 billion. Federal government acts as an insurer for further damages up to CHF 1 bil-



Electricity from nuclear power in Europe: reality and future

Switzerland is in fact an important hub in the European electricity trade. Axpo Group member, the Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft Laufenburg (EGL), alone traded a total of 67 billion kWh of power in the 2007 financial year, which is more than Switzerland uses in a year. Water is pumped to reservoirs high in the mountains using cheap energy from nuclear power stations and the peak energy produced is sold at higher prices. According to Heinz Karrer, head of Axpo, “trading in electricity is undoubtedly good business”.

Controversial nuclear energy

Five nuclear power stations are in operation in Switzerland – the smaller stations of Beznau I and Beznau II in the Canton of Aargau, Mühleberg in the Canton of Berne, and two larger stations in Gösigen (970 megawatt output) in the Canton of Solothurn and Leibstadt (1030 MW) in the Canton of Aargau. The legal lifespan of these stations will come to an end between 2020 and 2045. Energy Minister Leuenberger has received no fewer than three applications for new nuclear power stations in the past year. The power

EPR-3, relatively low cooling towers without great clouds of steam, a cost of CHF 6 to 7 billion, suitable locations and acceptance among local residents (except for Mühleberg). But all nuclear projects in Switzerland – nuclear power stations and atomic repositories – are subject to a lengthy legal procedure.

Safety and liability

There are several issues concerning the planned nuclear power stations, mainly relating to safety and the permanent disposal of radioactive waste.

The opposing sides are very divided on the issue of the safety of nuclear power stations. By law in Switzerland, the risk of damage to the reactor core must not exceed 1 in 100,000 per year of operation. Anton Treier, of the Swiss Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate, explains that the new “third-generation” plants – like the ones planned in Switzerland – must even be able to cope with a core meltdown, the most serious potential accident. But he adds: “The release of radioactivity cannot be completely ruled out in the event of a serious accident.”



Alternative energy production

lion (an increase to CHF 1.8 billion is planned). Any costs incurred by federal government are ultimately borne by the general public. “Operators are subsidised to give priority to nuclear power over other forms of energy”, says nuclear-friendly Avenir Suisse.

Unresolved disposal issue

The disposal of radioactive material is the main problem with nuclear energy. Since the civil use of nuclear power began, 300,000 tonnes of highly radioactive material have been accumulated worldwide (including 2,000 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium), to which more than 10,000 tonnes are added each year. There is no system for the disposal of nuclear waste in deep geological strata in operation yet anywhere in the world. Most nuclear waste emits radioactivity in water tanks at temporary sites close to the reactors. The storage of high-level waste from nuclear power stations needs to be based on a time-scale of a million years, and the disposal of low to intermediate-level waste on one of 10,000 years. “Finding a definitive solution for such long periods of time is bordering on science

fiction”, suggests Jürg Buri of the Swiss Energy Foundation.

Under Swiss legislation on nuclear power, radioactive waste must be disposed of in Switzerland “in principle”. The search for suitable repositories has been going on in Switzerland for 30 years. The National Cooperative for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste (Nagra) believes the construction of a final repository for radioactive waste 600 metres below the ground in Opalinus Clay is feasible. According to the government, this would satisfy the legally required “demonstration of feasibility” for the disposal of spent fuels and high-level waste. The government’s aim is to find a final repository for low and intermediate-level waste by 2030 and for high-level waste by 2040.

Nagra caught in the crossfire

When Nagra named six possible locations for the disposal of nuclear waste last autumn, there was outrage in all the cantons and regions concerned. There was strong opposition from Zurich’s Weinland and Bözberg in Aargau to Südfuss in Jura. There was also a negative reaction in southern Germany and Vorarlberg. The Swiss Parliament would be responsible for granting outline permission for a final nuclear repository. In the event of a referendum, the Swiss people would have the final say, but that is unlikely to happen before 2019.

Even though there is opposition to Nagra’s plans, their experts have received some recognition: whenever researchers abroad are looking for permanent repositories for nuclear waste, they visit two Nagra rock caverns in Grimselpass and close to the Jura town of Saint-Ursanne, which dates back to the Middle Ages. Whether granite or clay, Nagra experts believe both rock strata make ideal deep repositories several hundred metres into the mountain: “Geology gives us safety for thousands of years.”

Assessing the chances for new nuclear power stations in Switzerland, Energy Minister Moritz Leuenberger says: “New nuclear power stations will only win the support of the people if everything conceivable in relation to energy efficiency and renewable sources has genuinely been done.” He adds: “It will be difficult to win a referendum unless the issue of the permanent storage of radioactive waste has been resolved.”

Are gas-fired power stations the answer?

Could a major gas-fired power station using gas and steam turbines to produce electricity provide an alternative to nuclear power stations? This modern technology offers various benefits – a high level of technical efficiency of around 55%, a plant size of around 400 MW, the production of base load energy around the clock, a short realisation time of just three years and moderate construction costs of around CHF 380 million. However, there are two major disadvantages – fuel costs and environmental pollution.

Fuel costs represent 72% of the production costs, which means high dependency on the price of natural gas. “The greater the instability of gas prices, the greater the instability of electricity prices” (Avenir Suisse). And what about Switzerland’s supply of natural gas, which covers 12% of total energy consumption? “Our supply is secure thanks to a geographically broad purchasing base”, explains Ruedi Rohrbach, CEO of Swissgas. Three quarters of the natural gas used in Switzerland comes from Western Europe, mainly Norway and the Netherlands. There are no supply contracts with Russian producers but Russian natural gas still makes up 21% of our gas imports.

Gas-fired power stations pollute the environment with the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide. Parliament demands full compensation for these emissions through the purchase of emissions certificates. The revenues from these certificates are used to fund carbon dioxide-reducing technologies in Switzerland and abroad. The costs for the purchase of CO₂ certificates are lower abroad than in Switzerland. The electricity company EOS says the planned gas-fired power station in Chavalon in Valais could be constructed with a foreign share of 50%.

There is also opposition to gas-fired power stations. Left-wing and green parties prioritise renewable sources and will only consider gas-fired stations if nuclear power is abandoned. Conservative parties are mainly opposed to fossil-fuel power stations because they want to promote nuclear power. WWF Switzerland says that gas-fired power stations have “no place in our climate policy”.

Renewable sources

What contribution is made by renewable sources in Switzerland, such as hydraulic power and the so-called new renewable sources like solar and wind power, geother-

mal heat and biomass? Eco-electricity from all these sources represents 56% of total electricity production, principally thanks to hydraulic power. In terms of electricity consumption, the contribution of the new renewable sources is again very modest at 5.7% – 3.7% from wood and biogas, 0.8% from geothermal heat, just 0.13% from solar power and a mere 0.004% from wind power.

“Green energy” is now set to be promoted in Switzerland too. Swiss energy policy has set a target of 10% of current electricity consumption to be provided by solar (photovoltaic) and wind power, small hydraulic power stations, geothermal heat and biomass by 2030. As in other countries, relatively expensive eco-electricity is subsidised. Ever since the start of the year, all consumers pay 0.45 cents per kilowatt hour into a fund which will reduce the price of green energy fed into the electricity grid for 20 to 25 years. New eco-friendly projects and technologies only have a chance on the market with this state support. However, Parliament with its powerful lobby from the electricity and nuclear power industries has set a low upper limit for this subsidy. The CHF 250 million available has been quickly exhausted by proposed projects. Increasing the levy to 0.6 cents per kilowatt hour is now on the political agenda.

“It will be possible to supply the whole of Switzerland using renewable sources within the next decade”, explains SP National Councillor Rudolf Rechsteiner. However, with its current system for promoting these sources, Switzerland risks falling behind. This politician from Basel is calling for the unrestricted feeding of subsidised eco-electricity into the grid, if necessary through a federal popular initiative.

DOCUMENTATION

Urs Meister: Strategien für die Schweizer Elektrizitätsversorgung im europäischen Kontext. Zurich 2008, Avenir Suisse (www.avenir-suisse.ch)
Die Zukunft der Elektrizitätsversorgung in der Schweiz. Zurich 2009, The Energy Consulting Group (www.the-ecgroup.com/publ.htm)
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Documentation centre doku-zug.ch (www.doku-zug.ch)

“The Swiss economy is in good shape”

The bursting of the American property bubble caused a financial crisis which has resulted in a global economic crisis. How bad is this crisis? And how will it affect Switzerland? We asked Silvio Borner, Professor of Economics from Basel. Interview by Heinz Eckert.

“SWISS REVIEW”: *Were you surprised by the crisis?*

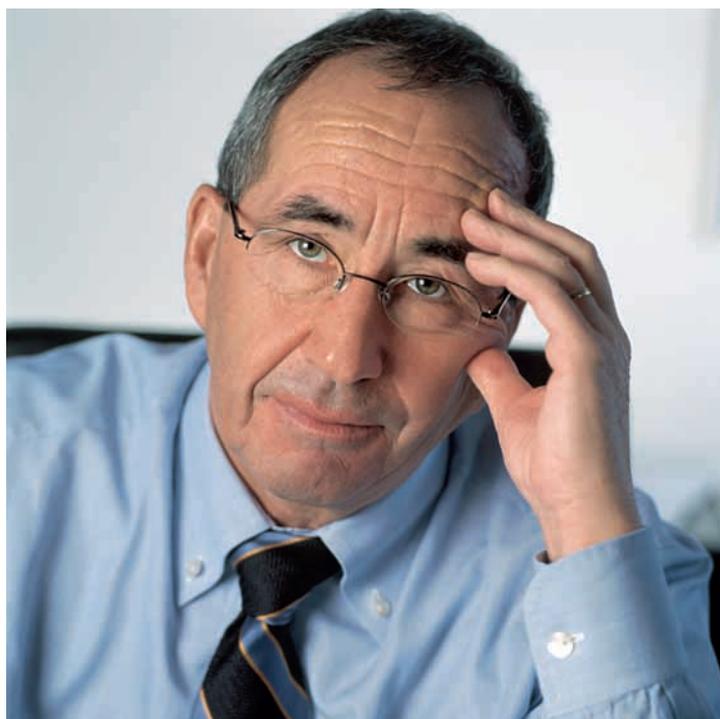
SILVIO BORNER: Yes, I was actually. Even though as economists we were aware that there were speculative bubbles, we did not predict that they would burst. The scale of the crisis was surprising, too. Had I known, I would have sold my modest share portfolio at the right time.

Which bubbles were you aware of?

The property bubble, for one. Though the fact that it managed to trigger a global crisis when it burst came as a huge surprise. People had been aware of the bubbles in the USA, UK and Spain for some time. But I constantly have to remind people that in Switzerland too we had to write off CHF 100 billion in the property sector at the beginning of the 1990s. The size of the property crisis in the USA is actually not so big in comparison. The speed at which the crisis spread and the depth of it was surprising.

Is anyone to blame for the crisis?

Economists are not moralists. I don't want to point the finger at excessive greed or swindlers or claim that the regulators failed. That doesn't tell the whole story. There have been and always will be financial crises. The entire financial market had simply become so big and complicated with different investment products that those responsible could no longer see the bigger picture. The financial crisis then be-



SILVIO BORNER

Silvio Borner, born in 1941, is a Professor of Economics at the University of Basel and Head of the Economics and Politics Department at the Center for Economic Sciences (WWZ) in Basel. He has been lecturing in economics and politics in Basel for more than 30 years and describes himself as one of the last all-rounders in the field. He is also a member of the Steering Committee of Avenir Suisse, Zurich, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Patria Genossenschaft, Basel, and Chairman of the Board of Trustees at Helvetia Patria Jeunesse.

came a banking crisis and that is the biggest problem now. If it had just been a matter of a lack of liquidity, the central banks could have solved the problem. But the banks took a hit to their assets. They had no money left and had to be recapitalised. In this case, there is also a shortage of private investors. This is why some banks went under and others had to be rescued by the government.

How relevant are comparisons with the crisis of 1929?

Comparisons with the first global economic crisis can only be made to a limited

extent. Everything was very different back then. The central banks now have new, efficient tools at their disposal that didn't exist then and currencies are no longer tied to the gold standard. The general setting was also very different to today. The economy had not yet become globalised and it is unclear how that crisis was overcome. Was it really Roosevelt's new deal or was it perhaps the Second World War with the need for new weapons manufacture?

Is the current situation being blown out of proportion? Lots of major Swiss companies seem to be in great shape.

That is certainly true. The Swiss economy is in very good shape and will come through the crisis okay. While the EU is forecasting a 1.9% fall in gross domestic product

(GDP) for 2009, we shouldn't forget that we have consistently achieved growth rates of 1 to 2% over recent years. We are currently at a very high level. I sometimes think the government has almost done too much and panicked. We shouldn't over-exaggerate the problem.

Even the President of the Swiss National Bank has said that the Swiss economy will withstand the crisis well.

Overlooking the fact that it would not be right for the President of the National Bank to fan the flames of the crisis with

negative statements at the moment anyway, I would have to agree. Not only do we have a strong economy, we do not have a property crisis. The problem in Switzerland is only actually centred on the financial sector.

How do you mean?

We are all wiser with the benefit of hindsight, but the Swiss banks should have concentrated on their core business of asset management. They are good at it and it is part of the Swissness that has been lost at the major banks in recent years. Switzerland as a financial centre cannot sustain two investment banks that are among the biggest in the world. That's having delusions of grandeur. I don't want to downplay the crisis, but let's not dramatise it either. If the large Swiss banks shrink, that can only be good for Switzerland as a financial centre.

As a neo-liberal, you must be horrified by the state intervention in recent times.

Even a neo-liberal doesn't want to see management of the economy without the state, especially not in the banking sector. Nothing is as heavily regulated as the financial sector. This means the state has failed too in the financial crisis. We don't need more regulation, but better and more efficient supervision of the banks. Those calling for more regulation should not forget that the banks are so creative they always find a way around new legal provisions and barriers. It's like with doping – the tests always lag behind medical advances.

So, was it the wrong response for the state to give UBS CHF 68 billion?

We really have to ask ourselves whether Switzerland needs two large banks. The nation is no more dependent on UBS for its survival than it was on Swissair. "What we need is an international airport. Everything else will take care of itself", is what we said at the time of the Swissair crisis and we were proven right.

I wouldn't like to have made the decision on the CHF 68 billion. What concerns me is not the fact that the state bought distressed assets from UBS, but that it acquired CHF 6 billion in share capital. This pushes private investors away. Very few

people want to buy shares in a state-owned company.

What do you think of government programmes to stimulate the economy?

I doubt whether they help much. By the time they have been finalised, it's often too late. Unfortunately. And what they are actually used for is a key point. If they are invested in long-term infrastructure, that's okay. However, economic programmes are a dream come true for powerful interest groups. They can finally get their pet projects, which have previously been rejected as uneconomical, financed or at least subsidised by the state. I don't believe in investing in social or ecological romanticism.

What do you mean?

For example, trying to convert Basel into a solar city.

The USA has also saved the car industry from bankruptcy. Do you believe this intervention was justified?

This is an anathema to me. State intervention in the financial sector has whetted the appetite of other sectors in trouble. However, it is important not to get in the way of structural change. The US car industry has been struggling for some time. Its products are no longer contemporary and there is no trace of innovation. It's doubtful that it has now turned the corner long-term.

THE THREE CRISES

Prof. Dr. Silvio Borner: "The financial crisis aside, the economic cycle had peaked in 2007/2008 anyway. This situation coinciding with the greatest disaster on the financial markets is threatening a spiral into a bad recession. Some people believe we could even face a depression like in the 1930s. I believe the financial crisis is slowly stabilising thanks to the huge state financial injections from central banks and finance ministries. The state programmes to stimulate the economy,

State intervention primarily aims to save jobs. Isn't that a strong argument for it?

No, otherwise we should have saved the stagecoach as well. The American stock exchange was founded in 1896. Of the founding companies, only General Electric still exists. Big companies will always disappear, like the airlines Pan American and Transworld Airlines. And not just in the USA. The Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter saw "creative destruction" as an opportunity. And Basel's modern-day chemical multinationals emerged from the city's silk-ribbon industry.

Why then does the financial sector deserve special treatment?

The collapse of the financial sector poses a threat to the system, which means the entire economy runs the risk of collapsing. But structural development mistakes are also made in the financial sector, as the UBS example shows. There is much to suggest that there should be a scaling-down process across the board. Care must be taken to ensure government fire-fighting measures do not hold back necessary restructuring in the medium term. With the benefit of hindsight, you have to ask whether UBS should have been scaled down immediately and whether it would have been better to sell off the investment business. But in the middle of the crisis that was no longer possible.

which are also huge by historical comparison, lead us to hope that we will come through the lowest point in the economic cycle in the second half of 2009 or in 2010 at the latest. Both estimations are optimistic but not unrealistic. Will the problem be over then? Unfortunately not, as the growth crisis might only then really start to take hold. This risk exists precisely because of, and not despite, the historically unprecedented state intervention. The reason is the state may have overstretched itself

financially and run up huge mountains of debt which will make things difficult in the future and in extreme cases could lead to new financial crises, this time state ones. The state has also taken large holdings in previously private financial companies, making investment management politically motivated. Nationalised banks have caused lots of problems in the past. Financial aid and economic injections obstruct or even prevent urgently needed restructuring within and outside the financial sector."

Berne and Brussels row over corporate taxation

Following the renewed approval of the free movement of persons, Switzerland and the European Union are now in negotiations on electricity transit and free trade in agricultural goods. The EU is also looking to attack cantonal tax privileges for foreign companies. By René Lenzin

On 8 February, the Swiss people definitively endorsed the agreement with the EU on the free movement of persons and extended it to the new EU members, Bulgaria and Romania (see page 12). A major hurdle in the bilateral relations process has therefore been cleared, but there is still a long way to go. Berne and Brussels are currently holding negotiations on further agreements in two main areas:

- Given its location at the heart of Europe and its role as an important producer of electricity, Switzerland has a key part to play in the liberalised European electricity market. Both parties are therefore attempting to reach an agreement on electricity transit.
- More free trade in agricultural goods and food products is also on the agenda. Negotiations concern a reduction in protective duties and quotas as well as the harmonisation of production regulations. The issue has sparked controversy in Swiss political circles. Those in favour anticipate lower consumer prices, while opponents fear for the survival of many farmers.

Discussions are also being held on less weighty issues, mostly concerning developments in EU law. Talks have been ongoing for some time on a framework agreement for bilateral negotiations that will make the process of adjusting Swiss legislation in line with such new provisions more efficient. These talks involve institutionalised dialogue that extends beyond the expert groups already set up in certain specialist areas. Micheline Calmy-Rey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, broached the issue of an agreement of this nature again after the referendum on 8 February, but the response from the parties was muted. Many politicians fear the EU's intention is the automatic implementation of its law in Switzerland, effectively making Switzerland a second-class member of the EU.

Negotiations without negotiation

The most complex issue in the relationship between Berne and Brussels is one about which negotiations are not officially taking place: the taxation of European companies

in Switzerland. The differing cantonal tax rates and, in some cases, low levels of tax for offshore companies – companies with an address in Switzerland, but no employees – have long angered many EU countries. The EU is also critical of the unequal treatment of Swiss and foreign holding companies in Switzerland. The former cannot carry out their own business activities, whereas the latter can. This enables them to generate revenues in the EU, but pay tax in Switzerland's fiscal paradise.

Brussels has given Switzerland an ultimatum to abolish these tax privileges because they contravene the Free Trade Agreement of 1972. Unless Switzerland makes concessions on this issue, the EU has indicated there will be no progress in other areas. Switzerland disputes any connection with the 1972 agreement and does not want to negotiate on its tax system or cantonal autonomy. However, the Federal Council is prepared to accommodate the EU by carrying out independent reforms. It launched proposals in December for the abolition of offshore companies and a ban on business activities by foreign holding companies. What impact these measures will have on Switzerland as a business location and whether they will pour oil on troubled waters in the EU remains to be seen.

Fingerprint in passport? The Swiss people will vote on biometric passports and complementary medicine on 17 May.

By René Lenzin

All passports are set to contain biometric data from the end of this year. What this essentially means is that the facial image and fingerprints of the passport holder are to be stored on a chip. The Federal Council and Parliament have decided to stop producing the old passports and just to issue biometric travel documents from now on. The old passports will however remain valid until their expiry date. A referendum has been called against this decision and it is now up to the people to decide.

Technically, the decision has to do with implementing European law. By acceding to the Schengen Agreement, Switzerland has also undertaken to accept any further devel-

opments of it. As the European Union has made biometric passports mandatory, Switzerland is also taking this step. However, this development was initiated by the USA and not Europe. Immigration regulations were tightened there in the wake of the attacks of 11 September 2001. Now, the only way you can enter America without a visa is with a biometric passport.

The decision was virtually unchallenged in the Council of States, where it was approved by 36 votes to 2. There was greater resistance in the National Council, which voted 94 to 81 in favour. Opponents of the scheme argue that data protection is not rigorous enough with the central storage of biometric data.

“As part of their responsibilities, federal government and the cantons will ensure that complementary medicine is considered” – a parliamentary majority wants this principle to be enshrined in the constitution against the will of the Federal Council. Their aim is to assign greater importance to alternative therapies, such as anthroposophical medicine, homeopathy, neural therapy, herbal medicine and traditional Chinese medicine. Mainstream and complementary medicine should work more closely together. The new provision is a counter-proposal to a more far-reaching popular initiative which has now been withdrawn. The bill was approved by 152 votes to 6 in the National Council and by 41 votes to 0 in the Council of States.



“Anyone who goes on a journey...

...will certainly have a story to tell”. Unfortunately, not everyone’s experience of holiday or business travel is good. Good travel preparation is time well spent and can often prevent little annoyances or even worst-case scenarios.

The following tips should help you prepare for and enjoy your best weeks of the year.

Obtaining information

Obtain information on your holiday destination in good time from travel guide books, the Internet, the media and the FDFA (see box), etc. The “Wenn einer eine Reise tut...” brochure published by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) provides lots of sound advice: www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise, “Tipps vor der Reise” section. This brochure can also be ordered in German, French and Italian from the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics, Federal Publications, CH-3003 Berne.

The FDFA’s travel advice, published on the Internet, contains the department’s assessment of the security situation in more than 150 countries. The travel advice assesses security in terms of the political situation and criminality. It highlights possible risks and recommends precautionary measures to be taken when out and about. If the FDFA considers the dangers in a country or region to be particularly great, it advises against travelling there. The travel advice therefore focuses on a very specific aspect of travel. For other areas, e.g. for information on entry regulations and the spread of diseases, it provides the appropriate contact details. This travel advice is published in the three official languages – German, French and Italian – and is constantly revised and updated if the assessment of the situation changes: www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise

ESTHER LEUPP, FDFA, TRAVEL ADVICE

Travel documents

Find out in good time about entry regulations from the representation (embassy or consulate general) of your holiday destination (the Swiss representations are unable to provide you with this information):

- Do you need a passport or is an identity card sufficient? (for the EU: http://europa.eu/abc/travel/doc/index_en.htm)
- Is a machine-readable passport OK or is a biometric passport required? Is a provisional passport sufficient (some countries, e.g. Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain, require a visa for a provisional passport)? (Information for the USA: http://bern.usembassy.gov/niv_waiver_program.html, www.schweizerpass.admin.ch),
- Do you require an entry, transit or exit visa?
- Do you have to obtain the visa prior to departure in your country of residence or do you obtain it at the airport on arrival?
- Are there other regulations to observe before arrival? (e.g. the entry authorisation compulsory for the USA since 12.01.09: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/>)
- Do minors travelling alone or accompanied by just one parent require special travel authorisation from their parents or from the parent not travelling?

Please note that despite Schengen identification is mandatory in the EU. You must be able to provide identification at all times.

Does your passport still have enough pages and is it valid for at least 6 months after arrival at your holiday destination? Please

note that in some countries a passport must contain at least two free facing pages when you apply for a visa.

If you require a new Swiss passport, apply for it in good time (at least six weeks before use) from the representation where you are registered: www.eda.admin.ch (Representations). Provisional passports can also be issued, but they are valid for a maximum of 12 months, contain just 16 pages and cost CHF 100. Provisional passports do not contain biometric data.

Keep your passport safe when at home and out and about, and protect it against theft and loss. Make photocopies of your passport before travelling. These may prove useful if you lose it. They are not a replacement for the original passport, nor do they prevent checks and inquiries at Swiss representations, which may take some time, particularly at weekends. Request a report from the police if you lose your passport. This is required for issue of a provisional passport and for cancellation of your stolen passport.

Insurance

The cost of seeing a doctor and receiving hospital treatment is comparable with Switzerland or even higher in many countries. Even a short stay in hospital or repatriation can be very expensive.

Check the following with your insurance company before you depart:

- What is your insurance cover abroad?
- Do you have to pay bills abroad yourself, with reimbursement from the insurance company following later?
- Are cancellations covered?

If necessary, additional health and/or travel insurance is recommended.

Money

If your money runs out or is stolen, your family or friends can transfer money to you quickly via agencies such as Western Union (www.westernunion.com).

For space reasons, this is merely an abridged version of the article. You can read the full article at www.revue.ch. We hope this advice helps you enjoy an unforgettable holiday, and wish you a fabulous time and a smooth journey!

But if something should go wrong ...

Contact your family if you hear of a disaster at your holiday destination. They will undoubtedly be worried about you.

If you are unable to cope alone, contact the appropriate Swiss representation: www.eda.admin.ch (Representations). The embassy or consulate general will primarily focus on helping you stand on your own two feet again. They can, for example, arrange contact with doctors and hospitals, organise repatriation, arrange a lawyer without obligation or issue a travel document in the event that you lose your passport. The representations charge fees for certain services. Further information can be found at www.eda.admin.ch (Services – Assistance abroad). But please do not expect the impossible as representations are bound by legal provisions. They cannot act as a bank, carry out their own police-style investigations, become involved in ongo-

ing court proceedings or free Swiss citizens without prosecution if they have broken the law. Representations cannot provide money for onward travel or hotel costs. Nor can they advance money for costs in the event of a death, or for bail, fines or legal fees. A representation cannot issue a passport at the airport or apply for an entry or exit visa on your behalf.



Distribution of "Swiss Review"

Would you like to receive "Swiss Review" electronically?

Do you receive several copies of "Swiss Review" to the same address?

"Swiss Review" is now available in a new Internet format (e-paper). If in future you wish to receive the link to the latest "Swiss Review" by e-mail and read it online, register at www.swissabroad.ch (please note that your e-mail program must be html-compatible). The electronic version of "Swiss Review" offers several benefits:

- Quicker, more reliable delivery to many countries irrespective of location. You receive "Swiss Review" immediately after publication, which means the articles are more current.
- Free choice of language: you can now choose for yourself the language in which you would like to read "Swiss Review" (not applicable to regional sections).

At www.swissabroad.ch you can also register to receive information by e-mail from your representation (embassy or consulate general) on issues such as culture and the economy, etc. Simple, step-by-step instructions can be found at www.swissabroad.ch or in the February edition of "Swiss Review" (No. 1/09).

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Statistics on Swiss abroad in 2008

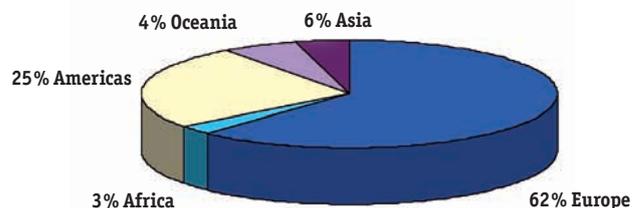
At the end of December 2008, the number of Swiss citizens living abroad was 676,176. This is 8,069 or 1.2% higher than in December 2007. The number holding dual nationality has reached 485,286 or 71.6%.

Where do most Swiss people abroad live?

Top ten

1. France	6. UK (GB & Northern Ireland)
2. Germany	7. Spain
3. USA	8. Australia
4. Italy	9. Argentina
5. Canada	10. Brazil

Statistics on Swiss abroad



57.6% of Swiss people abroad are female, and 22.5% are under the age of 18. Of those entitled to vote, 124,399, i.e. 23.9%, are enrolled on a Swiss electoral register.

The statistics in full and a detailed press release can be found at www.eda.admin.ch (Documentation – Publications – Swiss Abroad).

NEW POPULAR INITIATIVES AND REFERENDA

No new popular initiatives had been launched since the last edition at the time of going to press.

At www.bk.admin.ch/aktuell/abstimmung you will find a list of pending referenda and popular initiatives and the corresponding signature forms if available. Please complete, sign and send the forms directly to the relevant committee which is responsible for the authentication of your signature.

Switzerland's first metro

Since 27 October 2008, Lausanne has been the smallest city in the world to have an automatic metro system. This ambitious project has changed the face of the capital of the Canton of Vaud and some sociologists are already calling it an urban revolution. Deep down in the M2. By Alain Wey.

"The M2 is the jewel in our transport policy", said Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger. On 18 September 2008, the Minister of Transport officially opened Switzerland's first metro system together with the mayor of Lausanne, Daniel Brélaz. Mr Leuenberger said: "The people of Vaud have realised a visionary project. The M2 is an excellent example of sustainable transport infrastructure. It helps achieve social cohesion by linking the city centre with the suburbs in an environmentally friendly way. This metro system will foster the city's economic vitality and improve quality of life for its people." When the system opened for business on 27 October 2008, Lausanne became the smallest city in the world to have an automatic metro system. It is sunk into the depths of this city of 130,000 inhabitants, located in a conurbation of more than 300,000 people.

The ultimate symbol of urbanism

A metro system changes a city. This urbanist prophecy has become reality in Lausanne. In 100 days of operation, the M2 has transported 5 million passengers with an average of 50,000 users a day and a record high of 78,200. This urban escalator connects Ouchy, on the shores of Lake Geneva (373 m), with Croisettes, to the south of the commune of Epalinges (711 m), in twenty minutes. Lausanne Public Transport (TL) is already faced with saturation of the line and is ready to order extra trains in addition to the fifteen already in operation. The estimate of 18 million passengers expected in the first year already needs to be revised after just four months. Experts are now forecasting 20 to 21 million people, pointing out that the use of the metro is almost two years ahead of schedule.

Travellers arriving at Lausanne station take an underpass which leads directly to the metro on the other side of the street. Even at 11.00 a.m., the system is full of passengers. You might think you were in Paris. The trains arrive every six minutes, and every three

minutes at peak times in the morning and evening. Everything is automated. There are no drivers here, as the system is run by operators from a central control unit. The 5.9 km line, 90% of which runs through tunnels, has fourteen stations with a difference in level of 398 metres. After studies carried out in 1993, the story of the M2 really began in November 2002 when the citizens of the Canton of Vaud voted to finance its construction. Civil engineering work began in March 2004 and the job of laying the tracks started in November 2005. The progress made led to the closure of the M2's predecessor, "La ficelle" (cog-wheel railway between Ouchy and le Flon), in July 2006, and the track was made electric between January and August 2007. From this point onwards, trials and tests on the system were carried out on the entire line. In September 2008, the Federal Office of Transport (FOT) gave the green light for its launch. "This rubber-tyred metro with gradients of 12% is truly revolutionary for Switzerland. The M2 is a showcase example for transport in Switzerland", says Max Friedli, director of the FOT. While the baptism of the metro was met with general euphoria, this has not always been the case. In 1997, Christophe Jemelin and Vincent Kaufmann, from the laboratory of urban sociology at the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), launched an attack on the first reports on the project. Now as members of the metro's regional development committee, the two sociologists are fervent advocates of the system.

The impact of the metro

Sociologist Vincent Kaufmann says: "The M2 will change Lausanne profoundly. The 6 km line has already caused a cultural revolution. Having a metro means joining the club of big cities. From the small capital of a rural canton which denied it urban status, Lausanne has become the first metropolitan area in Switzerland to have a metro system. The M2 made a significant mark on Lausanne

even before its official opening. The unbelievable enthusiasm of the city's citizens provides the best evidence of this." The sociologist believes the urban revolution is just beginning. There has been a great increase in the number of major projects in the region since work on the metro began. A regional express railway, a tram system, athletics and football stadiums, an eco-district, museums of fine art and a giant aquarium are the visible public face of a development boom. "We are contributing to a complete overhaul of the city", says Olivier Français of the Lausanne department of public works whose services are under strain from requests from private developers. The city has not seen a boom in construction and redevelopment like this since the 1960s. The M2 is also already having an impact on road traffic. "There has been a noticeable fall in traffic in Lausanne", says Olivier Français, though this decrease has not yet been quantified.

Urbanisation in Lausanne is now developing along the axis of the metro. A new district (des Fiches) will be built around Fourmi station. Construction work is scheduled to start in 2009 and last for five years. More than 450 homes will be built there. At Vennes station, an out-of-town car park with 1,200 spaces will aim to meet the needs of commuters from the north and is scheduled to open at the beginning of 2010. As for the university hospital centre (CHUV), there are plans to build an extension to its maternity unit just above the metro station. Flon station will have a metropolitan look with a skyscraper, walkways and a bridge. More than 65,000 passengers pass through this key junction every day via "place de l'Europe" to catch either the LEB (Lausanne-Echalens-Bercher) train, a trolleybus or the M1 (tramway for south-western Lausanne). A new building and a link with the regional bus lines have been built above the station terminus at Croisettes. The authorities still need to develop other parts of the metro network. This involves deciding where the future M3, a tram linking the city centre (gare du Flon) with the north-western districts (Pontaise and Blécherette), will run and starting work on the future RER with the construction of a station at Prilly-Malley as part of the Lausanne-Morges conurbation project. After just four months of operation of the metro, the public transport company has decided to hire 85 bus drivers in 2009 to ensure bus services for travellers.



FACTS AND FIGURES FOR THE M2

- Construction took four and a half years, from March 2004 to October 2008, and cost CHF 736 million.
- The track has an average gradient of 6% reaching up to 12% in places. Its 5.9 km have a difference in level of 338 metres. The M2 has a double track except for a 200-metre section of single track to the south of the Lausanne-Gare station. Around 300 surveillance cameras ensure security on the system.
- The fifteen trains have a nominal capacity of 220 spaces with 60 seated. Made up of two railcars, they are 30.7 metres long and 2.45 metres wide. In order to climb the track's significant gradients, they travel on rubber tyres.

- The stations are announced by the voice of the watchman of Lausanne cathedral accompanied by contemporary music or soundtracks.
- With a frequency of every three minutes, its hourly capacity is 4,400 passengers in each direction. Eventually, the frequency will be increased to two minutes and the M2 will transport 25 million passengers a year.

Maximum speed: 60 km/h.

- Ours station lies 23 metres beneath ground level.
- A thousand men, 250 sometimes working at the same time, and a hundred engineers and experts were involved in the M2 development. Between June 2004 and summer 2006, these men from Portugal, Italy, Switzerland and Croatia dug 2.8 km of tunnels.



The example of Rennes

Before Lausanne, Rennes (France) held the title of "smallest city with a metro system". With a 9 km line in operation for 6 years, the metro has changed the face of the Breton city which shared its experience with the capital of Vaud. Car parks have disappeared from the city centre and the medieval squares have regained their charm. With out-of-town car parks at both ends of the line, motorists have become used to travelling by metro. Use of the entire public transport network has doubled in six years. With 1,300 surveillance cameras, this metro system has also made people feel safer. "People now take the metro as they would an elevator. The people of Rennes have become used to this system and it runs like clockwork", says the system manager.

In Lausanne, 2009 will be a year spent breaking in the metro with various incidents and breakdowns. However, its reliability increased to 98% in February with a target of more than 99% by the end of the year. Aside from the teething problems, technical difficulties and world firsts, the metro is setting about its most fundamental task: transforming a small city into a modern metropolis.



Ideas for summer in Switzerland



Summer in Switzerland offers magnificent, diverse landscapes, majestic mountains and crystal-clear lakes which are great for water sports and all kinds of leisure activities.

Discover nature parks and UNESCO world heritage sites

Switzerland's national park high up in the Engadine is world-famous. But did you know that there is at least one nature park in almost every region? Fauna and flora can flourish in these areas without human interference. And every one of these parks has something special to offer with traces of life from millions of years ago, rare plants or incredible, breathtaking views.

Visitors can enjoy culinary delights and activities suited to their personal tastes and requirements on these new nature trips. The beauty of these trips lies in experiencing nature first-hand, visiting parks and UNESCO world heritage sites and finding out all about nature.

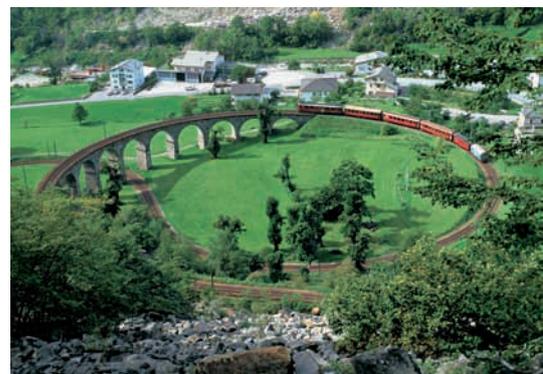


Switzerland's most beautiful panoramas

Enjoying the wonderful, world-famous panoramas is the highlight of any journey through Switzerland. Take in the view from the panoramic window of a train, the deck

of a ship or a coach. Switzerland's natural beauty will enthrall you. Travel on the Glacier Express from St. Moritz to Zermatt and enjoy the stunning landscape from the new panoramic

carriages. Or discover the wonders of central Switzerland, the Bernese Oberland and the region around Lake Geneva on a journey on the Golden Pass line. Further information can be found at www.MySwitzerland.com/aso.



Outdoor activities

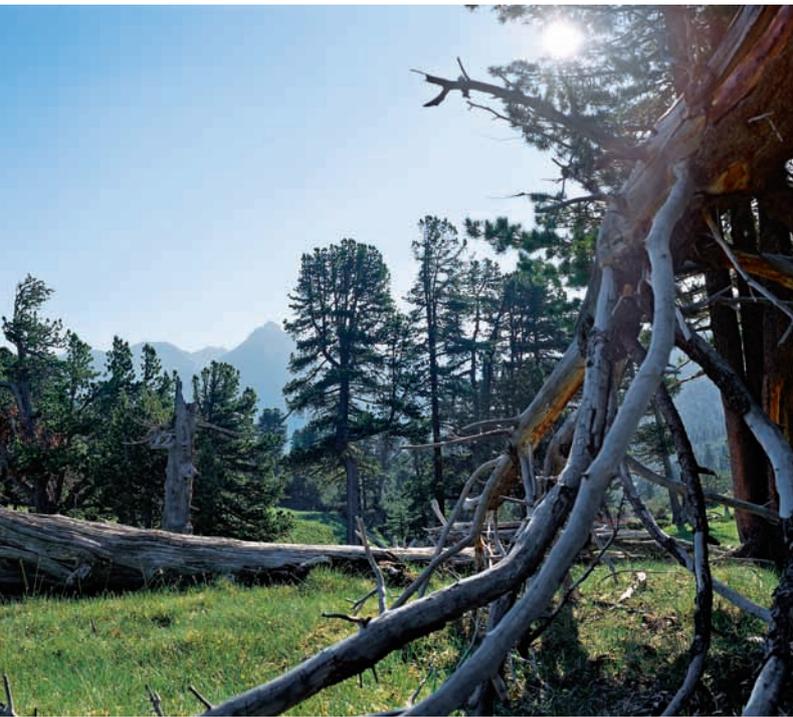
Switzerland is a natural paradise for all those who enjoy outdoor activities, and SwitzerlandMobility is the ideal route planner for the most beautiful tours. SwitzerlandMobility shows you the best routes for mountain bikers, hikers, skaters, cyclists and canoeists.

It covers all parts of the country and caters to all tastes and abilities. www.MySwitzerland.com/aso (SwitzerlandMobility section)

contains every route with details of public transport, journey stages, places of interest, accommodation and useful services.

SwissTrails makes SwitzerlandMobility's route network easy to use. More than 500 places offering accommodation of different categories can be





booked through SwissTrails. All this accommodation is linked together with daily, customised luggage transport. Bicycles can also be hired at any stage of the journey, even if there is no hire point nearby. SwissTrails simply delivers the bikes to the required destination.



Typically Swiss hotels

The service is a little friendlier, the atmosphere is authentic and the cuisine is surprisingly local. Typically Swiss is no empty promise, but rather an assurance of an exceptional

Swiss hotel experience. Not only do guests stay in a traditional Swiss environment, they also get the best tips on where to visit first-hand. Whether in a romantic alpine chalet, a charming guest-house or a luxury hotel, guests will feel as though they are in seventh heaven.

Tips from Switzerland Tourism: At www.MySwitzerland.com/aso you will find the package offer of the month and the registration form for *Network Switzerland*. Register by 31 July 2009 and you will automatically be entered in the prize draw for a weekend at a "Typically Swiss hotel". Other interesting information and attractive offers from Switzerland Tourism can be found in our newsletter. Register at www.MySwitzerland.com/aso

The accommodation's uniqueness lies in its diversity. Typically Swiss hotels are found throughout the country. No two are the same, but they are all typically Swiss and as authentic as the region in which they are located. Our hotels are always in the best locations and as diverse in character as the country itself.

Regional delicacies
The cuisine is as authentic as the accommodation. Everything served is home-produced and, of course, typical of the region, from Zürcher Geschnetzeltes and Freiburger Vacherin to Meiringer Meringues. And the wine cellar is full of the best labels from the local area: the beguiling Petite-Arvine in Valais, the mouth-tingling Saint Saphorin in Vaud and the intricate Pinot Noir in Grisons.



Competition

Experience authentic Switzerland and win a week's holiday in one of our Typically Swiss hotels. Want to find out more? Visit www.MySwitzerland.com/aso.



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Friendships around the world

Each year, the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad gives around 350 Swiss children abroad the opportunity to get to know their homeland better and to establish a strong bond with it. Lucas Maissen has been running camps for Swiss children from around the world for ten years. Here he shares his vast experience with us in an interview conducted by Viviane Aerni.

“SWISS REVIEW”: You’ve been a camp leader for the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad for ten years now. How did this come about?

LUCAS MAISSEN: I was involved with the Scouts for many years where I gained a lot of leadership experience. When a friend told me about the FYSA camps ten years ago, they appealed to me straightaway. I saw the multicultural and multilingual environment of the camps as an interesting challenge.

What does this practically voluntary position mean to you?

Firstly, I really enjoy working with children and young people. Bringing children from so many different backgrounds together in one place is a unique concept. I see it as a way of overcoming national mentalities. We have a truly global community at the camps. There is no distinction between rich and poor. Children are open-minded and without prejudice. They could teach us adults a lesson or two.

What experiences do the camps offer the children and what can they take away with them?

The children have lots of fun. There is so much to do and experience. They get to know their homeland better as well as other cultures. We give the children the chance to enjoy nature; we build fires and sometimes camp out overnight in tents. We allow the children to escape the routine of everyday life. Here, the opportunities for them are plentiful, while the demands on them are small. They often have a choice between different programmes.

We organise exciting, energetic activities for the children by, for example, turning a hike into a secret treasure hunt.

The most lasting experiences for the children are the global friendships they form at the camps, which often stay strong for many years and span great distances.

Is a particular image of Switzerland conveyed to the children taking part? To what extent do you shape their view of their original homeland?

Much of this comes automatically from everyday camp life. They see how hygienic

hold a Swiss passport. They are able to clearly distinguish between their Swiss identity and that of the country in which they live.

Do you sense that the children have a special relationship with one another because they all have the same roots?

It does provide a common denominator and a natural foundation which creates a connection and fosters openness. However, I think it is the unforgettable experiences they share that contribute most to the long-term friendships they form.



Play-fighting with the camp leader, Lucas Maissen.

What influence do the different language backgrounds have on the FYSA camps?

Language is overestimated by adults as a means of communication. Children develop their own language. They communicate through gestures, facial expressions and drawings. Children are open, they approach one another and always find a way to communicate even if they don't speak the same language.

Have you noticed any effects from an increasingly globalised world on Swiss children abroad?

It has become easier to maintain friendships around the world thanks to advances in information technology. We have also noticed that the children are better informed about Switzerland thanks to the Internet, and fewer clichés exist as a result. There are also disadvantages associated with the new technology: children keep in contact with their lives back home while at the camps by mobile phone, which can mean they become less involved in the camp community.

What has been your best camp experience?

There have been so many. But it is the small things that leave the biggest impression on me, like when children are astonished because they can collect herbs in the forest or gaze in amazement at the stars in the night sky for the first time. You need so little to be happy. The worldwide friendships formed at every camp also provide me with the motivation to carry on.

Switzerland is in that, for example, we happily drink water straight from the tap. We convey values such as sustainability to the children by using local produce for meals and by separating our rubbish.

Swiss children abroad often have an idealised perception of their homeland. They see it as a land of milk and honey. So, we aim to help them take a more critical and differentiated look at Switzerland as well. Folklore is important, but we want to show them that Switzerland is about more than just chocolate and cheese. Values such as our culture of dialogue and compromise should also be part of their personal image of Switzerland.

How strong do you think the bond is that Swiss children abroad have with Switzerland?

That mainly depends on their parents. Many children know a great deal about Switzerland and regularly speak one of the national languages. Swiss children abroad are proud of their heritage and proud to

Offers for young Swiss abroad aged 15 and over

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) offers expertise on matters concerning young Swiss people abroad. OSA brings young people together and aims to create a strong bond with Switzerland. OSA provides young people with information and advice, represents their interests and provides them with attractive holiday and educational offers in Switzerland.

Swiss camps

Young Swiss people from all over the world enjoy OSA's camps. Switzerland as a holiday destination offers lots of opportunities for sport. The team leaders of the Swiss camps are trained in teaching young people sport and provide high-quality coaching. Participants also learn about topical and important aspects of culture, geography, history, politics and society in Switzerland at OSA's camps. A highly enjoyable fringe programme ensures there is a relaxed atmosphere at the camp accommodation. Cross-border friendships are formed at OSA's youth camps.

This summer, OSA will welcome around 120 young people to the two camps in Leukerbad. The entire camp will visit the majestic mountains of Valais. The young people will participate in group sporting activities such as hiking, mountain biking, ball sports, climbing and water sports. Workshops, museum visits and a lively camp party are also part of the programme. The camp dates are:

Summer camp Leukerbad I: 19 to 31.7.2009
Summer camp Leukerbad II: 2 to 14.8. 2009

OSA looks forward to welcoming a few new faces to the multi-sport summer camps.

Educational offers

Switzerland is a small country, but there is plenty to discover for those eager to learn. OSA aims to encourage young Swiss citizens abroad to become better acquainted with the country of their forefathers.

OSA's two-week language courses are aimed at young people with little or no knowledge of a national language. The courses focus on conversational skills. They aim to produce an initial sense of



Happy participants of "Action 72 hours"

achievement and encourage more in-depth learning of the foreign language. Participants attend lessons in the mornings. Two or three afternoons a week, OSA organises joint excursions and activities. The dates of the language courses are:

French course in Fribourg: 22.6. to 3.7.2009

German course in Zurich: 6.7. to 17.7.2009

French course in Neuchâtel: 6.7. to 17.7.2009

German course in Lucerne: 3.8. to 14.8.2009

OSA looks forward to chatting with the young Swiss visitors in German or French.

Prior to the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lucerne on the issue of "The Swiss abroad – a great asset for our country?", OSA is offering young people the chance to take part in a seminar where participants will take a close look at the issue of what Swiss people abroad can do to help convey a positive image of Switzerland to the world.

The young visitors will also, of course, get to see Lucerne and central Switzerland, receive information on the Swiss education system and actively take part in the congress. The seminar will take place in Lucerne from 2 to 9.8.2009.

OSA is pleased that young people will have the opportunity to express their views at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad.

Host families

OSA has a large network of accommodating Swiss families who host young people for two to four weeks. These host families enjoy meeting people from other parts of the world and provide food and accommodation for young people. A stay with a host family is usually combined with an educational offer. Though, there is still plenty of time to get to know the host family and form new friendships.

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)
- Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne

Phone +41 31 356 6100, Fax +41 31 356 6101

www.aso.ch



87TH CONGRESS OF THE SWISS ABROAD – LUCERNE, FROM 7 TO 9 AUGUST 2009

“The Swiss abroad – a great asset for our country?”

Does having almost 10% of its population living abroad represent an asset for Switzerland? Do Swiss citizens abroad provide our nation with added value in terms of image, reputation and global networking opportunities? Do they see themselves as ambassadors for Switzerland and Swiss values? The 87th Congress of the Swiss Abroad will explore all these issues. With “The Swiss abroad – a great asset for our country?” as its theme, it will take place between 7 and 9 August 2009 at the new congress centre of the Museum of Transport in Lucerne.

In a globalised world where people, their economic activities and political systems are increasingly interdependent, the Swiss abroad are without question a great asset for our country.

Prominent speakers will look at the myths and reality surrounding the contribution of the Swiss abroad to the nation in short talks and a round table debate. Claude Beglé, who has worked for CICR, Nestlé and Philip Morris and is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Swiss Post Office, spent 30 years as a Swiss citizen abroad working for Swiss companies. He will share his experiences of this with us at the opening presentation of the congress. We will also welcome the Head of Switzerland Tourism, Jürg Schmid, and the Federal Chancellor of Switzerland, Corina Casanova, among others.

The 87th Congress of the Swiss Abroad in the charming setting of Lucerne will have plenty to offer the heart, mind and taste buds. A visit to the Swiss Museum of Transport will allow congress participants to discover various accomplishments achieved thanks to Swiss people spending time abroad. Finally, on the Sunday, there will be an opportunity to visit the city of Lucerne and its surrounding area. Participants can choose either to go sight-seeing in the beautiful city of Lucerne or to take a boat trip on Lake Lucerne followed by lunch on the Rigi. The 87th congress promises to be an exceptional event.

Further information on the congress is available on our website at: www.aso.ch/en/offers

Raise Switzerland’s profile where you are

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and Switzerland Tourism have teamed up and are working together to ensure that Swiss people abroad maintain strong links with their homeland. As part of this partnership, Switzerland Tourism is looking for committed Swiss people abroad who enjoy talking about their country and often have the opportunity to do so. A “Switzerland Promotion Kit” containing images, presentations, films, brochures and other interesting information about Switzerland will be sent free of charge to the members of “Network Switzerland”. These members will also receive regular information and news on Switzerland as well as exclusive special offers.

To become a member of “Network Switzerland”, visit the following website and complete the form in the “Network Switzerland” section: www.MySwitzerland.com/aso

Re-election of the CSA for the 2009–2013 term of office

The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) is the representative body for Swiss people living abroad. It represents the interests of all Swiss expatriates in political circles in Switzerland.

The CSA therefore plays a key role in protecting the interests of the 700,000 Swiss citizens abroad.

The delegates of the CSA are to be newly elected for the 2009 to 2013 term of office. An international appeal is being made to any Swiss abroad who would like to sit as a delegate on the CSA.

Further information is available at www.aso.ch/en/politics

87TH CONGRESS OF THE SWISS ABROAD FROM 7 TO 9 AUGUST 2009 AT THE SWISS MUSEUM OF TRANSPORT IN LUCERNE

I am interested in attending the next Congress of the Swiss Abroad. **Please send me the registration documents** for the 87th Congress of the Swiss Abroad (7 to 9 August 2009 in Lucerne) to the following address:

First name / Surname: _____

Address: _____

Country / Postcode / Town: _____

E-mail: _____

Please write clearly in block capitals and send the completed form to: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), Communications Department, Congress Organisation, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne

To save time and postage, you can also contact us directly by e-mail: communication@aso.ch

The Congress of the Swiss Abroad will be held **in German and French only** (with simultaneous interpretation) for organisational and financial reasons.

The latest information on the forthcoming congress will also be updated regularly at www.aso.ch/en/offers. It is well worth visiting our website from time to time!

■ **Chocolate** knows no crises. In 2008, the 18 companies making up the Swiss chocolate industry (ChocoSuisse) set a fifth consecutive sales record with revenues of CHF 1.8 billion, representing an increase of 9.3% in a year. Some 185,000 tonnes were sold last year.

■ The **alpine glaciers** are shrinking in depth as well as length. In Switzerland in 2007, the ice thinned by 1.3 m on the Silvretta (Grisons) and by 1.7 m on the Gries (Valais).

■ The **Zurich Lions** won ice hockey's Champions League, beating Russian team Metallurg Magnitogorsk. After performing well in the group stages, Zurich knocked out top Finnish side Espoo Blues in the semi-final.

■ While the debate rages on about bonus payments totaling CHF 2 billion, **UBS** has announced losses of CHF 20 billion for 2008 with CHF 8.1 billion coming in the fourth quarter alone. Net capital withdrawals were CHF 85.8 billion in the last three months of 2008 and amounted to CHF 226 billion for the full year. Credit Suisse lost CHF 8.2 billion in 2008.

■ The Swiss Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) says the country should take advantage of the recession to develop **public transport**. The capacity of rail and urban transport has reached its limit, as any commuter will agree. The solutions proposed by the SFTU involve public investment of at least CHF 5 billion.

■ Minister for Economic Affairs Doris Leuthard has met one of the SFTU's other demands, increasing the **duration of short-time work** from 12 to 18 months, effective from 1 April.

■ 52% of Zurich voters endorsed the abolition of **flat-**



The Swiss ski team has brought home a haul of 6 medals from the World Ski Championships in Val d'Isère: a Gold (Super-G) and Silver (Downhill) for Didier Cuche, a Gold (Giant Slalom) and Bronze (Downhill) for Carlo Janka, and two Silvers (Super Combined and Downhill) for 17-year-old Lara Gut.

"Since the bilateral agreements, we have had more well-educated young people from Switzerland settling in France for career reasons. In 1973, I had great difficulty obtaining work and residence permits despite the support of my employer." Jean-Paul Aeschlimann, Honorary Consul in Montpellier and Vice-President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad

"It would be a disgrace if, instead of deploying our army, we had to pay foreign soldiers to protect our ships at sea from pirates." Micheline Calmy-Rey, Federal Councillor and Foreign Affairs Minister

"If every Swiss citizen were to make one less visit to the doctor over the next six months, the healthcare cost issue would be resolved. Whether health insurance premiums increase depends on the people, not the Federal Council." Pascal Couchepin, Federal Councillor and Interior Minister

"The difference in salaries between the banking sector and the rest of the business world has become too great. Banker salaries need to be lowered." Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor and Economic Affairs Minister

"44% of Switzerland's national income is earned abroad. If the markets in Germany, France and the USA collapse at the same time, there will be far-reaching consequences for our economy." Jean-Daniel Gerber, Director of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs

"The fact that younger workers fear they will not receive a sufficient AHV pension is understandable but unwarranted." Bernd Schips, former Professor of Economics at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich

"Our two countries share remarkable similarities. Or do you know of another country where the staff apologise if a train is running late?" Ichiro Komatsu, Japanese Ambassador to Switzerland

"Switzerland has consistently proved itself capable of reform. But we have reform deadlock in national government due to its quasi-geriatric make-up." Rudolf Strahm, former National Councillor and Price Supervisor, on the ageing membership of the Federal Council

rate tax for wealthy foreigners. This decision may give other cantons the same idea, such as Vaud which has around 1,200 rich foreigners within its confines.

■ According to the weekly German newspaper "Sonntag", a survey has revealed that the authorities in at least 20 cantons are planning, or have taken, **measures to counter the economic crisis** at a total cost of CHF 1.16 billion.

■ Moritz Leuenberger has received the **European Railway Award** for his railway policy and, in particular, for the transfer of freight traffic from the road to the railways.

■ A week after winning the Wengen downhill, skier Didier Defago from Morgins was victorious at the Streif de Kitzbühel in Austria. This double triumph makes him a skiing legend. With 22 podium finishes and 10 wins this season (1 February), **Swiss skiing** is in good shape. Both men and women are enjoying success, with Carlo Janka, Lara Gut, Dominique Gislin and Fabienne Suter all doing well.

■ **Albert Einstein** is the most famous Swiss person of all time according to a survey by the "SonntagsZeitung". The Nobel Prize-winning physicist, who became a naturalised Swiss citizen in 1901, has been the subject of a permanent exhibition at Berne's History Museum since 2005.

■ The number of people looking for work in Switzerland could reach 160,000 or 4.5% in 2009, according to Klaus Wellershoff, chief economist at UBS. The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) said the rate of **unemployment** rose to 3.3% in January compared to 3% in December 2008, taking the jobless total to almost 130,000. ALAIN WEY



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and young travellers under 26 years of age. Children under 16 years of age travel free with their parents. Detailed information is available at www.swisstravelsystem.ch

The Swiss Pass and other Swiss Travel System tickets, seat reservations and brochures are available at major train stations in Switzerland and at many sales points all over the world listed at www.swisstravelsystem.ch/wheretobuy

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 AVS
 CLIMATE CENT
 ANTI-RACISM ACT
 21% FOREIGNERS
 PUNCTUAL TRAINS
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