

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD

S W I S S

REVIEW

OCTOBER 2009 / NO. 4



**Didier Burkhalter elected
as Federal Councillor**

**Eicher, Hunger, Happy & Co.:
new trends in folk**

Switzerland's getting older

IMPORTANT:
Decide if in the future
you wish to get
the «Swiss Review»
by post or e-mail.
(Page 14)

**All-round insurance cover
for Swiss citizens living abroad.**

The CSS Insurance International Health Plan covers **medical expenses**: on the job, off the job; **sickness, accident and pregnancy**. For details and a quotation:

www.css.ch/ihp

Phone: ++41 58 277 16 87/91

E-Mail: ihp.info@css.ch

SR 2009



The taste of Switzerland.

MySwitzerland.com/aso

The new cookbook from Betty Bossi.
Orders are sent post-free.



**In English for
the first time!**

Official commemorative coin 2009

Hans Erni: «100 years Pro Patria»

On the occasion of the centenary of the Pro Patria Foundation, the 100-year-old Hans Erni has created a gold coin. A miniature work of art from the hand of the great Swiss designer. Timeless value, meticulous coinage in a strictly limited edition. Obtainable from banks, coin dealers and www.swissmint.ch.



 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Swissmint

Order voucher

I should like to place an order for the following item plus shipping costs payable in advance:

Quantity	Quality	Price per coin
<input type="text"/>	Hans Erni: «100 years Pro Patria»	
	50 franc gold coin. Gold 0,900, 11,29 g, Ø 25 mm	
	Proof coin in presentation case	CHF 470.– no VAT

Hans Erni: «100 years Pro Patria»

50 franc gold coin. Gold 0,900, 11,29 g, Ø 25 mm

Proof coin in presentation case CHF 470.– no VAT

Name: _____ First name: _____

Address: _____ Town/postcode: _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

SchweizerRevue_E

Send voucher to Federal Mint Swissmint, Bernastrasse 28, CH-3003 Bern, or order directly online at www.swissmint.ch

Switzerland – a nation of culture

MANY FOREIGNERS STILL ONLY ASSOCIATE Switzerland with magnificent mountains and delicious chocolate, as a study commissioned by Presence Switzerland has once again shown. People do not really seem to be aware of just how much culture there is to be found in Switzerland that they can enjoy along with the mountains and chocolate. Few other countries have as much to offer culturally as Switzerland in all areas of the arts.

Is the Culture and Convention Centre Lucerne the most modern and magnificent concert hall in the world, or, at the very least, does it possess the best acoustics? The “Salle blanche”, designed by the brilliant French architect, Jean Nouvel, is most definitely an architectural gem with outstanding sound. And the Lucerne Festival is perhaps the world’s most prestigious musical event – and not just since Claudio Abbado began bringing the finest orchestral musicians together each year in his Lucerne Festival Orchestra to mesmerise the international music world with this extraordinary ensemble. The musical elite take the stage for five weeks in Lucerne – a showcase event for all the great orchestras, conductors and soloists. When the “Salle modulable” is completed in a few years’ time, even opera will be performed in the summer in Lucerne. And all this will be achieved with hardly any government funding.

While the Verbier Festival primarily aims to promote young artists, Gstaad’s Menuhin Festival has developed, over its 53-year history, from its origins in the church of Saanen into a major event featuring more than 40 performances and attracting 20,000 visitors. Since the year 2000, the large symphony concerts have been held in a 1800-seat

marquee. 70% of visitors to the Gstaad festival attend regularly, and 76% come from Switzerland.

Prince, in addition to many other artists, flew in especially from the USA for two exclusive performances at the Montreux Jazz Festival this year for a fee of CHF 1.5 million. The open-air events, from Berne’s Gurten Festival to Sittertobel in St. Gallen, from Interlaken to Frauenfeld, and from Gampel to Zofingen, always boast first-rate line-ups.

Basel, the city of art, attracted hundreds of thousands of visitors wishing to see world-class art. Van Gogh’s landscapes could be marvelled at in the Kunstmuseum, while Giacometti’s magnificent work attracted visitors from all over the world to the Beyeler Foundation in Riehen. The “From Cézanne to Rothko” exhibition was held in Lausanne, while “From Courbet to Picasso” was on display at the Giannada Foundation in Martigny.

Zurich offers musical festival weeks and traditional theatrical performances. And Locarno has the film festival.

There is art and culture aplenty.

The splendid calendar of events, which Switzerland offers twelve months a year, is possible thanks to the country’s general prosperity. Only a wealthy nation has sponsors able to spend large amounts of money on culture, even in times of economic crisis. World-class culture does not come cheap. Ultimately there also has to be a demand for events, which can sometimes be expensive, and an audience who can afford them.

We should not take the large spending on cultural events all over Switzerland for granted. It allows Switzerland to stand out, making us a cultural superpower.

HEINZ ECKERT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Heinz Eckert

5

Mailbag

5

Games: Helvetiq

7

Images: The panorama of Thun

8

Switzerland’s ageing population

11

100 years of Pro Patria

12

Politics: Referenda

Regional news

13

Politics: Federal Council election

14

Notes from Parliament

16

Eicher, Hunger, Happy & Co.:
New trends in Swiss folk

18

Interview: Stefan Meierhans –
the price inspector

20

OSA news

22

Discovering Switzerland

23

Echo

Cover picture: Didier Burkhalter (FDP) has been elected as Pascal Couchepin’s successor in the Federal Council and takes over the Department of Home Affairs. Photo: Keystone

IMPRINT: “Swiss Review”, the magazine for the Swiss abroad, is in its 36th year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 14 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 408 000. Regional news appears four times a year.

■ EDITORS: Heinz Eckert (EC), Editor-in-Chief; Rolf Ribi (RR); René Lenzin (RL); Alain Wey (AW); Viviane Aerni (VA); Jean-François Lichtenstern (JFL), responsible for “Notes from Parliament”, Service for the Swiss Abroad, DFA, CH-3003 Berne Translation: CLS Communication AG ■ POSTAL ADDRESS: Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Tel.: +41 31 356 6110, Fax: +41 31 356 61 01, Postal account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. Internet: www.revue.ch ■ E-MAIL: revue@aso.ch ■ PRINT: Zollikofer AG, CH-9001 St.Gallen. ■ CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please advise your local embassy or consulate. Do not write to Berne. ■ All Swiss abroad who are registered with a Swiss representation receive the magazine free of charge. Anyone else can subscribe to the magazine for an annual fee (Switzerland: CHF 25 / abroad: CHF 40). Subscribers are sent the magazine direct from Berne.

Copy deadline for this edition: 24.8.09

«Painted Farmhouses 2010» Calendar from Susanna Kuratli

12 new reproductions
of oil paintings

The paintings show the variety,
beauty and harmony of the many
still existing farming houses all
over Switzerland.

Calendar 42 x 42 cm, Fr. 40.-
+ delivery costs Switzerland
Fr. 7.-, Europe Fr. 12.-,
Other countries Fr. 18.-
Tel. +41 56 634 18 08

susanna@kuratli.com
www.kuratli.com



winexpress.ch

Exclusive Gift Ideas for your
Friends * Family * Business * Partners
in Switzerland

www.revue.ch

We look forward to your online visit.



International Health Insurance

- According to Swiss style
- Worldwide
- Lifelong

Private medical treatment
Free choice of doctor and clinic worldwide
Multilingual hotline 24h/7 days

ASN, since 1991 the experts for international
health insurance, partner of the best Swiss
health insurance companies

Contact us!

Tel: +41 (0)43 399 89 89

e-mail: info@asn.ch

ASN AG
Bederstrasse 51
CH-8002 Zurich
Fax +41(0)43 399 89 88
www.asn.ch



ANZEIGE

Ruhestand im Ausland – Wie kann ich ein regelmässiges Einkommen sichern?

Nach der Pensionierung lässt sich mancher Traum realisieren. Den Lebensabend im Ausland so richtig geniessen kann aber nur, wer über ein ausreichendes, regelmässiges Einkommen verfügt.

Die AHV-Rente aus der Schweiz bildet nur einen Grundstock. Manchmal kommt zusätzliches Einkommen aus einer früheren zweiten Säule oder im Ausland aufgebautes Vermögen für das Alter noch dazu. Dies reicht aber oft bei weitem nicht, um dem Ruhestand sorglos und sicher entgegen zu schauen. Regelmässiges zusätzliches Einkommen wird mit Vorteil unabhängig von den Schwankungen von Börsen- und Devisenkursen erzielt, zum Beispiel durch sichere, planbare Vermögenserträge, Vermögensverzehr oder zusätzliche Renten. Das sollten Sie sich fragen:

- Wie hoch fällt mein regelmässiges Einkommen nach der Pensionierung aus?
- Wie hoch ist mein finanzieller Bedarf?
- Wie ist mein Partner abgesichert?

Viele Auslandschweizer setzen für ihr regelmässiges Einkommen im Ruhestand auf die Lebens-

renten von Swiss Life, da sie eine hohe Sicherheit bieten. Die Rente wird lebenslänglich monatlich ausbezahlt – in CHF oder Euro. Ihre Höhe ist lebenslänglich garantiert und kann von Swiss Life nicht mehr verändert werden; selbst dann nicht, wenn Sie ein biblisches Alter erreichen.

Sie können eine Lebensrente bei Swiss Life auch auf zwei Leben abschliessen: auf sich und den Partner. In diesem Fall wird die vereinbarte Rente bis zum Ableben des Partners weiterbezahlt. So ist auch der Partner ein Leben lang abgesichert.

All diese Themen können Sie in einem Gespräch mit der Agentur für Auslandschweizer klären. Wir zeigen Ihnen gerne Ihre individuelle Situation auf und besprechen mit Ihnen, wie Sie Ihr Einkommen lebenslänglich sichern und den Ruhestand ohne finanzielle Sorgen geniessen können.



Stefan Böni
Leiter Agentur Auslandschweizer

«Geniessen Sie Ihr Leben in finanzieller Sicherheit. Wir unterstützen sie bei der Planung und Umsetzung Ihrer persönlichen Wünsche und Vorstellungen.»

Swiss Life
Dorfstrasse 140, 8706 Meilen
Telefon +41 44 925 39 39
Telefax +41 44 925 39 30
auslandschweizer@swisslife.ch



SwissLife
Bereit für die Zukunft.



Congratulations

I was extremely impressed by the last edition of your magazine. The article on the economic crisis is one of the best I have ever read on the topic. Of course, it is not an exhaustive report – nor indeed could it be – but the main points are set out with great clarity. Many congratulations! The same is also true of the review of René Zeyer's book. It will stand out from the many publications on this topic. However, I was very saddened to hear that "Swiss Review" will only appear four times a year in future. Of course, one has to live within one's means, but I cannot understand Parliament's budget cuts.

W. GEISER, GELSENKIRCHEN,
GERMANY

Fantastic

The new online version of "Swiss Review" is great. I really like the option of clicking on links in the text which take you to other pages and/or information. I also appreciate having access to the editions in other countries. Thank you so much.

F.J. RÖLLI, SANTA MARTA,
COLOMBIA

Swiss humour

I once again took great pleasure in reading "Swiss

Review", in particular the articles on Erni and Swiss humour. The cover page to illustrate Swiss humour was one of the most interesting yet. It was created by a Swiss German artist to illustrate how the French-speaking Swiss are seen by the Swiss Germans. It could equally well have been produced by a French-speaking Swiss to gently poke fun at the Swiss Germans. One of the strong points of Swiss humour is that it can be read in two ways, as such making it universal.

A. CHARBONNET, ATHENS,
GREECE

Bell-ringing

Your article in the August issue about bell-ringing was fascinating. Another reason to tune in to Swiss radio.

J. GRIFFITH, LIVERPOOL,
GREAT BRITAIN

Outlooks and insights

As a Swiss person abroad (20 years in Germany), I read the printed version of "Swiss Review" and enjoy sharing it with my family. We then pass it on to other people or simply leave it on our reading desk for guests. As you cannot always access the computer, I carry "Swiss Review" in my briefcase so I can read it whenever I want.

The printed version of the magazine may cost more and be less environmentally friendly, but it does have a much greater impact and attracts a significantly larger readership. There are insights as well as outlooks.

D. BIANCONI, OBERSCHÖLLENBACH,
GERMANY

Good for Swiss grey matter

"Which famous character was created by the Swiss author Johanna Spyri?" This is the type of question you will find in the parlour game Helvetiq. The answer is, of course, our very own Heidi. You will also discover where the artistic movement of Dadaism was born (Zurich) and which 19th-century Russian author lost a fortune at the casino in Saxon (Dostoevsky). Hadi Barkat, a graduate of the Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL), came up with the idea for the game whilst going through the naturalisation process. This entrepreneur, investor and engineer from the canton of Vaud lives in both Boston and Switzerland. While the game was originally designed to help future applicants for naturalisation to prepare for communal interviews, its

creators quickly realised that Swiss people would also be interested in playing the game to satisfy their appetite for knowledge about Switzerland. Helvetiq's red box contains two games - a quiz and a politics game. The quiz is a small board game, illustrated with a traditional "poya" scene of cows climbing to the mountain pastures. There are 150 cards which contain two questions, one on either side, with one side giving the answer to the other. For example: "Which famous Swiss sweet was introduced in the 1930s by the company Suchard?" And on the reverse side: "Which Swiss company launched the Sugus sweet on the market?" After answering the question, the player throws between one and three dice, depending on the risk incurred and the validity of the answer. In the politics game, each player represents a political movement and attempts to increase his or her influence by entering positions of power in the executive, legislative and judiciary bodies at communal, cantonal and federal level. The winner is the player who climbs the highest up the political ladder.

A fair amount of time is required to learn the rules and how to play the game. A visit to the www.helvetiq.ch website, which offers tips in video format, is recommended. After playing a game, you will begin to understand the strategies and finer points of the game to become a master of the tactics of political gamesmanship. It is a matter of manoeuvring five pieces to climb the rungs of the Swiss political system. You will need votes, special cards and laws, avoiding referenda and relying on initiatives, to score maximum points.

You don't have to be of voting age to play Helvetiq. The quiz can be played by 2 to 4 players aged 8 and above, and the politics game by 3 or 4 players aged 10 and above. The game is also aimed at communes and cantons to prepare new voters for citizenship, to foster the integration of immigrants or to provide a tool to support the naturalisation procedure. The game has been an immediate success with more than 7000 sets already having been sold in French-speaking Switzerland. It is set to be equally well received in German-speaking Switzerland, where it has been available for several months. Available in French, German, Italian and English, Helvetiq can be ordered on the www.helvetiq.ch website.

Perfect occupational benefits – with Soliswiss

Life and health insurance, asset formation, protection against political risk

Would you like a personal consultation? www.soliswiss.ch, T +41 31 380 70 30

SOLISWISS

International Health Insurance

Comprehensive, worldwide cover and free choice of doctor and hospital

SIP SWISS INSURANCE PARTNERS®
Tel. +41 44 266 22 66
info@sip.ch

Competence. Experience. Independent Advice.

www.sip.ch

Jetzt vergleichen unter:

www.auslandstreff.de/Schweizer-Revue.html

A+E Auslands-
Krankenversichert
Expertensicher

Neu! Online Vergleichsrechner für Auslandskrankenversicherungen (für Auslandsaufenthalte ab 1 Jahr bis unbefristet)

A+E GmbH Versicherungsmakler, Telefon +49 (0)228-3388770



MIETAUTOS

Grosse Auswahl, nur 30 min. ab ZH Airport! zB. Monatsmiete inkl. 3000 Km:

Chevrolet Nubira 1.6 Kombi, Fr. 1000.-

Chevrolet Matiz 55PS, Fr. 690.-

Auf Wunsch und mit Aufpreis Airport-Service ZH

Tel. 0041 52 720 30 60

www.ilg-mietauto.ch

Blocher-TV, die wöchentliche Fernsehshow im Internet. Jeden Samstag ab 15 Uhr zu einem brisanten Thema. Nur auf www.teleblocher.ch

BL  **CHER-TV**

A+

International Insurance

International health and loss of income insurance

- Private cover worldwide
- Free choice of doctor and hospital
- Personalised solutions

Multilingual emergency service 24h/7 days
We cover 330'000 satisfied customers worldwide

Contact ASN AG, our distributor in Switzerland!

Tel: +41 43 399 89 89

E-mail: info@asn.ch

ASN AG

Bederstrasse 51, CH-8002 Zurich, Fax +41 43 399 89 88
www.asn.ch www.aplusii.ch



**Leave a lasting legacy behind
Do something for our compatriots abroad**

A legacy or bequest allows you to leave instructions on the disposal of your money, real estate or property*. A bequest to the OSA is an enduring reminder of your solidarity with our compatriots abroad. The Organisation for the Swiss Abroad uses all such funds to assist Swiss Abroad in accordance with the testator's instructions.

*To do this you need to draw up a will. The OSA offers an informative, easy-to-understand brochure on how to draw up a will: Contact the OSA Legal Service, "Rechtsdienst der ASO", Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne or e-mail info@aso.ch

Help us to help you!



Rente oder und Kapital

Der Anlageplan RentenTIP erhält Ihr Kapital und sichert Ihnen ein regelmässiges Einkommen in Form einer Rente von bis zu 6% pro Jahr Ihres investierten Kapitals*.

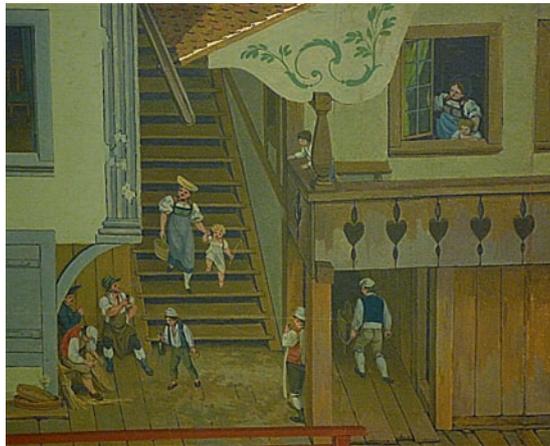
Wir freuen uns auf Ihre Kontaktaufnahme
www.protip.ch | info@protip.ch | +41(0)52 369 05 65

* Beispiel : Eine Anlage von € 100'000 ergibt eine Auszahlung von € 6'000 pro Jahr.

ProTIP Financial Products AG, Hauptstrasse 36A, CH-8546 - Islikon

The world's oldest panoramic painting

Basel artist, Marquard Woher, started work on his enormous 7.5×38.3 -metre circular painting of the city of Thun 200 years ago. It provides a panoramic view of the city at the time from the rooftop of a house on Obere Hauptgasse. The panorama is on display at the Kunstmuseum in Thun's Schadaupark and requires urgent restoration. www.kunstmuseum-thun.ch



Switzerland's getting older

Swiss people today are healthier and living longer than their forefathers. "Keep active as you grow older" is the maxim of the older generation. But there comes a time when they can no longer manage on their own. Care for the elderly then becomes an issue, and healthcare costs become a matter of political debate.

Delicate questions are raised about the distribution of the burden between the generations – are the contributions made by the young and old "fair"? By Rolf Ribi

Life expectancy in Switzerland has increased almost continually since 1880 – it was 40 years of age back then, whereas today it stands at over 80, in fact 79 for men and 84 for women. Average life expectancy increased by 4 to 5 months each year until the middle of the last century, and has since risen by around 3 months a year. The reasons for a longer life were initially falling mortality rates among infants and children, and later a decline in the mortality rate among older and elderly people.

Put another way, only a third of men born in Switzerland in 1880 lived to celebrate their 70th birthday, whereas this figure increased to two thirds among those born in 1930. And half the male offspring who came into the world in 1940 will live beyond the age of 80. In 1991, a 65-year-old woman had a remaining life expectancy of just over 20 years; by 2030 this will increase to more than 24 years. The corresponding figures for men are 15.5 years and almost 21 years. The Federal Council report entitled "Strategy for a Swiss policy on old age" states that "owing

to the greater life expectancy after 65 years of age, many people will reach a very old age and will therefore contribute to the ageing of the population". It concludes: "The population in Switzerland will age significantly and rapidly over the coming years."

The ageing of the population is also linked to the birth rate. The birth rate in Switzerland was still very high in the baby boom years between 1940 and 1960. However, it fell rapidly and considerably in the early seventies. It has since levelled out at the very low rate of 1.5 children per woman. 40 years ago, women in Switzerland had their first child at the age of 24, whereas today they are 31.

The baby boomers will reach retirement age between 2005 and 2035, and will still have a high remaining life expectancy. This will have an impact on the age structure of Switzerland's population. According to the Federal Statistical Office's moderate scenario, the proportion of over-64-year-olds as part of the total population will increase from around 16% at present to over 24% in

2030 (an increase of almost 800,000 people). The proportion of under-20s will fall at least to 18%. The age structure will therefore change dramatically in future.

Healthcare and its cost

The elderly in the Canton of Zurich were recently surveyed about their health and well-being. The conclusion of the report by the Institute for Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Zurich is that three quarters of those aged over 65 in Zurich feel well both physically and psychologically. Today, they are "in significantly better health than previous generations". The situation in Switzerland's largest canton is in line with statements found in the Federal Council report on old age policy: 68% of people aged 75 and above living at home consider their health to be "usually good to very good".

If Swiss people are to keep on living for longer and make up a growing proportion of the population, this will also have an impact on healthcare costs. Even though "age

is not a key factor in the most expensive cases of illness" (according to the biggest health insurance provider, Helsana), healthcare costs do increase in old age, particularly in respect of medicines and stays in hospital (cardiovascular problems). At Berne's Inselspital, patients aged between 60 and 79 generally cost 18% more than the average case (costs fall again for those aged over 80 as not all possible forms of medical intervention are used at this stage).

Higher healthcare costs and sharp rises in health insurance premiums have sparked a debate about appropriate treatment for very elderly people. For example, should a new heart valve be inserted into a 90-year-old patient at a cost of CHF 30,000? Bernhard Meier, head of cardiology at the Inselspital in



Three generations of a traditional large family, around 1930.

Berne, believes the operation should be performed as the elderly patient would otherwise become dependent on care. He makes reference to the National Health Service in the UK where a patient of this age would not even receive a pacemaker costing CHF 4,000.

Where should care for the elderly be provided?

Around 135,000 elderly people in Switzerland are unable to live at home independently. They require care, either at home, in a home for the elderly or in a nursing home. A person is deemed in need of care and assistance if he or she is no longer able to manage to carry out everyday tasks independently. Fewer than 10% of the elderly under the age of 79 require care in Switzerland. It is a fifth among those aged 80 to 84, while more than a third of 85-year-olds are dependent on care and assistance.

The most important institution for care duties in old age is the family. Care is provided by families in three out of four cases. A large proportion of dementia patients (more than 60,000 people) are looked after at home. However, the family support network is being stretched to the limit. The Federal Council believes day-care and respite services have a key role to play. Well-established services (with local differences) offering home-care support are provided by private non-profit organisations, such as Pro Senectute, the Swiss Red Cross and the Spitex organisations.

But what if the daily visits from care services are no longer enough and there are no family members available to help out? Then the care and home-help services provided by people from the Philippines or Poland may have to be relied on. It is estimated that there are as many as 20,000 illegal workers living in Switzerland without official papers providing services for elderly people, who are alone or suffering from dementia, assisting them as carers, cooks, clean-

ers and companions. These women, who are often well-educated, cost between CHF 4,000 and CHF 8,000 a month.

According to François Höpflinger, a researcher into old age, more people in Switzerland spend their twilight years in a nursing home or a home for the elderly than in other countries. He says: "More than half the over-80s die in a nursing home. Our tradition of family support is not as strong as in other countries." Around 77,000 men and women are looked after in Switzerland's 1,500 nursing homes and homes for the elderly. Offerings today range from the traditional nursing home for old people in the village to state-of-the-art residences for senior citizens in magnificent surroundings.

Two examples: the Villa Böcklin nursing home at the foot of the Zürichberg belongs to the private Tertianum Group and offers "a life in a dignified and private environment" in 26 care apartments, each with its own support service. A carer visits the home four times a week to accompany residents on walks, outings or trips to concerts. The cost of a stay there per person varies from CHF 229 to CHF 470 a day for one-room or two-room studios, in addition to the cost of care. The town of Wädenswil's Frohmatt home for the sick and elderly accommodates 135 people, and contains a residential group for dementia patients and an Alzheimer's unit. The offering ranges from single rooms to rooms with four beds. The management explains that they do more than in a hotel-style private residence to establish relation-

ships. Nursing home charges can amount to over CHF 300 per day.

François Höpflinger explains: "The trend today is clearly towards residential care with service." People want to live alone, but at the same time have access to social structures, support and the opportunity for social contact. He adds, however: "An outpatient solution cannot be provided right up to the end. If patients are no longer mobile and dementia takes hold, this is no longer feasible."

Who pays for care for the elderly? Mandatory health insurance covers the costs of medical care irrespective of the type of care or where it is provided (in a nursing home or at home). The cost of staying in a nursing home must be paid for by those requiring care (if necessary through supplementary benefits). The law on the financing of care is now set to be revised – the Federal Council, cantons, health insurance schemes and Spitex care organisations are all fighting their corner.

Residence in old age

A time comparison clearly shows that more and more elderly people want to stay in their own homes for longer. Over 90% of people today still live in their own homes up to the age of 80 to 84. And it is still almost 40% among the 90 to 94-year-olds. The extension of outpatient care and home care make it possible for people to stay inside their own four walls for longer.

Few elderly people live in small accommodation with just one or two rooms. The

vast majority consider their quality of accommodation to be good or very good. This is important because their own home plays a pivotal role in the emotional lives of the elderly. Even though some of these homes are not designed with the elderly in mind (doorsteps, stairs, bath, kitchen), moving into nursing homes and homes for the elderly is being delayed for



A modern "grandmother" today.

longer. Only a quarter of people aged 80 to 84 living at home have provisionally registered for a home.

In the past, almost every village and town in Switzerland had a "municipal home" for the elderly. Later came non-profit centres with public support offering accommodation for the elderly, which was much sought-after at the time. More recently, private operators have identified the elderly as an attractive market segment. Exclusive residences for senior citizens and attractive options for those on average incomes are being made available. The Age Foundation is a private institution that has appeared on the scene providing financial support for innovative projects for accommodation for the elderly.

The Solinsieme project in St.Gallen received the Age Foundation's Age Award in 2007. It represents a new form of co-existence for elderly people, living on their own yet together. 17 homes of various sizes, each with its own character offering residents individuality and the option to retreat, were created in former factory buildings. Spacious communal rooms, such as large-scale kitchens, work rooms and studios, underline the social aspect of the residential project. It is aimed at people "seeking quality for a new chapter in their lives, who are open to alternative forms of social co-existence".

The elderly – rich and poor

Most pensioners in Switzerland are financially secure and safe from poverty. This is the conclusion of a substantial study carried out by the Federal Social Insurance Office, which examined data from 1.5 million people aged between 25 and 99 on income and assets. A comparison of the various demographic groups shows that pensioners are the best off financially. Only 6% of the elderly are classed as poor, while almost one in five retired couples has assets of at least CHF 1 million.

Pensioners' income comes from four sources – around 40% comes from the AHV (old-age) pension, around 20% from pension funds, around 30% from income on assets and around 10% from earned income. However, 14% of those in retirement only have income from their old-age pension (and any AHV supplementary benefits). The average assets of the generation in retirement stand at more than CHF 300,000.

Younger generations under 45 have on average fewer assets than those in retirement, and even their income is often lower than that of the older generation.

However, a study by Pro Senectute shows that there is still a risk of poverty among older people. It estimates that no fewer than 30% of pensioners live off their AHV pension alone, with not all married couples receiving the maximum pension. 12% of AHV recipients are dependent on supplementary benefits, but a third are poor all the same. "Poverty in old age is not a thing of the past", confirms the sociologist Ueli Mäder. The differences in terms of income and assets are not as great in any other age group as they are among the over-60s.

The distribution of the burden between the generations

What is the distribution between the generations like in terms of contributions made by young and old? Is the relationship between the generations fair? A study by the Swiss National Science Foundation concludes that the "co-existence of the generations is largely based on solidarity". Relationships between generations of families have "improved rather than deteriorated" in recent years. The report nevertheless calls for a specific generational policy with the aim of fostering solidarity between the generations.

There can be no doubt that the generation in employment makes a great contribution to social insurance to the benefit of pensioners. With regard to AHV, there are now four people in employment to every pensioner. The contribution of the under-60s to care for the elderly is estimated at CHF 10 billion. Pensioners assist the younger generation with private help in return for their contributions. This includes providing care for grandchildren and financial support for their education. Help from grandparents often allows daughters and daughters-in-law to go out to work. Inheritances are also significant: these private financial transfers from the old to the young are estimated at CHF 30 billion. The disadvantage is the highly unequal distribution among recipients. In addition, a greater life expectancy means that inheritances are being received later and later.

Researchers into old age believe there is little chance of conflict between the generations. Social security payments and sup-

port from family members create solidarity between them. Social differences within the individual age groups are more significant than the differences between the generations (according to François Höpflinger).

The dignity and burden of old age

"We are close to achieving mankind's great dream – many more people living much longer in much better health, irrespective of social status", writes the economics professor, Thomas Straubhaar. It is in everyone's interests that people can remain in employment for as long as possible. He adds: "Work provides personal satisfaction, fosters social contact and makes people feel that they are still useful." Old-age researcher Höpflinger explains: "Many elderly people today engage in further education, spend a lot of time travelling, work for longer, use the Internet and have more money than before." Journalist Beat Bühlmann believes that old age offers "new freedom: as traditional social roles disappear and societal connotations fade away, alternative, often creative perspectives open up".

Social ethics expert, Hans Ruh, calls for a new outlook for an increasingly older society, including for the very elderly. He says: "We have to learn that there is dignity in dependence. We must accept that fragility is part of life." The former ailing Pope Wojtyla showed that "fragility is also an aspect of humanity". 75-year-old popular American author, Philip Roth, sees things radically differently. For the main character in his novel "Everyman", who is suffering from prostate cancer, "eluding death seemed to have become the central business of his life and bodily decay his entire story". Roth writes: "Old age isn't a battle, old age is a massacre."

The actor and singer, Maurice Chevalier, saw things in a more philosophical and ironic way: "Getting old isn't so bad when you think about the alternative."

DOCUMENTATION

Strategie für eine schweizerische Alterspolitik (Strategy for a Swiss policy on old age). Federal Council Report of 29 August 2007. www.bsv-admin.ch
Perrig-Chiello Pasqualina, Höpflinger François, Suter Christian: Generationen – Strukturen und Beziehungen. Generationenbericht Schweiz. Seismo Verlag 2008. CHF 58, EUR 38.50
www.bibliothek.pro-senectute.ch
www.doku-zug.ch

A foundation with a rich tradition is celebrating its anniversary.

Everyone knows the 1 August emblem, which has been sold for decades in the run-up to Swiss National Day. But what was the original vision behind this emblem? It represents the principle of solidarity and patriotism, fostering cultural and social endeavour for the benefit of the Swiss people. By Viviane Aerni

It was the turn of the 20th century when Albert Schuster, a patriotic and charitably minded businessman from St. Gallen, laid the foundations for the Pro Patria foundation. His vision was to establish the celebration of Swiss federalism, which until then had received little recognition, as part of Swiss tradition by introducing patriotic festivities and giving Swiss National Day a deeper meaning of solidarity. The idea was for Swiss people to come together thanks to a common charitable appeal as part of Swiss National Day to help less fortunate members of society. Albert Schuster founded the association Swiss National Day Donation in 1909.

Initially, the association just sold franked postcards specially created for this purpose by popular Swiss artists. The 1 August emblem, which is steeped in tradition, was created in 1923 and has since appeared in a new design every year. The stamps, which have been issued since 1938 in conjunction with the Swiss Post Office, were a major success for Pro Patria at the end of the 1970s. At this time, the carriage surcharges generated more than CHF 4 million a year.

In 1991, the Swiss National Day Donation became a politically independent and non-denomina-

tional public foundation called Pro Patria. The foundation is not subsidised by federal government or the cantons. Fixed administrative costs are intentionally kept low. However, more than 40,000 volunteer workers support Pro Patria by enthusiastically selling its various products on the street or directly. The foundation depends entirely on the solidarity of the Swiss people and its friends abroad for funds.

In the post-war years, money collected was primarily given to needy people among the Swiss population. Owing to the expansion of government and private social institutions, the charity collections have become less of an imperative. This means that only specific social Pro Patria projects still exist today, such as emergency aid for mothers. The proceeds of the collections are now primarily used for the salvation, preservation and maintenance of Swiss cultural heritage, such as

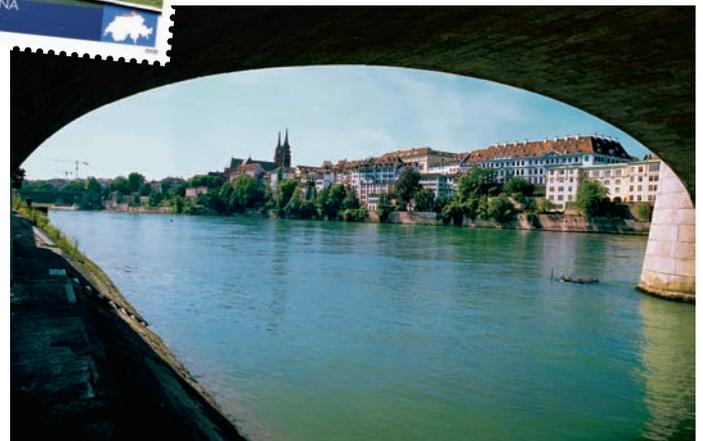
historic buildings and cultural landscapes. The foundation's board, which is made up of representatives from all parts of the country, decides on a priority for the collection each year. This year's collection is for the "Cultural Routes of Switzerland" project. The proceeds are to be used to restore historically significant route sections over the coming years.

However, like many other fundraising organisations, Pro Patria is also being hit by a fall in income. This is not primarily down to the Swiss people being less willing to make donations or waning patriotism. The main reason is the current age of telecommunications where stamps are less important and sales figures are on the decline. Like all other companies, charitable foundations are also at the mercy of changing times. Ideas and concepts have to be refreshed, which Pro Patria is attempting to achieve in its anniversary year, not least through humorous commercials.

Over the course of its 100-year history, Pro Patria has also collected for the Swiss abroad on many occasions. The first time was with the second emblem back in 1924. Other collections were in 1930, 1938, 1946, 1953, 1965, 1972, 1978, 1984, 1990 and 1993.



Focus of the collection in the anniversary year 2010: Cultural Routes of Switzerland. These Pro Patria stamps depict the steps cut into the rock above the Plan de Barasson along the Great St. Bernard Pass and the "proudest side of the city of Basel".



Banning minarets and the export of weapons?

Two popular initiatives aim to ban the construction of minarets and the export of war materials. A referendum will be held on the proposals on 29 November. The use of jet-fuel duty for air traffic will also be voted on. By René Lenzin

The Swiss weapons industry achieved record exports of war materials last year, totalling over CHF 720 million. The biggest customer was Pakistan, which purchased CHF 110 million worth of weapons from Switzerland. While manufacturers and their employees are delighted, opponents of such exports are furious. Switzerland is following the global armament trend, according to the Group for a Switzerland without an Army (GSoA). It believes exports to Pakistan, in particular, are irresponsible.

GSoA feels vindicated in its desire to ban the export of war materials. In September 2007, it submitted a popular initiative with this objective. The initiative also aims to stop the transfer of and trade in weapons. And it calls for the Swiss government to support international efforts aimed at disarmament and arms control. The initiative is backed by the Social Democrats and the Greens.

However, the Federal Council and the conservative parties oppose the proposal. They believe that current export controls strike a balance between various interest groups. They maintain that export licences are in line with the objectives of Swiss foreign policy, on the one hand, and the inter-

ests of national security and the economy, on the other. The Federal Council and a parliamentary majority argue that approval of the popular initiative would jeopardise the survival of the Swiss arms industry and put national defence at risk as a result. The National Council rejected the initiative by 131 votes to 63, and the Council of States by 35 votes to 7.

Are minarets part of religious freedom?

The “Against the construction of minarets” popular initiative was submitted in July 2008. It aims to introduce a complete ban on the building of new minarets in Switzerland. The initiative committee argues that the minaret has no religious significance as an architectural structure, but is instead a symbol of a religious-political claim to power that contradicts Switzerland’s constitution and legal system. The initiative’s proponents, who are supported in Parliament by the Swiss People’s Party (SVP), say a ban on minarets would not affect religious freedom.

The other major parties, and the Federal Council, oppose the initiative. They say it goes against many of Switzerland’s principles enshrined in the Federal Constitution,

such as the principle of equality under the law, the freedom of religion and conscience, the ownership guarantee, the principle of proportionality and the requirement of compliance with international law. They also argue that a ban would represent a disproportionate intervention into cantonal responsibilities. They maintain local authorities are best placed to approve or ban minarets based on the applicable building and planning laws. The National Council rejected the initiative by 132 votes to 51, and the Council of States by 39 votes to 3.

Jet-fuel duty to go towards air traffic?

Federal government levies a jet-fuel duty on private domestic flights. As international commercial flights are exempt from this duty owing to international agreements, the income generated is low (below CHF 50 million). Until now, half has gone to the federal treasury and half to road transport. The Federal Council and Parliament have now agreed a constitutional amendment under which 50% of jet-fuel duty would be used for air traffic. The aim is to finance contributions to environmental protection and safety measures. The National Council approved the proposal by 124 votes to 63, and the Council of States by 33 votes to 7. Only the Social Democrats and the Greens rejected the proposal.

All three referendum proposals concern the constitution. They therefore require the approval of the people and the cantons.

More money for invalidity insurance. The Swiss people approve a tax increase for invalidity insurance and abolish the general popular initiative. By René Lenzin

The reorganisation of invalidity insurance (IV), which has chronic deficits, has taken another step forward. The electorate has approved a fixed-term increase in VAT. From 2011, a 0.4% rise in VAT, or around CHF 1.1 billion, will flow into the invalidity insurance fund’s coffers for a period of seven years. Together with substantive reforms, these extra funds should ensure the financial stability of invalidity insurance and reduce its deficits. Invalidity insurance will also receive

initial capital of CHF 5 billion from the old-age and survivors’ insurance fund.

With a turnout of just over 41%, 54.5% of voters approved the proposal. However, it almost failed to secure a cantonal majority – 12 cantons voted in favour, and 11 against. The tax increase received most support in French-speaking Switzerland, Ticino, Grisons and the urban parts of German-speaking Switzerland. It was rejected in the rural cantons of central and eastern Switzerland.

Following its introduction in 2003

67.9% of the electorate and all cantons have now voted in favour of abolishing the general popular initiative. This new democratic instrument was enshrined in the constitution in 2003. It was intended to enable initiative committees to present political issues as general proposals instead of formulating constitutional amendments. However, when it came to implementing the instrument, the Federal Council and Parliament came to the conclusion that the new popular right was too complicated in practice. It will now be removed from the constitution.

Burkhalter becomes Couchepin's successor. Didier Burkhalter, the Neuchâtel member of the Council of States, succeeds Federal Councillor Pascal Couchepin. The Christian Democrats failed in their attempt to win back a second seat in government at the expense of the Free Democrats. By René Lenzin



Didier Burkhalter, the new FDP Federal Councillor, was elected with 129 votes.

The Federal Council election on 16 September went very much the way of the Free Democratic Liberals (FDP). The party's two candidates – Didier Burkhalter, the Neuchâtel member of the Council of States, and Christian Lüscher, National Councillor from Geneva – won more votes together than is required for an absolute majority. Following Lüscher's withdrawal after the third round of voting with slightly fewer votes, Burkhalter was elected in the fourth round by a comfortable margin of 23 votes over his opponent, Urs Schwaller of the Christian Democrats (CVP).

The contest was, in the end, less exciting than anticipated. While Burkhalter received the support of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) almost en bloc, Schwaller did not succeed in winning the full backing of the Social Democrat/Green camp. Some left-wingers/Greens may have voted for Burkhalter because they favoured a "true" French-speaking Swiss over Schwaller, a German-speaker from Fribourg. Others probably believed the FDP deserved the seat more than the CVP

because of their slightly higher share of the vote. The FDP also talked of a "victory for concordance".

However, the term concordance has lost some of its poignancy since the end of the "magic formula", and is interpreted by all parties to their advantage (see box). In purely mathematical terms, both the Greens and the SVP had a stronger claim to the vacant seat than the FDP. The CVP attempted to win back the second Federal Council seat that it lost in 2003 by highlighting the strength of its faction and its role as an intermediary between opposing political extremes.

Middle-of-the-road consensus politician

The election of Didier Burkhalter will hardly alter the political balance in national government. The 49-year-old economist has established a reputation as a heavyweight dealmaker who favours consensus-based solutions over political controversy. Burkhalter was elected to the communal parliament of the Neuchâtel suburb of Hauterive at the

age of 28, and, two years later, to Neuchâtel's city government, on which he served until 2005. He also represented his party in the cantonal parliament from 1990 to 2001. In 2003, the people of Neuchâtel elected him to the National Council, and four years later to the Council of States. Burkhalter is married with three sons. Unusually for a Free Democrat, he did not hold a single Board of Directors' mandate before entering national government.

As a member of parliament, Burkhalter was primarily involved with institutional, security policy and educational issues. He now takes over the Department of Home Affairs from his predecessor, Pascal Couchepin, with its many complex areas in need of improvement. In view of constantly rising health insurance premiums, his main objective will have to be to produce reforms to break the deadlock on healthcare policy. An almost equally difficult task will be putting forward proposals, capable of securing majority support, for necessary reforms in old-age pension provision. And finally, little headway has yet been made with the long-term objective of reorganising the Swiss university system. Didier Burkhalter will certainly not be able to complain about a lack of work.

CONCORDANCE – A KEYWORD

In Switzerland's political system, concordance means that the main parties in government work closely together. For 44 years, between 1959 and 2003, this principle was embodied by the so-called magic formula. The Free Democrats (FDP), the Christian Democrats (CVP) and the Social Democrats (SP) each had two seats on the Federal Council, while the Swiss People's Party (SVP) had one. The astonishing rise, by Swiss standards, of the SVP from the mid-1990s threatened to undermine this formula, and in 2003 the SVP finally won a second seat in government at the expense of the CVP. There has since been controversy over the term concordance. There are contrasting interpretations: a purely mathematical one – whereby the votes of the parties and/or the number of members in their faction are decisive – and one based on the issues, according to which a minimum consensus should be reached between the Federal Council parties on the most important political objectives.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON CHANGES TO THE METHOD OF DELIVERY FOR "SWISS REVIEW"

"Swiss Review" online – we are modernising our service

Various articles in "Swiss Review" have made our readers aware of the new, modern online version of this publication. This helps improve information for Swiss people abroad by making the service more modern and attractive, and offering the following benefits:

- Quicker and, in many countries, more reliable delivery. Recipients receive "Swiss Review" as soon as it has been published, keeping them more up-to-date.
- In line with the general increasing shift in reading habits towards the Internet. This appeals to the younger generation in particular.
- In keeping with the demand for the introduction of e-voting for Swiss citizens abroad.
- Helps meet the required expansion of online services.
- Access to all regional editions.
- Free choice of available languages: readers can select the language they desire, which is useful, for example, in families where more than one language is spoken.
- Option of forwarding articles electronically.
- Eco-friendly/supports sustainability.

"Swiss Review" online – cost reductions in the interests of readers

Online delivery of "Swiss Review" also enables savings to be made on printing and distribution costs. Cost reductions achieved through electronic delivery should enable the number of issues, which had to be reduced to four following budget cuts in 2008, to be increased to six a year again in the medium term, which is in the interests of our readers. As explained below, the prevention of multiple deliveries should also help to achieve this goal.

Therefore, online delivery is to become standard from 2010 ...

To ensure both cost reductions and service improvements through modernisation, delivery of the *online* version of "Swiss Review" will become *standard from 2010*. All entitled persons, whose e-mail addresses have been registered, will receive the publication electronically, *except for those who have informed us by this time that they wish to receive the printed version*. So far, 15,000 Swiss abroad have already responded to our appeal to register for the electronic version of "Swiss Review" at www.swissabroad.ch. We would like to thank them and hope that they and others who plan to join our electronic readership enjoy reading the online version.

... while we stand by our principles ...

However, we still stand by the principle that all entitled Swiss citizens abroad have the right to delivery of "Swiss Review". Readers who do not have an e-mail address will continue to receive it by post. In fact, we are showing even greater respect for this principle, as readers now have the option of choosing between the printed and electronic versions of "Swiss Review". Swiss citizens abroad who have an e-mail address but *wish to receive the printed version* should register at www.swissabroad.ch or contact their embassy or consulate (if they have not already done so).

... and offer a preliminary trial read

We would initially like to offer all Swiss citizens abroad entitled to receive "Swiss Review" the opportunity of a *trial read* of the electronic version of the October edition of "Swiss Review". This means that even those who have already registered for the printed version, but have an e-mail address, will receive this one-off trial copy. If you enjoy it, you can then register for the online version at www.swissabroad.ch. Otherwise, you will continue to receive the printed version.

To meet the right of Swiss citizens abroad to information and to ensure that there are no gaps in delivery we require your correct current address. We therefore kindly ask you to inform us of any changes to your postal or e-mail address by following the instructions below.

Avoiding multiple deliveries – one printed copy per household

Lots of households receive several copies of the printed version of "Swiss Review". This entails significant additional costs. As a result, *from 2010* all households which previously received several copies of the printed version, without expressly registering for them, will only be sent one printed copy in order to achieve the above-mentioned goal of reducing costs. *However, anyone entitled can order their own printed version by informing us at www.swissabroad.ch or by informing their Swiss representation.*

Summary

Delivery of the *electronic version* of "Swiss Review" will become *standard from 2010*. This move aims to provide readers with an improved, more modern service with the objective of returning to a higher number of editions by reducing printing and distribution costs.

All entitled Swiss citizens abroad, whose e-mail address we have, will therefore receive the online version of "Swiss Review". Those who do not have an e-mail address will continue to be sent the printed version. This also applies to those who have already registered for this version. Anyone who would like to receive the *printed version*, but has not yet registered, can also *request it* by registering at www.swissabroad.ch or by informing their Swiss representation. It will also be possible to change the desired method of delivery at any time in the same way. We kindly ask you to use the same approach to report any changes to your postal or e-mail address to ensure that there are no gaps in delivery and that your right to information is met.

In the first month, there may be overlaps with the processing of addresses. It is therefore possible that you may receive a different method of delivery for "Swiss Review" to the one for which you have registered. We kindly ask for your understanding.

To ensure smooth delivery in future, please inform your representation immediately of any changes to your postal or e-mail address. You can also register your e-mail address directly at www.swissabroad.ch.

FDFA: new head of the SSA

Jean-François Lichtenstern has been appointed head of the Service for the Swiss Abroad (SSA) in Political Affairs Division VI (Swiss Abroad). This division comprises the Service for the Swiss

Abroad, the Consular Protection section and the agency that provides crisis management and information for travellers. The head of the division, ambassador Markus Börlin, previously also managed the Service for the Swiss Abroad.

Born in 1951, Jean-François Lichtenstern, from Romainmôtier-Envy (Vaud), joined the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) in 1974. After training in Berne and Cologne/Bonn, he started his career as consular secretary in Toronto (1977), from where he was transferred to Santiago in Chile in 1981. In 1984, he was appointed to the commercial section of Switzerland's consulate general in New York, then, in 1987, to the Swiss representation in Lyon as vice-consul. After that, he took over the management of the chancelleries of our embassies in Brasilia (1990), and Athens (1993), as first secretary, before returning to Berne in 1997. He was then responsible for the promotion of exports at the Service for Financial and Economic Issues in Political Affairs Division V, as a diplomatic officer. In 2001, he went to Hong Kong as first assistant to the head of post. After being appointed consul general, he ran the Consulate General of Switzerland in San Francisco from October 2005 to July 2009. Mr Lichtenstern took up his new position in



Berne at the beginning of August in order to immediately participate in the Congress of the Swiss Abroad, held in Lucerne from 7 to 9 August 2009. At this event, ambassador Markus Börlin introduced his new colleague, and head of service, to his future dialogue partners and various individuals and institutions, such as the Council of the Swiss Abroad.

Change of address and contact details

Please inform your local representation of any changes to your postal address, telephone numbers or e-mail address in good time – www.eda.admin.ch (Representations). You can also register your e-mail address directly at www.swissabroad.ch. Your assistance will save us making time-consuming inquiries, and is the only way to ensure that you automatically receive your voting documents (provided you are registered with a Swiss polling commune), and “Swiss Review” at your new address. Please do not send notice of changes to your address and contact details to the Service for the Swiss Abroad of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), or the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad in Berne.

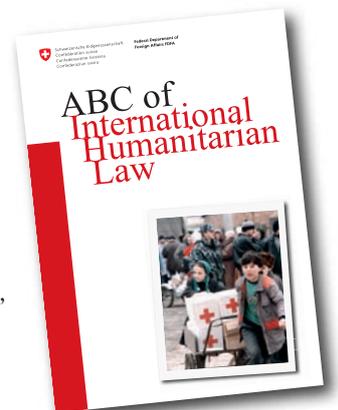
ABC of International Humanitarian Law

Every day we see newspaper articles on civil wars, refugees, torture, peace-keeping operations, war crimes and terrorism, etc.

International humanitarian rights govern warfare and protect the victims of armed conflicts. The brochure entitled “ABC of

International Humanitarian Law”, produced by the FDFA, provides a clear explanation of the most common terms and the significance of the Geneva Conventions and the Hague Convention.

The “ABC of International Humanitarian Law” can be downloaded in English, German, French or Italian from the FDFA's website www.eda.admin.ch (Documentation – Publications), or obtained from the following address: Information FDFA, Bundeshaus West, CH-3003 Berne



Registration of changes to civil status

Changes to civil status concerning Swiss citizens abroad must be recorded in the family register of their place of origin in Switzerland.

A fully updated family register ensures that passports can be issued and matters of inheritance can be settled, etc. If the birth of a child is not registered before the age of 22, he/she loses the right to Swiss citizenship.

Please register any forthcoming marriage, divorce, birth of a child or death of a family member immediately with the representation where you are registered (embassy, consulate general). The representation will inform you of the documents required for entry in the family register. Addresses and additional information can be found on the websites of the representations (www.eda.admin.ch – Representations).

NEW POPULAR INITIATIVES AND REFERENDA

At the time of going to press, no new popular initiatives had been launched since the last edition. 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.

Referendum on 29 November 2009

The Federal Council has decided to hold a referendum on the following three proposals on 29 November 2009:

- The federal decree to create special funding for tasks related to air traffic
- The popular initiative “For a ban on the export of war materials” and
- The popular initiative “Against the construction of minarets”.

The Federal Council's explanatory notes on these proposals can be found at www.bk.admin.ch from 20 September 2009.

RESPONSIBLE FOR THE OFFICIAL FDFA INFORMATION PAGES:
JEAN-FRANÇOIS LICHTENSTERN, SERVICE FOR THE SWISS ABROAD/FDFA,
BUNDESGASSE 32, CH-3003 BERNE
TEL. +41 31 324 23 98, FAX +41 31 322 78 66
WWW.EDA.ADMIN.CH/ASD, PA6-AUSLANDCH@EDA.ADMIN.CH

Eicher, Hunger, Happy & Co.

New trends are emerging in Swiss folk music. Stephan Eicher has always been the most revered Swiss performer in Europe, but now Zurich's Sophie Hunger and other Swiss songwriters are also making their mark. We take the plunge into a world of sound.

By Alain Wey

Is Swiss folk music in good shape? With leading performers like Stephan Eicher, Sophie Hunger and Heidi Happy, it most certainly is. Nonetheless, it is difficult to label these performers as folk artists as their music embraces other styles ranging from jazz to rock. To understand the new trend in Swiss folk, which is also eminently exportable, you have to take a look at the Swiss music scene. The only database of Swiss artists (www.mp3.ch) contains no fewer than 12,000 groups and performers. But few of those categorised as songwriters have managed to achieve success abroad as easily as Sophie Hunger. You would have to go back to Stephan Eicher to find an artist who has been as well received in neighbouring France. There have been rave reviews in England and Germany as well as in France. And this is just the start of her career.

A trend has emerged in Switzerland in recent years with young female performers growing in stature and assimilating influences from American, English and Scandinavian folk music. The most popular ambassadors of Swiss folk are Sophie Hunger,

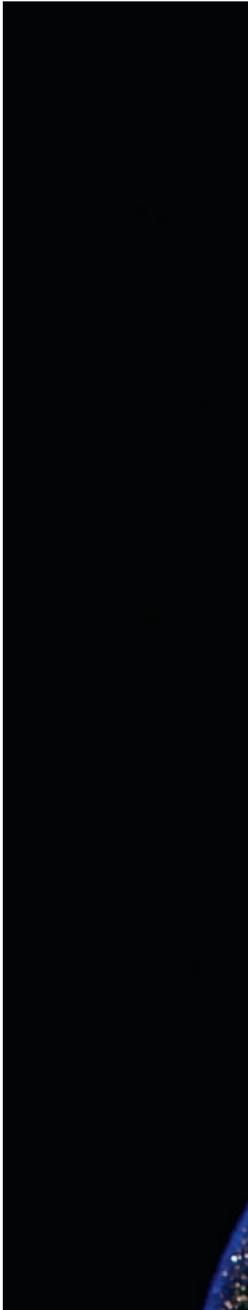
Heidi Happy and, more recently, Evelinn Trouble. This is a fine example of a local and global Switzerland showing openness to the various musical influences around, taking its cue from Stephan Eicher who always favoured this kind of eclectic approach. The Bernese artist also knows the importance of relationships and contacts when it comes to exporting music. After all, it was Eicher who introduced Sophie Hunger to France when she performed in the first part of his concerts in Paris in May 2007.

To understand the huge impact Sophie Hunger has made on audiences, you only need to take a look at her "myspace" page, which has almost a million visitors. This 26-year-old is on her way to conquering Europe. "Sketches on Sea", her debut album recorded at home in Zurich in 2006, first won over the critics and then her musical peers. It was the vocalist of "Young Gods" who passed the album on to Stephan Eicher. Her reputation is growing, and it is not by chance that her album "Monday's Ghost", which came out in October 2008, stood at the top of the Swiss charts from the first

week of its release. Praised to the heavens in Germany and in France, she has been compared to British artist P. J. Harvey and Iceland's Björk in the UK. Her captivating, velvety voice and untainted songwriting have obviously hit the spot. Hunger's influences include both Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash, whose styles she blends on her defiant, frenetic album "Sophie Hunger Blues". Since her talent has blossomed and after meeting inspirational figures like Eicher (they sing "Spiegelbild" as a duet), the "Young Gods" and trumpet player Erik Truffaz, nothing seems to be able to stop her. The press in French-speaking Switzerland is heralding "Sophie Hunger's great destiny", while the French magazine "Les Inrockuptibles" proclaims her a "songwriter of immense personality with a scintillating album". Her tracks fluctuate between folk, jazz, pop and rock, all revealing a fierce independence in terms of writing and expression. She says: "My inspiration comes from my passion for playing, in the primary sense of the word. I don't know how I would describe my music, but all I can say is that I play and invent things like a child."* The daughter of a diplomat, she was born in Berne and grew up in the UK, Germany and Switzerland. It may well have been the time spent drifting



Leading the way: Stephan Eicher and Sophie Hunger





Rising star of the Swiss folk scene: Sophie Hunger

at university which finally led her towards music in 2003. She resumed the piano and learned to play the guitar. She said: "I have always loved music, but I stopped myself from pursuing it. I kept my distance. I had so many things in my head, I analysed everything. I had to still my consciousness, and forget my own identity. It was when I managed to achieve a state of nothingness that I was finally able to open myself up to music."^{*}

Performing around twelve concerts a month in 2009, the artist from Zurich is gearing up to conquer the UK next year. Sophie Hunger seems to look to the future with a sense of irony and light-heartedness.

When asked what we can expect from her, she said: "I'll find out what came first: the chicken or the egg!"

^{*} Les Inrockuptibles (23/02/2009), Monday's Ghost (label: Irascible) www.myspace.com/sophiehunger

Evelinn Trouble

A former member of Sophie Hunger's chorus, Evelinn Trouble released her first album, "Arbitrary Act", at the beginning of the year. This young artist from Zurich, who has just turned 20, possesses the style to blend musical genres: from folk to electronica and pop to rock, her work contains surprise after surprise. The daughter of a jazz artist, she inherited a voice with ex-



Evelinn Trouble: A promise?

traordinary timbre modulation, and has chosen a snappy stage name for herself, Evelinn Trouble. She played around with the words to come up with "in trouble", which sounds like the title of a hit movie.

Label: Irascible www.myspace.com/evelinntrouble

Heidi Happy

As her mother is a classical soprano, it comes as no surprise that Heidi Happy should captivate audiences to such an extent with her suave, jazzy voice. In 2007, the 29-year-old from Lucerne released her debut album, "Back Together", and performed more than sixty concerts in Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Belgium and Holland. Her brand of folk, jazz and pop reveals even greater depth on her second album "Flowers, Birds and Home", which came out at the end of 2008. Accompanied by seven musicians on stage, including a trombonist, Priska Zemp - alias Heidi Happy - plays the guitar and the glockenspiel and loves the loop station (device enabling artists to produce sound loops with the voice or an instrument). Clear melodies, moving tales of unhappy love affairs, complicit irony and bold arrangements make Heidi Happy a leading light in Swiss pop. She is also set to accompany the Swiss Jazz Orchestra on its autumn tour.

Label: Irascible www.myspace.com/heidihappy



Going right to the top: Heidi Happy from Lucerne

“We process and answer every letter and every enquiry”

Stefan Meierhans has been the Swiss price inspector since 1 October 2008. The former Microsoft manager became Rudolf Strahm's successor. Interview by Heinz Eckert

Swiss Review: Is your role more dealing with complaints or acting as an ombudsman?

Stefan Meierhans: Actually, I handle complaints as well as acting as an ombudsman and price regulator. These tasks go hand in hand. If a consumer complains about a problem, but does not make any headway with customer services, we attempt to mediate directly and to help out. We often manage to achieve a successful outcome. It is astonishing how little importance many companies attach to customer service. After all, customer care is the key to sustainable success in business. We process and answer every letter and every enquiry.

Is the public aware of what the price inspector can and cannot do, and what your role is?

We constantly receive enquiries on matters that have nothing to do with us. If, for example, the price of Nespresso capsules rises, we are unable to act as there are alternatives and nobody is obliged to drink Nespresso coffee. However, if the Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) were to discriminate against commuters between Zurich and Berne, this would be a case for the price inspectorate. This is because commuters have

THE PRICE INSPECTOR

Stefan Meierhans was born in 1968 in Altstätten, in St.Gallen's Rhine Valley. He studied law at the universities of Basel, Oslo and Uppsala, and received his doctorate from the University of Basel in 1998. He went to work for the Federal Office of Justice and then spent six years at the General Secretariat of the Federal Department of Justice and Police, as a member of the staff of Federal Councilors Koller and Metzler-Arnold. Most recently, Meierhans worked in the private sector. He is a member of the Christian Democratic Party (CVP) and also serves on the CVP's executive committee in the Canton of Berne. He is married and lives with his family in Berne.

no fallback alternative to the train. The car is not another option.

Is Switzerland still an “island of high prices”, so to speak?

Statistics, for example, constantly show that Zurich and Geneva are among the most expensive cities in the world in terms of the cost of living. Many Swiss pensioners spend their retirement abroad, where they can get more for their money. However, it is very

PRICE INSPECTION AS PART OF ECONOMIC POLICY

In 1972, Switzerland's economy overheated. To control the situation, the National Council and Council of States approved various measures, including the inspection of prices, salaries and profits through a federal decree on 20 December 1972. With regard to salaries and profits, the role of the price inspector was to monitor developments, organise surveys and carry out negotiations. The inspector's remit with regard to prices was more extensive, as he was also able to reduce them. This power was only restricted in the areas of taxation and property prices.

As this decree invoked emergency law, it entered into force on the day of resolution. It was limited in time until the end of 1975. In the same year, Parliament decided to extend price inspection until the end of 1978, with amended powers, owing to the sustained high rate of inflation. The inspection of salaries and profits was no longer part of the price inspector's mandate, and the inspection of prices was also restricted to specific areas and economic sectors.

In 1979, shortly after price inspection based on the federal decree expired, consumer organisations from German, French and Italian-speaking Switzerland submitted the popular initiative “for the prevention of the abuse of prices”. The initiative called for provisions on price inspection and price recommendations for goods and services. The consumer groups were, in particular, targeting companies with large market shares and cartels.

Parliament and the Federal Council also put forward a counter proposal to the initiative, which only provided for price inspection in times of high inflation. The referendum was held on 28 November 1982. The counter proposal was defeated by a strikingly clear majority of 65.3%, while the initiative was approved by 56.1% by the people and the cantons.

The price inspection law was passed on 20 December 1985, and revised in 1991. The prices of cartels and companies with large market shares, under public and private law, have been subject to price inspection since 1991.



Stefan Meierhans primarily sees himself as an ombudsman

difficult to make comparisons. You have to remember that Switzerland has higher salaries and much lower direct and indirect taxes than other countries. The bottom line is that the Swiss have more disposable money at the end of the month than many people abroad.



man in his role as price inspector.

What is clearly too expensive in Switzerland?

Healthcare is very expensive, as are mobile telephony, data transmission and certain imported goods, for which prices are set by the general importers. To put it simply, prices are too high anywhere where the market does not function properly.

And in which areas does the market not function properly?

There are, for instance, still import restrictions on foodstuffs. There is also insufficient competition in the healthcare sector. The market is obviously not effective in the case of natural monopolies, such as with water and electricity, as an alternative provider is not available for every household. Neither does the market function as it should in the mobile communications sector.

Price inspection is a typically Swiss invention. Has it proven its worth?

It most certainly has. The price inspector plays a key role, and not just as an ombudsman. The Competition Commission deals with competition, whereas the price inspec-

tor protects consumers from excessive prices and ensures transparency. It is extremely important that consumer interests are officially represented and defended. We endeavour to assist everyone with a highly unbureaucratic approach. Access to us should be as easy as possible for everyone.

How often are the Internet and your blog used?

Our blog is like a virtual office, open 24 hours a day. In the first six months of the year, we had more than 1500 messages from citizens. That's a lot. Even the Swiss abroad contact us, mainly in relation to charges.

Do you receive enough support from politicians?

As the price inspector, you don't make many friends, but have plenty of enemies. Politicians represent a vast array of interests, and someone always loses out when the price inspector lowers prices.

Do you think that the explosion in healthcare costs can be controlled?

Yes, I think so, if we stop providing financial incentives for service providers to offer patients as much as possible. The price inspector will, in future, pay greater attention to outpatient services at hospital outpatient units, as particularly high cost increases have been identified here. Switzerland also has too many hospitals. It is interesting to note that it is not the elderly who account for the heaviest costs.

What have you achieved so far as the price inspector?

We have, for example, reduced postal charges and helped to ensure that public transport costs have not risen. We have also reduced the fees and charges of various community services and quasi-government enterprises, and we have helped to raise the awareness of the authorities and consumers.

What special qualities are required of a price inspector?

You have to have a strong sense of fairness and a sympathetic ear. You must be a good listener and able to communicate well with people from all parts of the country.

Jean-René Bory (1928 to 2009)

With the death of Jean-René Bory, the Swiss international community has lost one of its most prominent figures. In the 1950s, Bory began studying the history of Switzerland's foreign services, the Swiss regiments that have fought for the Kings of France, the Popes and other European rulers since the 15th century. He soon extended the scope of his work to explore the history of his compatriots in other professions – diplomats and journalists, teachers and researchers, engineers and architects, businessmen and bankers, artists and authors, missionaries and development workers, confectioners and cheese-makers – who left their homeland for various reasons, influenced life in their adopted countries through their work and created strong bonds between Switzerland and the rest of the world.

Jean-René Bory communicated on three different levels:

- He established and managed the Museum of the Swiss Abroad (*Musée des Suisses dans le monde*), initially in Coppet, and then from 1978 in Penthes (Pregny, Geneva), with its collection and special exhibitions.
- With his loyal "Amis suisses de Versailles", he undertook numerous study trips to important locations in European history.
- He often appeared as a speaker, produced radio programmes and acted as an exhibition guide. Bory possessed the unique talent of being able to captivate his audience and inspire a love of history in them.

Jean-René Bory's legacy should be preserved and his successors are fully committed to this task. However, they will only succeed by obtaining the moral, intellectual and financial support of a sufficient number of friends in Switzerland and abroad who share the view that this work is worth enhancing and developing despite a lack of state funding.

BENEDIKT VON TSCHARNER
President of the Foundation for the History of the Swiss Abroad



Camps for children aged 8 to 14

There are still some places left on our two New Year ski camps in Wildhaus (St.Gallen) and Saas Grund (Valais)!

Whether they are skiers or snowboarders, beginners or at an advanced level, Swiss children abroad aged 8 to 14 can have a great time at our winter camps.

**Winter camp in Wildhaus (St.Gallen)
Winter camp in Saas Grund (Valais)**

Date: Saturday, 26 December 2009 to

Monday, 4 January 2010

No. of participants: 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.aso.ch (Offers / Offers for Children and Young People / Camps and offers / Holiday camps and travel - winter). 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 Wildhaus and Saas Grund are the only SJAS offers available during the 2009/10 winter season.

Summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

Registration for the summer camps will begin on 15 February 2010.

Precise details on the various summer camps in 2010 (dates, locations and age groups, etc.) and the registration form will be available from 15 February 2010 at www.aso.ch (Offers / Offers for Children and Young People / Camps and offers / Holiday camps and travel - summer). If you would prefer to look through our offers on paper, you can order a brochure from the office from February 2010.

Camps for young people aged 14 and above

The Swiss abroad will visit three winter sports regions next season. OSA welcomes young people to the holiday destination that is Switzerland, where the presence of nature is a little bit stronger than any-

where else in the world. What is so special about the OSA camps? We'll let the young people themselves tell you.

**New Year ski camp in Sedrun (Grisons)
26.12.2009 to 4.1.2010**

"I can't call this camp a vacation; I call it an adventure! It might sound childish but I felt like Harry Potter going to Hogwarts. So many different people from so many places and now they are friends. It is a very nice feeling, because I criticized whoever I saw and everything turned surprisingly wrong in a good way. I liked it a lot and gained a lot from it: Snowboarding adventures. New Year. Leaders. Appropriate moments of hilarious despair!"

Feedback from a participant of the 2007 camp

**Winter sports week in Grächen (Valais)
27.2. to 6.3.2010**

"The camp is well-organised and the atmosphere is very good. Each person is encouraged to have fun. I'll tell my friends that OSA offers this great opportunity, and it is really worth giving it a try! Not all countries offer a programme like this for people living abroad. It is fantastic that Switzerland does! Lots of fun and good memories."

Feedback from a participant of the 2008 camp for adults

**Easter camp in Fiesch (Valais)
3.4. to 11.4.2010**

"I'll tell my friends that first off I didn't know what to expect and thought it would be ok but not amazing, but as soon as the camp began, it opened a door to a new world full of new people that are fun, and an amazing 8 days where I had fun each moment! Thank you all so much for making this camp so amazing!"

Feedback from a participant of the 2008 Easter camp

Educational offers for young people aged 14 and above

OSA language courses are aimed at young people with little or no knowledge of the language. They are beginners' courses heavily geared towards developing conversational skills. OSA aims to encourage participants to have the motivation to continue learning the language and to develop their knowledge. Language courses

are provided in cooperation with the Migros-Klubschule. OSA organises leisure activities, excursions and city tours on two afternoons a week. As the young people stay with Swiss host families, they gain a first-hand insight into everyday Swiss life and have the opportunity to try out their new language skills with their host parents. German course in Berne (4. to 15.1.2010)
French course in Fribourg (4. to 15.1.2010)



AJAS – New President

The Association for the Promotion of Education for Young Swiss Abroad (AJAS) has had a new president since the beginning of August 2009. Antonio Hodgers, a Green Party National Councillor, has replaced former National Councillor Remo Galli, who had been president of the association since November 2001. As the president and representative of AJAS, Antonio Hodgers was also elected to the Council of the Swiss Abroad at its meeting in Lucerne in August this year.

We would like to thank Antonio Hodgers for his willingness to work on behalf of young Swiss people abroad and to thank Remo Galli for the commitment he showed over the past few years.

Further information on educational opportunities in Switzerland is available from the AJAS office:
Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne
Tel.: +41 31 356 61 04, Fax: +41 31 356 61 01
E-mail: ajas@aso.ch
www.ajas.ch



Resolutions of the Council of the Swiss Abroad

The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) appointed its representatives for the period 2009-2013 at its meeting in the hall of Lucerne's cantonal parliament. The debate focussed on the issues of political recognition for Swiss citizens abroad by the authorities and the importance of providing information for them. These issues prompted the passing of three resolutions concerning Swissinfo, "Swiss Review" and federal government's policy towards the Swiss abroad.

The Council now has 140 members: 120 Swiss abroad and 20 Swiss living in Switzerland (compared to 40 previously). This means that greater weight is ascribed to the delegates of the Swiss communities abroad to strengthen the Council's representation of the interests of the Swiss abroad. On behalf of the Council, its President, Jacques-Simon Eggly, confirmed the results of the election of delegates in which Swiss communities around the world took part through umbrella organisations of the Swiss associations and institutions recognised by OSA. 45% of the delegates in the new Council were elected for the first time. The average age of the delegates is 56, and 30% of them are women. The geographical spread is as follows: Europe is the most strongly represented continent with 60 delegates, followed by North and South America (30 delegates), Asia (16 delegates), Africa (8 delegates) and Oceania (6 delegates). Each delegate represents the vote of 1000 Swiss citizens living abroad. Members elected who are based in Switzerland, and who will represent the resolutions passed in plenary sessions to the Swiss authorities, include: Member of the Council of States Filippo Lombardi (CVP/TI) as well as National Councilors Christa Markwalder Bär (FDP/BE), Thérèse Meyer-Kaelin (CVP/FR), Carlo Sommaruga (SP/GE), Antonio Hodggers (Greens/GE), Hans Kaufmann (SVP/GE) and André Reymond (SVP/GE).

The CSA is anxious about the wavering commitment shown by federal gov-

ernment to the Swiss abroad. In all parts of the world where Swiss communities are found, consulates are being closed and information for the Swiss abroad has been subject to Draconian cuts ("Swiss Review") or once again called into question (Swissinfo). The CSA has called on federal government to make the concerns of the Swiss abroad a priority and, to this end, to enact an implementing law for Article 40 of the Federal Constitution and to bring all associated issues together under one department. The CSA will contest any proposals aimed at reducing the provision of information for the Swiss abroad; indeed, Swissinfo is at risk of further budget cuts. Finally, the CSA demanded a CHF 300,000 increase in the budget for "Swiss Review" for 2010 so that the magazine could once again be published six times a year instead of just four.

Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lucerne

The Swiss abroad met at their annual congress in Lucerne held over three days. More than 400 expatriates attended the 87th Congress of the Swiss Abroad. This year's congress focussed on the topic of the Swiss abroad themselves. The debate centred on whether the 700,000 Swiss living abroad represent an asset for Switzerland.

To what extent does a large and well-organised Diaspora provide added value for Switzerland? What benefits does the network of contacts that Swiss people have established all over the world offer Switzerland? How important is international experience and knowledge transfer for Switzerland and its economy?

These and many other questions were discussed on Saturday, 8 August 2009 in front of an audience of around 400 Swiss abroad at the plenary meeting held in the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne. Well-known speakers explored the myths and reality of the contribution made to Switzerland by Swiss people living abroad in short presentations and round-table sessions.

The new chairman of the Swiss Post Office, Claude Béglé, recalled his own experiences as a Swiss abroad in his humorous opening speech entitled "The travel adventures of the Swiss Marco Polo". The theatrical performance delivered by the charismatic chairman of the Swiss Post Office captivated the audience and earned him an ovation.

Federal Chancellor Corina Casanova, representing the Federal Council, gave her speech at the end of the day. She said that the Swiss abroad were Switzerland's ambassadors on the international stage but that they had unfortunately had little opportunity to express their opinions in Swiss political life. She explained that it was therefore important to facilitate their access to the democratic process, in particular through e-voting.

On Sunday, exploring the city of Lucerne was on the itinerary with a guided tour of the historical centre and the surrounding area, including a trip to the Rigi.

The next Congress of the Swiss Abroad will be held in St. Gallen from 20 to 22 August 2010.

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, info@aso.ch, www.aso.ch*

The Swiss winter offers the perfect winter break

In Switzerland, guests enjoy the cosiest and most authentic winter breaks with a wide range of traditional chalets and fine local cuisine. Winter-time in Switzerland is ideal for the perfect winter break, offering winter sports, the charm of alpine chalets, spas, culinary delights, Christmas markets and lots more besides.

In Switzerland, the presence of nature is a little bit stronger than anywhere else in the world. Switzerland Tourism's "get natural" slogan captures what guests can expect from holidays in Switzerland in a nutshell: enjoy the winter – and surrounded by exquisite alpine scenery get a bit more natural yourself.

Get natural by taking a winter hike or a husky-drawn sleigh ride through forests covered with fresh snow, go downhill skiing through powder snow, enjoy a trek in snow shoes high above the clouds, go skating on frozen lakes, sledge down the valley or take a hot air balloon trip above the winter mountain landscape.

Of course, you will build up quite an appetite after all this activity. Each region offers its own individual dishes to satisfy your hunger. Traditional mountain cabins and refined eating houses offer a variety of traditional specialities. There is raclette in Valais, fondue in Fribourg, polenta in Ticino and capuns and salsiz in Grisons. There is a lot of fine food to discover – in a country where four languages and cultures meet, each region has its own "national dish".

You will find a Swiss ski and snowboarding school wherever a mountain railway leads to winter snow. The youngest visitors receive tuition in the Swiss Snow Kids Village and are looked after by Snowli, the mascot. Each school offers a standard course for the different types of equipment and levels of learning – the Swiss Snow League.

A busy winter's day will tire you out. Perhaps you will spend a night on ice in an igloo, get your head down in the dormitory of a SAC hut, sleep in the suite of a grand hotel or doze off in front of a chalet



Sleeping in a dreamy chalet

fireplace. If you are not ready for bed just yet, why not enjoy a glass of mulled wine at a snow bar after a torch-lit descent, play a game of cards in a ski cabin over a Kafi Luz, a coffee with apple and pear schnapps, or party the night away in a nightclub – alpine nightlife is extremely diverse, not to mention legendary.

After so much enjoyment, you will occasionally want to take it easy. In the seclusion of the Alps, wellness is provided in an exquisite natural setting – hot springs rich in minerals from the depths



Winter holidays in Switzerland: just like in the brochure

of the Alps, fresh mountain air, mountain scenery radiating peace and quiet, and idyllic winter landscapes.

Find out how to really enjoy the winter at www.MySwitzerland.com or by reading Switzerland Tourism's new winter brochure. This can be ordered free of charge from Switzerland Tourism online at www.MySwitzerland.com/aso

Christmas markets

Swiss Christmas markets are a real treat. You can enjoy the romantic Christmas atmosphere of the Advent period in various Swiss towns and villages. There is an abundance of local craftwork and Christmas delicacies, as well as cultural and musical performances. The markets are bathed in candlelight by evening and the air is filled with the wonderful Christmas aromas of punch and cakes.

The largest and most romantic Christmas markets are held in Basel, Montreux, Einsiedeln, Bremgarten and Appenzell. Further details on the different markets can be found at www.MySwitzerland.com/aso

Top event

On 1 August 2009, the Swiss National Museum in Zurich opened two new permanent exhibitions: the "History of Switzerland" and the "Collections Gallery". With these exhibitions, the museum provides a comprehensive insight into Swiss history for the first time and displays its own collections, focussing on handicrafts in Switzerland. Various media stations help visitors to understand Swiss history and the exhibits. They offer a more in-depth knowledge of the history of Switzerland and the history of individual pieces. To mark the re-opening of the main part of the National Museum, Swiss citizens abroad can visit the museum at special rates until 31 January 2010: there is a 2-for-1 offer on. For more details, visit www.MySwitzerland.com/aso



If you **REGISTER** with Network Switzerland by 31 January 2010 at www.MySwitzerland.com/aso you will automatically be entered into the prize draw for a 3-night stay for two persons, including breakfast, at a 3* hotel, plus 2 x 2-day ski passes for Villars Gryon.



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

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

Switzerland Tourism.
MySwitzerland.com



■ Did you say Jurassic? Almost 8,000 new **dinosaur tracks** have been discovered at Courtedoux in the Canton of Jura. The site is four times bigger (4,000 m²) than the one discovered in 2002. Dating back around 152 million years, the tracks measure up to 80 cm in diameter.

■ The **Dalai Lama** attracted a full house on 4 and 5 August at the Malley ice rink in Lausanne. Almost 13,000 spectators from across Switzerland and Europe squeezed in to hear a series of teachings and conferences on the art of happiness. As the visit was made on religious grounds, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate was not received by a member of the Federal Council.

■ Recognised cases of A (H1N1) **influenza** topped the 500 mark in Switzerland in August. Three hundred of the victims were infected on trips abroad and around 100 in Switzerland. While these figures are very low, it has not prevented a media frenzy or stopped people from buying protective masks en masse. Assuming swine flu hits Switzerland on the same scale as in Mexico, the number of Swiss infected would only be just over a thousand.

■ The **devastating hail storm** of 23 July caused half a billion francs' worth of damage in Switzerland. Harvests were destroyed, cars dented and the façades of houses bombarded with hail stones the size of golf balls. The steep repair bill and the work involved inspired a light-hearted response from Patrick Lucca of the Swiss Trade Association. He said:

"The department of defence is the best – the other departments pore over files, while we deal with tanks and aircraft."

Ueli Maurer, Federal Councillor and Minister of Defence

"If it came down to a choice between higher health insurance premiums and benefit restrictions, the people would support price increases."

Pascal Couchepin, Federal Councillor and Interior Minister

"From the European Union's perspective, Switzerland's intellectual and innovative prowess would certainly represent an enrichment."

Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, German Minister for Economic Affairs

"I love the 1st of August. But there are far fewer flags and lanterns hanging from the windows on this day of patriotic celebration than during football tournaments."

Suzette Sandoz, former Liberal National Councillor and professor of law

"The Rütli Oath tells you that we don't need or want big chiefs in Switzerland."

Peter von Matt, professor of literature, in his 1 August speech on the Rütli

"Switzerland was not an idyll during the Second World War. If you want to understand what everyday life was like back then, you cannot dismiss the fear of a genuine threat."

François de Capitani, historian and curator at the Swiss National Museum, on the television series "Alpenfestung" (Alpine Fortress)

"The government's image is not the same everywhere: in French-speaking Switzerland cantonal councillors are seen as bigwigs, while in Central Switzerland they are seen as colleagues who also go to the town hall as a secondary duty."

Rainer Schweizer, professor of public law at the University of St. Gallen

"The Swiss, Danes and Norwegians work the most. These are also the countries with the lowest unemployment figures and where workers earn the most."

Beat Kappeler, publicist



■ Hugo Loetscher, the Zurich-born author, has died at the age of 79. After the loss of Dürrenmatt and Frisch, this eternal traveller was the last remaining giant in Swiss literature. Editor of *Weltwoche* from 1964, the double Schiller Prize winner was the author of "Abwässer" (Drainwater, 1963) and "Der Immune" (The Immune Man, 1975). Published in August, his last book, "War meine Zeit meine Zeit" (Was My Time My Time), is a literary legacy.

"The weather has granted us a 4th economic recovery programme."

■ The Swiss team won three gold medals, two silver and four bronze at the **World Orienteering Champion-**

ships in Miskolc, Hungary. Simone Niggli-Luder and Daniel Hubmann both won the main long distance race.

■ The Swiss government has sold its **CHF 6 billion**

stake in UBS. By divesting the convertible bond underwritten in October 2008 to save the bank from ruin, the federal government has got its investment back in full and made a profit of CHF 1.2 billion. That is an annual return of more than 30% in eight months.

■ Switzerland and the USA have reached an extrajudicial agreement in principle concerning the **US tax authorities'** case against UBS. Switzerland's leading bank is to provide data on 4,450 American clients who are likely to face prosecution for tax fraud. The US judicial authorities had been demanding the names of 52,000 American clients suspected of tax evasion. The negotiations carried out by the Swiss government cost the country almost CHF 40 million in administrative costs, which are once again to be met by the taxpayer.

■ Are **Swiss roads** safer? This is debatable as "boy racer" accidents always seem to be in the news. However, the number of traffic accidents last year fell to its lowest level since 1945. There were 63 times fewer cars on the road back then and the population of Switzerland was just 4.5 million.

■ The mounted police have returned to Berne every summer since 1985. The traditional **equestrian patrols**, established in 1914 for the city's national exhibition, are not just a tourist attraction. On horseback, police officers are at the perfect height for surveillance in crowds or traffic. This mode of transport is also environmentally friendly.

AW/RR

SPICK

Mit SPICK
eine Klasse
besser!

Wenn die Schüler SPICKen,
freut sich der Lehrer!



www.spick.ch

Das schlaue Schülermagazin aus der Schweiz

Flyer weg?

Mehr Infos über den SPICK gibt
es auf www.spick.ch

Jetzt abonnieren:

1 Jahr lang mit 12 für 11 Ausgaben
€ 69,-* statt € 99,60
(Einzelheft € 8,30)

*Länder D und A (übrige Länder zzgl. Versandkosten)

Oder testen:

Schnupper-Abo (2 Ausgaben)
€ 15,- statt € 16,60



SPICK-Abo inkl.
Geschenkpaket
mit Sammelbox,
Riesenposter und
tollen Stickers.

EMPFOHLEN VON DER  Stiftung Lesen



Das Weihnachtsgeschenk für 8–14jährige:
SPICK Abo-Service +41 (0)31 740 97 94 · abo@spick.ch