

# SWISS REVIEW

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The magazine for the Swiss Abroad  
July 2018



**Our Alps – where natural beauty and  
thrill-seeking collide**

**Extraterrestrial clean-up mission:  
Switzerland hunts for debris in outer space**

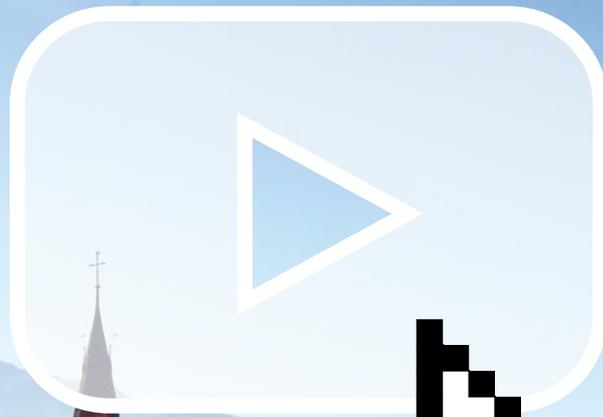
**PostBus loses its shine –  
an unprecedented affair in Switzerland**

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The Alps are undoubtedly a vitally important part of Switzerland and how it sees itself. They are unmissable. They are immovable. Yet, how we perceive the mountains has changed. This has become evident over the past two years. Over this period, the Swiss have been pondering whether the nation should bid to host the Winter Olympic Games in 2026. The normally sports-mad Valais put an end to the project in June.

Voters there overwhelmingly rejected their canton's financial contribution to the Games at the ballot box. Switzerland's candidacy has therefore been withdrawn.

The prospect of hosting the sporting event was a dream for many but a nightmare for others. The issue was fiercely debated. One camp of friends of the Alps argued that hosting the Games here would see their return to the birthplace of winter sports and allow the rediscovery of, and a return to, greater simplicity. The key concept of the Olympic project was to use only existing sporting facilities to prove that the Games do not necessarily require massive infrastructure and dubious encroachment.

The other group of friends of the Alps see the mountain landscape in a completely different way. They perceive the Alps as a habitat made vulnerable by climate change and jeopardised by pressure from the commercial events industry. The opponents of the Olympics also focused on the people who live in the mountain communities. These mountain dwellers urgently require prospects for the future, they argued, which the Olympic Games with their designed for the moment artificiality cannot deliver. They refuted the notion that the Games offer any kind of sustainability.

Turning down the Games means that Switzerland will not be amongst the bidding nations for the Olympics for years to come. The question remains as to how we will perceive the Alps in future and how we will deal with the pressure to use this now fragile mountain landscape.

"Swiss Review" also addresses this issue in the article by the author and historian Daniel Di Falco on page 6. Di Falco wonderfully illustrates how the Alps have always been a projection screen, a stage that provides a healthy dose of thrills and spills and directs our gaze. For example, artists like the painter Ferdinand Hodler, who died 100 years ago, shaped the image of the mountains as an idyll for generations. However, even Hodler travelled in comfort by mountain railway to the locations where he portrayed the natural alpine environment.

MARC LETTAU, EDITOR

Cover photo: Wellness in the Zermatt pool – against the backdrop of the Matterhorn. Photo: Keystone

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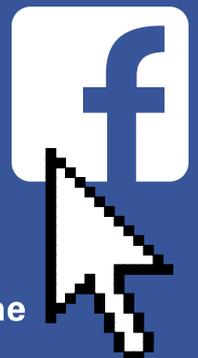
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## Ten years of Kosovo – and what this has to do with Switzerland



It sounds rather romanticised, as though the relationship between Swiss and Kosovans is some kind of shining example. The fact remains that the crime figures tell a different story and the behaviour of some young Kosovans

on the road or when going out shows little respect for their host country. There is still much work to be done in terms of integration.

MARKUS FLURY, HUA HIN, THAILAND

This was an article you can identify with as a Swiss Abroad. However, “freeing the nation from the stranglehold of the greedy elite” is (practically) a global issue, albeit one that is particularly evident in the small country of Kosovo.

FLOW BOHL, LONDON, UK

I went on a cycling trip through Kosovo four years ago. I knew practically nothing about the country beforehand but was pleasantly surprised. It is a very beautiful country with an optimistic outlook despite all of its problems, lack of infrastructure, unemployment and corruption. I certainly got the impression that it is a country on the up and that the next ten years will definitely be better than the previous decade. Pristina is also a fantastic city. I also noticed the return of expats over the summer. I’ve never seen as many Swiss number plates abroad as in Kosovo!

PIUS OTT, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Without going over the top, besides the much-celebrated goals, years of negative headlines have left a bitter taste. I think Switzerland would have fared better without the cultural influx.

MARTIN ANLIKER, ECUADOR

It is a shame that Serbia is being made to look like an evil oppressor. The fact that Kosovo has been the cultural and religious centre of Serbia and of its Orthodox church for over 1,000 years should not be forgotten. The Albanians in Kosovo are there as a result of the mass immigration organised by the Ottoman Empire at a time when the Turks found it difficult to contain the Orthodox Serb population. That is why they sent in their Albanian neighbours who had recently been converted to the Ottoman cause and Islam. Kosovo is a political football for the USA and Europe and its history and conflict are purely political. Anyway, happy birthday Kosovo.

SYED SIRAJE, ONLINE COMMENT

Switzerland’s financial support during the reconstruction phase has produced tremendous benefits for the people in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo, not least with the rebuilding of hospitals and in the area of apprenticeships. Personally, I think it would be beneficial if these countries introduced legislation like in Switzerland in areas such as nature conservation, animal welfare, the protection of life and limb, victim support, child protection (particularly for children born out of wedlock), insurance and vested rights. Switzerland could serve as a model in these areas. Unfortunately, in my experience as a Swiss Abroad, much of what I have mentioned does not exist here and the desire and moral will to introduce such laws are also lacking. Waste disposal is one of the greatest issues in my view. There are no waste disposal plants and the areas around the cities are becoming increasingly contaminated. The situation is completely out of control. I urge representatives of the Swiss Abroad – whether in Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro or Serbia – to work towards ensuring that suitable waste disposal plants are built with Swiss help. This would help to make sure that a beautiful natural environment is passed on to the younger generation.

GORAN VASOVIC, PRIJEPOLJE, SERBIA

## Cyclists in Switzerland are moving into the fast lane



Bicycles are a great alternative way to get around Switzerland. Of course you have to have the infrastructure of dedicated bike lanes in large cities like Zurich, which involves politics and funding issues. It’s nice that rental bikes are readily available but I’m guessing it’s mostly tourists that use these or do residents rent them as well? Denmark is a great biking country to emulate. I biked around in Denmark for two years and it was wonderful.

MIKE RIGERT, LEHI, UTAH, USA

As well as cycling, one car-free Sunday per month could also be introduced as in the past. This would improve air quality and allow families to enjoy the great outdoors in peace and quiet.

MADELINE MURPHY, ONLINE COMMENT

## With Rousseau on his “Thrill Walk”

Whenever a new suspension bridge or summit viewing platform is planned in the Alps, objections are soon raised about commercialising the mountains and selling them out to the events industry. However, tourist experiences require complex technical infrastructure and the pioneers of alpine pursuits also sought thrills and spills.



**“Ascent III”** from the  
**“Ascent and Fall”**  
series, painted by  
**Ferdinand Hodler** in  
**1894** Photo: Keystone

DANIEL DI FALCO

It doesn't have to be a drive-in chapel for skiers on the piste, a penguin zoo on a 2,500-metre-high peak or the longest staircase in the world. Even far less outlandish projects provoke discontent. Rigi Plus, an organisation representing two dozen companies in the tourism sector, unveiled its master plan last summer. The 200-page document focused on the Rigi as a location for experience-based activities and its "sustainable positioning". It aims to provide more appealing offers for visitors to the mountain that boasts panoramic views and a rich history as well as better economic prospects for operators. Its proposals include a new website, a booking system for all destinations in the area and a uniform brand identity.

But that is not all. "Travelling up to the peak, looking down and enjoying the view are no longer enough today," explained Stefan Otz, Managing Director of the Rigi Railways, the biggest company on and up the mountain. He was brought in from Interlaken where he was the Director of Tourism. His task is now to provide fresh impetus on the Rigi. Otz is talking about "exciting projects", a tree-house hotel, a pine-cone-shaped viewing tower and an alpine hut with a cheese dairy for visitors and a schnapps distillery.

"We're certainly not planning the kind of sterile facilities that lead to mass tourism," added Otz. "We won't implement any projects on the Rigi that don't belong there." But his assurances were not enough to prevent the storm that blew up shortly afterwards. It started in the readers' letters columns and then spread to the wider public. With an online petition, alpine conservationists, politicians, architects, business people, scientists and prominent figures, such as Emil Steinberger, fought against the "insidious transformation" of the Rigi into a "Disneyland for over a million tourists" a year. The Rigi Railways already transports three quarters of a million passengers today. The petition said: "We don't want artificial experiences which represent a sell-out of the Rigi."

### "An enormous influx of outsiders"

Sell-out? Can a mountain that has been used for tourism for so long really be sold out? The Rigi was in fact already a fashionable mountain destination two hundred years ago. A covered viewing point was built in 1816, a viewing tower in 1820 and finally Europe's very first mountain railway in 1871. The "queen of the mountains", as it is known, was overrun with tourists, and this was in the supposedly more sedate period of the 19th century. The "influx of outsiders" was "truly enormous", reported the "Echo vom Rigi" during the first season of the mountain railway, with visitors even sleeping in the corridors of the hotels which provided

over a thousand beds at the time. Three years later, the railway transported over 100,000 visitors up the mountain for the first time.

Mark Twain gave an account of what could be experienced there besides the legendary sunrise and the no less infamous hordes of tourists eagerly anticipating it. In 1879, the American writer climbed the Rigi on foot from Weggis and soon heard "for the first time the famous alpine yodel



From the exhibition at the Alpine Museum in Berne

Photo: Keystone

in its own native wilds". His joy was nevertheless short-lived as "after that we found a yodeller every ten minutes" and they all wanted people to put money in their hat for performing. After the fourth, fifth or sixth time "during the remainder of the day we paid the rest of the yodellers a franc apiece not to yodel anymore. There is somewhat too much of this yodelling in the Alps."

### Thrills and spills on the mountain

This raises the question as to where the line between selling and selling out lies. For the critics of the latest master plan for the Rigi, the answer is where the experiences become "artificial". The symptomatic word for this is Disneyland. This is the nightmare scenario and a byword for the synthetic, interchangeable schemes of an alpine events industry. This is not just restricted to the Rigi either. The evils of "Disneyfication" were also highlighted when Europe's highest suspension bridge was built on the Titlis and the first one between two peaks was constructed at Les Diablerets. There was a similar response when the Schilthorn railway opened the "Thrill Walk" beneath its middle station – a steel bridge with a latticed and glass floor built into the vertical rock face beneath which lies a 200-metre abyss. "Thrills and an exhilarating mountain experience," proclaimed the advert. While such ideas enable tourist destinations to remain attractive and take on the competition, conservation organisations complain that the Alps are being transformed into an adventure playground. For example, Mountain Wilderness – a group founded by winter sport enthusiasts – is calling for "more

peace and quiet in the mountains, more space for authentic mountain experiences” and an end to the expansion of tourist facilities.

But what actually is an “authentic mountain experience”? Those promoting new suspension bridges, viewing platforms, walkways built into the rock, climbing parks, biking trails, zip wires or summer toboggan runs are saying exactly the same thing. They also want “authentic” (Stefan Otz, Rigi Railways) and “unique” (Christoph Egger, Schilthorn railway) experiences.

## Haller and Rousseau – the instigators

One thing is quickly forgotten in the battle over what is “authentic” in the Alps: even in the earliest, most innocent days of tourism, the development of infrastructure, charged-for activities and artificial paraphernalia enabled what seemed like the most authentic experiences. And they were no less contentious than they are today.

This was the age of hobnailed boots, stagecoaches and strolls beneath parasols. Switzerland was perceived as the beauty of the mountains untouched by civilisation and inhabited by wholesome shepherds and farmers. At least this is how they were seen by Albrecht von Haller (in his poem “Die Alpen” written in 1729) and JeanJacques Rousseau (in his novel “Julie, or the New Heloise” in 1761). These two thinkers and poets were the leading instigators of international enthusiasm for Switzerland and its mountains at the time. The promise of the original purity of its natural environment and people attracted visitors. They sought authentic experiences.

However, shortly afterwards a guest at a spa resort from northern Germany complained about the profiteering of the tourism industry and about reality being flooded with tacky souvenirs. There were no postcards yet in the Biedermeier period. But the spa guest recounted that he had seen over 30 images of “a single spot in the Bernese Oberland”: sketches, engravings and watercolours. He went on to say that “there are perhaps even more of other famous places that are marvelled at”. It may soon be necessary for “nature to create new mountains or for old ones to collapse” to provide “fresh inspiration” for the business of landscape painting and copper engraving. In short: “People no longer want to publicise the country but instead just artistic impressions of it!”

That was in 1812. The German was in fact just an artistic creation himself, namely the first-person narrator of the novel “Die Molkenkur” by Ulrich Hegner, a politician and author from Winterthur. There was nevertheless a real background to Hegner’s satire on “Swiss natural and artificial products” – the widespread anxiety about the artificiality of tourist experiences.

But then not everyone possesses as much romantic sensitivity as Rousseau or Haller. And these people are assisted by tourist organisations. These organisations began developing the mountains early on with technical infrastructure: high-altitude trails, benches, terraces, open areas and panoramic information boards – “viewing aids”, as historian Daniel Speich calls them. These are facilities that guide the view of the visitor towards the landscape and its attractions so that everyone gets the impression they anticipate. Even the simple view of the mountains is therefore calculated and standardised thanks to an “artificial” experience. But this does not tarnish it.

## The mountains in picture frames

“You might think everything in the Alps is nature. But it is only ever thanks to infrastructure that people can see and access this natural environment in the first place.” This is the view of the cultural scholar Bernhard Tschofen. He was involved in the “Beautiful Mountains” exhibition through which the Alpine Museum in Berne is currently displaying the typical perception of the Swiss Alps in paintings. This perception is an ideal, a popular cliché, and romanticises the Alps as an unspoilt alternative world to modern civilisation. Tschofen also points out: “Booms in mountain railway construction were also followed by booms in painting of the mountains.” The artists generally removed the very infrastructure from their paintings which had actually provided them with the panoramic view of the mountains.

Let’s take Ferdinand Hodler, for example. This painter, who died exactly one hundred years ago, regularly took

Vitznau’s steam-powered cog railway up the Rigi on a colour postcard, circa 1900

Photo: Keystone





**The Hotel Pilatus Kulm  
beneath a starlit sky  
in an advert for  
the Pilatus Railway**

Photo: Severin Pomsel

holidays in the Bernese Oberland from 1879. Many of his paintings of the Alps were produced here and he often used the same routes and viewing points as the tourists. He explored the area around Interlaken on transport links which were new at the time. The cog railway up to the Schynige Platte took him to the “view of Lake Thun and Lake Brienz”, and when the mountain railway from Lauterbrunnen up to Mürren opened in 1891, it provided access to a new attraction not just for tourists but also for the artist – the postcard subject of the “Jungfrau”. Hodler paid his first visit here in 1895 and then returned in the summers of 1911 and 1914. During those two seasons, he painted the Jungfrau massif in a total of thirteen different works. There are, of course, differences in terms of colour, contrast, texture and atmosphere. However, one thing does not change in the thirteen versions. Hodler stood in the same spot as the tourists and painted different paintings from various railway stations. He used the railway to frame the Jungfrau as he wished.

This is the paradox that has always dominated not only the painting of mountain scenery but also tourism. It promises unique experiences but at the same time inevitably transforms them into a technically mediated and staged product. This irrefutably casts doubt over the difference between “authentic” and “artificial” experiences which is contested with such zeal in the current debate on new attractions in the mountains.

Events and thrills do not receive good press today. But that is precisely what the Alps have been about from the outset and since the earliest fervour for the mountains: exhilaration and thrills. Shortly after 1700, the English essayist Joseph Addison went on a journey through Europe and when he stopped at Lake Geneva and took in the giant

mountains before him – this world of rock and ice – he was filled with a feeling that would later become a key selling point for the tourism industry: a kind of quivering sensation, “a pleasant sort of terror” at the force of nature.

Finally, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who through his “Return to Nature” became famous and the benchmark for an authentic, deep soulful experience of the mountains, gave an account in his “Confessions” in 1781 of a remarkable hike in the Alps of Savoy. At Chailles the route took him into a rock face and “far below the road cut out of the rocks a little stream rushes and foams in some fearful precipices, which it seems to have spent millions of ages in hollowing out”. The road itself is modern and “along the side of the road is a parapet to prevent accidents”, wrote Rousseau, and then the great philosopher was overcome with the same desire that people seek today in the steep face of the Schilthorn. He was exhilarated and looked into the abyss. “Leaning securely over the parapet” he could “be as giddy as he pleased”. Rousseau’s path is a “Thrill Walk”. The parapet is the structure that makes his experience of adventure possible – comfortable and without risk: “I am very fond of the feeling of giddiness provided I am in a safe position,” he wrote.

Swiss Alpine Museum, Berne:

“Beautiful Mountains: A Point of View” runs until 6 January 2019.

An accompanying postcard book with texts by Bernhard Tschofen and other authors is available to buy. (Verlag Scheidegger & Spiess)

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DANIEL DI FALCO IS A HISTORIAN AND CULTURE JOURNALIST WITH THE “BUND” NEWSPAPER IN BERNE



## Two proposals about money

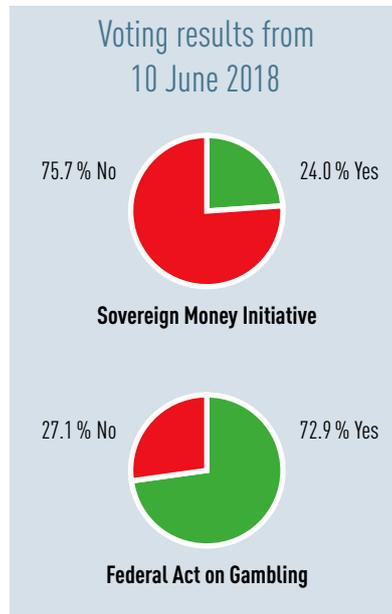
One concerned sovereign money, the other gambling. One was rejected, the other approved. The Swiss people do not want the National Bank to be solely responsible for creating money. But they approved the new Federal Act on Gambling.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

The debate all over the country and in the media was certainly interesting, but it was also very taxing. Many people would have gained a better understanding of how our monetary system works. However, the economic and monetary policy arguments failed to persuade the majority to switch to a sovereign money system. The sovereign money initiative was rejected on 10 June by 75.7% of the electorate and every canton. The initiative's authors wanted to make the National Bank solely responsible for issuing not just banknotes and coins – which make up the smallest proportion of money – but all forms of money. Today, electronic money and book money are created by commercial banks through the issuing of credit. The group behind the initiative wanted to prevent them from doing so in future.

They argued that sovereign money would provide a more secure financial system. Sovereign money would have been withdrawn from the lending cycle. The banks would no longer have had customer deposits on their balance sheets and would only have been allowed to manage them. This would have been “real money” and not part of bankruptcy assets in the event of a banking crisis. Loans could only have been issued with money specially made available by savers, other banks and the National Bank.

Opponents contended that this was a dangerous experiment for the Swiss financial centre, was unprecedented worldwide and would have incalculable consequences. The creation of money by the banks is already limited by tightened regulations and provisions on equity capital and min-



imum reserves, while customer deposits are also protected up to 100,000 Swiss francs. The Federal Council, Parliament, industry, the banks and all the major political parties rejected the popular initiative. The initiative's authors, various economists and political activists, lacked prominent figureheads and were politically hard to pin down. Some left-wing politicians showed a degree of sympathy for the issue. But even SP National Councillor and economics expert Susanne Leutenegger Oberholzer welcomed the outcome as she believed the sovereign money initiative would have been the wrong solution to a genuine issue – the need to make the financial system more secure.

### Foreign online casinos blocked

The debate on the new Gambling Act took on an incredible dynamic. The law's central point was the legalisation of online casino games – though only Swiss operators would receive li-

cences, whereas those abroad would be blocked. Youth parties from right across the political spectrum called the referendum against the bill and started an intense debate about the fundamental principle of blocking content on the internet. The youth parties were supported by the FDP, the Greens, the Green Liberals and the BDP, who also joined the no campaign.

Those opposed to the law argued that it was tantamount to internet censorship. They warned of the dangers of blocking in other areas. Switzerland would obstruct the path to the digital future. Supporters asserted that this was a special case that would not set a precedent for further online restrictions. It was a matter of allowing old-age and survivors' insurance, cultural societies and sports clubs to continue benefiting from casino gambling. Opening it up to non-Swiss operators on the internet would have seen some of the money go abroad. Most of the electorate were clearly won over by these arguments. Many people also took exception to the fact that the referendum was supported by a 500,000 Swiss franc contribution from foreign gambling operators.



## Ecological and socially minded or just dangerous?

Precisely a year after the referendum on food safety, the Swiss people will vote on the issue of food again on 23 September 2018. Two popular initiatives concerning food production will be decided on.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Agricultural policy is one of the most contentious and emotive areas of Swiss politics. Agricultural issues and the interests of society as a whole often conflict irreconcilably. Two popular initiatives from the left and ecological end of the political spectrum have now been added to the already charged debate on the future of Swiss agriculture. Both proposals will be put to the Swiss people on 23 September 2018.

A year earlier, on 24 September 2017, almost 79 % of the Swiss people voted in favour of the counterproposal to a popular initiative put forward by the Swiss Farmers' Union. The principles on food safety have since been enshrined in the Federal Constitution. The main points are:

safeguarding the basis of production, in particular farmland, resource-efficient food production adapted to the location, and an agricultural and food sector aligned with the market. It also aims to put a stop to food waste. The previous bill contained issues covered by the two initiatives now under discussion – fair food and food sovereignty. To some degree, there are overlapping elements in all three initiatives. Calls for the two initiatives still pending to be withdrawn proved to be in vain.

“Healthy, environmentally friendly and fair”

The Greens’ “For healthy, environmentally-friendly food fairly produced” initiative (Fair Food Initia-

tive) calls for environmental and social standards to be applied to imported products. The authors of the initiative argue that the high animal welfare requirements in Switzerland fail to prevent imported meat and eggs from factory farms reaching retail shelves. “Scandalous working conditions” are widespread, even in Europe. Industrial farming is putting pressure on prices worldwide due to free trade, which makes it difficult to provide fair salaries.

The initiative therefore calls for federal government to tighten the general requirements on high-quality food. Legislation should ensure that food is produced in an environmentally-friendly, resource-efficient and animal-friendly way and under fair working conditions. Imported agricultural products must meet these requirements. Federal government should favour imported fair trade produce. It should issue provisions on the authorisation of food and animal fodder and on the declaration of production and processing methods. Federal government could also increase import duties. Furthermore, the processing and marketing of regional and seasonally produced food should be promoted and food waste stopped.

As is often the case, the Federal Council supports these concerns “in principle”. However, national government primarily sees problems with implementation. New, time-consuming and expensive controls would be required to check that imported agricultural goods actually meet the initiative’s requirements. It could also result in trade policy conflicts. The popular initiative is simply irrecon-

**Focus on farming:**  
The potato harvest  
in Kerzers, canton of  
Fribourg

Photo: Keystone



cilable with Switzerland's obligations to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the EU and states with which free trade agreements exist, according to the government.

### The SP's counterproposal stands little chance of success

The majority of MPs take the same view as the Federal Council. Committee rapporteur Hansjörg Walter, an SVP National Councillor from Thurgau, also dubbed the initiative infeasible due to international trade law and the excessive controls. Berne BDP National Councillor Heinz Siegenthaler believes correct product declaration is more important than checks. Consumers can already buy healthy and fairly produced food today. Regine Sauter, an FDP National Councillor from Zurich, believes this initiative is about more than just food. It could jeopardise jobs and the attractiveness of Switzerland as a centre of business. Bastien Girod, the Greens National Councillor from Zurich, underlines that there is something wrong with the system if high quality standards are required in Switzerland but are not applied to food imports.

The SP appeared divided over the issue in Parliament. Lucerne SP National Councillor Prisca Birrer-Heimoz warned that pressure on Switzerland to lower its product standards could increase if the initiative were accepted. There is also the risk of higher food prices. On the other hand, Martina Munz, the SP MP from Schaffhausen, believes there are only four countries in the world which spend less money on food than Switzerland in relation to their purchasing power. In a compromise proposal, the Basel SP representative Beat Jans suggested favouring the import of sustainable food by lowering customs duties on them instead of ban-

ning the import of certain products. This counterproposal is just as unlikely to succeed in Parliament as the popular initiative itself.

### "Change in agricultural policy urgently required"

The second initiative also found a sympathetic ear in Parliament but ultimately received little support. One of the main reasons for the "For food sovereignty" popular initiative – submitted by the farming union Uniterre and supported by 70 organisations – is discontent with structural change in the agricultural sector. "Two or three farms are closing down every day. Farming income has fallen by 30 % over the past 30 years and more than 100,000 jobs have been lost. The food sovereignty initiative will deliver the urgently needed change in agricultural policy," argue the authors of the initiative.

Its aim is "diverse and rural agriculture free of genetic engineering which protects natural resources". Those behind the initiative want "fair prices" and "fair income" for farmers and agricultural workers. Regulative customs duties should enable "fair international trade". It also aims to "encourage short cycles and to enable and revitalise regional production". The initiative's text states that, in addition, federal government should take effective measures aimed at "increasing the number of people employed in agriculture and fostering structural diversity".

In the Federal Council's view, the initiative contains demands already taken into account by federal government's current agricultural policy, on the one hand, and which conflict with it on the other. National government rejects "greater state structural control and additional market intervention". The Bernese SVP National Councillor Erich von Siebenthal sees the

initiative as an "indication of the desperate state of affairs". The prices of agricultural products have fallen over recent years, while the pressure on farms is growing. However, all the parliamentary groups – with the exception of the Greens – opposed the initiative in Parliament. FDP President Petra Gössi believes the proposal is "backward-looking" and heading towards protectionism and a planned economy.

### Test run for official agricultural policy

Debate in the National Council primarily focused on the Federal Council's agricultural policy rather than the initiative that is doomed to fail in Parliament. The Federal Council had announced on 1 November 2017 that it intended to base agricultural policy on free trade from 2022. Representatives of the SVP, CVP and left-wing parties, in particular, denounced these proposals as incomprehensible, mainly because the Swiss people had only recently approved the previously mentioned constitutional article on food safety in September 2017, demonstrating their desire to strengthen the agricultural sector.

Despite the fact that almost all the parliamentary groups, with the exception of the Greens, rejected both popular initiatives, the referendum campaign will provide an opportunity for a broad debate on agriculture in general. However, it will also test the mood of the people regarding federal government's agricultural policy in particular.



# The bicycle's path into the Federal Constitution

Footpaths and hiking trails have long held constitutional status.

If approved by the Swiss people on 23 September 2018, cycle paths will receive the same honour.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

“Incredible” was how Ursula Wyss described the increase in cycling in the federal capital in April 2018. The city councillor responsible for transport was clearly very surprised herself at the cycling boom. Cycling had risen by 35 % in the short period from 2014 to 2017. The city is now looking to step it up a gear by increasing the proportion that cyclists make up of total traffic from 15 % at the moment to 20 % by 2030.



**In good shape: More importance is to be attached to cycling and it will receive constitutional status.**

Photo: Keystone

The city of Berne is not a unique case. Cycling is on the up nationwide (also see *Swiss Review* no. 3/2018). The bicycle is now also set to find its way into the Federal Constitution – provided Swiss voters approve a federal decree on cycle paths at the ballot box on 23 September 2018. This proposal involves supplementing Article 88 on footpaths and hiking trails, which has been part of the Constitution for 40 years. It has resulted in the creation of a unique network of footpaths and hiking trails. An extensive network of cycle paths is now also to be established in Switzerland.

## Cross-party praise

The idea comes from the bike initiative by Pro Velo, an umbrella organisation representing the interests of cyclists. The Federal Council also supported the basic thrust of the proposal. It put forward a slightly watered-down counterproposal: federal government will bear the same responsi-

bilities as for the footpaths and hiking trails, thus restricting itself to basic framework legislation. The planning, construction and maintenance of the cycle paths will be the responsibility of the cantons and communes. Federal government cannot take on any new duties due to tight financial and staff restrictions, according to national government. The counterproposal therefore does not provide for any funding obligation. Federal government can nevertheless lay down principles for cycle path networks. It can also support and coordinate cantonal measures for the construction and maintenance of such networks.

Cycling as a mode of transport received overwhelming support from all parties in Parliament. No criticism at all was voiced in the Council of States. Only the SVP rejected the Federal Council's counterproposal in the National Council. Parliamentary group spokesperson Thomas Hurter said that no additional measures were required as “Switzerland is already a cycling nation”. This idea was refuted by Bastien Girod, the Greens National Councillor, who contended that the lack of infrastructure prevented Switzerland from becoming a cycling nation as “yellow lines are not enough”. SP National Councillor Evi Allemann said that Switzerland needs to catch up with other countries abroad. Various speakers underlined the benefits of cycling. It could help to alleviate peak traffic and reduce energy consumption, and it has health benefits.

## Objective achieved, initiative withdrawn

After parliament's approval of the counterproposal, the authors of the bike initiative returned the favour by withdrawing their popular initiative. They declared that their goal had been achieved. “The federal decree on bicycles addresses the core issues of the initiative, namely giving cycle paths equivalent status to footpaths and hiking trails,” stated SP National Councillor Matthias Aebischer, president of the association behind the bike initiative. The committee behind the proposal is now backed by numerous organisations from the fields of tourism, health, sport, transport, business and the environment. Even the car-friendly Touring Club Suisse (TCS) supports the initiative. TCS Vice-President and FDP National Councillor Thierry Burkart remarked: “The separation of traffic flows is in the interests of all road users, including motorists. It helps to create capacity.”

# The hunt for debris in outer space

Switzerland is at the very forefront of international research on outer space. It is now demonstrating its penchant for tidiness by becoming a debris hunter in outer space. The Zimmerwald Observatory has commissioned three new telescopes for this task.

SIMON GSTEIGER

The two domes that stand on concrete pillars in Zimmerwald in the canton of Berne look like part of the set for a science fiction movie. You might think you were on the Moon or Mars were it not for the luscious green Zimmerwald meadows, the neighbouring farm, the hum of a tractor and the Alps in the background. The canton and University of Berne have recently equipped and expanded the nearby Zimmerwald Observatory. There are now three new telescopes in both domed buildings. Scientists are using them to scour outer space for debris.

This is an urgent requirement, according to Thomas Schildknecht, Director of the Zimmerwald Observatory: "It's hard to imagine how much damage these fragments can cause." They move at a speed of over 7.5 kilometres a second. "That's almost ten times faster than a bullet," he says. At that speed even the smallest pieces release as much energy as the explosion of a hand grenade upon impact. An es-

timated 30,000 objects are circling Earth, and these are just the larger ones.

## Permanent monitoring

One of the new instruments consists of two wide-field telescopes. They have an extensive field of vision and are used to permanently monitor debris in the geostationary ring. This ring is at an altitude of 36,000 kilometres, where weather and communications satellites orbit. "The telescopes allow us to see when something is moving against the backdrop of the stars. We then log what's in motion," explains the Zimmerwald Director. Various recordings enable an object's orbit to be calculated. This helps to establish whether it is a previously identified or newly discovered object.

"The amount of debris has reached a critical point and cannot continue to increase," points out Schildknecht. The problem can be tackled at source once it is clear where the objects are

## "It's become crowded up there"

Whereas it was just a few dozen satellites at the start of the history of space travel, there are now over 1,300 of them circling Earth's orbit. "It's become quite crowded up there in recent years," reveals Thomas Schildknecht, Director of the Zimmerwald Observatory. It is not so much the active artificial celestial bodies that pose a problem but rather those which have exceeded their lifespan, such as decommissioned satellites, fuel tanks and panels. Space debris is increasingly presenting issues for space travel. The orbits of around 30,000 such objects have now been identified. They also represent a threat to manned spacecraft. Anyone planning a mission in outer space is best advised to coordinate the operation with great precision. The organisations behind such launches rely on data logs indicating the orbits of debris fragments. (SG)

coming from. They are often remnants of satellites or rockets, but sometimes also fragments of insulation panels. "The developers of spacecraft have to be notified so that they can modify construction methods," he says.

## Debris ends up in "cemetery"

A preventative approach is one solution. However, if the amount of debris in outer space continues to rise, other strategies will be required. One possibility is robots able to gather debris. Such collection robots are nevertheless controversial due to the risk of them being misused for military purposes. "Just imagine reconnaissance satellites being sabotaged," says Schildknecht. Above a certain distance

The two new domed buildings at the Zimmerwald Observatory are equipped with three telescopes.





from Earth it is also extremely difficult to steer objects so that they burn up in the atmosphere. Instead they are sent into a zone even further away from Earth, which is something akin to a cemetery in outer space. “There is no future in this method though,” says Schildknecht. “Who knows what we might need the space out there for one day.”

### India needs data from Berne

The University of Berne has a tradition of research into debris in outer space. Schildknecht explains that this field was still regarded as the domain of “freaks” at the end of the 1980s. Those who worked in it gained a reputation for tarnishing the image of their own discipline. Schildknecht adds: “Space exploration had enjoyed an impeccable reputation until that point. Then people started highlighting the nega-

tive impact on the space near Earth.” This field is becoming increasingly important today, he says. “We are fortunate in Berne because not only can we hunt for debris but we also have the capability to calculate orbits. That’s an almost unique combination.”

Schildknecht and his team are frequently in touch with the European Space Agency and colleagues in Russia. And if India wants to launch communications satellites into outer space, its agencies use the data from the University of Berne to prevent any collisions with fragments of debris.

The Zimmerwald Observatory invests heavily. In 2013, it spent 700,000 Swiss francs on a new dome and telescope. The two latest domed buildings cost the canton of Berne 820,000 francs. Around the same amount was spent on the new telescopes, the cost of which was largely met by the Swiss National Science Foundation and the

**Thomas Schildknecht, Director of the Zimmerwald Observatory, in front of the telescope that can locate small pieces of debris in outer space.**

Photos: Adrian Moser

University. How can such high spending over a short space of time be justified? Schildknecht says, “Berne is at the very forefront of space exploration. To remain there requires state-of-the-art technology and equipment.

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SIMON GSTEIGER IS A FREELANCE JOURNALIST IN BERNE

### Flagship in space exploration

The Zimmerwald Observatory in the canton of Berne is a Swiss flagship in the field of space research. Switzerland has many other such facilities though. The Swiss Astronomy Society lists 46 observatories. In addition, there are also research institutes at various traditional universities and universities of applied sciences, such as those in Geneva and Zurich. The observatories perform various tasks. While the team in Zimmerwald hunts for debris in outer space, the observatory in Geneva conducts research into planets outside our solar system. Astronomers working at the Eschenberg Observatory in Winterthur measure the position of asteroids near Earth. Their measurements provide data for calculating the orbits of celestial bodies and help to estimate potential impact risk to Earth.

(SG)

# Yellow gloss tarnished

PostBus was an exemplary company. Then a subsidy scandal erupted which was unprecedented in Switzerland. The matter has still not been fully resolved. How did this situation arise?

YVONNE DEBRUNNER

PostBus travels through mountain passes, providing transport to the most remote valleys and far-flung villages. It covers areas where bakers, butchers, village shops and, yes, even the Swiss Post Office have long since closed their doors. A bus, even if only every few hours, is part of universal service in Switzerland. The yellow postal buses are a symbol of public service. They connect towns and villages and, in a sense, hold the country together.

The yellow gloss has now been tarnished. The drivers wearing light yellow shirts no longer just have to explain to passengers where to get off or change buses. They now have to tell them why their employer fraudulently obtained subsidies for many years. PostBus systematically moved money around using accounting tricks to make the subsidised bus routes seem less profitable than they really were.

The upshot was that federal government and the Swiss cantons paid excessively high subsidies for almost ten years, from 2007 to 2015. They handed over 92 million Swiss francs too much, according to Federal Office of Transport (FOT) calculations. The FOT has already demanded the repayment of some of that amount – 13.7 million – as part of a previous adjustment. PostBus wants to repay the rest of the money, too. But the figure could yet rise. The FOT has revealed that PostBus also received undue subsidies in the post-2015 period, effectively right up to the present day.

The only thing that has changed is the procedure. Swiss Post established a holding structure in 2016. The FOT criticised this move because it believed the company's units would



**The scandal has tarnished PostBus's gleaming image, and Swiss Post CEO Susanne Ruoff paid the price in June by resigning from her position.** Images: Keystone



charge each other inflated prices for reciprocal services. Was the intention simply to obtain subsidies by fraudulent means using a subtle trick? This is what the ongoing investigation aims to establish. Swiss Post repeats this sentence almost every day at the moment. The current investigation is seeking to determine whether Susanne Ruoff, the Swiss Post CEO who resigned in June, and her predecessors turned a blind eye while millions of Swiss francs in public funding was fraudulently claimed. It is also looking into whether the dismissed PostBus CEO was sacrificed as a scapegoat. Finally, it is seeking to find out why all of this happened at all. The motive in this case is the biggest mystery.

PostBus ultimately deceived its own owner. The fraudulently obtained money stayed in the company. What lay behind it all? It is conceivable that some of the PostBus management would have received higher bonuses for improving performance.

The real reason may actually lie in the company's bizarre dual role. PostBus travels from village to village and

receives subsidies in return. But PostBus also takes tourist groups to Burgundy and Piedmont, has bus networks in France and invests in Publibike, a bike hire scheme. The company does not receive subsidies for these activities. The aim here is profit rather than making villages accessible.

The dismissed PostBus CEO also pointed to a "conflict of interests". Should transport from one village to the next be provided as cheaply as possible to avoid causing unnecessary expense to the taxpayer? Or should public money be claimed where it doesn't really do any harm to expand and invest in order to achieve internal profit targets? The answer is obvious. Subsidies must be minimised before profits can be maximised. However, operating in that space between public service mandate and market orientation, as well as the organisational proximity of these completely contrasting units, must have led to confusion in this regard.

YVONNE DEBRUNNER IS ECONOMIC AFFAIRS EDITOR AT TAMEDIA

# Mesmerised by the brilliance of genius

Switzerland prompted Claire Goll to become an early emancipated woman but she conquered Paris as the companion of great men.

CHARLES LINSMAYER

When the Huber-Verlag in Frauenfeld published Claire Studer's novellas "Die Frauen erwachen", Friedrich Glauser ridiculed her. On 6 January 1919 in a letter to Robert Binswanger he called her a "male (!) Barbusse" in reference to the French pacifist of the same name and said that the book, in which an "insatiable woman mimed the belly dance of human love", was enough to turn the stomach. Claire Studer – who was born in Nuremberg on 29 October 1890, the daughter of a Jewish hops trader, and became Swiss and gave birth to a daughter after marrying the publisher Heinrich Studer in 1911 – began to develop pacifist principles as a student in Geneva and was part of the Dada movement in Zurich from 1917. Emancipation and human love soon faded into the background in the works of the talented poet and author of the brilliant memoirs "Ich verzeihe keinem" (1976), making way for poetic evocations of the couple's relationship, such as the "Poèmes d'amour" (1925) and the "Poèmes de la jalousie" (1926), which were written in French. Glauser's description of "insatiable" was not entirely wide of the mark, but she must also have been so irresistible to the opposite sex that shortly before her death on 30 May 1977 in Paris she told Jürgen Serke: "I have the misfortune that men swarm around me like flies."

Rilke, Werfel,  
Malraux and Audiberti among suitors

In 1916, long since divorced from Studer, she turned down a proposal from the Alsatian poet Ivan Goll and became Rilke's lover in Munich for two years where she saw the "brilliance of genius" in his "unearthly, gleaming eyes". She nevertheless had Rilke's child aborted and returned to Goll, who became her second husband in 1921, forming one of the

most outrageous couples in Parisian bohemian society for decades. The couple's passionate love letters were matched by equally intense affairs. Ivan was captivated by the young poet Paula Ludwig, while Claire had affairs with André Malraux, Franz Werfel and Jacques Audiberti. This went on until she could no longer bear the unfaithfulness and wanted to kill herself. In 1947, after Goll's exile in the USA, the couple returned to Paris and Claire looked after her husband, who was ill with leukaemia, until his death in 1950. But she could not let go of the great love of her life. She did everything she could to prevent his work from being forgotten and even went as far as accusing Paul Celan – completely unjustly – of plagiarising him. In his final collection of poems entitled "Traumkraut", Goll wrote about the unfaithful companion of great men: "You are a dancer of fear / Dressed as meadow saffron / In the circle of red warriors / The bone music exhilarates you / But you never break out of the circle / And you never sway to me."

BIBLIOGRAPHY: "Ich sehne mich nach Deinen Briefen", the correspondence between Ivan Goll and Claire Goll and Paula Ludwig, is available from Wallstein. The letters of Rilke and Claire Goll are available as an Insel paperback.



"I'm writing a novel about my last love. I want to prove to women of my age that it's never too late for passion. I'm 82 years old but I do headstands every morning and cycle like the Emperor of Abyssinia. I adore weeds. I take Rimbaud to bed and sing the Bach cantata "I'm looking forward to death" every day. My favourite saint is Francis of Assisi. My favourite food is ice cream. But it's no good in Germany. The German soul lies in sausage."

(Claire Goll in an interview with Elfriede Jelinek in the "Münchener Abendzeitung" on 31/07/1973)

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH

## Is Roger Federer the Swiss Jesus?

'Rodger, l'enfance de l'art,' a satirical comic album dedicated to the Swiss tennis player, presents him as a divine being. The book's author, Herrmann, lauds Federer's unmatched ability to make his countrymen dream.



STÉPHANE HERZOG

The best tennis player of all time, a stylish player of incomparable grace, a fair-play athlete, a serene champion who can still cry for joy, a father and exemplary husband ... The virtues with which Roger Federer has been credited are innumerable. And after each victory, the press wonders how the superlatives associated with his achievements can be embellished yet further. "We don't dare dream any more in Switzerland. We're too restrained," says Gérald Herrmann, the cartoonist for *La Tribune de Genève*. "But Federer enables us to let rip. He's a god!" In collaboration with Vincent die Silvestro, who drew the pictures, Herrmann wrote the story for a satir-

**Federer as a ball boy in Basel in 1990. McEnroe predicted: "You'll be the next McEnroe." Rodger was furious: "I want to be Edberg!!!"**

ical and crazy story, 'Rodger, l'enfance de l'art.'

This 80-page comic album, which was published in the spring, follows Federer's life from his birth to his phenomenal junior world title and Wimbledon win "in July of the year 16", in other words 1998. "Roger was quick-tempered, just like Borg. He cried with fury after losing matches, but we know little about his childhood," Herrmann says. The Genevan has his hero lose his virginity to Martina Hingis, the global tennis star, at 16. "He achieved everything that he could achieve," says the self-confessed Roger fan, who admits that he has to hide in the toilets whenever his hero plays against Nadal. "We are 8

million Swiss out of 8 billion people on the planet. And yet our country has brought forth a champion of this calibre, who beats all the others and has remained at the very top for a very long time," Herrmann explains. Are there any Swiss heroes to compare with "RF"? What about Bernhard Russi, for example? "We're proud of him, but he is far less important internationally," Herrmann says.

Federer and his false twin brother

This comic album is a bit like an extended quiz for all those unacquainted with the minutiae of Roger Federer's life. Did "Rodger" perhaps lose a twin brother at birth who later



## “Roger Federer is more like a sort of saint”

Is Switzerland's favourite sportsman divine? *Swiss Review* put the question to two theologians who are also sports fans.

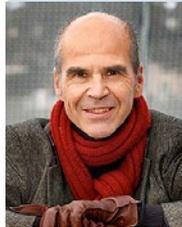
became his own double when he plays? Was his father Robert really the Swiss wrestling champion? The answer is no, but the story remains plausible. The novel is filled with mythological fabrications, such as the story that claims the champion's future mother – who is actually South African by birth – visited Nelson Mandela as a Red Cross representative. And that the hero advised her to leave that racist country. “Everything is all false, of course, except the passages with Jesus,” as the back cover claims.

So where did “Rodger” get his superpowers from? That is the question at the heart of this comic story. Sure, part of the champion's strength stems from his father, who worked in the pharmaceutical industry and one day fell into a cauldron of a cocktail of chemicals destined for the Swiss Army. But the central explanation is different: that God Himself had tasked Jesus with finding Him a successor (see box opposite). It was this message that revealed itself to Robert in the toilets of the Swiss tennis club in Johannesburg, of which he was a member, as was his future wife, Lynette Durand.

### Cut scenes and a parcel to Ohio

So has the book's main character read it? Herrmann admits that his contacts in the industry weren't much help in reaching Roger. The album was sent to the star's manager in Ohio. “I'll be so happy” a person in the secretary's office had said on the phone, claiming that the book had indeed been passed on to the champion. “I'm sure he would have read the book and wouldn't have liked it,” says Herrmann, who had already cut certain scenes from his work on the advice of another star, this one a Genevan lawyer.

‘Rodger, l'enfance de l'art,’ published by Herrmine, 2018, 80 pp.



Olivier Bauer is the author of a book about ice hockey as a religion

Denis Müller, an honorary professor at Geneva University, wrote the book ‘Le football, ses dieux et ses démons’ [Football, its Gods and its Demons]. Olivier Bauer from Canton Vaud is the author of a book on the religious fervour of supporters of Montreal's ice hockey team. What did they think of this comic album, which claims Roger

Federer was predestined to have a supernatural career?

“It's all very amusing, but barely credible,” says Denis Müller. “Federer is an exceptional champion, but he is partly self-made, with the accompanying highs and lows. He is the outcome of training, talent and circumstances.”

Müller puts the public's obsession with the tennis player on a par with “quasi-religions that are imitations of religions, but remain a far cry from real religions”.

“There isn't a Church of St. Federer, but certainly one dedicated to Madonna,” quips Olivier Bauer, reminding us that “the aim of tennis is to destroy your opponent, and Roger Federer is a product designed to make money, neither of which are goals of religions”. The theologian also stresses the excessive amounts of money tennis stars earn. “It's fundamentally unjust that one person can amass so much money,” he says.

### A Swiss model

Will Swiss religious aspirations be sublimated in their love of this sportsman, presented humorously as Jesus'

successor? “Jesus died on the cross at the age of 33,” Dennis Müller replies. “His achievements were linguistic and therapeutic in nature. At age 36, Federer is preparing for a second career rather than a resurrection.” Bauer reminds us that the tennis player has failed on several occasions: “He had glandular fever and sometimes lost to lower-ranking players. If anything, Federer encourages us to be better people, to defend our country better, but everyone knows that he's not godlike. In theology, we don't confuse Jesus of Nazareth with God Himself. Even in the Holy Trinity, Christ is the son of God; the crucified one.”

Olivier Bauer says you can use theological tools to interpret the image of the Swiss star even without recourse to the divine. He sees Federer as being more like the saints. “He's an ideal man, a model to follow at a time in our history in which people are united by sport, whereas in the past they did so more during patriotic gatherings, wrestling competitions or at Church.” The athlete from Basel would also make the perfect example of Swissness. “He appeals to everyone, a little bit like Bernhard Russi. Some people would also like the Swiss to be like Federer: a country that doesn't make too much fuss.”



Denis Müller, honorary professor at the University of Geneva



The Paninis of the alternative scene: An insight into the early years, emotions running high in the Schachtjor v. Rotor match and the team Rosa Liga.

Photos: Reto Oeschger



## “Great matches against friendly opponents”

The world of football is dominated by money. Yet in Switzerland there is a colourful alternative league which even recognised the right to strike in its wild beginnings. The “third half”, during which no goals are ever scored, is vitally important to these idealistic footballers.

THEODORA PETER

Matches are played on Sundays. On the extensive grounds of Hardhof in Zurich, AC Tabula Rasant are playing against FC Widerstand Wipkingen, Real Azul against Zwietracht Turicum, and FC Tormotor 07 against Olympique Lettenwiese. Three matches kick off at the same time, which means that between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. all 46 teams in Zurich’s alternative league – including eight women’s teams – can theoretically play on the same day. On match days there is a lot of coming and going at Hardhof, but many people also stay on. After the final whistle, most of the players enjoy a beer with their opponents, meet up with friends or watch other league matches as spectators. It is this “third half” above all that distinguishes the alternative league from normal club football, according to the league’s long-serving chairman, Mämä Sykora. He points to the code of conduct in the association’s rulebook: “Great matches against friendly opponents, not ugly games against nasty opponents, are the aim of this league.” Respect for opposing players is of paramount importance in the rules “and players shake hands after the match”. Fair play is particularly rewarded and after victories counts above goal difference in the league table. Strengthening teams with external players, such as talent from “normal” clubs outside the alternative league, is also deemed unfair. Discrimination and violence on the pitch are not tolerated.

Sykora has experienced just one violent incident during his 14-year stint in office. The guilty player was barred from playing in the league.

### On the radar of the state security service

The Fortschrittliche Schweizerische Fussballverband (Progressive Swiss Football Association), as Zurich’s alternative league has been officially known since its foundation in 1977, stopped pursuing political objectives some time ago. At the time, anarchistic groups hoped to at least bring the fragmented left wing in Zurich “together on the football pitch if not around a table”, writes former midfielder Christoph Kohler, historian and writer of the documentary film “Ein Tor für die Revolution” (A Goal for

Name : Fortschrittlicher Schweiz.  
Vorname: Fussballverband FSFV  
Geburt :  
Beruf :  
Wohnort: Zürich

Datum	Gegenstand
7.7.77	v.Stapo ZH: Bericht über die offizielle Gründung des FSFV am 3.10.76. Seit Herbst 75 spielen einige Linkgruppen gegeneinander Fussball. Nachdem sie das Sportamt ZH um Zuteilung eines Sportplatzes ersucht hatten, wurden sie aufgefordert, Statuten und Mitgliederlisten einzusenden. Diese sind in der Beilage ersichtlich. Mit 2 Ausnahmen alles bekannte Linke-Aktivist. Als Präsident wird ENDERLI Rudolf 44, als weiteres Vorstandsmitglied WAESCHLE Robert 49 angegeben. Nach den Namen der Gruppen zu schliessen (Abbruch, Bakunin, Focus, Soldatenkomitee, Telefonzitatig usw), ist in diesem FSFV die gesamte Neue Linke vertreten.



the Revolution), in the association's history. The left-wing footballers were soon on the state security service's radar as the file entry of 7 July 1977 (see image) shows. The Zurich Office of Sport had obviously handed the membership lists required to use the pitches directly over to the police. The authorities did not apologise until decades later. To make amends, the Office of Sport made the Letzigrund stadium in Zurich available to the association for the finals in 1992, the year which marked the association's 25-year anniversary.

### Ambition at odds with left-wing ideals

The founders wanted to transfer their left-wing ideals to the football pitch. Referees, league tables and uniform football kits were abolished. Instead the right to strike was introduced. Anyone who felt that fairness was being sacrificed for "victory at all costs" could call for a match to be interrupted and for a discussion to be held. However, according to Kohler, the ideals failed not least because "ambition and the desire to win are not so much symptoms of capitalism as an intrinsic part of football". The women, with their physical disadvantage, also came to feel this. While they were initially allowed to play with the men as a sign of equality, they saw less and less action as time went on. The disappointed female players initially formed a women's team called Mama Zurigo, but gave up after a season. The alternative league was a low-key affair during the 1980s.

It experienced another upturn during the 1990s. In 1994, the Swiss national team caused a stir at the World Cup in the USA. Those on the left-wing scene were also on the edge of their seats. Football became fashionable among party-goers too. Teams from nightclubs, trendy bars and cultural centres increasingly joined the alternative league. De-politicisation was also taking place on the pitch: referees were reintroduced and the official rules of the Swiss

Football Federation were applied and still apply today with very few exceptions.

### Leagues launched in Berne, Basel and St. Gallen

At the turn of the millennium, alternative leagues also emerged in other German-speaking Swiss cities, such as Basel (Unsri Liga), St. Gallen (Brodworscht-League) and Berne (F.O.U.L). There, a team from the Reitschule – an autonomous cultural centre – took the initiative in 1995 to found an alternative league, originally consisting of four teams. Twenty men's teams now play in two divisions on the Allmend pitches in Berne on alternative league match days. A seven-team women's league was launched in 2010. It includes the female footballers of Miss en place.

The idea to start a women's team came about over an after-work beer in autumn 2013, recalls Lisia Bürgi. At the time, the student was working at a restaurant in Berne where the staff already had a men's team. Bürgi had never played football before. Overcoming her inhibitions and joining a normal club without any previous experience would have been a step too far for the 23-year-old. "It's all about having fun for us. And it's great to see how we are constantly improving technically." As there are not many proper matches in the women's league with just six games each in the first and second halves of the season, Miss en place attach great importance to their weekly training sessions. The women playing in the Bernese league recently also attended a crash course held by an experienced referee. As is customary in all alternative leagues, every women's team also has to provide three officials to referee the matches of the other teams. "That has helped us a great deal. Having to make a penalty decision in the heat of the moment is not always easy," says Bürgi.

THEODORA PETER IS A FREELANCE JOURNALIST IN BERNE (SPRACHKRAFT.CH)

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# Winter camps for children aged 8 to 14

Whether skiers or snowboarders, novices or at an advanced level, 8 to 14-year-old Swiss children abroad will have a great time at our winter camp.

## Winter camp in Les Diablerets (Vaud)

Date: Wednesday, 26 December 2018 to

Friday, 4 January 2019

Number of participants: 42

Cost: Camp contribution of CHF 900

Ski or snowboard hire: around CHF 150

Registration deadline: 30 September 2018

### Registration:

The exact details of the winter camp and registration form will be available from 1 September 2018 at <http://sjas.ch/en>. Reduced rates are offered in justified cases. The required form can be requested on the registration form. We would also be pleased to post you our information brochure on request.

### Off to the Juskila!

From 2 to 8 January 2019, around 600 children aged 13 and 14 will enjoy a week of winter sports at Lenk in the Bernese Oberland – and this will be the 78th time the camp has been run. The 600 winners of the prize draw will include 25 Swiss Abroad.

A further chapter in the history of ski camps for young people (Juskila) will begin on 2 January 2019, when 600 girls and boys aged 13 and 14 will travel from all over Switzerland to Lenk in Simmental by special train. For the 78th time Swiss-Ski and its partners are holding Switzerland's largest winter sports camp. This time it is the turn of children born in 2004 and 2005.

Anyone wishing to take part in the ski camp for young people (Juskila) must be able to speak at least one of Switzerland's three national languages (German, French or Italian). The camp places will be awarded through a prize draw, with the prize being participation in the camp including winter sports lessons, food and accommodation. Parents are responsible for organising and funding the outbound and return journeys. The

25 Swiss Abroad who have won a place will be announced at the end of September.

### Camp costs

The price includes train tickets valid within Switzerland, meals, accommodation, a ski pass and winter sports lessons, etc. CHF 120

### Hire costs for winter sports equipment

Skis, poles and ski boots CHF 50  
 or snowboard and snowboard boots CHF 150

### Form for the draw – JUSKILA Lenk (2 to 8 January 2019)

Please complete in clearly legible block letters.

First name: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode, city: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/legal guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Girl  Boy

Commune of origin in Switzerland (see passport/ID): \_\_\_\_\_

Email address of parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. no. of parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of sport:  Skiing  Snowboarding

Only tick one! The type of sport cannot be changed once the draw has taken place.

Language of child:  German  French  Italian

Signature of parent/legal guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Send the coupon and a copy of the Swiss passport of one parent or the child by 15 September 2018 (date of receipt) to: Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA), Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND

**Information:** Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

Tel. +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01, Email: [info@sjas.ch](mailto:info@sjas.ch), [www.sjas.ch](http://www.sjas.ch)

#### Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)

Alpenstrasse 26  
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Stiftung für junge Auslandschweizer  
 Fondation pour les enfants suisses à l'étranger  
 Fondazione per i giovani svizzeri all'estero  
 Fundaziun per giuven svizzers a l'ester

# “My advice is not to worry”

Martina Boscaro's experience of studying in Switzerland

**Martina Boscaro, you are a Swiss Abroad from Italy. What made you decide to study in Switzerland?**

I've dreamt of returning to Switzerland to study since my childhood. The sense of calm that Switzerland exudes held a magnetic appeal for me. The educational institutions are also of an incomparably high standard, in my view.



Martina Boscaro was awarded a grant by her canton of origin. She received support with her application from [educationsuisse](http://educationsuisse.ch).

**Did you settle in quickly at university?**

I found it really easy to settle in at university, especially thanks to support from the professors and the welcoming family atmosphere. The fact that the University of Neuchâtel is quite small definitely helped me. I never felt lost. The first few months were tough as my French wasn't good enough to begin with. But the language courses provided free of charge by the university enabled me to move from the B2 level required to the C1/C2 level within a few months. Sharing an apartment with young French-speaking women definitely also helped.

**Are there any particular differences between Italy and Switzerland?**

You notice the differences, but there's nothing to be afraid of. I saw integrat-

ing as a challenge that inspired me. Education in Switzerland is more practically relevant than in Italy. The Swiss universities really prepare students for the challenges of the modern world of work.

**You will soon receive your Master's degree in Law. What are your plans for the future?**

I'd like to remain in French-speaking Switzerland for the time being to undertake an internship before sitting the bar exam. But I wouldn't rule out doing a doctorate or working for federal government in Berne. There are lots of options.

**What advice would you give to young Swiss Abroad interested in studying in Switzerland?**

My advice is not to worry. I came to Switzerland on my own without much money but was determined to establish myself and achieve things. The grant from my home canton of Zurich enabled me to study here. [educationsuisse](http://educationsuisse.ch) supported me with the grant application and handled it for me. Find out about possible sources of funding and give yourself the opportunity to do your dream course.

# OSA advice

*Question: I live abroad and I have lost my driving licence, which was issued in Switzerland. Can I get a new one from the cantonal authority that issued it or from a Swiss representation abroad?*

The Swiss authorities are not able to issue a new Swiss driving licence. From the date on which you begin residing abroad, it is the authorities of your country of residence that have authority with regard to your driving licence rather than Switzerland. On account of the principle of territoriality, you are subject to the legal system of the state you reside in. Consequently, the area of road traffic is exclusively governed by the law of the country of residence. The cantonal road traffic authority that issued the driving licence can therefore only provide you with an attestation stating that you are the holder of a Swiss driving licence. By issuing this attestation, the cantonal authority certifies that you have obtained a driving licence based on the conditions stipulated by Swiss law. You will then have to check with the authorities responsible in your country of residence which conditions have to be met for a driving licence to be issued to you (confirmation of the information contained in the attestation, driving test, etc.). The attestation from the cantonal road traffic authority may be useful to you at this stage.

The contact details of the cantonal road traffic authorities can be found at:  
[www.strassenverkehrsamt.ch](http://www.strassenverkehrsamt.ch)

The OSA's Legal Service provides general legal information on Swiss law, particularly in areas which concern the Swiss Abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law or intervene in disputes between private parties.

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[www.revue.ch](http://www.revue.ch)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Please advise your local embassy or consulate. Do not write to the editorial office in Berne.



## The offers for young people this winter

### New Year's ski camp for young people in Valbella (Grisons)

from 26/12/2018 to 04/01/2019

An extremely varied programme awaits participants in the mountains of Grisons. As well as skiing or snowboarding lessons in small groups and a highly diverse fringe programme, there will also be time to make new friendships. Those taking part will be looked after by a well-trained and highly motivated team of leaders. This offer is aimed at young people aged 15 to 18. Cost: CHF 950

[www.tgadalai.ch](http://www.tgadalai.ch) and [www.arosalenzerheide.swiss](http://www.arosalenzerheide.swiss)



### Winter sports camp for adults in Saas-Grund (Valais)

from 27/12/2018 to 05/01/2019

We're offering a cool camp for young adults for the third time in the winter holidays. This year's skiing and snowboarding camp is taking place in Saas-Grund in the Valais Alps. Cost: CHF 950

For a preview of the accommodation and ski resort, visit:

[www.ferienhaus-schoenblick.ch](http://www.ferienhaus-schoenblick.ch) and [www.saas-fee.ch](http://www.saas-fee.ch)

### German course in Berne and French course in Bienne

from 07/01 to 18/01/2019

Four lessons of language teaching in the morning, joint activities in the afternoon and a welcoming host family. We encourage participants to learn German or French as one of the four national languages or to improve their existing language skills on an intensive course. Course costs: CHF 1,500 (34 lessons, including host family and Swiss Travel Pass)

### Subsidies

The Youth Service has funding available to provide support for financially disadvantaged participants. Applications can be made under the following link:

[www.swisscommunity.org/en/youth/reduction-of-fees](http://www.swisscommunity.org/en/youth/reduction-of-fees)

### Registration start date

Registration for the winter sports offers begins on 8 September 2018.

Further information on the offers and registration can be found on our website

<https://www.swisscommunity.org/en/youth/youth-offers>.

### Youth Service contact details

[youth@aso.ch](mailto:youth@aso.ch) / +41 31 356 61 00

### Offers from partners:

Schweizer Jugend Forscht (Swiss Youth in Science):

[www.sjf.ch/nationaler-wettbewerb/wettbewerb-2019](http://www.sjf.ch/nationaler-wettbewerb/wettbewerb-2019)

Easyvote: <https://www.easyvote.ch>

Federal Youth Session: <https://www.jugendsession.ch/>

[www.facebook.com/ASOyouth](http://www.facebook.com/ASOyouth)

## THE SWISS ABROAD ON INSTAGRAM



## "I feel honoured to represent Switzerland at the Olympics."

*Born in the USA but representing Switzerland at the Olympics. The 16-year-old figure skater Alexia Paganini finished in 21st place at the Olympic Games in Pyeongchang. Although she lives in New York and has already seen much of the world, she calls Switzerland "home".*

**My sport:** Figure skating has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. My mother took my brothers, Kevin and Mario, and me to a local ice rink when I was just two years old. My brothers play ice hockey, and I'm a figure skater. We all have a passion for sport.

**My Olympics:** Representing Switzerland at the Olympic Games was an incredible experience. I feel honoured and extremely grateful. My most precious memory is entering the official Olympic ice rink for the first time. That's when I realised that it was for real and actually happening. I'm here at the Olympic Games representing Switzerland, my home nation.

**My Switzerland:** I've always felt Swiss. I am very proud to be Swiss. Almost my entire family lives there. We've got family in Weesen, Solothurn, Zurich and Poschiavo, and my grandmother lives in Brusio. I love visiting Switzerland – it's my home.

**My heart:** I can't see into the future, but I could imagine living in Switzerland at some point. I'm often in Switzerland, and the very first thing I look for is a good raclette restaurant. I adore raclette!

The full interview was published on [swissinfo.ch](http://swissinfo.ch), the online service of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, which is available in ten languages. Do you live abroad too? Add the tag [#WeAreSwissAbroad](https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/weareswissabroad/) to your photos on Instagram.

# Contract children, institutionalised children and those forcibly adopted – belated acknowledgement of suffering and injustice

Victims of compulsory social measures will receive a solidarity payment, and over 9,000 people submitted an application for payment by the deadline. However, this does not mean that the process of coming to terms with the issue is over.

The procedure for dealing with the compulsory social measures and care placements before 1981 is still in full swing. In summer 2013, victims and representatives of the authorities and institutions involved came together for the first time as part of a round table to engage in dialogue. The members of the round table appointed by Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga were given the task of preparing and initiating comprehensive action to come to terms with the compulsory social measures and care placements before 1981. In July 2014, they presented a report including proposed measures, most of which were incorporated into the new law aimed at addressing this dark chapter in

Victims on the Bundesplatz at the launch of the initiative on 31 March 2014  
Photo: Wiedergutmachungsinitiative

Swiss social history. This law went through the parliamentary consultation process in record time – not least due to pressure from the Reparations Initiative – and was adopted in autumn 2016. At the suggestion of the members of the round table, federal government also set up an emergency fund which provided around 1,200 victims in financially precarious situations with interim support.

The new law formally recognises the injustice that victims of the compulsory social measures and care placements suffered in Switzerland prior to 1981. It enables victims to apply for the payment of a solidarity contribution of 25,000 Swiss francs. It also provides the legal basis for re-

search to comprehensively examine the issue. An independent expert committee is looking at the destiny of people who were “under administrative care” and will unveil its findings in spring 2019. The Federal Council has also launched the National Research Programme 76 entitled “Welfare and compulsory measures – the past, present and future”. This focuses on the documentation of and research into all other forms of compulsory measures at the time, such as the system involving institutionalised and contract children. The individual research projects are set to be approved and launched by summer 2018. Significant funding has been earmarked for the overall research activities. This



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Skype: helpline-eda

## Travel advice

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## itineris

Online registration for Swiss citizens travelling abroad  
[www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris](http://www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris)



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highlights the importance that Switzerland attaches to coming to terms with this issue.

Finally, the new law also governs the archiving and inspection of records and provides an advisory and support service for victims and others affected through the cantonal points of contact. Organisations representing the victims and persons affected will also be given the opportunity to submit proposals for self-help projects. The victims and persons affected are also to be given the chance to develop personal or professional prospects and to exchange experiences.

The 15th and final meeting of the round table took place on 8 February 2018. The deadline for solidarity payment applications has now also expired. The Federal Office of Justice has received 9,018 applications in total. Some 313 of these applications from 41 countries – around 3.5% – were submitted by people residing abroad. A large number of them were submitted to the specialist department from the neighbouring countries of France and Germany. But many also came from

Canada, Thailand and Italy. The applications must be dealt with within four years of the law entering into force, which means by the end of March 2021.

Persons residing abroad had to personally request a life certificate from a Swiss representation for the application. Individual solutions were found in cooperation between the Swiss representation and the Federal Office of Justice for people who would have had to travel extremely long distances or who are in poor health.

Further information can be obtained from the Compulsory Social Measures Unit at the Federal Office of Justice (+41 58 462 42 84 or sekretariat@fuersorgerischezwangsmassnahmen.ch). Further information is also available online: [www.bj.admin.ch](http://www.bj.admin.ch) > Society > Compulsory social measures and placements. The report and minutes of the round table can be viewed in German, French or Italian at [www.fszm.ch](http://www.fszm.ch) > Runder Tisch.

## Important notice

Notify your local Swiss embassy or consulate about your email address(es) and mobile phone number(s) and/or changes to these and register at the online desk (link on the FDFA homepage [www.eda.admin.ch](http://www.eda.admin.ch)) or via [www.swissabroad.ch](http://www.swissabroad.ch) to select your preferred format for receiving "Swiss Review" and other publications. Please contact your Swiss representation if you have trouble registering.

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## Federal referendums

Voting proposals are determined by the Federal Council at least four months before the voting date. The following proposals will be put to the vote on 23 September 2018:

- Federal Decree of 13 March 2018 on Cycle Paths, Footpaths and Hiking Trails (direct counter-proposal to the Popular Initiative "To encourage the use of cycle paths, footpaths and hiking trails (Bike Initiative)")
- Federal Popular Initiative of 26 November 2015 "For healthy, environmentally-friendly food fairly produced (Fair Food Initiative)"
- Federal Popular Initiative of 30 March 2016 "For food sovereignty. Agriculture affects us all"

Further voting date in 2018: 25 November

All information on the proposals (voting pamphlets, committees, recommendations by Parliament and the Federal Council, electronic voting, etc.) can be found at [www.admin.ch/votes](http://www.admin.ch/votes).

## Popular initiatives

The following federal popular initiatives had been launched at the time of going to press (deadline for the collection of signatures in brackets):

- For autonomy in family and business affairs (Child and Adult Protection Initiative) (15.11.2019)
- Appoint federal judges by drawing lots (Judiciary Initiative) (15.11.2019)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found in German at [www.bk.admin.ch](http://www.bk.admin.ch) > Politische Rechte > Volkssinitiativen > Hängige Volkssinitiativen



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[www.fdfa.admin.ch](http://www.fdfa.admin.ch) Rome (2018)



## The discreet catwalk for Swiss kitties

An object typical of Swiss residential areas, the cat ladder, is finally receiving the attention it deserves.



They are a typical yet overlooked urban development phenomenon – cat ladders in Swiss suburbia. Nowhere else on the planet do they discreetly blend into the urban landscape in such incredible numbers and wide-ranging designs. Cats are provided with an accessible link between roaming freely outdoors and the warmth of a human home with great architectural skill and craftsmanship: spiral staircases, narrow and perilously teetering bridges, climbing aids in artistically designed zigzag patterns and fur-covered miniature balconies screwed into house facades. However, despite the great number of artistic structures installed for cats, no research has been carried out into cat ladders as yet. That is now about to change. The author and graphic designer Brigitte Schuster is currently working on a reference book about cat ladders and the relationship between urban residents and their domestic pets. A whimsical project? Schuster is deadly serious. She is looking at cat ladders from a sociological, architectural and aesthetic perspective. Her exploration of the topic raises the question as to whether the ladders are ultimately more important to people than the animals. They highlight a person's need to provide the animal with access to the home. Cats would probably cope in everyday life without the climbing aids. Schuster's artistically produced book will be published in German and English at the start of 2019 but can be pre-ordered now. MARC LETTAU

[brigitteschuster.com/swiss-cat-ladders](http://brigitteschuster.com/swiss-cat-ladders)



The research focuses on the case study of Berne. All the photos show cat ladders from districts in the federal capital.  
Photos: Brigitte Schuster



## Luck – what’s that?



CLAUDE CUENI:  
 “Der Mann, der Glück brachte”  
 Lenos Verlag 2018  
 275 pages;  
 CHF 29.90, € ca. 23.90

“Now you’ve got your life back.’ ‘What life?’ I looked down at the park, (...), the people (...); they all had a plan, whereas I had none.”

This is how the novel about Lukas Rossberg begins. He was seriously injured after being shot in the head and through the lung as a bystander in a casino robbery. After seven years in a coma and extensive rehabilitation, he is about to resume his old life. He is going back to a world that did not expect his return. His girlfriend has left him, his company no longer exists and in his career as an IT specialist he now belongs to the old school. The long-term effects of his injuries and pain also blight his everyday life. A former colleague, Robert Keller, who is now director of the lottery company

for whom Rossberg once developed software programs, gives him a job. His task is to break the good news to people who have just won millions on the lottery – he is the man who delivers good tidings. Rossberg soon realises that Keller does not have a clear conscience and is not telling the truth about events on the night of the robbery. He starts to do some investigating and before long discovers irregularities and even criminal activities at the lottery company. Rossberg attempts to get to the bottom of the story and to find some peace of mind.

The author Claude Cueni is known to a wide audience for his lengthy, mainly historical novels. Readers will want to read more after finishing this 275-page novel, despite the first-person narrator not enjoying much good fortune and the lack of a happy ending. The budding romance, which is not without problems, between Rossberg and a saleswoman produces a feel-good effect. Cueni, who suffered from leukaemia several years ago, masterfully draws on his own experiences in life and work without being melodramatic or moralising. In an interview he revealed that he wanted to write intelligent, entertaining novels. He has done so with aplomb here.

Claude Cueni was born in 1956 into a French-speaking family in Basel. After leaving school, he travelled around Europe earning a living from casual jobs. In the 1980s, he started to make a name for himself as an author of novels, radio and theatre plays and later also as a screenwriter for film and television. He also developed computer games and founded a successful software company. His novels have been translated into many languages. The author lives in Basel today.

RUTH VON GUNTEN

## Nine languages – one sound



ELINA DUNI:  
 “Partir”, ECM

The young Albanian-Swiss jazz singer and composer Elina Duni is a force of nature. Her voice is just as impressive as her personality and appearance – captivating, multilingual, vibrant, lithe and filled with French charm and nimble wit. She is a dedicated performer who possesses depth and a feeling for melancholic music.

She was born in Tirana in 1981. Her mother was an author and her father a director, which meant she grew up in a creative home. She began performing on the stage at just five years of age, learned to play the violin and then the piano. She came to Switzerland from Albania when she was ten with her by then divorced mother, living briefly in Lucerne before moving to Geneva. “My poetic idiom is still Albanian,” she reveals, “but my intellectual language is French.” She also speaks Bernese German delightfully.

She studied song and composition at Bern University of the Arts. Here she got to know Colin Vallon, the acclaimed pianist from Lausanne, with whom she founded her quartet. Her idols included Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Shirley Horn and Sheila Jordan. But she also enjoyed listening to rock and world music.

Her new and third CD “Partir” has been released by leading label ECM. Elina Duni performs without her trusted band here and provides her own accompaniment, switching between the piano, the guitar and percussion. She sometimes also sings a cappella. She has selected 12 songs from all sorts of different countries. The album features folk songs from Kosovo, Armenia and Macedonia. She also includes Portuguese fado and an Italian track by Domenico Modugno. Jacques Brel is invoked with “Je ne sais pas”, while Switzerland is represented by “Schönster Abestärn”.

It sounds like a real global hotchpotch, but the opposite is in fact true. This album is a delight. It adopts a reflective tone despite representing a new departure. It is not a euphoric or frivolous change of direction but rather a considered and at times wistful one. Elina Duni sings about it with an earthy presence and masterful power.

“Partir” is much more than a secondary album. As a soloist Elina Duni gives her all here. She negotiates every potential pitfall without a safety net. She is captivating and a pleasure to listen to.

MANFRED PAPST

# Magdalena Martullo-Blocher



She is head of one of Switzerland's biggest companies and is one of the nation's most successful and wealthiest entrepreneurs – and she has also climbed quite a few rungs up the political career ladder. Magdalena Martullo-Blocher, CEO of Ems-Chemie-Holding, is a 49-year-old mother of three and has been a Swiss People's Party (SVP) National Councillor since 2015. Switzerland is wondering whether the daughter of Christoph Blocher, the dominant figure in the SVP, will now dedicate herself fully to politics or remain in business.

Her professional track record suggests she will pursue the second option. Under Martullo-Blocher's leadership, the specialist chemicals group based in Domat/Ems in Grisons is enjoying even greater success than when it was run by her father, whom she replaced as CEO after his election to the Federal Council in 2003. Last year's trend of positive revenues continued into the first quarter of 2018.

She also says at every opportunity that she would rather be in business than in politics. However, if Switzerland was in peril, she would probably have to bite the bullet and steer national government on the right course: "In an emergency situation, such as if the EU suddenly and unexpectedly started putting us under great pressure, I would probably consider office," she told various media outlets when asked whether she wanted to become a Federal Councillor. Not only does she resemble her father in terms of style and appearance, her methods are also the same. She disguises her political ambitions as a "duty" to protect the Swiss nation and people from disaster and ruin. In March 2018, Magdalena Martullo-Blocher replaced her retiring father on the party's executive committee, one of the most powerful positions in the SVP. Even on the day before the election, her father was saying that she didn't actually want the position. She "had" to take it.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

## The Sion 2026 Olympic bid is withdrawn

Switzerland will not bid for the Winter Olympics in 2026 after all. This is despite the Federal Council approving almost a billion Swiss francs for the Sion 2026 bid in April. Its aim was to use existing sports facilities in the four cantons of Valais, Fribourg, Berne and Grisons. But on 10 June, the people of Valais voted against a 100-million-franc cantonal contribution to the Games at the ballot box (also see the editorial on page 3). The bid has been withdrawn as a result. Financial and environmental concerns were key factors in the proposal's rejection. (MUL)

## Exchange of newspapers between Tamedia and Blocher

The upheaval in the Swiss media scene is continuing with major restructuring measures. In April 2018, the former Federal Councillor Christoph Blocher sold the "Basler Zeitung" – which he had acquired six years earlier – to Tamedia, the Zurich-based media group. In return, the company handed over the "Tagblatt der Stadt Zürich", which is distributed to all households, and other local newspapers to the SVP politician. This deal sees Tamedia further strengthen its dominant position in the Swiss media landscape. In contrast, Blocher is focusing on free local newspapers. In 2017, he acquired the Zehnder-Verlag, which has 38 titles. (JM)

## The papal Swiss Guard is expanding

The Swiss Guard, the small armed force which serves the Vatican, is expanding. Christoph Graf, Commander of the Guard, says that growing security requirements make the increase in numbers – from 110 men at present to 135 – necessary. The Swiss Guard, founded in 1506, is responsible for guard and ceremonial duties at the Vatican, but also for the personal protection of the Pope. The number of guards last rose in 2000 from 100 to 110 men. (MUL)

## Swiss development aid fell in 2017

CHF 3.05 billion – which equates to 0.46% of gross national income (GNI) – was the amount earmarked for Swiss state development aid in 2017. That is almost half a billion Swiss francs less than in the previous year. The federal authorities indicate that it is the "lowest amount since 2013". They believe the decline has to be put into perspective because expenditure on asylum seekers fell sharply. These costs are included in development aid. Alliance Sud, the umbrella development organisation, has voiced criticism of the reduction. It argues that Switzerland has once again missed its self-imposed target of increasing the proportion of development aid to 0.5% of GNI and is a long way off the international goal of 0.7%. (MUL)



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