

SWISS REVIEW

The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
September 2015

lamentato

Parliament

**A look back at politics
over the past four years**

**Who is voting for the issues that concern
the Swiss Abroad in Parliament**

The conjuring trick over the magic formula

**Timea Bacszinsky's struggles on
and off the tennis court**



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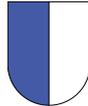
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Today is 1 August and Swiss National Day. It is raining. Sitting at one's desk to work is not a chore. It is not exactly torrential rain outside nor a summer thunderstorm. Just gentle rain from a grey overcast sky. It is as though the heavens are weeping.

Lots of eloquent, patriotic and clever speeches will almost certainly be made in Switzerland today. Many of them will have already been forgotten by the time you receive this magazine in a few weeks' time. Perhaps more speeches will be made this year than usual. After all, there is an election campaign going on and Switzerland finds itself in a state of profound uncertainty.

"OECD predicts negligible growth for Switzerland," was one headline a few days ago. Another read: "SECO lowers its projection for the Swiss economy". Yesterday's "20 Minuten" reported: "A foreigner enters Switzerland every 3.6 seconds." That is 24,000 a day. The commuter newspaper "20 Minuten" has 535,000 daily readers. "Asylum chaos" and the "influx of refugees" have been reported on 210 times by Swiss newspapers over the past month. Immigration is a major issue in this election campaign. One side is calling for rigid isolationism while the other is desperately pointing to our humanitarian tradition. Everyone is aware that the issue is only going to get bigger in future. Neither border fences nor starry-eyed idealism can prevent that.

We do not cover immigration in this edition but will undoubtedly return to the issue in future. However, we have invited two foreign journalists living in Switzerland to share their views on Swiss politics and the election campaign with us in this issue. Their articles can be found on pages 8 and 9, accompanied by analysis from a Swiss political scientist.

The question that will concern the Swiss Abroad in the run-up to the elections will almost certainly be which party and which candidates can I expect to represent my interests as a Swiss citizen abroad? A look back at the work of Parliament over the past four years may prove insightful in this respect, so we have examined the voting behaviour of the parliamentary groups on all proposals relevant to the Swiss Abroad. You will find our analysis on page 18. We hope it inspires you to vote and makes your decision easier.

BARBARA ENGEL, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Cover photo
The highly secure entrance to the Parliament building in Berne.
Photo: Alessandro Della Valle

The liberal Voice of Swiss Citizens abroad

Meet the candidates speaking for you in Bern:



Helen Freiermuth,
Member of the Board
FDP International, ZH

Raphaël Comte
Council of States, NE

Doris Fiala
National Council, ZH

Christa Markwalder
National Council, BE

Christian Wasserfallen
National Council, BE

Raphaël Corbaz, VD

Marcel Dobler, SG



Nicolas Leuba, VD

Walter Locher, SG

Stephan Mumenthaler, BS

Isabel Schorer, SG

Rolin Wavre, GE

Laurent Wehrli, VD

Silvia Zeder, GE

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A 27th Canton for the Swiss Abroad

746 000 Swiss citizens live abroad. If they formed a canton, it would be the fourth largest by population. Does „Fifth Switzerland“ make up the 27th canton of the Swiss Confederation? Do Swiss living abroad need to be represented in the parliament?

- > *What do you think?*
- > *Share your opinion at:*



You can also take part in the discussions at SwissCommunity.org. Register now for free and connect with the world at: www.swisscommunity.org

SwissCommunity.org is a network set up by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)

A debate is needed

The quintessence of Georg Kohler's article in the August issue is the assertion that national state democracy is no longer capable of guaranteeing the solid foundation for an internationally acceptable system and development alone and without taking account of transnational interests. However, the following question needs to be raised before addressing this claim: How are an internationally acceptable system and development achieved? The EU is responsible for this task in Europe and illustrates how decisions are made by small groups. It is sufficient to mention Greece, TTIP and CETA. Policy on the issue of Greece is determined by the most economically powerful EU partner – Germany and its Chancellor. Secret meetings are held over TTIP and CETA, and an EU-wide vote, which is possible in principle, is being prevented. I am not in the position to propose the best solution but the Swiss method of finding solutions through referenda meets more interests and is also feasible internationally.

GÜNTER BERGERHOFF, BONN

Exasperatingly sluggish

I find the sluggish pace of progress with electronic voting exasperating. I've been unable to vote since I moved to live in central Brazil. I receive the voting material only a few days before the ballot or even after it. It is pointless to even consider sending it back. I don't understand why those responsible have been unable to agree on a workable system despite quibbling for so long. And once again, instead of there being a national project, each canton is working separately. The only people being discriminated against are the Swiss Abroad who are unable to exercise their constitutional rights.

ALAIN LEUBA, BRAZIL

Just a few pied pipers

There is not a section on one single website of Switzerland's major parties where the Swiss Abroad are taken seriously or which might be of interest to us as Swiss citizens abroad. We simply don't exist. At most a few isolated pied pipers (politicians) are carrying out self-promotion for the election in October 2015 but not one of them is providing any evidence of what he or she really intends to do for the Swiss Abroad. That is the reality of the situation.

DAVE DANCER, BY EMAIL

Zimmerwald and Switzerland

I discovered the anecdote about Zimmerwald in a book by Jean Ziegler with the French title "Le bonheur d'être Suisse". This book can contribute to the debate on the history of Switzerland, and I recommend reading it. I believe it would be of interest if "Swiss Review" were to interview the author.

ROBERT GALL, FRANCE

Back to the family drama



JOACHIM B. SCHMIDT:
"Am Tisch sitzt ein Soldat";
Landverlag Langnau 2014;
360 pages; CHF 33.90;
EUR 26 approximately.
www.joachimschmidt.ch

"He resolved no longer to think about his homeland" – this is the decision made by the young protagonist in spring 1967 in Hamburg. But shortly afterwards he is abruptly torn away from his student life after receiving a telegram from his aunt Rósa. Jón returns home to the island of Iceland aboard a cargo ship. His mother lies dying and wants to confide a long-held family secret in him. But Jón can only recall one single word after the night of her death – tree. When it dawns on him that this must be the exotic tree of heaven planted by his grandfather, the plot starts to move at a rapid pace. Digging at the foot of the tree, Jón finds a skull and then an entire skeleton.

Are these the remains of his father, who was supposed to have drowned in the glacial river in 1942 together with the head of the local authority and whose body had never been found?

Joachim B. Schmidt masterfully portrays and characterises the figures in his novel "Am Tisch Sitzt ein Soldat" (At the Table Sits a Soldier): Aunt Rósa, who looks after Jón's mentally handicapped brother with great determination, or the sheep farmers, who wring life from the barren, cold landscape and escape into home-made schnapps during the long, dark winter. The father figure is lovingly depicted in the way a two-year-old child can remember him. The protagonist not only has to contend with his family's dark secrets but also with the difficulties faced by people who live cut off in the middle of the North Atlantic. The author skilfully switches the narrative between the past, with the family drama set in 1942, and the 1960s. The outcome of the plot may seem rather elaborate but this is precisely where the author's storytelling skills are reflected. A real coming-of-age novel in which the protagonist ultimately returns to Hamburg and is able to reconcile himself with his origins.

Joachim B. Schmidt, who was born in Grisons in 1981 and grew up there, has been living in Iceland for eight years. The qualified structural draughtsman today works as a journalist and an author. He has also previously made a living as a gardener and a farm labourer. The adopted home of this Swiss Abroad plays a key role in his stories, the first of which he published in 2010 with his first novel "In Küstennähe" coming out in 2013. Readers will hope for more of these tightly-crafted tales from Iceland.

RÜTH VON GUNTEN

Lending beauty to terror

They shocked the world – the photographs that Steve McCurry, disguised as a Mujahideen fighter, took in 1979 in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan and smuggled out of the country. A few years later he photographed an Afghan girl in a refugee camp in Pakistan – the image became iconic. The now 65-year-old American, a member of the illustrious Magnum photo agency, primarily photographs in Asia and regards himself as a chronicler of histories and cultures that are disappearing in some respects. 130 of his photographs are currently on display at the Museum für Gestaltung in Zurich.

www.museum-gestaltung.ch

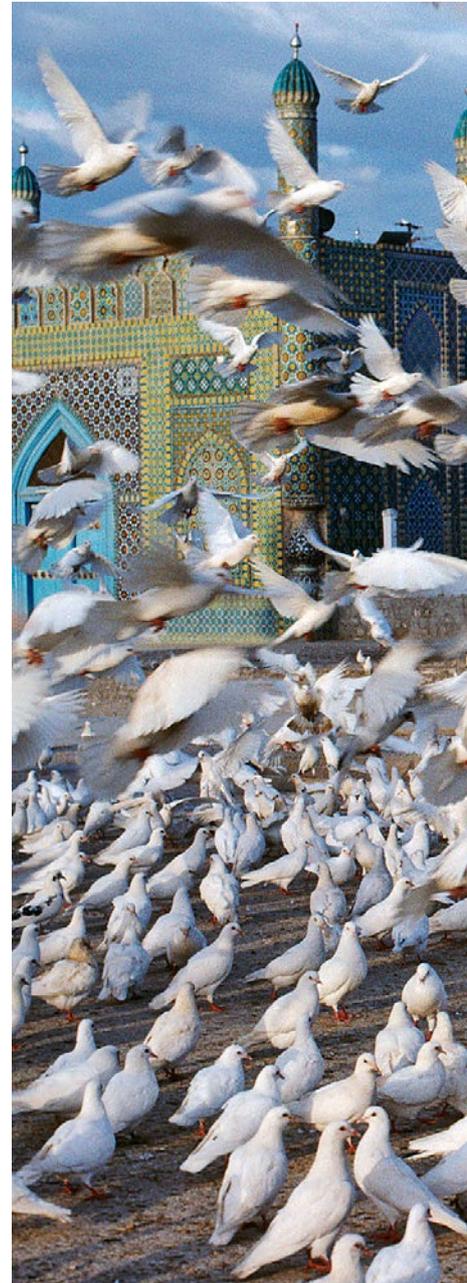
The exhibition runs until 18 October 2015. An extensive fringe programme has been organised.



Sharbat Gula – the 1984 photograph of the Afghan girl in the Nasir Bagh refugee camp near Peshawar became an iconic image



Afghanistan in 1992: women at a shoe seller's in Kabul



Afghanistan in 1991: the Blue Mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif



India in 1983: a train in front of the Taj Mahal in Agra



in the federal state of Uttar Pradesh



Pakistan in 1985: a father and son at a refugee camp in the Chitral Valley

An outside perspective on Switzerland

The election campaign in Switzerland is in full swing and obviously the candidates and parties are making lots of promises about the future. The election campaign nevertheless also provides an opportunity for reflecting on the past few years. We have therefore invited two observers, the correspondents from two leading foreign newspapers, "Le Monde" and "Süddeutsche Zeitung", to share their insights into Swiss politics and the election campaign with the Swiss Abroad.

Switzerland torn between openness and protectionism

The last legislative period was marked by the nation's desire to escape the European crisis... but in vain. The same issue will have a major influence on the forthcoming federal elections.



MARIE MAURISSE, "LE MONDE" CORRESPONDENT
IN SWITZERLAND

Switzerland has spent the past four years walking a tightrope. On one hand, it has attempted to avoid contagion by the crisis rocking the European Union at all levels – economically and politically. On the other, it has sought to continue supporting Swiss growth, which depends heavily on trade with and labour from neighbouring states. Three key events have illustrated the difficulty faced by the nation in maintaining this delicate balance.

On 9 February 2014, the Swiss people supported the reintroduction of immigration quotas by voting yes to the popular initiative put forward by the Swiss People's Party (SVP), the country's biggest political party. The result was a political bombshell and presented a headache for the Federal Council. The self-sufficient tendencies of the Swiss people contrast starkly with the reality of the situation faced by Switzerland, where companies desperately need foreign workers in order to operate. Is it politics that determines the state of the economy or vice-versa? The Federal Council has to find a way forward but the "Get out of the blind alley. Don't reintroduce immigration quotas!"

committee wants the Swiss people to vote again. The coming months will prove decisive.

End of the minimum rate and banking secrecy

The other indicator of Switzerland's swaying between autonomy and dependence is the decision by the Swiss National Bank (SNB) on 15 January to abandon the minimum rate introduced in 2011 to counteract the appreciation of the Swiss franc. Thomas Jordan, chairman of the SNB, now believes that artificially keeping the currency at reasonable levels is too expensive. Companies have to manage on their own to remain competitive despite the strong Swiss franc. Swiss SMEs and the tourism industry are flagging, and the central bank is being put under pressure. Regardless of whether it wants to be or not, Switzerland is not an island in the heart of Europe, and its GDP is heavily influenced by the euro crisis.

Moreover, the country no longer wants to go it alone. That is the final point of this synopsis. On 27 April, Berne signed an agreement on the automatic exchange of information with the European Union that will effectively bring an end to banking se-

crecy from 2017. This is a Swiss speciality which has disappeared in favour of a globalised system based on the transparency of banking flows. This development will not be restricted to foreign clients holding accounts in Switzerland, as the experts believe the Swiss themselves will undoubtedly renounce banking secrecy soon. That is assuming the popular initiative entitled "Yes to the protection of privacy", which is to be voted on at referendum over the coming months, is not approved by the Swiss people.

Swiss politics under European influence

Switzerland's heart remains torn between openness and protectionism. Antoine Chollet, a political scientist at the University of Lausanne, believes the SVP has won a symbolic battle. The European Union has increasingly less credibility in the eyes of the Swiss, and the idea of accession has completely disappeared from the agendas of the Swiss parties. "Swiss politics nevertheless remains highly influenced by Europe," according to this expert, the author of the book "Défendre la démocratie directe" (Defending Direct Democracy). In his view, "the consequences of the end of the minimum rate and the referendum of 9 February, two sovereign decisions, will indicate to what extent we are dependent on the countries surrounding us". The SVP's performance at the forthcoming elections will set the tone.



More courage, fewer aperitifs

The Federal Council has set a topic that could act as a pointer in the election campaign.



CHARLOTTE THEILE, SWITZERLAND CORRESPONDENT FOR THE "SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG"

The campaigning for the National Council elections has been going on at least since February. Roger Köppel, editor-in-chief and publisher of "Weltwoche" who has been appearing on all the talk shows in Germany, declared that he wanted to enter Parliament for the SVP in Zurich. In fact, it was not so much that he wanted to but that he had to. He felt compelled owing to the "disastrous policies of the left-wing majority in Berne". His candidacy – and concerns over pushing long-serving SVP politicians down the list – was the main election campaign issue for almost two months. The SVP caused the next big stir in April. Magdalena Martullo-Blocher, CEO of Ems-Chemie and Christoph Blocher's daughter, also decided to stand for election, not in Zurich but in Grisons. The headline in the German weekly newspaper "Die Zeit" was "Hooray, hurrah, everyone to Chur".

The battle over Blocher's political legacy

What would the high-profile newcomers bring? This was not evident. Would

the SVP succeed in using the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean for its own political ends? There was also uncertainty over this. While political scientists are observing a slight "shift to the right", the FDP is more likely to benefit from this. It comes as little surprise that the main issues over recent months have been related to the economy. The Swiss have been experiencing firsthand since January what it means to live with a safe-haven currency. Kilometre-long tailbacks of cars heading towards Germany to go shopping, longer working hours for the same salary and the relocation of industrial jobs – the consequences of the strong Swiss franc are real and tangible. What answers Switzerland can provide to this currency crisis remains to be seen given that it is stemming from Greece and the EU. Nevertheless, economic competence seems a more important factor in this election campaign than in the past. That said, the election campaign has not yet really got going. The major parties are primarily focussing on mobilising their core voters – free aperitifs rather than addressing issues. And the "course-setting elections" forecast by SP President Christian Levrat –

right or left, an outward-looking perspective or isolationism, social democracy or economic liberalism – is actually a claim that could be made every four years.

The Federal Council nevertheless set a topic at the end of June that could act as a pointer this summer. The negotiations with the EU are to be restructured over the coming weeks. There is to be a chief negotiator who will now not just discuss the new provisions on immigration but also research matters, institutional cooperation and the European electricity market. The Federal Council anticipates the initial proposals by the autumn. If such a package-solution approach were to come off, this would represent a resounding success for Swiss diplomacy. Taking a step further towards "fitting a square peg into a round hole" – as many people called the implementation of the immigration quotas adopted in 2014 – would be good news for the Federal Council shortly before the elections. But Berne is taking a big risk with this strategy. Even though the EU has refused to negotiate, the expectation has been raised in Switzerland that an outcome to negotiations will soon be achieved.

Attention given to mavericks

A few candidates creating a stir, economic issues and perhaps some suc-



cess with a relaxed negotiating strategy – these do not sound like major surprises during the elections. A good deal of attention is being dedicated to even tiny parties, such as the Artists’ List whose own estimations indicate potential support of less than one per-

cent. Their ideas may sound similar to those of the Greens or SP – the environment, refugees, education and EU relations. The well-known author Ruth Schweikert nevertheless believes a new party is needed. That means room for utopian ideas and un-

conventional candidates. The artists have hit upon an important point here – courageous ideas and new and perhaps also awkward politicians are probably the best thing that could happen to the election campaign over the coming weeks.

Parliament and the concerns of citizens

With the elections on 18 October the 49th legislative period of the federal government will come to an end. What were the issues that impacted the Swiss political world the most from 2011 to 2015, and how well did the political system function?

An analysis by Thomas Milic

Foreign affairs

The most significant event of the last four years, one that the public, Parliament, government and media were all talking about, was the narrow approval by Swiss voters of the immigration initiative on 9 February 2014. This initiative represented a break in Switzerland’s relationship to the EU, as it called into question the bilateral path that had been approved several times by voters in initiatives. But there was more to it than that. The outcome of the voting also slowed down negotiations with the EU over an institutional framework agreement, the ratification of which will only be possible if a solution to the issue of the free movement of persons has been found. Had Swiss voters approved the Ecopop initiative that was up

for a vote just a few months later, on 30 November 2014, this most likely would have signalled the end to the bilateral agreements. But the initiative was unexpectedly clearly rejected.

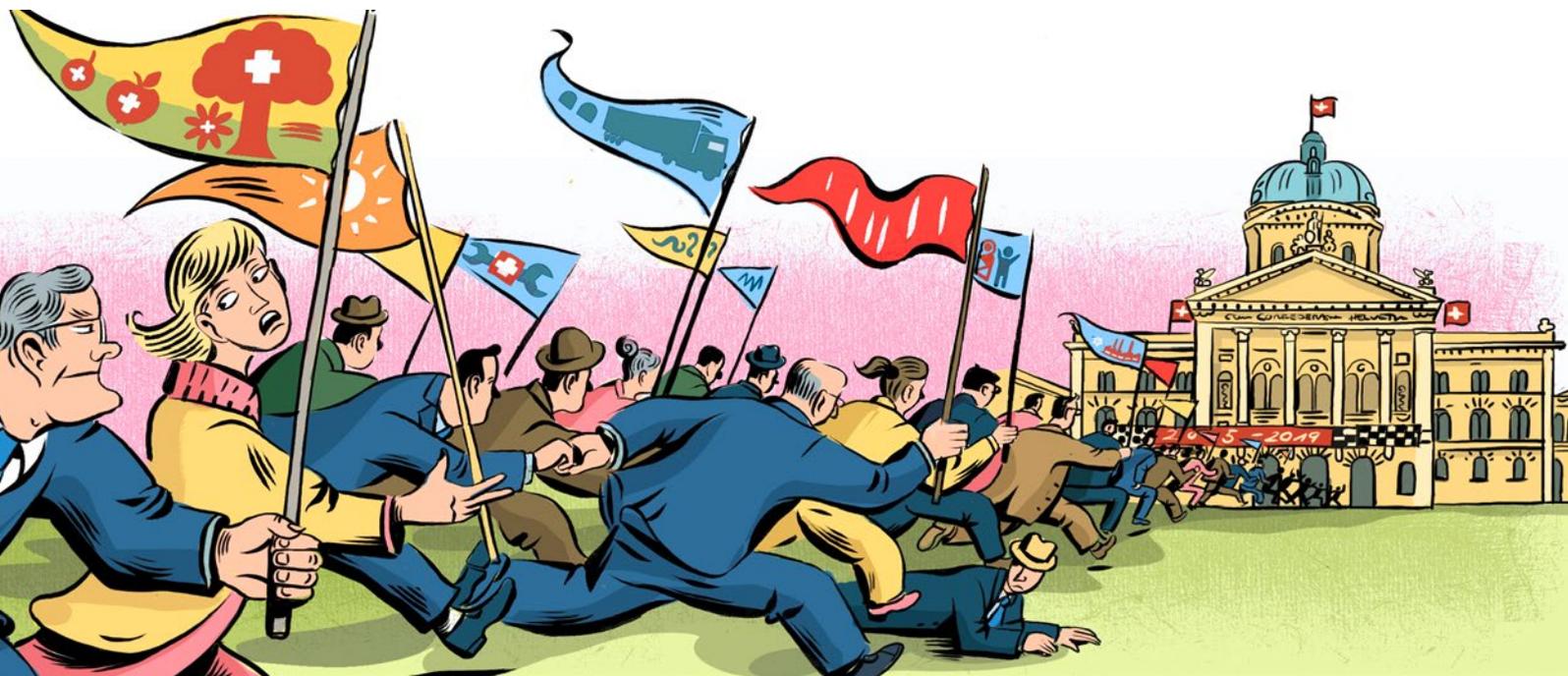
Supporters of the bilateral path will have only a short break, however, as the outcome of the negotiations with the EU is difficult to predict. The searched-for form of implementation that can be broadly accepted has proved elusive. And because Parliament, which is badly divided in the area of foreign affairs, is unlikely to find a solution for implementation, it will probably be up to the voters to break through this Gordian knot with another referendum.

Foreign affairs is currently so dominated by the implementation of the immigration initiative that other international issues have

practically been forgotten. But these other issues are hardly insignificant. The FATCA agreement with the United States has meant the de facto suspension of banking secrecy with US clients. “Swallowing the toad”, as finance minister Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf called it, was finally approved by Parliament by a surprising large majority, although not without some misgivings. Three other tax disputes were also settled, as tax agreements with the UK and Austria were signed in 2012, and with Italy in 2015. A similar solution with Germany was rejected by the German Parliament.

Immigration and asylum policies

The immigration initiative is an issue that the SVP put forward. It has both a foreign



policy and an immigration policy dimension, and because of this it is difficult to interpret the voters' decision. Trying to limit immigration was not the only topic that the SVP took on. The first initiative to deal with the issue of foreigners in Switzerland came in 2010 – the SVP deportation initiative. The point of this initiative was not to limit immigration, but the automatic deportation of foreigners who were engaged in criminal activity. The SVP was unhappy with how this initiative was being implemented, so it submitted an enforcement initiative in 2012. This was a new event in Swiss politics. For the first time ever, a political party tried to impose its meaning on the constitutional text that voters had approved through another initiative. In light of the rising success with initiatives and the simultaneous international integration of Switzerland, the future will likely see more initiatives to enforce legislation.

When it comes to asylum policies it is currently the proverbial calm before the storm. The ongoing wars and revolutionary unrest in parts of Europe have led to a rapid increase in the numbers of refugees. This makes it crucial for there to be a pan-European coordination of asylum policies. And Europeans don't want Switzerland to stand on the sidelines. But the debate will be fierce, as with almost no other issue are there such differences in the views between the right and left as there are over asylum policies. It is possible to make a forecast here: the asylum issue will most

likely be one of the dominating themes of the upcoming legislative period and even of the coming election campaign.

Energy policies

The key event that shaped the energy debate during the last legislative period is actually a leftover from a prior period: shortly after the Fukushima catastrophe (and just before the 2011 elections) the Swiss Parliament decided on a gradual withdrawal from nuclear energy. The four female members of the Federal Council at the time were the proponents of this measure. But the government did not set a specific deadline for the withdrawal. A deadline would depend on the safety of the nuclear power plant, the government said at that time. It is uncertain whether there will ever be a deadline for withdrawal, however, as the energy strategy 2050 has run into criticism primarily from the right, but also from the left (see also party surveys on page 14).

Social policies

Nobody would disagree that demographic changes are making adjustments necessary in both social policy and healthcare. And everyone would also agree that time is of the essence in both areas. The Swiss social security system (AHV) is facing a deficit of billions of francs in a few years, while healthcare costs are rising without interruption. The answers from the Federal Council to these chal-

lenges are "Retirement 2020" and "Healthcare 2020". The retirement issue takes pride of place for Federal Councillor Alain Berset. Critics have pounced on his plan from all directions. Berset's own party, the SP, has rejected his call to raise the retirement age for women to 65. The conservative parties and the business world believe that the financing is too focused on bringing in more revenue, especially through an increase in VAT. There remains quite a bit of work to do until a retirement reform package is ready that a majority will support. The Federal Council's plans for reforming healthcare are under less pressure.

Defence and security

The planned upgrading of the Air Force was the main defence issue of the legislative period that is ending. The ageing Tiger planes were to be replaced by 22 fighter jets of the Swedish type Gripen. But before the Federal Council announced its decision in favour of the Gripen, internal documents were leaked to the public in which the Swedish fighter plane was given poor marks. The supporters of the Gripen were never able to recover from this setback. There was fierce debate in Parliament regarding procurement. And in contrast to earlier deals for defence and security, the line separating support and opposition did not run along the classic left-right divide, but also ran right through the conservative parties. In the eyes of the supporters of the

Gripen, several missteps were made during the referendum campaign. The opponents won in the end and the Gripen was rejected. It was the first time that the Army had suffered a defeat at the polls.

Business

The Swiss public have been very busy with economic issues over the last four years. Business and economics were usually at the top of the list in surveys conducted about issues that concerned Swiss citizens, and economics is a much bigger issue than the public had perceived it to be in the past. This might seem to be a contradiction at first glance, as practically no other country has been able to overcome the various economic disruptions (euro, finance and banking crises) in such fine fashion as Switzerland. Nevertheless, many Swiss citizens apparently feel that the country cannot remain an island of prosperity forever. This basic concern may be one of the reasons why Parliament has approved programmes to cut spending. It might also explain why initiatives that business interests have said would damage the economy have been soundly rejected at the polls recently. The initiative to provide six weeks of vacation for everyone was clearly rejected, to the surprise of the rest of the world, as were the minimum wage initiative and the 1:12 initiative. One initiative stands out as an exception, however: the so-called initiative against abusive executive compensation. Even though *économiesuisse* spent five to eight million francs to oppose this referendum, the victory at the polls and for Thomas Minder, who was the main proponent of the initiative, was unexpectedly clear. The line-up of supporters for this initiative was quite unusual, however, as a left-leaning issue was backed by a businessman who tended to move in more conservative circles. In the final vote, both SP and SVP voters gave their backing to the initiative by a wide majority.

The Swiss National Bank sent shock waves through the country in January 2015 when it scrapped the floor on the minimum euro exchange rate that it had set four years earlier. It is still too early to know what the full im-

pact of this decision will be. According to the media and political experts, one party has already benefited: the FDP. The FDP's success in cantonal elections in 2015 is due to economic insecurity, analysts say. Voters are turning to those parties that are perceived to have a high level of economic and business competence.

Land use planning and transport policies

Over the past years a concept has been making the rounds that biologists are familiar with, but not the general public. That concept is "density stress". The term was used in connection with various political demands. For example, in the voting on the *Ecopop* and immigration initiatives, it was a central topic of discussion, and it also played a role in the initiative on second homes. Without getting into a discussion of whether this term is suitable to the Swiss situation, it should be pointed out that the population of Switzerland passed the eight million mark in 2012.

Against this backdrop, it is understandable that questions of land use planning and transport policies are becoming increasingly important, which is also reflected in the way that Swiss citizens are voting. Both the land use initiative and the second home referendum were approved, the latter result being far more of a surprise. In addition, an initiative to establish a new financing mechanism for rail infrastructure was passed comfortably by Swiss voters. In contrast, a conflict has developed between car owners and those who prefer not to own a car. The price increase for the motorway toll stickers was rejected by voters, and the decision regarding the so-called "milk cow" initiative has not yet been made. There was also a first look at a major long-term project in the current legislative period: the second Gotthard tunnel. A decision on the second tunnel will take place in 2016, and it looks like the debate will be emotional.

Political culture

A review of the action in Parliament over the last four years shows that issues such as cul-

ture, energy, research and education and land use planning are trending left, while policies on foreigners, Europe and business are trending right. It is interesting to note that the SVP tends to be more frequently the loser in the final votes than it used to be. Apparently, the SVP is sticking to its uncompromising position until the end, in contrast to earlier legislative periods. In addition, a high number of government proposals were rejected in Parliament, at least in the first half of the 49th legislative period. But it's not only Parliament that has been rejecting government recommendations. Swiss voters are following these recommendations less than they used to. This holds true for both referendums and initiatives. Four initiatives were accepted in the current legislative period. Never before have so many been accepted.

But it is becoming more difficult to implement the initiatives that voters have approved. The government and Parliament are often faced with the dilemma that, if implemented, either international agreements will be violated or the intent of the initiative will be violated. The latter case occurs more often. The government and Parliament then have to deal with the discontent of the persons who proposed the initiative and the supporters of it. The upshot is that voting is becoming more and more token.



Thomas Milic, 44, studied political science, history and journalism at the University of Zurich. He received his Ph.D. in 2005 on the topic of "Ideology and Voting Behaviour". Until 2014 he was a senior

lecturer at the Institute for Political Science and lecturer at the universities of Zurich, Bern and Lucerne. He currently works at the Center for Democracy and is also the head of the voting and elections section in the *sotomo* research group. He also works as a lecturer at the University of Zurich.

The magic formula and the parties' conjuring trick

Georg Kohler, professor emeritus of political philosophy at the University of Zurich, is conducting observation and analysis of the election campaign in Switzerland throughout 2015 on behalf of the Swiss Abroad.

Switzerland is probably the only democracy in the world to have been governed for over half a century now by a large coalition, in fact a very large one. What is remarkable here is that power in Switzerland is not shared by just two parties but instead four (FDP, CVP, BGB or SVP and SP). At least this was the case until late autumn in 2007 and the great watershed moment when the Christoph Blocher affair, a revolutionary episode for the Swiss system, occurred.

You will recall how, after a four-year term on the Federal Council, the SVP leader, despite being the uncontested head of the strongest party in terms of share of the vote, was de-selected and replaced by his "party colleague" – I'm sorry, but that is simply the proper term – Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf. The vast majority of the SVP regarded this as an act of betrayal, and the new Federal Councillor paid for her deed with expulsion from the party.

This resulted in two things – the foundation of another centre party, the Swiss Conservative Democratic Party (BDP), and the second SVP Federal Councillor, Samuel Schmid, also joining the BDP, which was essentially supported by the faction of the SVP who disagreed with Blocher's approach.

This shattered the "magic formula" that had existed since 1959 dividing the seven Federal Council seats amongst the four strongest parties. Based purely on share-of-the-vote calculations, the little BDP would never have obtained two Federal Council seats.

However, neither the conservative parties nor the SVP sought to make a big issue of it. The SVP simply wanted to return to government as soon as possible. It also achieved this aim quickly – admittedly only with the begrudging approval of Ms Widmer-Schlumpf's continued presence. In December 2008, the long-serving Party President Ueli Maurer was elected to the Federal Council as the successor to Samuel Schmid, who stepped down.

This meant that the "magic formula" has for the last seven years no longer just contained four parties but instead five. One certainly wonders how long that will continue.

The elections in the autumn are fascinating not least because of the "Widmer-Schlumpf" situation. If the SVP only makes slight headway compared with 2011, if the BDP



loses some ground, if the CVP relinquishes a few seats to its conservative rivals and the FDP gains support at the expense of the Green Liberals, then the outlook will not be good for the Finance Minister regardless of how well she has performed her duties. The SVP is of course thirsty for revenge without saying as much.

Widmer-Schlumpf has been blamed for the supposed shift to the left in Swiss government policy which is nevertheless characterised by the extremely restrained withdrawal from nuclear power primarily attributable to the conservative Doris Leuthard. Regardless, the de-selection of Widmer-Schlumpf is being portrayed as the key strategic step required to correct a misguided path. A dyed-in-the-wool SVP President would clearly want to ensure that a more restrictive approach is adopted to asylum and immigration policy.

It is already clear the SVP is holding a strong hand to exert pressure on the FDP and CVP if the outcome outlined materialises. Both parties want to keep their existing representatives on the Federal Council and with a bit of guile the claims of both could be played off against one another splendidly.

The point I am making is that for once the electorate will be able to determine the winners and losers of a Swiss parliamentary election based on the leadership figures. This is rare in Switzerland and an indication of the fact that the style of politics has also changed here, shifting from an issues-oriented search for consensus by politicians to a no-holds-barred battle over the make-up of the governing body.

Expressing it so pithily is nonetheless overstating matters. The nation's institutions still exert sufficient pressure to ensure objective, matter-of-fact cooperation. The seven-member Federal Council is and remains a collective authority which only performs effectively if its members produce reasonable policies essentially deemed acceptable by the overwhelming majority. The departure or arrival of individual figures cannot do much to change that.

This will be welcomed by political philosophers and provides good reason to laud the constitution governing Switzerland's authorities. *Rule of law, not rule of men* is after all the most important element in all good state systems, including our own based on (direct) democracy.



ELECTIONS
2015

Survey amongst the political parties

We asked the seven main parties represented in Parliament to provide us with brief responses to sometimes complex questions. They all obliged and provided some very insightful answers.



The Swiss Abroad are a constantly growing electoral group. What means does your party use to communicate with the Swiss Abroad?

<p>The Conservative Democratic Party (BDP) is a recently established party and does not yet have an institutionalised relationship with the Swiss Abroad. Communication primarily takes place via our website, the video newsletter and email.</p>	<p>Member of the party executive responsible, international secretary at headquarters. OSA Congress, advertising in "Swiss Review", presentations at Swiss societies abroad, website, newsletters, social media and print magazine.</p>	<p>We only communicate electronically via a newsletter sent by email and information on our homepage. We are also present on Facebook and at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad.</p>	<p>We are very active on social media. The newsletter can be subscribed to online at www.gruene.ch in German or French. We also attend the Congress of the Swiss Abroad each year.</p>	<p>Our party communication is almost exclusively digital. This has the advantage of allowing us to reach the Swiss Abroad just as effectively as all other members. As a party, we also take part in the Congress of the Swiss Abroad on an annual basis.</p>	<p>SVP International, our section for the Swiss Abroad, engages in lively exchange with Swiss people all over the world. It also does so via www.svp-international.ch and the Facebook page www.facebook.com/svpinternational</p>	<p>The ambassadors of the SP are the members of the SP's international section. Members are active in SP satellite offices in Berlin, Paris, Rome and Israel. New ones are being set up in Brussels, Montreal, Buenos Aires and Cape Town.</p>
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If a compromise is not reached with the EU over implementation of the initiative on mass immigration (MEI), i.e. if the agreement on the free movement of persons and bilateral accords would have to be terminated, what would your party attach greater importance to: implementation to the letter, or maintaining the bilateral agreements?

<p>Maintaining our bilateral accords has utmost priority and is a key issue for the BDP this election year. The BDP presented a proposal back in early 2014 for implementing the MEI. What is more, the BDP seeks to clarify these relations between Switzerland and the EU, and to anchor the bilateral agreements in the Swiss Federal Constitution. It is vital that the electorate's demand to reduce immigration be heard and met by promoting Swiss labour.</p>	<p>The treaties of the Bilateral packages must be upheld. Yet, the issue would not even arise if the Swiss Federal Council would accept our proposal to implement the initiative and negotiate a safeguard clause with the EU (with similar accords already in place in the EU). Immigration will be better controlled anyway without endangering the Bilateral packages of treaties by implementing flanking measures and promoting the Swiss domestic labour force.</p>	<p>Retaining the bilateral agreements has absolute priority for FDP International. Loss of the free movement of persons would have serious consequences for a major share of the 450,000 Swiss citizens living in the EU. Moreover, it is important to use all the room for manoeuvre we have for implementing immigration control while adhering as closely as possible to the treaty governing free movement of persons.</p>	<p>The bilateral agreements must be maintained. Our geographical location and economic and social ties render any thought of "going it alone" an illusion. The Greens therefore do not wish to see any rigid implementation of the initiative on mass immigration, but rather a non-discriminatory, EU-compatible solution that guarantees our bilateral treaties.</p>	<p>Our bilateral accords with the EU are crucially important to Switzerland as a business and research location. Because of that, maintaining and further advancing along the bilateral road repeatedly affirmed by the Swiss people clearly takes priority for the Green Liberal Party over any strict implementation of the initiative on mass immigration.</p>	<p>The Swiss people have confirmed that they are in favour of controlling and limiting immigration. The task now is to implement this mandate in a manner that best fulfils the nation's interests. The only treaty affected by this is our agreement with the EU on the free movement of persons, which now stands to be renegotiated. Yet, linked with this agreement are the other six treaties of the Bilateral I set of treaties - which are in the mutual interest of Switzerland and the EU. All told, Switzerland has over 150 bilateral agreements with the EU.</p>	<p>Without a doubt, ensuring the bilateral treaties takes priority for the SP. Whether in politics, the economy or cultural issues, Switzerland relies on maintaining good relations with its European neighbours. Under no circumstances do we want to lose our liberty to freely move throughout Europe. If terminating treaties of the Bilateral packages is indeed to become an option on the table, it is the Swiss people who must have the final say in the matter.</p>
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In the recent past, multiple grass-roots initiatives aimed at promoting family policy have failed. What does your party believe to be the single most important family policy measure that should be pushed through without fail in the near future?

<p>The BDP seeks to improve the compatibility of family and career with an eye to better integrating women into the workforce, and thereby contribute to alleviating the shortage of skilled workers. This requires an entire bundle of measures for which the BDP has submitted motions to the Swiss Parliament, for example to expand and promote the availability of daycare centres and to introduce day schools and block times.</p>	<p>The next family initiative sponsored by the CVP will be presented to the people of Switzerland in 2016. We want to eliminate the tax burden of marrying or living in a partnership. After years of having been disadvantaged, married couples and registered life partners should finally be treated equally without er couples in matters of taxation, care and pension plans. Further legislative demands concerning paternity leave and exempting children from premiums called for by the CVP are currently pending in Parliament.</p>	<p>Families would best be helped by introducing individual-based taxation for couples. This is a fair solution, and one custom-tailored to each individual's personal income level and capacity. It would prevent what is termed tax "bracket creep", amounting to unfair fiscal drag. In addition, greater efforts must be made to enhance the compatibility of family and career, in work-life balance, for example, by increasing the tax deduction allowed for the costs of externally provided childcare.</p>	<p>It is our wish to support all families, whether headed by married couples, registered life partners, or single parents, etc. To this end we have brought a number of measures before Parliament, of which certainly one of the most important is to diminish their financial burden for example by taxing couples as individuals and enhancing their life-work balance with day schools.</p>	<p>We seek equal treatment of married couples and co-habiting life partners in the eyes of tax law and social insurance, and we support allowing the institution of marriage for same-sex couples. It should be possible for professionally active men and women to raise children together in a work-life balance. Hence, the infrastructural offerings for daily routines and part-time jobs must truly be available at all levels and for both genders as a matter of course.</p>	<p>The tax burdens of families should be reduced. To this end, for example, what is termed in German the "Heiratstrafe" - the financial tax disadvantage of being married - should be finally eliminated. Married couples are taxed at higher rates today than unmarried couples. The goal of the SVP is to lower taxes for everyone.</p> <p>high-income families in particular benefit most.</p>	<p>The SP would like to replace tax deductions for children with child tax credits aimed at easing the tax burden on families with low and moderate incomes. Tax credits, which can be deducted from the tax bill based on the principle of "one credit for every child", are more socially just than deductions, from which high-income families in particular benefit most.</p>
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In 2011 the Swiss Federal Council and Parliament decided to begin a stage-wise phase-out of nuclear power. In its Energy Strategy 2050, the Swiss Federal Council proposes a successive restructuring of Switzerland's energy systems, to be completed by 2050. Does your party support this strategy?

<p>"For the energy transition" is one of the three core topics of the BDP's election campaign. The BDP was the first major political party in Switzerland to call for an organised, orderly exit from nuclear power. We embrace Switzerland's Energy Strategy 2050 and a market-oriented energy management system. Environmental responsibility is a duty we have to future generations, and thanks to innovation potential it actually offers us major economic opportunities.</p>	<p>The CVP has been helping to drive Swiss energy transition from the very start. We call for an incremental phase-out of nuclear power and support the Energy Strategy 2050 of our Federal Council. Power generation from renewable energy sources strengthens the regional economy and creates jobs, while energy consumption drops, CO2 emissions are reduced, and our dependency on foreign energy sources falls. Switzerland is on its way to becoming a frontrunner in the energy sector.</p>	<p>The Swiss economy, its business and industry will hardly be able to cope with the energy strategy proposed by the Federal Council, and the strategy is incompatible with Switzerland's societal structures and needs. It creates new barriers for Switzerland as a business location and will cause jobs to be relocated abroad. The FDP International wants a clearly defined and sustainably reliable enabling environment instead of new taxes and subsidies, which distort the market.</p>	<p>The Greens support the Energy Strategy 2050 as an important step in our energy transition. However, we are still lacking stipulated maximum service lifetimes for Switzerland's existing nuclear power plants, as called for in our nuclear phase-out initiative. Without clearly specified deadlines for the nuclear phase-out, there is no planning certainty for investment in energy efficiency and expanded use of renewable energy.</p>	<p>Yes - we want to pursue the energy transition and achieve turnaround, but with liberal incentive systems. Environmental emissions today are not being squarely attributed and billed to the actual causers, and the nuclear industry benefits from hidden subsidisation. We want to see cost transparency and steering taxes, i.e. environmental incentive taxes, move us away from CO2-generating technologies and nuclear energy towards renewable energy sources.</p>	<p>The Federal Council's Energy Strategy 2050 is an expensive utopian dream that puts at risk the safe and reliable energy supply that a growing Switzerland needs. The SVP rejects this concept plan, which is based on forcing compliance at high prices. Hardest hit by this strategy would be the people of Switzerland, as well as our small and medium-sized enterprises and the many jobs those businesses provide. It would make much more sense to improve the framework conditions enabling optimum exploitation of every available energy source. Banning certain technologies does nothing to help us move forward.</p>	<p>The energy transition, i.e. the phase-out of nuclear power and the promoting of renewable energy sources, is one of the major successes of the last legislative period. The SP has played a decisive role in shaping Switzerland's energy turnaround efforts, and will continue to support the coming second phase. The transition to clean energy is a huge opportunity for Switzerland, both environmentally and economically.</p>
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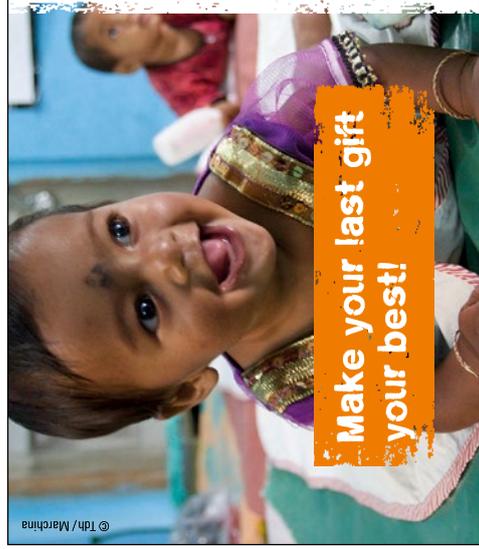


What sort of line-up in the Federal Council is your party looking to achieve after the elections? A purely arithmetical magical formula, such as two seats for each of the three parties that garner the strongest voter support, and one seat for the fourth strongest? Or rather complete cross-sectional concordance in which, as today, even the smallest party can be represented on the Federal Council?

<p>The BDP would like to see cross-sectional concordance of the solution-focused forces in the government. The BDP would reject a conservative-right government led by an SVP-FDP coalition majority as, in the Swiss concordance system, a balanced representation of the constructive forces is to be weighted more highly than a government compiled along purely arithmetic lines.</p>	<p>We will not let our position on the Federal Council elections be known until after the parliamentary elections.</p>	<p>Parliament is free to put together the Federal Council as it sees fit. Yet, the government must have broad support within Parliament in order to push through projects. This used to succeed in the past with the 2-2-1 formula. Yet, in the two most recent legislative periods the Federal Council has often failed in its role.</p>	<p>The Greens are in favour of a "concordance based on reason". The Greens believe that the SVP, a party bent on dismantling the just rule of law of our Swiss state and one that endangers international cooperation, is not fit to form part of our national government despite its size.</p>	<p>The Green Liberals stand firmly behind the concordance system. However, the 2:2:1 rule no longer reflects the reality of our political party landscape. We would welcome a clear rule defined by the parties prior to the elections. Yet, we have two minimum demands concerning the make-up of the overall Federal Council: We want to safeguard the energy transition, and to preserve our liberal economic system.</p>	<p>The SVP has always embraced the concordance system in which the four major political parties are integrated into the Federal Council according to their electoral strengths. This system creates political stability and should be re-established after the coming elections. The SVP is also prepared, as called upon time and time again, to assume greater responsibility in the government.</p>	<p>Concordance means that all important responsible political forces should be represented in the government: provided they present electable candidacies. On the other hand, a set allocation formula as in the decades of the traditionally applied magical formula no longer makes sense today. And indeed, the SVP has always stated that it will not vote out any Federal Councilor currently in office who is doing a good job.</p>
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The Swiss Abroad have little chance of being elected because the votes of those eligible to vote abroad are distributed among all cantons. Having their own constituency would significantly improve their chances of election. Would your party support a separate "constituency for the Swiss Abroad"?

<p>No</p>	<p>Yes, in principle.</p>	<p>No position adopted yet.</p>	<p>That would be great!</p>	<p>No position.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
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From Grisons to Lake Schwielowsee

The Swiss author Silvio Huonder first discovered his own style in Berlin

CHARLES LINSMAYER

“Adalina” was the literary sensation of 1997. The novel recounts how Grisons-born Maculin returns to Chur from Berlin after many years to reconcile himself with the fate of his deceased cousin and lover Adalina. But instead of finding deliverance, he realises that the girl’s accidental death was the result of his petty jealousy and, plagued by feelings of guilt, he plunges from a rock face into an abyss. And yet rarely has Swiss prose been written so tenderly, sensuously and erotically as in this Grisons home-coming novel that ends in tragedy.

“I could never have written ‘Adalina’ in Switzerland,” its author Silvio Huonder, who was born on 6 October 1954 in Chur, declared on record in 2014. In fact his first novel “Von Silber bis Russ schillert der Regenbogen bei Vollmond” published in 1982 under the pseudonym J.J. Silla gave little indication of Huonder’s subsequent qualities. He first discovered his own style in Berlin where he relocated in 1990 and still lives today with his wife and two sons. He resided in Berlin Friedrichshain until 2000 and since then in the village on Lake Schwielowsee which he portrayed in his 2009 novel “Dicht am Wasser”.

Expanse of horizon

Coming from the mountains of Grisons, Huonder found an “incredible expanse of horizon” in Berlin and a landscape dominated by water conducive to his writing. “I looked out from my study over the water whose surface always looks different depending upon the time of year, light and weather – gleaming metallic, frothed up by the wind or as smooth as glass.”

After writing four plays, in “Adalina” he produced the book that enabled him “to confront Chur and put the past behind him”. His second novel “Übungshefte der Liebe”, published in 1998, again portrayed a young Swiss man’s escape from his native country, but this time with a conciliatory ending.

Huonder’s 2006 family novel “Valentinsnacht” was set entirely in Berlin. The city and its bodies of water also play a key role in probably his most brilliant work to date, the

2008 volume of stories entitled “Wieder ein Jahr, abends am See” and then go on to develop a magic in the previously mentioned novel “Dicht am Wasser” which has a lasting impact on both the destinies narrated and the crime story plot. Taken as a whole, Berlin is not just the backdrop to the novel but also a narrative subject.

Returning with an historical novel

In 2012, with “Die Dunkelheit in den Bergen”, Huonder again revisited Grisons. However, it is set in 1821 and tells the tale of two soldiers from Grisons who return home to Chur after serving with the Dutch military and investigate a murder at the behest of Baron von Mont. The historical setting, the precisely researched details and the intensity of the landscape and language not only produce an extremely credible, riveting crime story but also provide compelling evidence that Huonder is again entirely comfortable with the backdrop and milieu of Grisons 18 years after “Adalina”. Despite having been a Swiss Abroad for 25 years, Huonder has never really cut his ties with home. At any rate, as a lecturer at the Swiss Literature Institute, he travels between Berlin and Biel every week by train.

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH



“A fear grew in him. The fear that all that now awaited him was his cousin. It was as though she could wait for him at the railway station, Adalina, a ghost from the past, silent and reproachful.”

(From the novel “Adalina”, 1997, Arche-Verlag, available from Nagel & Kimche)

Bibliography: Silvio Huonder’s books are available from Nagel & Kimche, Zurich.

How do our MPs vote on issues concerning the Swiss Abroad?

The legislative period which is coming to an end saw a particularly high number of proposals that affect the Swiss Abroad either directly or indirectly.

Thanks to the electronic voting procedure in the National Council and, since 2014, also in the Council of States, the voting behaviour of every member of the Federal Assembly can be followed. A look back can also provide guidance in making a decision for the forth-

Proposals concerning the Swiss Abroad

Subject	Vote	SP	The Greens	GLP	CVP/E	BDP	FDP	SVP
Retaining the embassy in Guatemala (FAC-NC motion)	NC 16.04.13	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Retaining the consulate general in Chicago (FAC-NC motion)	NC 16.04.13	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Cooperation between federal government and WOSA on the election of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (FAC-NC motion)	NC 03.06.13	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Comprehensive e-voting for the Swiss Abroad by 2015 (Fässler motion)	NC 18.09.13		■	■	15:14	■	17:9	■ ■
Moratorium on consulate closures (Büchel motion)	NC 19.09.13	■	■	■	■	5:3	■	■
Against the taxation of real estate in Switzerland by France (CEAT-NC motion)	NC 19.06.13	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Inheritance tax agreement with France Introduction	NC 12.12.13	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Federal Act on the Provision of Swiss Education Abroad	Overall vote NC 10.03.14	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Final vote NC 21.03.14	■	■	■	■	■	■	29:22
Act on the Swiss Abroad	Introduction NC 05.06.14	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Compulsory enrolment requirement (Romano minority motion)	NC 05.06.14	■	■	■	7:4	■	■	■
Article concerning federal support for OSA (Bugnon deletion motion)	NC 05.06.14	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Maintaining the Soliswiss default guarantee (Flury motion)	NC 05.06.14	■	■	■	■	■	15:9	■
	Overall vote NC 05.06.14	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Direct election of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (Masshardt motion)	NC 15.09.14	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
	Final vote NC 26.09.14	■	■	■	■	■	■	36:18
Basic payment transactions provision for the Swiss Abroad (Büchel motion)	NC 11.09.14	■	5:4	■	17:9	■	■	■
Strengthening of the Swiss network of representations abroad (FAC-NC motion)	NC 06.05.15	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

coming elections. Not everyone who claims to represent the interests of the Swiss Abroad actually votes accordingly when it comes down to it.

The following table shows the voting behaviour of parliamentary groups on se-

lected proposals between 2011 and 2015. It lists bills that concern the Swiss Abroad directly as well as individual proposals that may have implications for our compatriots abroad. Parliamentary groups often do not vote uniformly. If the ratio between yes and

no votes is 2:1 or less, the exact voting figures are indicated. Individual abstentions are not counted. The results of all votes can be found in the Federal Assembly's official bulletin at www.parlament.ch > Official Bulletin.

Proposals with implications for the Swiss Abroad

Subject	Vote	SP	The Greens	GLP	CVP/E	BDP	FDP	SVP
Popular initiative "Against mass immigration"		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Recommendation for approval	NC 20.06.13							
Fatca Agreement between Switzerland and the USA		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Approval of the agreement	NC 27.09.13							
Approval for implementation	NC 27.09.13							
Grants initiative		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Recommendation for approval	NC 19.03.14							
Popular initiative "Stop overpopulation" (Ecopop)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Approval	NC 12.06.14							

Parliamentary groups:

- SP = Social Democratic group
- The Greens = Green group
- GLP = Green-Liberal group
- CVP/EVP = Christian Democratic / Evangelical group
- BDP = Swiss Conservative Democratic Party group
- FDP = Free Democrat / Liberal group
- SVP = Swiss People's Party group.

Abbreviations:

- FAC Foreign Affairs Committee
- CEAT Committee for Economic Affairs and Taxation

- Approval
- Rejection
- Abstention

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All eyes on Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf

The Swiss People's Party (SVP) has a good chance of securing a second seat at the forthcoming Federal Council elections.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Whenever anything goes wrong in the country then “the government is to blame”. This simple formula applies in Switzerland as in most other countries. And yet the Federal Council almost always enjoys great trust in surveys conducted amongst the Swiss people. The Federal Council's stability in terms of composition over recent years and a much more united appearance again outwardly may be contributing factors. However, the impression of stability is deceptive. A generally accepted magic formula no longer applies.

Continue as before?

The make-up of the government with its seven members – 2 FDP, 2 SP, 1 SVP, 1 CVP and 1 BDP – will be up for debate after the parliamentary elections on 18 October 2015 (see also survey on page 14-16). The Federal Council will be completely re-elected at the start of December for the next four-year term. Despite epic debate and wild speculation beforehand, the chance of no change at all cannot be ruled out. A possibility – but not very likely as things stand – is a Federal Council with a “traditional composition” if no Federal Councillors stand down and the parties' share of the vote does not change significantly at the parliamentary elections. Parliament has often got cold feet over de-selecting Federal Councillors even though Ruth Metzler (CVP) was sacrificed for Christoph Blocher (SVP) in 2003 and Blocher himself was forced out of the Federal Council by the election of his former party colleague Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf in 2007.

It is precisely over this issue of line-up that the wrangling will continue after the federal elections. Widmer-Schlumpf is today the figurehead of the Swiss Conservative Democratic Party (BDP) which splintered off from the SVP. In terms of concordance politics, it is an anomaly that the SVP, the best-supported party with 26.6 % of the vote at the National Council elections in 2011, only has one representative in national government. Widmer-Schlumpf's expulsion from the SVP resulted in the break-away of the BDP, which now also has one Federal Councillor with just 5.4 % of the vote. As the BDP is not exactly looking formidable and would be pleased to hold onto its already small share of the vote in the autumn, Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf and her party will have some fundamental reflecting to do after the elections.

The search for the right formula

Whether the BDP's Federal Councillor and Finance Minister then steps down of her own accord or remains in office even in the event of her party losing ground, everything will revolve around her Federal Council seat. The SVP has always laid claim to it. The proponents of arithmetic-based concordance – primarily the strategists of the SVP and FDP – want, in any event, to return to the allocation formula that has traditionally applied whereby the three largest parties each receive two seats and the fourth-largest one seat. The dream outcome for the centre-right would be 2 SVP, 2 FDP, 2 SP and 1 CVP. This formula will come to the fore especially if the FDP makes significant headway at the elections,

which is widely predicted. The debate over whether the FDP is entitled to two seats or whether the SVP should be given its second seat at the expense of the FDP would then be off the table. The FDP, CVP and Green Liberals (GLP) are essentially supportive of two seats being awarded to the SVP as the strongest party. The SVP therefore has a strong hand. Only the SP and the Greens are opposed to a second seat for the SVP in principle. They like to highlight the notion of “substantive concordance” and do not regard the SVP as being consensus-oriented.

Such arguments also find a sympathetic ear amongst sections of the centre parties (BDP, EVP, GLP) and the CVP owing to the often polarising approach of the SVP. Together with the left-Green factions, they could attempt to save Widmer-Schlumpf's seat. However, this option could only be justified if the smaller centre parties increase their share of the vote at the elections which does not appear likely to happen, according to the polls. If the small parties in the centre lose support, such a move could no longer be justified in the general political mood.

The SP can go into the Federal Council elections unperturbed. Unless something completely unpredictable happens at the National Council elections, it is certain of its two seats. A serious and successful attack on one of its seats is unlikely, even if the SVP has already considered such a move. But don't forget, Federal Council elections have produced some major upsets in the past.

JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”



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How to vote

The same questions are asked every four years. People have a good idea what the answers are but are often not entirely certain. We have therefore compiled a list of answers to the most frequently asked questions for the forthcoming elections.

What requirements have to be met in order to be eligible to vote in elections and referenda as a Swiss citizen abroad?

You have to be at least 18 years of age and be registered with a Swiss representation abroad (embassy or consulate). In addition to registration, you have to be entered on the electoral roll of your former commune of residence or your commune of origin as a Swiss citizen abroad eligible to vote. The registration form can be found at: www.eda.admin.ch > Living abroad > The Fifth Switzerland > Voting and electoral rights

Can I vote in National Council and Council of States elections?

All Swiss Abroad entered on the electoral roll are eligible to vote in the National Council elections.

The Swiss Abroad can only take part in Council of States elections in 12 cantons – Basel-Landschaft, Basel-Stadt, Berne, Fribourg, Geneva, Grisons, Jura, Neuchâtel, Schwyz, Solothurn, Ticino and Zurich. BE, BL, BS, FR, GE, GR, JU, NE, SO, SZ, TI and ZH.

Election survey amongst the Swiss Abroad

The Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau is conducting a broad-based survey amongst the Swiss Abroad on the parliamentary elections. The data is being collected by FORS, the research association of the political science departments of the Swiss universities, as part of the Swiss election study SELECTS.

Participation in the study is voluntary.

It is nevertheless important that as many people as possible take part to ensure the results are as informative as they can be.

Please take 15 minutes to answer the questions.

To the survey:
www.umfrage15.ch

When will I receive the voting documents?

The Federal Council recommends that the cantons send the ballot papers to the Swiss Abroad eligible to vote by 1 October 2015. There is no guarantee of this.

Who can vote electronically?

13 cantons have submitted applications for e-voting at the 2015 elections. At the time of this issue going to press, it was still not clear which applications would be approved by the Federal Council. Further information is available at: www.ch.ch/en/online-voting

How can I support candidates standing as Swiss Abroad?

You can only vote for candidates from your canton. You cannot vote for Swiss Abroad who are not standing in your electoral constituency.

Where can I find out which Swiss Abroad are standing for election?

All candidatures of Swiss citizens abroad are listed on OSA's website.

As candidates can register until shortly before the elections, "Swiss Review" is unable to publish a current list of all candidates.

List of candidates:

www.2015elections.ch > Candidates

Are there candidates campaigning especially for the Swiss Abroad?

The following members of the Executive Board of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) or the Council of the Swiss Abroad are standing as candidates:

- Céline Amaudruz, SVP, Geneva
- Roland Büchel, SVP, St. Gallen
- Robert Cramer, Greens, Geneva, Council of States
- Antonio Hodgers, Greens, Geneva
- Filippo Lombardi, CVP, Ticino, Council of States
- John McGough, SVP, Basel-Stadt
- Christa Markwalder, FDP, Berne
- Roman Rauper, SVP, St. Gallen
- Carlo Sommaruga, SP, Geneva
- The members of the Swiss Abroad parliamentary group can be found at: www.aso.ch > Politik > Parlamentarische Gruppe

How do I complete the ballot paper?

You have the following options:

1. Use an unchanged ballot paper

You vote using a preprinted ballot paper of a party without making changes to it.

The listed candidates receive one vote. There are as many votes for the party as there are seats allocated to the canton.

2. Amend the ballot paper:

You can cross out the names of candidates. They do not receive any votes, but the vote counts for the party.

You can vote cumulatively, which means entering the names of candidates twice by hand on the list. The person then receives two votes. Please note: On party ballot papers, names often already appear twice in the list. You cannot enter these names additionally.

You can split the vote, which means entering the names of candidates from other lists on blank lines of the preprinted ballot paper. You can also cross out a name to enter a desired candidate.

The party whose list you have chosen then loses a vote to the party to which the person from the other list belongs.

This does not apply to the cantons of Uri, Glarus, Appenzell AR and Appenzell IR where only one National Council seat is allocated in each case.

3. Use a blank ballot paper:

You can enter the candidate(s) you wish to vote for on a blank ballot paper. Please note: Only take names from the preprinted ballot papers as only these are candidates. You can also vote cumulatively on the blank ballot paper.

You can enter the name of a party at the top of a blank ballot paper and the lines left blank then count as votes for this party.

Avoid making errors.

Adhere to the guidelines of your commune and canton.

- Only use an official ballot paper.
- Write by hand using legible handwriting.
- Only candidates who appear on preprinted ballot papers are valid.
- Always write out the surname, first names and numbers of candidates. Quotation marks and “ditto”, etc. are not permitted.
- At least one valid name must be entered on your ballot paper.
- A name may only be repeated once, never more than that.
- The ballot paper must not contain more names than there are seats allocated to your canton.
- Do not write anything else on the ballot paper.
- Do not sign the ballot paper.
- Do not forget to sign and send the voter identification card when voting by post (exception: canton of Basel-Stadt).



Links with good information on the elections

www.ch.ch/en/elections2015/

The websites of federal government, the cantons and the communes containing special information for the Swiss Abroad. These are indicated by a blue background.

www.smartvote.ch/?lang=en_GB

www.easyvote.ch

www.ich-will-waehlen.ch

www.parteienkompass.ch

www.civicampus.ch

www.wahlen.ch

www.vimentis.ch

Emerging victorious from depression

The Swiss tennis player Timea Bacsinszky is rubbing shoulders with the best in the women's game after a long slump in 2013. Her progress coincides with finding peace inside herself and breaking free of her domineering father.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

It is a comeback story. At the start of 2013, Timea Bacsinszky, who began hitting tennis balls at the age of three, decided to hang up her racket. 2012 turned out to be a hugely disappointing year. The previous year was marred by injuries, including a broken foot off the court. As a child, she had dreamed of becoming a waitress, as “pleasing others” is part of this young woman’s nature, as she herself put it, even if this may seem paradoxical in competitive sport. That year Timea decided to gain work experience in a hotel, having left secondary school early to focus on tennis.

But at the end of May 2013, when she decided to leave the tennis court behind perhaps for ever, the sport made one final appeal to the youngster from Vaud in the form of a phone call, as explained by her lifelong coach Alexandre Ahr. “The Roland Garros tournament called to ask her to enter the French Open. She was 220th in the WTA rankings at the time, and set off alone by car to play in the qualifiers. Timea (editor’s note: who lost in the first round) was given the opportunity to play tennis again.” At this point, one of the major decisions in the player’s life was choosing a new coach. This was Dimitri Zavialoff, the man who had coached StanWawrinka since the start of his career. “He is very wise,” revealed Timea Bac-

sinszky. He is a good listener, even when it comes to things not directly related to tennis, and I have every confidence that he will help me to become not just a better player but also a better person.”

Coming to terms with a stolen childhood

Media reports have frequently alluded to a shadow hanging over Timea’s life – that of her father, Igor Bacsinszky, a Romanian tennis coach who was her first trainer. She has not seen him for several years, and it has taken some time for the athlete to cast him off both physically – he handed over the reins as her coach when she was 13 – and also psychologically. “I never really had a father since he was not willing to play that role, and I had to come to terms with that. He wanted to bask in the glory,” claimed the tennis ace, who was born in Lausanne to a Hungarian mother in 1989. Timea faced up to her demons and her stolen childhood by calling on the help of a psychologist. That was in 2013. “I didn’t go and see her as a tennis player but as a woman,” she pointed out, “But this approach ultimately helped me tremendously with my development as a tennis player.”

The semi-finalist at Roland Garros in 2015 is now starting to make her own decisions. “Before 2013, I follo-

wed the path I was led down rather than what was in my heart,” she went on to say.

A state of wonderment and victories

2014 marked the start of an upward curve for Timea Bacsinszky. In the autumn, she beat Maria Sharapova – ranked 4th in the world at the time – at the Wuhan tournament in China. In January 2015, she triumphed over Petra Kvitova (WTA number 4) in Shenzhen. This was followed by victories in Acapulco and Monterrey in Mexico. She also reached the quarter-finals in Indian Wells, Marrakesh and Madrid. “She chalked up 13 consecutive wins,” said her coach Alexandre Ahr, who pointed out that at the end of June before Wimbledon the Swiss player’s real ranking was up to number 8 (but 15th in the WTA ranking), taking into consideration the matches she had played since the start. Ahr said that he had discovered in Bacsinszky a “state of wonderment”.

At the start of major tournaments, Timea Bacsinszky said she was not feeling the pressure. “I look at myself in the mirror after a match and know I’ve given my all. I certainly always try to make things as difficult as possible for my opponent, to frustrate her, but it’s OK if that doesn’t work.”

Timea Bacsinszky after her victory in the quarter-finals against the Romanian Monica Niculescu on 6 July 2015 at Wimbledon

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The shadow of Martina Hingis

Besides her father's shadow, that of Martina Hingis has also hung over Timea Bacsinszky's career. Like Hingis she turned professional at 14 and won the "Tournoi des Petits As" in Tarbes, France, on two consecutive occasions, which created enormous expectations of her. When she reflects on her career, the former world number 1 at under-14 level sometimes mentions the professional tournament in Dinan, France, which she won in 2004 and 2006. In 2004 and 2005, she was a semi-finalist three times in junior grand slam events at the Australian Open and Roland Garros. She won her first WTA tournament in Luxembourg in 2009. Timea Bacsinszky went from 285th in the WTA rankings in 2013 to 15th after her semi-final in Paris in June 2015.

Whether she's playing in Tallinn, Kreuzlingen or Cincinnati, her coach asks her to approach matches with the same humility. Timea believes she has "mellowed" and gets annoyed less on court. In a TSR report broadcast in April 2008, she can be seen swearing in Hungarian after making a mistake, and is taken to task by her former trainer, the Iranian Erfan Djahangiri. "I don't swear any more, or very rarely, even if it was handy since nobody could understand me," she laughed. She spoke Hungarian for the first four years of her life and is fluent in five languages today, including Italian and German. "It's very Swiss," acknowledged this lover of

fondue and raclette who enjoys nothing more than drinking a Rivella when she returns home to Switzerland.

Being able to fund a permanent staff

The Swiss player's life changed somewhat after Roland Garros. Timea even succeeded in posing problems for world number one Serena Williams, leading her 6-4 and 3-2. "After that semi-final, the people of Lausanne have constantly stopped me in the street to congratulate me," she said. This victory in a Grand Slam has also brought in some money, but not to the extent

that they caused her "wealth-related issues", she said. Rather, she is simply pleased to be able to "fund her own tennis". In particular, this means her staff can accompany her on the circuit most of the time. However, the Swiss star pointed out that the career of female tennis players is over at 35, and that while tennis can pay well you have to be "smart" to start over again afterwards.

STÉPHANE HERZOG IS AN EDITOR WITH THE "SWISS REVIEW"

Competitive sport and depression - the story of the former gymnast Ariella Kaeslin

People caught up in the spiral of high-level sport at an early age often experience terrible personal turmoil, which can result in depression. This happened to the former Swiss gymnast Ariella Kaeslin after the national star retired in 2011.

"Leiden im Licht: Die wahre Geschichte einer Turnerin" (Suffering in the limelight: the true story of a gymnast) recounts the life of a young gymnast cut off from her family to pursue the path of glory. The training regime at the sports centre in Macolin was arduous. The

young athletes were treated like objects which simply have to be repaired if they get injured. Ariella Kaeslin, world runner-up and European champion on the vault in 2009, smiled under the spotlight but used to cry in the showers after every training session. Gymnasts had to endure both verbal and physical abuse during the sessions, where they were subject to disparaging remarks and made to live under constant fear of gaining weight. Like Timea Bacsinszky, depression spurred Ariella Kaeslin to look for psychological help to deal with the traumatic

experiences of her youth. This moment arrived for her when she felt an excruciating sense of emptiness, having experienced the highs and lows of the sport for a long period. Released in June, the book sold 10,000 copies in two weeks.

"LEIDEN IM LICHT: DIE WAHRE GESCHICHTE EINER TURNERIN"; CHRISTOF GERTSCH AND BENJAMIN STEFFEN; VERLAG NZZ LIBRO, 2015; CHF 29 EURO 19.90, E-BOOK CHF 19.90

OSA advice

I am planning to return to Switzerland after residing abroad for several years. What do I need to take account of with regard to health insurance?

Health insurance is mandatory for everyone living in Switzerland. The health insurance schemes are therefore also obliged to offer basic insurance to all persons residing in Switzerland regardless of their age and state of health. The law governs which services are covered by basic insurance. Health insurance schemes cannot therefore refuse Swiss Abroad returning to Switzerland basic insurance cover, nor are they permitted to impose any restrictions (e.g. due to existing illnesses). The health insurance policy must be concluded within three months of taking up residency in Switzerland. It is taken out with retrospective effect to the date when residency began. Certain people are exempt from the obligation to take out insurance in Switzerland. These include pensioners who draw a pension from an EU country but not a Swiss pension as well as those residing in Switzerland for educational reasons and who have the same insurance cover as that provided by basic Swiss insurance.

Health insurance is taken out individually for each family member (adults and children). All insured persons pay a premium which can vary depending upon the health insurance scheme, but the basic insurance services are the same for everyone. It is therefore worth comparing premiums. Savings on premiums can also be made on various insurance models. The Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) provides a comparison of premiums online: www.priminfo.ch.

Anyone requiring insurance cover that goes beyond the basic insurance services (e.g. inclusion of alternative medicine, private or semi-private room during a stay in hospital, etc.) can take out supplementary insurance. However, these are private insurance policies, which means that the health insurance schemes can refuse to insure particular persons or apply restrictions excluding certain services.

Further information can be found on the FOPH's website:

www.bag.admin.ch -> Topics -> Health insurance

LEGAL DEPARTMENT OF THE OSA

OSA's Legal Department provides general legal information on Swiss law, in particular in the areas that concern the Swiss Abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law and does not intervene in disputes between private parties.

Studying in Switzerland with foreign qualifications

The university-entry qualifications of different countries are not equivalent. The reason is that every country has a different education system and contrasting academic curricula.

To study at a university or university of applied sciences in Switzerland, candidates require a university-entry qualification recognised by the Swiss confederation or an equivalent foreign qualification. Special conditions apply to admission to medical degrees as places are restricted.

Young Swiss Abroad who would like to study in Switzerland should find out about the exact admission requirements at the earliest possible opportunity. This helps to avoid disappointment. The conditions vary greatly depending upon the country of origin. Sometimes additional examinations are required, for example, or even a university degree in the country of origin.

The Rectors' Conference of the Swiss Universities draws up guidelines for each individual country and its university-entry qualifications. Detailed information can be found on the website of www.swissuniversities.ch. There is no central admissions system in Switzerland. Applications are therefore always made to the university as it decides autonomously on admissions.

Of the 17 Swiss schools abroad, those in Bangkok, Barcelona, Bogotá, Madrid, Milan, Rome and Santiago de Chile provide the opportunity to obtain a university-entry qualification recognised by the Swiss confederation. The Swiss schools in Curitiba, Lima, Mexico and Sao Paulo offer the International Baccalaureate (IB). However, admission to a Swiss university with an IB qualification is subject to conditions. A specific score has to be achieved and a higher level

qualification is required for some disciplines. Exact details can also be found on the website of www.swissuniversities.ch.

Anyone wishing to study at a university of applied sciences in Switzerland should contact the institution concerned. The Swiss Federal Vocational Baccalaureate enables direct access to universities of applied sciences which focus more on application-oriented fields and professional qualifications than traditional universities. Applicants may also be admitted with a grammar school-type university-entry qualification or a foreign school-leaving qualification under certain conditions (e.g. internship).

Further information on the Swiss schools abroad and education in Switzerland is available at www.educationsuisse.ch or directly from [educationsuisse members of staff](mailto:educationsuisse@members.ch).

RUTH VON GUNTEN,

HEAD OF THE EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND

DEPARTMENT

Admission information:

www.swissuniversities.ch/de/services/zulassung-zur-universitaet/laender

Admission with IB qualification

www.swissuniversities.ch/de/services/zulassung-zur-universitaet/baccalaureat-international

Offers for young people

OSA provides young Swiss people abroad with a wide range of opportunities for visiting Switzerland. We have reserved camp accommodation, found host families and put together educational programmes for those eager to learn. What is particularly exciting about OSA's projects for young people is the personal contact with youngsters with Swiss heritage but who live all over the world.

The offers for the coming winter

New Year's camp in Sedrun from 26 December 2015 to 3 January 2016

ALLEGRA Sedrun. The traditional winter camp in Sedrun will also take place this year. The ski resort in the mountains of Grisons provides the opportunity to discover the Swiss mountains and one of Switzerland's greatest ski areas. OSA's trained skiing and snowboarding instructors will demonstrate the latest techniques over 10 days and ensure an unforgettable experience in the splendid snowy surroundings. A highly enjoyable fringe programme is also being organised this year. Hiking in the snow, indoor sports, visits to the swimming pool, evening workshops and a New Year's party will ensure relaxation and entertainment.

Language course in Berne from 4 to 15 January 2016

You speak German but would like to improve your knowledge of it? Or perhaps you do not speak any German at all and would like to learn the language of your forefathers? Our German course in Berne is ideal in both cases. We offer you a combination of holiday and educational experience. In the morning you attend German lessons with other young Swiss Abroad. During the afternoon you can enjoy an extremely diverse fringe programme in-

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



Free participation in young people's ski camp!

600 children aged between 13 and 14 will enjoy a winter sports week free of charge from 2 to 9 January 2016 in Lenk in the Bernese Oberland. The 600 draw winners will also include 75 Swiss Abroad this year.

600 girls and boys aged 13 and 14 will travel to Lenk in Simmental by special train on 2 January 2016. The ski camp for young people is taking place once again. For the 75th time, Swiss-Ski (the Swiss skiing association) and its partners are sending out invitations to Switzerland's biggest winter sports camp. To mark the 75th anniversary, 75 places will be awarded to Swiss children abroad in the prize draw. Anyone born in 2001 or 2002 can register for the draw by completing the form on our website. The registration deadline is 15 September 2015. Anyone wishing to take part in the ski camp for young people (Juskila) should be able to speak at least one of Switzerland's three national languages (German, French or Italian). The camp places are being awarded through a prize draw, and the winners will attend the camp which includes winter sports lessons, food and accommodation. Parents are responsible for organising and funding the outbound and return journeys. The 75 Swiss Abroad who have won a place will be announced at the end of September.

Registration: www.sjas.ch > camps

Send the form and a copy of the Swiss passport of one parent or the child by 15 September 2015 (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, www.sjas.ch



Stiftung für junge Auslandschweizer
Fondation pour les enfants suisses à l'étranger
Fondazione per i giovani svizzeri all'estero
Fundazioni per giovani svizzeri a l'estero

cluding city visits, museum trips, a toboggan run, bathing fun at the thermal spa and much more besides. You stay with a host family and learn more about Swiss culture.

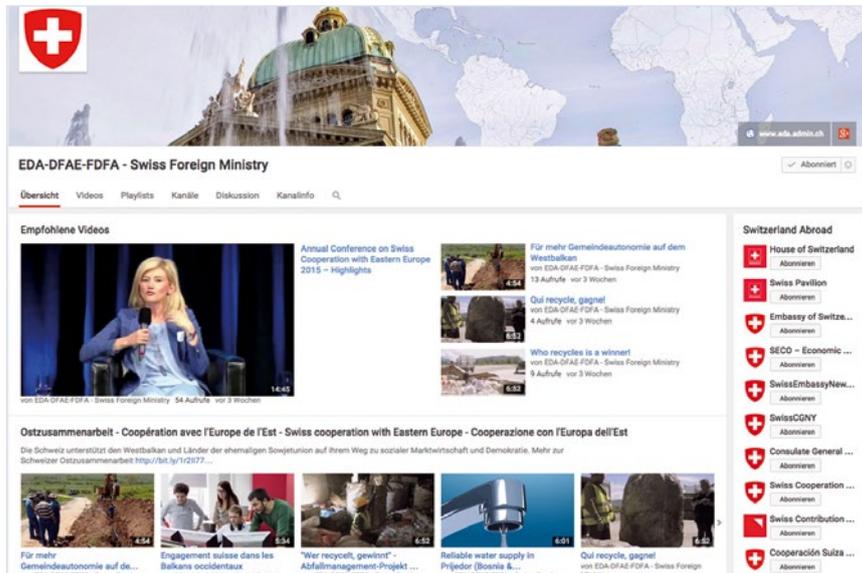
Easter camp in Valais (19.03. – 27.03.2016)

The Easter camp takes us to the Valais Alps. The mountain landscape in the Saas Grund/Hohsaas ski region is world-famous and offers a wide range of experiences. An adrenaline kick on the

Allalin run, tobogganing fun or a fantastic view over most of the Valais peaks over 4,000 metres while snowshoe trekking. Experienced leaders show you the best parts of this Swiss winter wonderland. Whether you are a snow sports novice or at an advanced level, whether you have experience on the slopes or not, you will enjoy a fantastic, unforgettable experience together with other Swiss Abroad.

Facebook, Twitter and Co. at the FDFA

The advance of social media has not escaped the federal administration. The FDFA deploys social media where expedient in line with its information strategy. The internet nevertheless remains the most important electronic information channel.



The FDFA's YouTube channel (Screenshot von www.youtube.com/swissforeignministry)

The Federal Council and federal administration have an information mandate under the federal constitution. They are obliged to inform the public comprehensively and in good time about their activities, foster relations with the public and keep informed of “the opinions and concerns expressed in public debate”. At the same time, social networks are becoming increasingly important due to the development of e-government, especially in the field of e-voting. If one day the entire information and decision-making process were to work electronically for the voting and electoral system, the casting of votes would only be a click away from a “like” on Facebook.

It is a logical step to also use social networks for information although the federal administration is under no obligation to do so. All departments can freely decide how and where to use social media. Guidelines only exist with regard to corporate design so that the channels are easily recognisable as part of Swiss government. The Federal Council itself sends tweets to the Swiss people via the Federal Council spokesperson. Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf has her own Facebook page and Federal Coun-

cillors Alain Berset and Johann Schneider-Ammann are Twitter users, as are the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) and various federal offices.

Social media at the FDFA

The FDFA is also taking account of these new, changed communication requirements and is taking its information mandate via the additional medium of social networks very se-

riously. It sees the new means of communication as an opportunity but without overlooking the risks (keywords: data protection, personal rights, own dynamics).

The FDFA has drawn up a strategy to foster direct dialogue with citizens via the social networks. The strategy also seeks to reduce the risks given that social networks are not sender-to-recipient communication in the conventional sense as recipients can also become senders. They enable messages to be distributed worldwide in the blink of an eye.

The FDFA uses social media where it is expedient. It is primarily used by the representations abroad (embassies, consulate generals and cooperation offices) but also by the Consular Directorate with its travel advice, Presence Switzerland, the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (HA/SHA), Switzerland at the UN and at the OSCE, and the post-2015 agenda. In this way they raise the profile of their own work and convey a comprehensive and authentic image of Switzerland and its foreign policy. The representations abroad and the organisational units are unrestricted in their choice of network. They nevertheless bear responsibility for the content and quality assurance of their channels.

Overall, the FDFA today has around 80 of its own pages on social networks worldwide. The most widely used media are Face-

Which version of “Swiss Review” do you read?

The “Swiss Review” you have received is effectively an anniversary issue. The first electronic version of the information magazine published by OSA for the Swiss Abroad was published exactly five years ago. The e-paper today has 170,000 recipients worldwide, while 230,000 copies of the printed version are produced.

With each copy weighing 72 grams, that totals around 100 tonnes of paper a year. In addition, 2,760,000 metallic staples and packaging material are also required, while postal dispatch worldwide can take up to three weeks. The electronic version reaches you much more quickly and obviously also in a less expensive and more eco-friendly way.

If you currently subscribe to the printed version we therefore recommend that you change your “delivery preference” from the paper to the online version at www.swissabroad.ch. You will also be making a contribution towards protecting the environment.

Of course, we hope you continue to enjoy reading “Swiss Review”.

book and Twitter, followed by YouTube and Instagram. All of the FDFA's social network pages can be found at www.eda.admin.ch/socialmedia-en

■ Social media refers to web-based applications or platforms that enable people to exchange information, photos, videos, opinions and experiences with other people electronically. However, they are not simply another form of internet but instead follow their own logic. They require a new form of communication on their own channels and have great mobilisation potential. These sites are being used increasingly frequently worldwide. More and more people – and not just

youngsters or IT-savvy target groups – are spending increasing amounts of time on social networks. The importance of social networks is also growing because the opinion-forming process is also increasingly shifting from the traditional media (newspapers, radio and television) to free, interactive platforms. Facebook, Twitter and co. are not just used privately but also professionally by media specialists and deci-

sion-makers in the fields of politics, business and culture. They can play a key role in regions with restricted media freedom.



Twitter profile of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit. (Screenshot <https://twitter.com/SwissHumAidUnit>)

Important notice

Please notify your Swiss representation of your email address(es) and mobile telephone number(s) and/or any changes to these and register at www.swissabroad.ch to ensure you do not miss any communications ("Swiss Review", newsletter from your representation, etc.).

The latest issue of "Swiss Review" and previous issues can be read and/or printed out at any time at www.revue.ch. "Swiss Review" (or "Gazzetta Svizzera" in Italy) is sent free of charge to all households of Swiss Abroad who are registered with an embassy or consulate general, either in printed format or electronically (via email or as an iPad/Android app).

Publications

Stories and faces of Holocaust survivors

This book contains the summaries of 16 previously unpublished memoirs of survivors living in Switzerland. It also details the history of the publication of these memoirs, the highlight of which was an official celebration at the Federal

Palace in Berne. The FDFA supported

the publication of this book.

Both the book and the individual memoirs are available free of charge at www.eda.admin.ch/publikationen Keyword: Holocaust.



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Federal referenda

The federal elections (National Council elections) will take place on 18 October 2015 as the last ballot of the year. You can find information, instructions, useful facts and further links at www.ch.ch/en/elections2015 – the joint website of the Federal Chancellery, Parliamentary Services, the Federal Statistical Office and ch.ch.

Voting dates in 2016:

28 February / 5 June / 25 September / 27 November

Popular initiatives

At the time of going to press, no new federal popular initiatives had been launched since publication of the last issue of "Swiss Review".

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found at www.bk.admin.ch under Aktuell > Wahlen und Abstimmungen > Hängige Volksinitiativen.

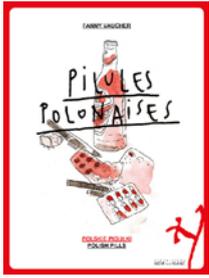
www.swissworld.org

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How to become Polish?



Just like children and journalists, Fanny Vaucher, an illustrator from the French-speaking part of Switzerland has a tremendous sense of curiosity. This is the starting point of a blog, which has been turned into an illustrated book that she produced whilst settling in in Warsaw in 2012. “Why don’t the buildings have shutters? How is it that people eat ice cream in the middle of winter? Do people live behind the huge advertising hoardings that completely cover some façades in the city centre?” These are some of the questions pon-

dered upon by the artist, who lives between Switzerland and Poland.

“Les Pilules polonaises” (Polish Pills) - which enable you to become Polish – reveals the cultural, sociological and architectural reflections of Fanny Vaucher through a mixture of illustrations accompanied by text and speech bubbles. The watercolours that document Fanny’s life are reminiscent of a travel journal. The text is handwritten in French, but the text of the Polish and English translations is in block letters. What is it makes this book so worth reading? It will certainly inspire readers to want to visit

Je me souviens très bien de la toute première fois que j'ai marché sur ce pont; c'est vraiment poétique! Je venais de Cracovie et je pensais traverser la rivière, et pour ce pont il y avait... la ville, ça semblait ne jamais devoir finir et j'adorais ça.



Warsaw to verify the tales of this Swiss artist with a keen sense of humour. SH

FANNY VAUCHER: "PILULES POLONAISES" (POLSKIE PIGULKI / POLISH PILLS), LES EDITIONS NOIR SUR BLANC, LAUSANNE, 2014; CHF 21.50, EURO 17. BLOG: PILULESPOLONAISES.BLOGSPOT.CH



One female party president and her six male counterparts

“Swiss Review” has provided plenty of good theory but perhaps slightly less emphasis on people in its reporting on the election campaign over recent months. This was the analysis at our editorial meeting in July. Here is a suggestion to make up for the lack of focus on the figures involved – the one female president and her six male counterparts from the main political parties present themselves wonderfully in front of swissinfo’s cameras. They eloquently discuss the Swiss Abroad, their significance in Switzerland and the world and their parties’ plans to put

greater emphasis on the Swiss Abroad in Swiss politics. You will find some great answers to the question: What do the Swiss Abroad mean to you? Among them: “They are a breath of fresh air for our nation.”

It is well worth noting that in addition to interviews with the party presidents, swissinfo also provides extensive background information on the political protagonists and developments in the run-up to the elections.

BE ALL OF THIS CAN BE FOUND AT WWW.SWISSINFO.CH

12.30 p.m. – the news colossus



You no longer have to sit as quiet as a mouse in front of the radio set at 12.30 p.m. to find out what is going on in the world. News has become a mass commodity available any time and anywhere thanks to the internet, smartphones and similar devices. But for generations the broadcast time of what remains German-speaking Swiss radio’s best-known news programme was sacrosanct. In terms of audience figures, the 12.30 p.m. news was “a Matterhorn-like peak on the chart for decades”, as Kurt Witschi outlines



in his book entitled: “Die Zeit: 12.30 Uhr.” (The Time is 12.30 p.m.). Few people could provide a better insight into the development of 90 years of news on Swiss radio than the former news editor. He himself influenced news editing at Swiss radio DRS (today SRF) for over 40 years in various positions. The author is able to draw upon vast experience and provides a fascinating look

behind the scenes of the “news factory” sprinkled with anecdotes of minor and major dramas. The extensive chapter on the Second World War period and the difficulties faced under censorship are especially absorbing. Anyone who has read this eloquently written book with its wealth of factual information will listen to radio news differently afterwards.



JM KURT WITSCHI, "DIE ZEIT: 12.30 UHR. 90 JAHRE NACHRICHTEN AM SCHWEIZER RADIO", VERLAG NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG, ZÜRICH 2015, 248 PAGES, CHF 41.90

CVP courts Swiss living abroad

CVP Switzerland founded the CVP International as a parent party on 1 August. It is focusing primarily on three objectives: Establishing a global party network, ensuring the issues of the Swiss Abroad are addressed more effectively in politics and giving CVP members and sympathisers living abroad the opportunity to voice support and engage in politics for the CVP. CVP International will be led by Patricia Mattle (New York), Daniel Wyss (Hong Kong), Raymond Loretan (Geneva) and Filippo Lombardi (Council of States member for Ticino) as co-presidents.

Swiss weapons much in demand

The Swiss arms industry exported weapons worth just under 217 million Swiss francs in the first half-year 2015. That is about 30 million Swiss francs or 16% more than in the same period last year. Germany was the largest recipient of Swiss armaments. A new major buyer of war material is Indonesia, whereas exports of weapons to Russia and France fell sharply.

MPs and moonlighting

Who are MPs primarily representing in politics? French-speaking radio and swissinfo have carried out an in-depth investigation into this issue. Using various databases (commercial register, official list of vested interests, parliamentary proposals) they revealed which MPs hold mandates at which private companies, associations and foundations etc. and are therefore interest group representatives in this respect. Topping the list is the liberal Council of States member Max Fluri with 33 mandates. In second and third places are National Councillors Ruedi Noser of the FDP with 30 mandates and Jean-François Steiert of the SP with 29. FDP MPs hold 11 non-parliamentary mandates on average. They are closely followed by CVP parliamentarians. At the bottom of the list come the Greens with six mandates on average.

Photo of Zimmerwald

In the last issue of "Swiss Review" we published a photo of the Hotel Beau Séjour in the article on the international socialist conference held in Zimmerwald without giving proper attribution for the photo. The stone lithograph belongs to Daniel Guggisberg, a Swiss Abroad living in Los Angeles.



Breel Embolo

The "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" has hailed him as a wonder kid. He is undoubtedly a star. He has been playing in FC Basel's first team since March 2014. He became a naturalised Swiss citizen last year in an accelerated procedure. He is now the youngest member of the Swiss national squad, while he also had the option of representing Cameroon. Several top European clubs are now setting their sights on signing him. He remarks: "I'm not that interested in these rumours. I'll talk to those in charge when I feel the time is right. For the moment I just want to play football."

Direct democracy means direct responsibility

SWISS PRESIDENT SIMONETTA SOMMARUGA

Playing at being a major power when you are a small country does not turn out well.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR UELI MAURER

The politics of the extreme, the politics of the ends of the spectrum and the politics of shrill tones are proving increasingly appealing.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR EVELINE WIDMER-SCHLUMPF

Isolationism cannot be an option. There is no rational alternative to cooperation with Europe.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR ALAIN BERSET

There are various groups in Switzerland who believe we are strong enough alone. That is quite simply irresponsible.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR JOHANN SCHNEIDER-AMMANN

Our path to security is achieved through the security of others.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR DIDIER BURKHALTER

Let's be honest - we moan and complain a lot. Millions of people would trade places with us.

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR DORIS LEUTHARD

"It is not enough to speak, but to speak true."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564 - 1616)

The quotations of the Federal Councillors come from their 1 August speeches in 2015



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