

SWISS REVIEW

The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
November 2018



The printed book defies digital trends

Rent, sell or even demolish?

What to do with the hundreds of unused churches in Switzerland

**Bern and Brussels gamble and wrangle over the
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Excuse us for first briefly talking about ourselves - the "Swiss Review" that is. Finding well-thumbed copies on the tables in Lyon, Tarragona, Vancouver, Invermay, Newcastle, Berlin or Hong Kong tells us that the printed edition passes through many pairs of hands, and often acts as a starting point for family discussions or is perhaps sometimes even a matter of dispute. It is also always a small and tangible piece of

Switzerland. That is why we would like to ensure the long-term continuation of the "Review's" printed edition. But printed matter is under pressure due to the costs.

Ironically, the future of the printed edition of the "Review" depends upon those readers who enjoy the benefits of the electronic edition. Those who access the contents of the "Review" online or via our – improved – app and unsubscribe from the printed edition, instead of tossing it into the waster paper basket without having read it, help reduce the high printing and shipping costs and thus help protect the future of the printed edition. Specific tips on this topic are provided on page 22.

Will the printed word survive? We took a closer look at how books, which have long been declared dead, are doing in Switzerland. It is astonishing. After years of decline, new bookstores are opening up again for the first time. The classic, printed book itself is doing much better than the book trade. It is conquering new markets. In 2017, 9,000 new books were published in Switzerland. That is almost twice as many as 50 years ago, at a time when the book was still entirely unrivaled. In addition, a feeling of "digital fatigue" can be observed in Switzerland, which helps the classic book: e-book sales are stagnating and do not even account for ten percent of sales in the book market.

One story has yet to be written: the tale of suspense that is the tough negotiations over the future relationship between Switzerland and the European Union. The tense final phase of the showdown is underway, with Bern and Brussels raising the stakes. We offer a brief guide to the matter of debate, which is not always clear, even to those interested in politics. What is clear though, is that the tussle between Bern and Brussels will influence the elections in Switzerland. During the election year 2019, Switzerland itself will be the subject of debate as seldom before: What will happen to the "Swiss model of success"? How can it be safeguarded? What threatens it? These are also the first questions for those who want to start preparing for the upcoming autumn elections.

MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cover photo: printed books are holding up surprisingly well in Switzerland. Image: iStock

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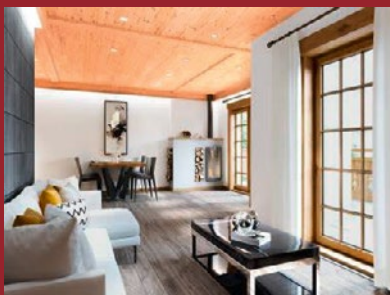
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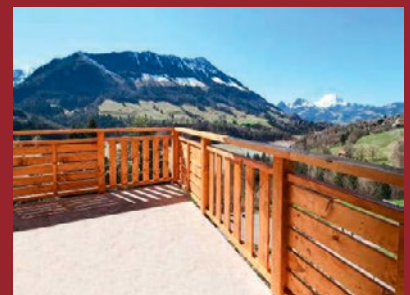
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Contract children: Reparation does not make the scars disappear



I am glad at last to read how some children were treated in Switzerland. It is a disgrace we did this to 1980. I have a family history like this. My mother married in 1930 and had three children, two boys and a girl. She became a widow early in the 1940s. Because she was a widow the state or federal authorities took all her three children away. She was not allowed to see them. I only

saw my oldest half-brother from the distance once. I was 15 before I saw my half-sister for the first time. My other brother once he was 20, being now of age, came to us and told our mother how he was used by this farmer and as a child he was given this cider which was alcoholic. He later became an alcoholic. I am glad I left Switzerland in 1970.

MARIE SALADIN-DAVIES, EMU PLAINS NSW, AUSTRALIA

My father was a “Verdingkind” and I remember how pleased he was. So much so that he took us often as children to the farmer family where he grew up. Personally I find it ridiculous to waste so much money on settlements and scientific research. Back then things were very different. For many children of impoverished parents, like my father, it was the first time that these children had three decent meals a day, a bed to sleep in and a roof over the head and could attend school regularly. Of course in the spoiled times we live in today, where the biggest problem is not food on the table but if the cellphone battery is fully charged, people have no clue what it meant to live in Switzerland during two world wars.

OTHMAR VOHRINGER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

I also spent several years as a contract child in Emmental and Rossemaison (JU) and in Merishausen (SH) instead of at home. That didn't cost my parents anything. I think that was the main reason. Those were tough times at the beginning of the second school year in Hasle-Rüegsau. Preparing hay or grass at 4 o'clock in the morning, cleaning out the stables, then rösti for breakfast on the shared plate. Afterwards a long way to school towards Sumiswald. Field work at noon, potato germination for the pigs, stable work in the evening – and then off to a shared bed in the evening. At Christmas we got two Swiss francs and two days off. The farmer family's own children never had to work and played every day. That was difficult! I am unable to forget or process this period. I prefer not to think about many details. I don't even have the strength to register as damaged.

MARKUS LÜTTIN, SPAIN

It is all well and good that the federal government is working on the issue, but now it is primarily recognition and payment that should be promoted. Many of those affected are old and ill and would like to receive the payment during their lifetime. It didn't take very long for the foster care placements either. This often happened very quickly and without wasting time. If you consider that the authorities have ruined a child's entire life, it is only a drop in the ocean.

PETER MATTLE, PHILIPPINES

From the article: “Hans Jörg Rüeeggsegger, president of the major farmers' association in Bern, recently responded to Gägger's claim, saying that he did not know of any farms that felt stigmatised because of the past”. Perhaps if the names of the farms that benefited from what effectively was slave labour were made known, the farmers and the “major farmers' association” would not be so light-hearted about this sickening history.

WALTER LIENHARD, USA

Reservations against increasing urban density in Switzerland



I have not lived in Switzerland since 1974. I see through this article, it is having the same density issues as here in the US. It is troubling, and heart breaking to see that what was a country rich in greenery, bucolic countryside and

beauty is now in danger, and that not being able to develop on such land outside the city limits to create urban sprawl is “a problem”. It should not be a “problem” but should be mandatory that the powers that be and urban developers try to protect what makes Switzerland so special. Urban density is a world issue that will eventually, if not arrested, take over and affect quality of life. It is happening everywhere. I can only hope that money does not become the deciding factor over the beauty and character of the cities and outlying areas, and Switzerland can wisely move forward with “green” and density housing without destroying what is dear to not only its citizens but visitors as well.

MICHELE ENGEL, USA

God only knows what will happen to all the surplus churches

For hundreds of churches in Switzerland the question is whether they should be demolished, sold, rented out or put to a completely different use. These surplus churches are tangible proof of the rapid change in Switzerland's religious landscape. And this raises new questions: is the church in the village centre just a place of worship, or something more?

DÖLF BARBEN

How simple things used to be in Switzerland. Everyone was either Catholic or Reformed. Everyone paid church taxes. Almost everyone attended church services. Up until the 1970s. And today? Only six out of ten inhabitants are still Catholic or Reformed. The free churches have increased in popularity. Every twentieth person professes Islam. And those with no religious affiliation, who have turned their backs on the once powerful national churches – especially the Reformed Church – now account for 25% of the population.

Things are particularly tough for the parishes in the large, traditionally Reformed cities. In the city of Bern, for example, the number of Reformed Church members has shrunk by over a third in the last 30 years alone, from around 84,000 to just under 52,000. But the churches and other church properties are still the same size. Maintenance costs are as high as ever. In Bern, the Reformed Church has long since sounded the alarm: if nothing changes, it was said five years ago, the equity capital would be used up within a very short time and the church would be declared bankrupt.

Since then the talk has been about how the church should cut its coat according to its cloth. The solution proposed is that it should invest in people rather than in walls – in other words, spend money on establishing a church community that impresses people through its work rather than

preserving impressive but barely used buildings. The first step is obvious: the 12 parishes in Bern are tasked with halving their building expenses.

Surrender the church?

But churches, parish houses and rectories cannot be replaced as easily as clothes. Especially not the churches. Beatrice Tobler and Franziska Huber, the president and vice-president of the Paulus parish, know this only too well. One of them is a lawyer, the other a theologian. The Paulus Church, which was consecrated in 1905, is not just any place of worship. It is regarded as one of the most important Art Nouveau churches in Switzerland. “We are sitting in a national monument with a high conservation value,” says Beatrice Tobler, “this church is a complete work of art”. Nevertheless, there is a proposal to give up the church and move the parishioners to another church in the city. Give up this church? “No”, the two women say in unison. Church life also needs “large and dignified rooms”. They have other ideas. They are looking for a forward strategy.

Johannes Stückelberger's workplace is not far from the Paulus Church. The art historian is a lecturer at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Bern and is regarded as *the* expert for all things regarding the conversion of churches. He is the one who established the Swiss Church Construction Day, which arouses

great interest. Strictly speaking, it was originally a Church Dismantling Day, since the first conferences in 2015 and 2017 focused on the question of how churches can be converted. Even the third meeting in 2019 will not be able to avoid the question. “This is an issue that is currently topical in Switzerland,” says Stückelberger.

“A strongly increasing trend”

But it hasn't been for long, it must be said. In countries such as the Netherlands, Germany and Great Britain it has been virulent for decades. In Switzerland, the trend to convert was initially curbed by the complex financing of the national churches, which was interlocked with the state. Nevertheless, in the last 25 years alone around 200 churches, chapels and monasteries have been used for other purposes. This is shown in Stückelberger's database. But not every conversion project is made public. The expert therefore assumes that in the meantime “many more buildings are involved and there is a strongly increasing trend”.

So, what are good ideas for dealing with surplus churches and what are bad ones? Demolition, sale, renting out and extended use: according to Stückelberger, these are the possibilities at the moment. So far, the demolition of Catholic or Reformed churches remains an exception though. Buildings from the post-war era that are in need of renovation and



Church expert Johannes Stückelberger: “Churches must open themselves up to a non-religious society and show that they are not giving up on themselves”.

Photo: Werner Rolli



Franziska Huber (left) and Beatrice Tobler in front of the Paulus Church in Bern, a “complete work of art” and “a national monument with high conservation value”. There is a proposal to give up this church. Photo: Danielle Liniger

not yet listed as historical monuments are candidates for demolition. One such exception is St. Mark's Church in Basel. In the near future, demolition work will commence.

On the other hand, a considerable number of the 200 places of worship recorded in the database, about 70, have been sold. These include a noticeably large number of Methodist and New Apostolic chapels. If such a chapel is transformed into a residential building or a concert hall, it does not spark a major debate, since it does not greatly change the neighbourhood. If, however, a very large church is under consideration, things are different and can also go badly wrong. This is what happened to the St. Leonhard Church in St. Gallen, an urban landmark. It has been closed for 13 years and is a bone of contention.

Addressing the non-religious

The remaining churches were either rented out or given extended use. Stückelberger's recommendations also clearly point in this direction. It is an advantage if a parish remains in possession of its church and thus stays involved, he says. If it is possible to make it available to outsiders this sends a “strong signal” for the development of the church as an institution, showing that activities that not only benefit the church population are taking place under its roof. According to Stückelberger, “Churches must open themselves up to a non-religious society and show that they are not giving up on themselves”.

He sees the Maihof Church in Lucerne as a prime example of this. It was also in need of renovation. However, the parish decided to combine



Exemplary solution: Maihof Church Lucerne

The Catholic Church of St. Joseph in Lucerne's Maihof neighbourhood, which was built in 1941, has undergone a unique renovation. Instead of renovating the parish centre as usual, the church leadership decided to adapt the building to the needs of the residents of the neighbourhood and the city. In the church, whose pews have been removed, it is now possible to hold meetings, exhibitions, concerts, seminars and banquets in addition to church services. A kindergarten and a playgroup occupy the basement.



A radical decision: St. Mark's Church Basel

Since 2009, no church services have been held in the Protestant-Reformed St. Mark's Church in Basel's Hirzbrunnen district, which was built in 1932. The parish in question chose the most radical of all possibilities and will demolish the church in 2019. This will also lead to the disappearance of the slender, free-standing bell-tower with a weathercock designed by the renowned graphic artist Celestino Piatti (1922–2007). Apartments are to be built on the grounds instead.

pastoral care and neighbourhood work. The church space is now a multifunctional hall. According to Stückelberg, such spaces do not aim at winning back believers and thus taxpayers: "It has to do with the overall social mission of the churches".

Multifunctionality seems to be the keyword. And when Beatrice Tobler and Franziska Huber talk about the future of the Paulus Church in Bern, they also envision multifunctional premises. On the one hand, they would like to give up their unfortunately somewhat remote but very busy parish hall and build a versatile "house for the neighbourhood" directly next to the church. This would concentrate parish life locally. They are also pursuing a forward strategy for the church building itself: If the church were to be used by several partners – "while sharing all costs", as the specification reads – then the continued operation would be an option. However, Beatrice Tobler doubts whether a profitable use would be possible in the case of the church, as

it presumably would be in the case of the neighbourhood house outlined above, thanks in part to rented apartments.

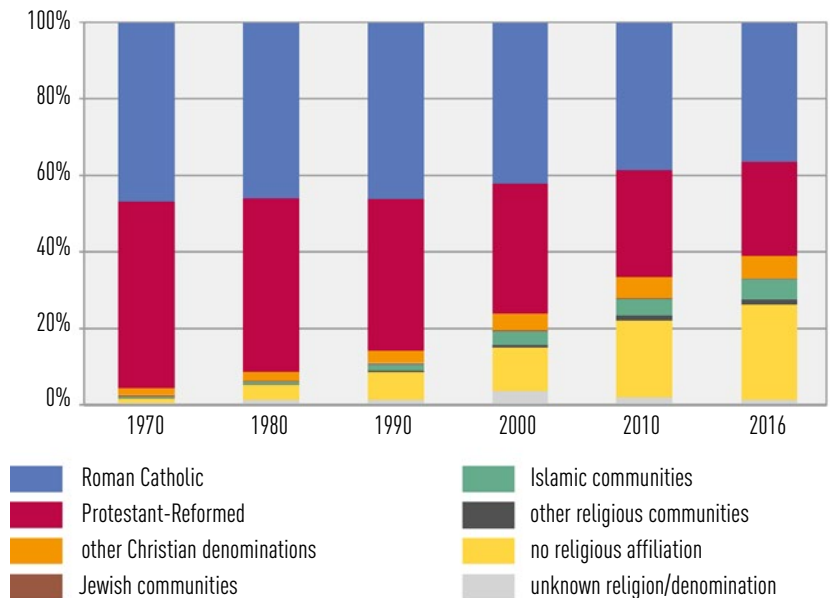
The nave as a lecture hall?

Despite the doubts and difficulties, there are ideas. One of them concerns the expanding university in Switzerland's capital. It is in need of large rooms. "This could be an opportunity," says Beatrice Tobler. "We would have a reliable tenant. It would be more than just a drop in the bucket." The question is whether the medical faculty could use the nave as a lecture hall. Franziska Huber does not consider this a problem. On the contrary, it would close the circle. She says education is "ultra reformed" and to some extent part of the reformed heritage. In addition, the first universities emerged from ecclesiastical institutions, from monastic and cathedral schools.

But objections have already been made. For example, would it be rea-

The development of the religious landscape

Permanent resident population aged 15 and over



Sources: BFS – VZ (1970–2000), Strukturbehebung (SE, 2010–2016) © BFS 2018

sonable for students of other faiths to study in a Christian church? Theologian Huber shakes her head over this question. Reformed church spaces are theoretically, unlike Catholic church spaces, only considered sacred spaces when a congregation holds church services in them. And the lawyer Tobler says: “Students are grown up and can deal with it.” The case would be quite different if non-Christian schoolchildren were to be taught in a church.

She sees the biggest obstacles elsewhere: the church interior is not designed to be heated continuously – especially the organ, which is highly sensitive to the indoor climate. And the pews are unsuitable for lecture hall seating arrangements. But here too, the optimism of the two women is evident. They believe these problems can be solved. The department of monument preservation is open to concrete projects. “Abandoning the church and letting it decay is not in their interest either,” says Tobler.

These words could come from Johannes Stüchelberger. He says that much more is possible than is generally assumed regarding church conversions. There are churches, for example in Olten or Schaffhausen, in which offices and a kitchen were installed and the parish hall given up. Of course, there is always a balancing of priorities, “but one must not forget to add the symbolic value of a church building to the equation”. A church has potential and is a “spiritual asset”. Making the church brand visible in public works much better with a church than with a parish hall. He therefore advises church representatives to seek dialogue with the public more often: “They must make it an issue that is talked about and show what is possible in their premises”.

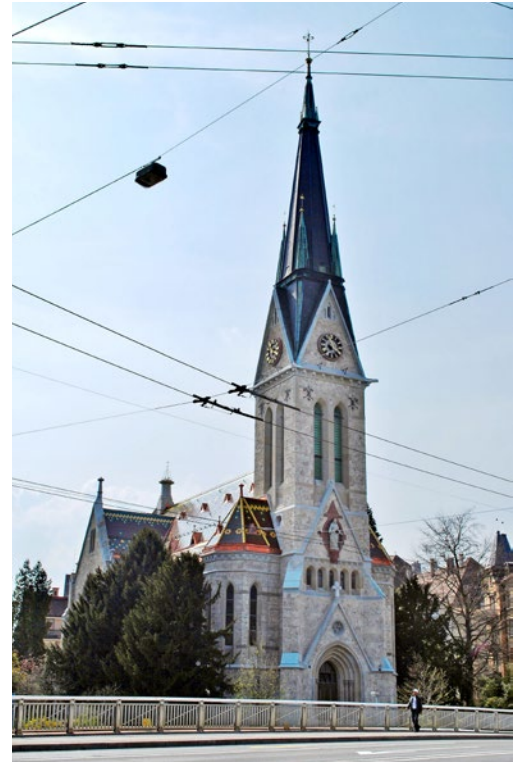
These could in turn be the words of Franziska Huber. It runs counter to her image of the church when

churches seek self-preservation on their own account, she says. She speaks of a break with tradition, which has taken place in many areas: “There are many children who are no longer religiously socialised.” Now it is important to prevent the connection from breaking, she says. Churches opening their doors to everyone would be a logical step. “If a person comes to us, eats with us or worships with us, it doesn’t matter what their motives are.”

The church as a structural manifestation

Church spaces for everyone, although “everyone” no longer means the same as it used to – that no longer sounds like “only Reformed” or “only Catholic”. Rather, it sounds like interreligious “open churches” or so-called city churches, which already exist in several Swiss cities. And this is reminiscent of what Jean-Daniel Gross, a curator of historical monuments in Bern, noted on the first Church Construction Day: Churches should not be understood exclusively as symbols of the Christian religion. They are – in a very broad sense and independent of religious feelings – places of identification. They must be seen as “structural manifestations of a centre of whatever kind in our society”, he said. “Deep in our subconscious minds, we consider them to be guarantors of social, cultural and spiritual stability.”

Swiss churches that are no longer traditional churches (only in German):
www.schweizerkirchenbautag.ch > Datenbank
 Kirchenumnutzung > Ort



Poor outcome: Leonhard Church St. Gallen

The renovation of the Reformed Church of St. Leonhard in St. Gallen, which was built in 1887, would have cost 4.5 million Swiss francs. This was too expensive for the parish. The demolition of the protected building, whose land was used profitably, was out of the question. The church was finally sold to an architect for 45,000 Swiss francs. He wanted to turn it into a cultural centre with restaurants, concerts, theatres, film screenings and fashion shows. None of this has happened so far.



The unusual deal regarding taxes and old-age and survivors' insurance (OASI)

It is considered the most important and consequential deal of the current legislative period – the corporate tax reform, controversially boosted by a financial injection for the OASI. Voters have the final say on 19 May 2019.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

“Horse trading” was the most commonly used expression of the autumn session 2018. Finance Minister Ueli Maurer (SVP), on the other hand, described the same process as “a small masterpiece of political compromise”. The different perceptions can be explained. What was rejected by some and approved by others was indeed a somewhat unusual parliamentary affair: two distinct policy areas were packed into a single bill, namely a corporate tax reform that is important for Switzerland’s business interests and a financial injection for the old-age and survivors’ insurance (OASI). During the autumn session parliament approved the Federal Act on Tax Reform and AHV Financing (TRAF).

It is necessary to look into the past in order to understand the special mechanics of this legislative package. In 2017, two major reform packages were rejected by popular

votes: the Corporate Tax Reform III bill on 12 February and the Retirement 2020 bill on 24 September. The need for reform is huge in both areas. The tax issue is under enormous time pressure, especially because Switzerland could end up on the European Union’s (EU) blacklist if there is no reform; the EU Member States could take unpleasant countermeasures against Switzerland. In addition, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is also exerting pressure on Switzerland over the same issue.

A well-known problem

The problems did not come out of the blue. They were already identified in 2005. Certain cantonal tax practices are a thorn in the side of the EU, since income from abroad is taxed less heavily than domestic profits. In the eyes of critics, this leads to harmful tax competition. Switzerland undertook to abolish the special tax status for holding companies and other international corporations, since this system made the country attractive for highly mobile companies. They had privileges that domestic companies did not enjoy. The tax reform is designed to ensure that all companies are treated equally with regard to taxation. To offer an alternative to these previously privileged companies, certain new tax deductions were to be made available to them. However, in the opinion of the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP), parliament was unnecessarily adding further tax benefits to the Federal Council’s original bill, whereupon the SP called a referendum, only to emerge victorious in February 2017.

Complicated control mechanism

Now a new solution had to be found quickly. On the one hand, because the internationally active companies in question are of considerable importance for Switzerland, not least from a tax point of view, since they account for almost 50 percent of the federal tax revenues of legal entities; on the other hand, because of increasing time pressure. The aim of the reform is to prevent a dramatic increase in the tax burden for these companies with special status, since



They fought for the deal regarding taxes and the OASI and must now struggle with a sceptical base: The SP Council of States members Christian Levrat and Paul Rechsteiner.

Image: Keystone

there are fears that this could lead to their departure. The cantons will therefore generally reduce profit taxes. The status companies will pay slightly higher taxes in the future, while the companies that are currently not tax privileged, above all domestic SMEs, will pay less. This leads to large tax shortfalls, which to some extent is the price of equal treatment of all companies. To remain attractive for existing status companies, new tax privileges that are internationally accepted will be introduced. Some important elements are the patent box (lower taxation of income from patents), special deductions for research and development, as well as a deduction for self-financing. In return, the taxation of dividends for major shareholders will slightly increase again. The federal government is also allocating another billion Swiss francs from the direct federal tax to the cantons, thereby giving them more leeway for their own tax cuts. The main features of the current reform are similar to the one rejected last year, although the mechanics have been adapted in such a way that tax shortfalls should decrease slightly.

Social redistribution via OASI

At this point the OASI comes into play. Pensions, like taxes, are among the major ongoing issues in Swiss politics. And the major pension reform of 2017 also failed to find favour with the voters. Now politicians, especially from the SP, CVP and FDP, have come up with the idea of adding new financial resources for the OASI to the tax bill, in the spirit of social redistribution. Approximately two billion Swiss francs worth of tax shortfalls resulting from the tax reform would be compensated by contributions of the same amount to the OASI. This is to be financed by increased OASI contributions from employees and employers as well as by increased federal funding of the OASI fund. Although this is not a pension reform, the proponents say that some time has been gained for a fundamental reform.

Passionate debates

The somewhat unusual legislative package led to passionate debates in parliament and among the public. It seems as though no one is entirely satisfied. It is not a good proposal, said Martin Schmid, the FDP Council of States member from Grisons, but considering the failed Corporate Tax Reform III it is the best solution. The CVP Council of States member Peter Hegglin from the canton of Zug agreed, “because we need a viable solution for a serious problem”. And the SP Council of States member Roberto Zanetti from the canton of Solothurn even described the efforts of the commission that had drafted the bill as “a great moment of parliamentarism”. The words of SVP Council of States member

Peter Föhn from the canton of Schwyz, who warned against combining two failed bills, were less euphoric. A marriage of the weak has never led to success, he said.

The SVP rejected the bill in parliament, but the joint effort of SP, FDP and CVP ultimately triumphed in both chambers. However, the deal was met with scepticism from almost all political camps. Various groups announced a referendum right after the autumn session: the youth parties of the SVP and Green Liberals, but also the Green Party, along with other organisations from the green-red spectrum. The left-wing criticism states that the bill is a copy of the Corporate Tax Reform III in all essential respects and encourages international tax competition. The heads of the Swiss Trade Union Confederation (SGB) and the SP – first and foremost Paul Rechsteiner (Chairman of the SGB) and Christian Levrat (President of the SP) – have played a key role in shaping and negotiating the entire package in parliament. The position taken by the trade unions and the SP shows the extent to which the political left is divided. The SGB declared a free vote, and although the SP base stood behind their president Levrat at an assembly of delegates, the fierce debate and the results of the vote (148 yes and 68 no) illustrate the deep divide within the party.

“Swiss prosperity is at stake”

For once Heinz Karrer, President of Economiesuisse, the Swiss Business Federation, is fighting alongside Levrat. If the bill fails “an important pillar of Swiss prosperity is at stake”, Karrer writes in the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung”. Switzerland must do everything it can to avoid the “catastrophic scenario of a blacklist”. Should the compromise package fail at the ballot box, the current tax rules would have to be abandoned quickly and without any palliative measures, and there would be a sudden and massive increase in taxes for the affected companies, which in turn could lead to large companies leaving Switzerland, he says.

If the referendum is successful, the deal concerning taxes and the OASI would have to be approved by the voters on 19 May 2019. The outcome is still open. The proponents of the bill face a heterogeneous opposition: left-wing opponents of tax cuts, right-wing opponents of OASI financing, as well as legal purists who do not approve of the link between the tax bill and the OASI financing.



Despite rejected initiatives the debate about agricultural policy is still ongoing

Both agricultural initiatives were rejected by voters on the popular vote Sunday of 23 September 2018. However, the topic is by no means off the table – no fewer than five more initiatives envisage changes to Swiss farming policy.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

The two failed initiatives had similar aims. The Fair Food Initiative intended to enshrine in the Federal Constitution that the supply of environmentally-friendly, animal-friendly and fairly produced food from Switzerland and abroad would be strengthened. It was rejected by 61.3 percent of voters. The initiative for food sovereignty also called for a sustainable, diverse, GMO-free, small-scale and more family-oriented agriculture; the group behind the initiative criticised the opening of the market and the strong international competitive pressure. The popular initiative was rejected even more clearly with 68.4 percent of votes cast against it.

The results cannot be interpreted as a categorical “no” to these issues – surveys conducted prior to the vote showed that both initiatives had high levels of approval. Additionally, organic products are becoming increasingly popular in Switzerland. But obviously consumers prefer to decide for themselves at the shops whether they want to buy organically produced food or not. After all, the arguments of the opponents gained ground in the course of the debate over the initiative. They argued that the protectionist approach of the two proposals is problematic, the implementation would be associated with bureaucratic hurdles and international trade agreements would also be at risk. The debate about Swiss agricultural policy is not over

after the rejection of both initiatives. On the contrary - five further agricultural initiatives are in preparation. In the next few years there will be popular initiatives for a ban on pesticides, clean drinking water, against mass livestock farming, for an import ban on products produced in a way that is cruel to animals, and for nutritional education of the youth.

Moral boost for cycle paths

Meanwhile, bicycles had an easy ride and managed to make it into the Federal Constitution on the popular vote Sunday of 23 September. The counter-proposal to the withdrawn cycling initiative was accepted by 73.6 percent of voters. In future, the federal government will coordinate the construction of cycle paths. However, the cantons and communes will still be in charge. It remains to be seen whether the country will soon have uninterrupted cycle paths. The article of the Constitution does not contain any specific requirements and there are no signs of a genuine construction programme in favour of bicycle traffic. But at least the Federal Constitution now contains something like a moral obligation to embark on one.

Initiative aims to end urban sprawl

Thousands of hectares of farmland and near-natural landscapes have disappeared in recent decades, and urban sprawl continues to progress. Voters have already expressed their views on this issue twice. In 2012, an initiative that limits the proportion of second homes to 20 percent nationwide was adopted, and in 2014 the partially revised spatial planning law came into force (see Swiss Review of September 2018). This is one of the reasons why the Federal Council and parliament are against the urban sprawl initiative of the Young Greens. The implementation of the spatial planning law is in

full swing and is beginning to take effect. The initiative will be put to a vote on 10 February 2019.

The aim of the popular initiative is to prevent a further increase in building zones. New building zones should only be created if an area of at least the same size and comparable soil quality is removed from the building zone. This should enable existing development land to be used more efficiently and allow for sufficiently good land to be preserved for agriculture. The initiative also contains provisions on internal settlement development, on sustainable neigh-

bourhoods and on building outside the construction zones. This goes too far for the opposition, which consists of almost all parliamentary groups except the Greens, while the SP was divided. The opposition believes the initiative is too rigid and does not account for cantonal and regional differences. During the parliamentary debate, everyone expressed their concerns about dwindling farmland and increasing urban sprawl. Yet at the same time, one cannot simply freeze the current situation and “turn rural areas into Heidaland”, as the BDP National Councillor Hans Grunder from Bern put it. (JM)

What exactly are they talking about?

A year before the elections, the desire of many politicians to get their fingers burnt by the most heated dossier in federal Bern has noticeably declined. The dossier in question is the institutional framework agreement between Switzerland and the European Union. While it might sound tedious, it is essentially the key to the advancement of the current bilateral path.

HEIDI GMÜR

Will the Federal Council dare to take the plunge in domestic politics? Or will it capitulate before the finish line? During late summer, the years of trying to find a solution to the institutional issues with the European Union (EU) came to a head over this question. The Federal Council's answer came at the end of September: neither nor. It wants to continue negotiations with the EU and reach an agreement as soon as possible, to guarantee the continuation of the successful bilateral path into the future. However, the Federal Council does not want to make any concessions in the form of accompanying measures to combat wage and social dumping, as Brussels recently demanded with the force of an ultimatum. At least not for the time being in the face of the domestic political resistance that has built up over the summer.

A final round of negotiations began in autumn and was marked by uncertainty as to whether it would be possible to reach an agreement at all under the circumstances. If not, the framework agreement would ironically not fail because of the SVP's resistance against the frowned upon "foreign

judges", but because of the resistance of the trade unions and the SP to alternative forms of wage protection accepted by the EU.

In order to answer this question, we have to go back to the origins, which can be found in Switzerland. The idea of an agreement to establish a common framework for the increasingly complex set of bilateral accords between Bern and Brussels first emerged in the Council of States in 2002. In 2006, the Federal Council mentioned the possibility of a framework agreement in a Europe Report. Finally, in 2008 the EU made it clear that it was no longer prepared to continue with bilateralism as before. It wants to ensure uniform application of EU law by Switzerland, which enjoys privileged access to the Single Market thanks to the bilateral accords, even though it is neither a member of the EU nor the EEA. Brussels is particularly concerned about the dispute about individual accompanying measures taken by Switzerland, which has remained unresolved for years. In the eyes of the EU these measures are not compatible with the agreement on the free movement of persons. An exam-

Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis tries to explain the complex framework agreement during a speech by using colourful blocks.

Photo: Keystone



ple of such a measure is the so-called eight-day rule, which requires foreign companies that want to send employees to Switzerland for brief assignments to give eight days' notice.

In the years to come, the EU will increasingly insist on resolving institutional issues. In 2012, the EU made it known to Switzerland that there won't be any new bilateral accords without a framework agreement. The negotiations started in May 2014. At the end of 2017, the EU lost its patience for the first time. It punished Switzerland for its hesitation by only recognising Swiss stock market regulations for one year and made an extension dependent on the progress of the framework agreement. This galvanised Bern, where there are growing fears of additional, economically damaging blows.

What does the framework agreement regulate?

Essentially, there are two aspects: the dynamic adoption of legislation and the settlement of disputes.

The current bilateral agreements, with the exception of the Schengen/Dublin agreement, are static in nature. However, EU law is constantly evolving. Switzerland already regularly adapts its national law to match new EU laws, especially where it deems it necessary to ensure unhindered access for the economy to the EU Single Market, as in the case of stock exchange regulations. But the new approach will be an institutionalised, dynamic adoption of legislation.

Nowadays, Bern and Brussels are able to discuss their differences in the Joint Committee, a politico-diplomatic body. In the event that opinion is divided, there is no legal way of achieving an agreement. From a political point of view, each side is at liberty to take retaliatory measures to exert pressure on the other side, which represents a principle of "might makes right". In future, there will be a jurisdiction for the settlement of disputes.

During the negotiations conducted to date, it has been agreed – at the insistence of Switzerland – that the framework agreement should only apply to five of the 120 or so bilateral agreements. Namely for those that regulate the economy's access to the EU Single Market. These are the agreements on the free movement of persons, technical barriers to trade, air and land transport as well as agriculture. Future agreements on market access shall be covered by the framework agreement. One example is the electricity market agreement that Switzerland would like to conclude.

How does the dynamic adoption of legislation work?

In principle, Switzerland would commit to always adopting new EU Single Market laws instead of adopting these independently on a case-by-case basis. In return, Switzer-

land would be given a say in the further development of EU law and a sufficient period of time during which it could adapt national law in accordance with its principles of direct democracy. Thus, Swiss voters would still have the final say. If they reject the adoption of new EU law in a specific case, the EU could indeed take retaliatory measures. But unlike today, the framework agreement would ensure that these would be proportionate.

How will disputes be settled in the future?

In its 2013 negotiating mandate, the Federal Council stipulated that disputes should be resolved by the European Court of Justice (ECJ). However, this met with increasing resistance on the domestic front. Eventually the EU offered Switzerland the option of negotiating a new arbitration solution instead of an ECJ solution. This defused the debate about "foreign judges", especially since the arbitral tribunal would consist of a judge appointed by Switzerland and a judge appointed by the EU, as well as a jointly appointed president. Nevertheless, this solution will not change the fact that the European Court of Justice remains the decisive authority for the interpretation of EU law.

Which decisive issues remain?

Questions regarding the so-called EU Citizens Directive have yet to be resolved. So far, Switzerland has refused to adopt it, since it would have consequences regarding family reunification, access to social welfare and the expulsion of EU citizens. Meanwhile, a consensus on the regulation of state aid seems to be within reach. In addition to subsidies, this also includes tax relief and state investments in companies, which are particularly widespread in the cantons. By contrast, such subsidies are frowned upon in the EU in as far as they distort cross-border competition. However, the accompanying measures remain the most difficult issue. If the positions of Bern and Brussels do not become more closely aligned, all other negotiation successes would become irrelevant. After all, what always applies during negotiations also applies in this case: "Nothing is agreed, until everything is agreed".

Bern puts pressure on refugees from the Eritrean dictatorship

Switzerland is currently re-examining the situation of refugees from Eritrea granted temporary admission. Forced returns will not happen, but the diaspora fears being plunged into insecurity.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

The Eritrean diaspora, the largest refugee group living in Switzerland, is under pressure. About 23,000 have been recognised as refugees; 9,500 are on temporary admission (F permit) and 3,000 are waiting for a decision. While the expulsion of the second group has been deemed impossible to implement, their files have been the subject of a re-examination since the summer. Holders of the F permit received a letter from the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM). “We are considering cancelling your provisional admission, which would result in your removal from Switzerland.”

Sent initially to about 200 people, the message plunged the diaspora into turmoil. “People, including those with a stable legal situation, such as a B or C permit, are worried that their situation will deteriorate,” says Tzeggai Tesfaldet, political opponent of the Eritrean regime and co-founder of two refugee associations in Geneva. “Teenagers have dropped out of school from fear,” says Aldo Brina, asylum officer at the Geneva Protestant Social Center (CSP).

The loss of the F permit will be brutal

The people concerned, if they do not appeal, will move from social assistance to emergency assistance, with an allowance of ten francs a day, and will have to leave their homes. “These people will be housed in the most dilapidated homes. This is the path to social disintegration,” predicts Aldo Brina. They will no longer have access to the labour market.

For this specialist on asylum issues, the policy is mainly aimed at diverting incoming Eritreans to other countries. “In Switzerland, people will not leave. Their situation will become precarious or they will go into hiding,” he predicts.

The recipients of the letter – a group that is growing – are invited to contact the SEM. The CSP reports that the Confederation has already gone back on several cases. “The pilot project showed that in 9 % of cases the cancellation of these admissions was proved to be proportionate and legally defensible,” says Emmanuelle Jaquet von Sury, spokesperson of the SEM. So far there have been about 20 cases of temporary admission being cancelled. Several

appeal procedures are pending before the Federal Administrative Court (FAC). As for those seeing their F permits cancelled, they will be able to “return voluntarily to their country of origin without risk to their safety”, says the SEM.

National service and risk of rape

This change of policy towards the Eritreans has been carried out in several legal phases. The most recent was in July when the FAC made a decision relating to national service in Eritrea, made compulsory since the war with



Ethiopia (1998–2000). Admittedly, the court is “convinced that ill-treatment does take place during military service... but it is not established that it is so widespread that anyone performing it would be exposed to the serious risk of suffering such attacks”.

The risk of rape for women conscripted by force is also not considered a sufficient criterion. “Sources do not allow us to conclude that every woman performing national service risks a sufficient probability of suffering such as-

The Minister of Justice Simonetta Sommaruga surrounded by asylum seekers: Federal Bern is increasing pressure on refugees from Eritrea in particular. Photo: Keystone

sault,” says the court. More generally, indefinite recruitment would not with sufficient certainty constitute forced labour, which international law condemns.

Radical change of course

In 2006, Switzerland decided to accommodate all deserters fleeing forced enlistment under the Eritrean flag, raising the rate of recognition of Eritrean asylum seekers from 6% to 82%. This period is over. “Eritreans are the largest group of asylum seekers in Switzerland, so there is immense political pressure to reduce their numbers,” says Peter Meier, spokesman for the Swiss Refugee Organisation. The Federal Department of Justice and Police is increasingly giving in to this pressure.”

“This policy is not linked to the fact that the refugees come from this particular country, or to the problems that this group poses, which are minimal, but to the number of people it constitutes,” says Tzeggai Tesfaldet. The social worker believes that “this deterrence is bearing fruit, since the arrivals are decreasing, although of course the closing of the Mediterranean route also plays an important role”. In addition, new asylum applications are now examined in the light of the new policy, reducing the chances of obtaining protection.

Defending the image of refugees

Two arguments, relayed by the media, may have weighed on the image of Eritreans in Switzerland. The first relates to the difficulty this group has in integrating. “Many Eritreans have only poor education... Most do not understand our writing and need literacy training,” says the SEM. An SEM study indicates that since 2002 all students have had to complete their secondary education at a military school, and only a limited number are allowed to study at one of the country’s higher education institutions. The others are forced to perform military service.

Another complaint is the fact that some refugees have returned to their country for holidays. “In 2017, the SEM withdrew refugee status from four Eritrean nationals who had made a visit to Eritrea. In the first half of 2018, the same applied to nine people,” says Emmanuelle Jaquet von Sury.

According to a report from the European Asylum Support Office, dated May 2105, exiled Eritreans apparently had the opportunity to enter the country to visit their families. To do this, or to obtain any official document, they must have paid a 2% tax on income required by Eritrea from all members of the diaspora. “I do not pay this

tax, which is used without any transparency and limits the rights of refugees,” says Tzeggai Tesfaldet.

Parliamentarians say good things

The perception of the authoritarian regime in Asmara may have been influenced by the visit in February 2016 of four parliamentarians. Interviewed on the spot by Radio Télévision Suisse RTS, the CVP National Councillor Claude Béglé, for his part, claimed that “Eritrea is opening up”. For Aldo Brina, this media operation has helped to change the perception of the public, yet the situation on the ground has not changed.

Are repatriated deserters at risk of abuse? “Since human rights observers cannot travel to Eritrea, and the International Committee of the Red Cross is not allowed to visit prisons, it is impossible to verify this,” says the European Asylum Support Office. As for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, it was “obliged in 2006 to put an end to its commitment of several years in Eritrea in view of the difficulties encountered by local mutual assistance organisations”, according to the SEM.

A country being hollowed out

Every month, 5,000 people on average flee Eritrea, a country led by Isaias Afewerki and a single party. No elections have taken place and the constitution has never entered into force. The Eritrean community in Switzerland is estimated at 35,000 people. In 2015, about 25% of European asylum applications were filed in Switzerland. The Eritrean diaspora totals almost half a million people, for a country of 5 million inhabitants.

Drought in Europe's water reservoir

The summer of 2018 was Switzerland's hottest since 1864. It was not only hotter than the previous record summer of 2003, but also exceptionally dry. There are long-term consequences.

THEODORA PETER

This summer, the roar of army helicopters could often be heard in the Swiss mountains. Superpuma helicopters transported water to remote alpine farms more than 500 times – a total of over 1,300 tonnes. A dairy cow drinks 40 to 80 litres of water a day. The water reservoirs in the Alps of western, eastern and central Switzerland were dried up. Where access was possible, water tankers transported water to higher altitudes. Otherwise it would have been necessary to bring the farm animals down into the valley at an earlier date. But even in these areas the drought gave the farmers a hard time. Hardly any grass grew on the pastures, so the cows had either to be fed hay from winter stocks or farmers had to buy additional fodder. This became too expensive for many farmers. They brought their animals to the slaughterhouse prematurely or sold off more cattle than had been planned resulting in low prices. Proceeds from cattle for slaughter also came under pressure because the industry organisation Proviande had approved the import of 800 tonnes of beef at the end of June. This caused discontent among farmers. In order to relieve the burden on the meat market, Proviande ultimately extended the import period, which normally lasts four weeks, until the end of September.

The drought also had an impact on the grain harvest. Swiss Granum expects a significant decline in the quantities of wheat, barley and rapeseed for 2018. As for fruit growers, they were forced to harvest early after fruit growth came to a standstill. At least the slightly smaller apples are of excellent quality - good news compared to the record low 2017 harvest, where frost in spring caused major losses.

Fish die-off despite "cooling zones"

The lack of precipitation caused the water levels of rivers and lakes to drop and the heat led to rising water temperatures. Near Schaffhausen, the Rhine crossed the 27 degree mark once again this summer. What may please swimmers is life-threatening for aquatic organisms. For example, cryophilic fish species such as the grayling show initial stress symptoms at 23 degrees. After almost 95 percent of the graylings had died during the heatwave of 2003, "cooling zones" were created this year along several streams leading to the Rhine, where the fish could find refuge in the deeper and cooler water. Nevertheless, there was a great fish die-off in the Rhine during August. In addition to graylings, many trout also died. In other regions, fish were re-

moved from streams and rivers that were drying out and placed into larger bodies of water.

Due to the drought, several cantons called upon the population to use less water. However, there was no acute and widespread water shortage during the summer. As "Europe's water reservoir", Switzerland has large water reserves. According to the Federal Office for the Environment, 80 percent of the drinking water in Switzerland is extracted from the groundwater. The groundwater has a delayed reaction to drought, which is normally visible after several months.

Retreat of glaciers continues

The high temperatures of 2018 also caused the glaciers of the Alps to retreat further, while the drought amplified the process. This is because precipitation, which falls in the form of snow at high altitudes, helps protect the glaciers from melting by adding a layer of snow. But according to researchers, it is impossible to stop the smaller glaciers at lower altitudes from disappearing. Due to global warming, 80 percent of the mass of ice will have disappeared by the year 2100. Climate protection could at least save the large glaciers from completely retreating.

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



A common sight during the summer of 2018: Army helicopters deliver water to cows in the mountains, in this case to the Oberbättruns mountain pasture in Schänis. Photo: Keystone

The printed book lives on

Digitalisation shook the Swiss book market and led to a decline in sales. But the book world is enduring the storms thanks to the passion and creativity of booksellers.



SUSANNE WENGER

A mellow light falls on the book tables from outside. The rooms have high ceilings and the furniture appears modern in a friendly way: the Buchzeichen bookshop in Langenthal, which is located in the canton of Bern, presents the book as a cultural asset and celebrates its aesthetics. For three women, the opening of the store this spring marks the fulfillment of a dream. They all have professional backgrounds related to books but are lateral entrants when it comes to entrepreneurship. For this, Beatrix Studer left her better-paid job as an upper secondary school teacher. “Of course the step required courage,”

says the co-owner, but bookstores are on the rise again. “People like to spend time browsing among rows of books in a nice place,” Susanna Paoletti adds. As a businesswoman, she keeps an eye on the course of business.

The women from Langenthal are not alone. The last two years have seen the first openings of new bookstores, as registered by the Swiss Booksellers’ and Book Publishers’ Association (SBVV). Prior to that, there was mostly downsizing and crisis. In 2007, fixed book price agreements were abolished. Large online retailers such as Amazon came onto the scene. The sales of Swiss booksellers plummeted. Approximately 100 bookshops had to

The Buchzeichen bookshop in Langenthal represents a new trend: after years of just downsizing, new and reimagined meeting places packed with books are being opened in Switzerland.

Photo: Matthias Schneider

close in the German-speaking part of Switzerland alone. Today there are 200 stores left in the area. For SBVV’s Managing Director Dani Landolf, the fact that a counter-movement is on the rise is “a good sign”. The book industry was one of the first sectors to experience the explosive potential of digitalisation. “But we are still here,” says Landolf, “and we are doing a bit better than before”.

Books in the organic food store

The statement may contain a dash of calculated optimism, but there are figures to support it. The proportion of books sold online in Switzerland has

stabilised at around 25 percent. In other words, bibliophiles still buy three-quarters of all books in stores. The book industry's decline in sales has also slowed recently. 2018 could even result in a slight surplus, depending on Christmas sales. However, the positive developments did not happen of their own accord. Many booksellers realised that putting books on shelves was no longer enough to get people to go to bookshops. Bookstores have become meeting places with cafes, lounges, events and support clubs. The selection of books is carefully maintained. "Our selection is hand-picked," says Beatrix Stuber, "our customers appreciate being inspired and receiving advice".

Carol Forster, a bookseller from Appenzell, reacted early on. Her campaign is called "Lock-in and enjoy" and has been taking place in her bookstore several times a week for the past nine years. Groups or individuals can reserve the bookshop and browse through the available books. "We are always fully booked," says Forster. She also focuses on purchasing locally. She delivers books ordered from her online store to stores in Appenzell's Vorderrand region. There are no more bookstores there, but the retailer Volg, the bakery, the organic food store and the cafe now run small book corners. "This is a way for village shops to support each other," says Forster. And the conscious consumer, the consumer who is tired of globalisation, can contribute to a more lively place to live.

The look and feel of a book

Book publishers have been receiving cultural funding from the federal government for the past two years. But even in their case creativity has to flourish, and is doing so. "We are enhancing our profile," Matthias Haupt says in the conference room of the publishing company Haupt-Verlag,

which is located in the Länggasse district of the city of Bern. He runs the family business, which has been in the family for three generations. Today, Haupt-Verlag mainly publishes non-fiction books on nature and the environment as well as handicrafts and design. The focus is on quality, also in terms of the design. The publisher pulls out "Steine Berns", a new geological excursion guide through the federal city. He almost tenderly

"We are treading on thin ice, but the ice is supporting us."

Publisher Matthias Haupt

strokes the rough cover. "The paper is inspired by sandstone," he says. According to Haupt, the look and feel is an unbeatable advantage of the printed book.

Even niche books, which are produced in high quality, find a readership willing to pay for them. The sixth edition of the Flora Helvetica plant guide was recently published by Haupt. Virtually every wild flower that grows in Switzerland is mentioned in it. But it is a heavy load, even for flower lovers, weighing almost two kilograms. The publisher now combines the book with 21st century technology, an app for mobile devices. This also has its price, but is doing very well according to Haupt. Unlike newspaper publishers, the book publishers never made the mistake of offering their products for free online. "We are treading on thin ice," says Haupt, "but the ice is supporting us". He is more optimistic than he was five years ago.

More than a retro fad

One third of the books sold in Switzerland are fiction books, ranging from

novels to regional thrillers. Biographies, and not only those written by celebrities, also do well. Even when they never go on sale. The cultural project Edition Unik lets people like you and me write down their life stories. They are guided through a writing program by a specially developed software and receive two copies of a printed book at the end. "People are still fascinated by books when it comes to giving away their own life story – to their children, family or friends," says the founder and cultural entrepreneur Martin Heller. The participants know that they have produced something precious "and for them an elegant, sensuous book is more suitable for expressing this preciousness than a simple digital file".

The printed book is alive. And this is most likely more than just a retro fad like the vinyl record. While more and more music is streamed online, the e-book has yet to establish itself in Switzerland. It has a market share of ten percent. The printed book has something about it that people obviously don't want to give up, even in digital times: the physical interaction with it, undisturbed immersion in reading experiences. "People already spend far too much of their lives in front of computers," says the bookseller Carol Forster, "they enjoy taking a break and holding a book in their hands". Her colleague Beatrix Stuber stresses that she "has no desire to only be a manager of data". And SBVV Managing Director Dani Landolf quotes the writer Umberto Eco: "The book is like a spoon – an invention that simply cannot be improved."

A cross-section of the current Swiss book scene can be found on the following page.

Current book recommendations from Switzerland

The “Swiss Review” asked two experts to give their tips for new books by Swiss authors. The recommendations for the German-speaking part of Switzerland come from Dani Landolf, Managing Director of the Swiss Booksellers’ and Book Publishers’ Association. Those for the French-speaking part of Switzerland and for Ticino are from Ruth Gantert, managing editor of the *Viceversa Literature Yearbook* (www.viceversaliteratur.ch).

German-speaking Switzerland

Alex Capus, “Königskinder” (Hanser):
Capus is one of the best storytellers of contemporary Swiss literature.

Heinz Helle, “Die Überwindung der Schwerkraft” (Suhrkamp):
An expertly told story about the search for a deceased brother.

André Holenstein, Patrick Kury, Kristina Schulz, “Schweizer Migrationsgeschichte, von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart” (Hier und Jetzt Verlag):
A non-fiction book about the hysteria surrounding migration. For a detailed review, see page 30.

Lukas Holliger, “Das kürzere Leben des Klaus Halm” (Zytglogge):
An amusing, idiosyncratic and original novel based in Basel.

Jonas Lüscher, “Kraft” (C.H. Beck):
Seldom has anyone exposed the New Economy ideology so brilliantly and with such wit.

Gianna Molinari, “Hier ist noch alles möglich” (Aufbau):
A spooky yet subtle story about threats and borders.

Anita Siegfried, “Blanchefleur” (Bilgerverlag):
A light historical novel full of lively characters.

Peter Stamm, “Die sanfte Gleichgültigkeit der Welt” (S. Fischer Verlag):
The author returns to his literary beginnings and former strength.

Vincezo Todisco, “Das Eidechsenkind” (Rotpunktverlag):
A poetic and captivating story about a boy who illegally immigrated to Switzerland and is forced to hide.

Julia Weber, “Immer ist alles schön” (Limmatverlag):
A sad yet beautiful, wonderfully eloquent and idiosyncratic book.

French-speaking Switzerland

Jean François Billeter, “Une autre Aurélia und Une rencontre à Pékin” (Allia):
A moving diary of mourning and an account of an intercultural love story.

Laurence Boissier, “Rentrée des classes” (art&fiction):
The Geneva-based author carefully recounts how ten-year-old Mathilde finds her way back to life after her father’s disappearance.

Julien Bouissoux, Janvier (L’Olivier):
“What does an employee do when they are forgotten at their job?” A light, melancholic satire of our working world.

Elisa Shua Dusapin, “Les Billes du Pachinko” (Zoé):
An enchanting novel about relationships between generations, about foreigners and home.

Claudine Gaetzi, “Grammaire blanche” (Samizdat):
A poetic plunge into inner and outer spaces, carefully remembering and progressing.

Rinny Gremaud, “Un monde en toc” (Seuil):
The author travels around the world and takes an attentive and ironic look at special places, or non-places: shopping malls.

Pascale Kramer, “Une famille” (Flammarion):
The author skillfully recounts the everyday life of a family living in the shadows of the alcohol addiction of the son and brother.

Pierre Lepori, “Nuit américaine” (Éditions d’en bas):
Alex the journalist flies to America during a life crisis and wanders through the metropolis: a tragicomic impression of life.

Bruno Pellegrino, “Ici, août est un mois d’automne” (Zoé):
The author retraces the life of the poet Gustave Roud and his sister Madeleine.

Philippe Rahmy, “Pardon pour l’Amérique” (La Table ronde):
A legacy of the author who died in 2017. He gives a voice to people who have been wrongly imprisoned.

Ticino

Laura Di Corcia, “In tutte le direzioni” (Lietocolle):
The volume contains, among other things, poems for which the young poet won a prize in 2017.

Andrea Fazioli, “Succede sempre qualcosa” (Casagrande/Guanda):
A volume with subtle short stories and a new detective novel starring private detective Elia Contini.

Giorgio Genetelli, “La partita” (Edizioni Ulivo):
With hardly any belongings, Damian settles down in an abandoned house. What are the reasons for his escape?

Federico Hindermann, “Sempre altrove” (Marcos y Marcos):
The delicate poems of the poet, who died in 2012, published in a carefully compiled and comprehensive anthology.

Anna Ruchat, “Gli anni di Nettuno sulla terra” (Ibis):
In 12 short stories, the author explores human life in the passage of time.

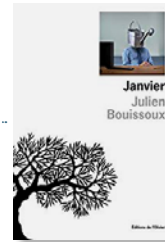
Alexandre Hmine, “La chiave nel latte” (Gabriele Capelli):
The autobiographical novel recounts how the son of a Moroccan mother grows up in Ticino.

Pierre Lepori, “Quasi amore” (Sottoscala):
In 45 poems, the Ticino-based author melancholically and melodically praises his near-love or lover.

Fabio Pusterl, “Cenere, o terra” (Marcos y Marcos) and **“Una luce che non si spegne”** (Casagrande):
The poet circles around the elements and portrays companions.

Luca Saltini, “Una piccola fedeltà” (Giunti):
Love, money and power in Romania during the reign of the dictator Ceausescu. A dramatic historical novel.

Maria Rosaria Valentini, “Il tempo di Andrea” (Sellerio):
After a stroke and a separation, Andrea is in hospital and his thoughts revolve around episodes from his past.



“The desire to break down boundaries”

In 1982, Lukas Hartmann published a book about a journey to India, which is still enchanting.

CHARLES LINSMAYER

Lukas Hartmann's novels are often set in distant countries. For example, “Die Seuche” (1992) contrasts the medieval plague in Bern with the Ugandan AIDS sufferer Sam Ssenyonja, while “Die Tochter des Jägers” (2002) takes place in the Kenyan big game hunting areas of the 1920s, and the painter John Webber travels the South Seas in “Bis ans Ende der Meere” (2009). “Abschied von Sansibar” (2013) describes the childhood of a princess on the same island and “Ein Bild von Lydia” (2018) is mainly set in Florence and Rome.

Experienced personally: India 1980

Only one book features Hartmann sending himself to a distant country: “Mahabalipuram. Als Schweizer in Indien” (1982). The trip took place in the winter of 1980/81 and had India as its destination: a country the author had already visited on behalf of an aid organisation, but which he now privately explored by train, bus and bicycle. As soon as they arrived in Bombay, he and his wife Silvia felt thrown into the throngs of people. This had nothing in common with the poetic wonderland of childhood. Suddenly they were confronted by an “exotic raggedness”, masses of people sleeping in the streets and crippled beggars, got lost “in the trampling of thousands of feet around themselves” and became “gradually indistinguishable, faces among faces, in the darkness of the night”.

Hartmann's words are able “to withstand the impact of the unknown”, the NZZ wrote, “but at the same time they are steeped in it, and this explains to a large extent the fascination of his book”.

The traveller's account had a very specific and personal purpose: “Travelling in order to awaken. A journey to the unknown? Or into oneself? The desire to break down (internal or external) boundaries. To be on the road for weeks, not to make commitments (and the difficulty of not making commitments)”.

Keeping an eye on Switzerland as well

This search for self is also connected to the fact that a substantial part of the book is dedicated to faraway Switzerland: “Thinking about Switzerland. Here of all places? Right here. Here I depend on a nameable identity like a second skin.”

Thus the experiences in Trivandrum in the state of Kerala, where they meet a German dropout, the chemist Dr. Subbarao and also little Moli, who tries to attach herself to them like a limpet, are always juxtaposed with reflections on Switzerland: for example on 1 August and the Swiss national consciousness, and before they visit the temple of the goddess Meenakshi in Madurai, Hartmann mentions the moment that he looks forward to most in Switzerland in 1981: bathing in Lake Gerzen on warm summer evenings. The stay at Broadlands, a lodging house in Madras that once housed the harem of a nabob, is contrasted by the image of the Bernese onion market, where mechanical orange-red trunked animals suck up the confetti mountains under the motto “keep Switzerland clean”. But in Mahabalipuram, before the beginning of a wild festival, the full moon rises out of the sea, paints the sky bright orange and “quite unpoetically, takes on the colour of cheese; it could be a Camembert...”

The perspective on Switzerland may have changed in the almost 40 years since the publication of this travelogue, but the spontaneous glance at India, which is enchanted in a dazzling, vivid sense by the curiosity, the receptiveness but also by the hunger for experience and the sensuous narrative exuberance of a talented chronicler, remains as relevant as ever.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: “Mahabalipuram” has been out of print for years and can only be found in libraries or antiquarian bookshops.



“Without being able to retreat and process my experiences by writing, I would be helplessly exposed to the deluge of images and the intense rush of India. Fear of being wiped out by sudden, everlasting impressions; fear of dissolving in the never-experienced. So I continue to write, to write along the boundaries of what is still bearable.”

(From: “Mahabalipuram. Als Schweizer in Indien», Arche Verlag, Zürich 1982)

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH

The “Swiss Review” online instead of printed

Practical tips for switching

The “Swiss Review” is published both in printed form and in an online version. OSA, which is the publisher of the “Review”, wants to keep it this way. However, printing and shipping costs are an enormous expenditure item and shipping is not always the most ecologically sensible option. Those who appreciate the advantages of the electronic version are therefore advised to switch from print to online. By doing this, you will receive the “Review” earlier and have access to all content at any time and from any location. When doing so, it is important to report that you are switching! It does not help the environment or save costs if you read the electronic version of the “Review” before the printed version lands in your mailbox, only to throw it into the waste paper basket without having read it.

How do I switch?

- The recommended way is to report the change from print to online to the Swiss representation in your country of residence. This can be done either by email or by letter.
- Another option is to use the online desk of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), which was created for Swiss Abroad. > www.eda.admin.ch > Living abroad > Online desk FDFA. Prior registration is required to use the online desk.



Whether on paper or on a screen the content of the “Swiss Review” is always identical, regardless of its form.
IPhoto: Thomas Schneider

- The last option is to send an email to swissabroad@eda.admin.ch. However, in order to simplify the administration of change requests, the first two options are preferred.

Voluntary subscription fee

As important as it is for the “Review” to keep printing and shipping costs low, it is clearly committed to the printed edition. Readers who particularly appreciate receiving the printed edition are now able to support it with a voluntary subscription fee. Your support expressed in this way will help us to offer the “Review” on paper in the same quality for many years to come.

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New guide explains key issues of social security law to those working abroad

People are becoming more mobile, business work increasingly so. Thus an overview of key insurance law issues is increasingly important. The new guide “Arbeiten oder Leben im Ausland – wer ist in der AHV versichert?” (Working or living abroad – who is insured in the OASI?) contributes to this overview. In a language that is simple and easy to understand, it describes where people who work abroad or emigrate are insured. The guide is good for those considering moving abroad as well as those already living abroad who wish to provide possible new arrivals with advice on OASI matters.

The common examples chosen and list of questions help simplify the relevant insurance criteria. In the introduction, the legal basis of national and international social security law is explained. The main part deals with the insuring of the employed and self-employed who go to work abroad or work in several countries at the same time, as well as those not working who emigrate.

The information presented deals separately with the EU/EFTA states and the contracting and non-contracting countries, and is supplemented by numerous examples and overviews. In addition, it shows how to proceed so that

persons employed abroad continue to be insured in the OASI. As a practical handbook it is suitable for specialists who deal with cross-border cases. Thanks to its understandable language, it also gives interested laypeople a good overview of the topic. The book is available only in German. (MUL)

SYBILLE KÄSLIN, CHRISTINE VON FISCHER, “Arbeiten oder Leben im Ausland – wer ist in der AHV versichert?” (Working or living abroad – who is insured in the OASI?), 236 pages, Stämpfli Verlag Bern, CHF 78.

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

Signatures from 137 countries for OSA's e-voting petition

E-voting must be made available to all Swiss Abroad by 2021. The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) submitted this demand to the Federal Chancellery on 30 November. Thousands of Swiss citizens living abroad support the demand.

OSA's online petition in support of e-voting is literally backed by people all over the world. By the time the signature deadline was reached, Swiss citizens from 137 countries had signed the petition, which was submitted to the Federal Chancellery on 30 November. Through their signatures thousands signalled their support for the demand that Switzerland rapidly introduce an electronic voting and election system. The petition addressed to the Federal Council and parliament specifically calls for e-voting to be made available to all Swiss Abroad by 2021.

OSA feels confirmed in its position: it is convinced that e-voting is the only way to guarantee that all Swiss Abroad are able to exercise their political rights.

A total of 172,100 Swiss citizens living abroad are registered on an electoral register and can therefore vote in Switzerland. However, often their voting intentions remain unfulfilled. Since the election documents often arrive too late, voters living far away from their home country are frequently unable to vote. At the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad on 10 August in Visp, several delegates emphasised that e-voting was ultimately the only way to guarantee that Swiss citizens living abroad were able to exercise their political rights.

Through the petition the Swiss Abroad are now starting to exert more pressure over this issue. However, it remains to be seen how the Federal Council and parliament will react to the petition. At the time of writing, the authorities had yet to respond to OSA's request. (MUL)

www.evoting2021.ch

University or apprenticeship?

Advice from [educationsuisse](http://www.educationsuisse.ch) on education in Switzerland

University or apprenticeship? These are two different education pathways, which are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the Swiss education system is characterised by a high degree of flexibility. Consequently, there are many ways to begin or to change to a different education programme. The educational opportunities are highly diverse. An overview of the Swiss education system can be found on our website www.educationsuisse.ch.

Anyone who wishes to study in Switzerland with a foreign high school diploma, should inquire about the admission requirements of the universities well in advance; sometimes admission fails because a basic subject is missing. The next step is to find the right field of study. The [swissuniversities website www.studyprogrammes.ch](http://www.studyprogrammes.ch), can be of some benefit here. Many universities, universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education organise information days, which usually take place in autumn or winter. Several universities also have their own study counselling offices.

Those who would like to complete an apprenticeship after compulsory schooling or high school, can choose from around 250 occupations. The official website of the Swiss Career and Academic Studies Consulting, www.berufsberatung.ch, offers a wealth of information such as job descriptions, education descriptions, tips and much more. Once the area of interest has been defined, trial apprenticeships (1-5

days) in an enterprise are a suitable way of receiving an insight into the profession. One normally starts finding an apprenticeship at least a year before commencement of the apprenticeship. Sometimes companies require aptitude tests (such as Multicheck), which must be attached to the application.

A so-called bridge year can be a good interim solution for those who are still uncertain about their career choice. Such additional school years of pre-vocational training years are organised in all cantons.

In order to successfully complete an education in Switzerland, sufficient knowledge of a national language is important. A good command of English is an advantage, but by no means enough. Only a few university-level degree programmes (Master's) are offered entirely in English. (RG)

Information sheets on individual topics, general information and personal advice, also on career and academic choices, can be obtained from [educationsuisse](http://educationsuisse.ch): info@educationsuisse.ch, Tel. +41 (0) 31 356 61 04. Our employees speak German, French, Italian, English and Spanish.

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www.revue.ch

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Emotional moments in the second home country – Scenes from the summer camps for children and young people

Girls in traditional wrestling breeches, young people in the mountains making friends with a local goat, daredevils on a jagged rock near Saas Grund and language students on the shores of Lake Geneva. These are just some of the highlights and memorable moments experienced by Swiss children and young people living abroad during camps in their second home country.

Cycling, hiking, wrestling, climbing, chatting, having a party: the pictures speak for themselves. Such snapshots are made possible by the courses and camps for Swiss Abroad aged 8 to 25, which are organised every year by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) and the Youth Service of the OSA. The goals of the projects for children and young people are:

- The participants become better acquainted with their second home, Switzerland.
- Young Swiss Abroad from all over the world are brought together.
- An understanding of the mentality and way of life of their second home country, as well as its culture, history and society, is acquired.
- Every young Swiss Abroad is allowed at least one stay in Switzerland. In order to make this stay possible for everyone, we collect donations to support financially disadvantaged families by contributing to camp and/or travel expenses.

The participation of many volunteers is necessary in order to carry out these projects. Every year, almost 160 camp leaders and 30 host families contribute to ensure that the young Swiss Abroad have a great stay in Switzerland. In addition to the objectives mentioned above, the quality of the implementation of the projects is also very important. The summer and winter camps are planned and implemented according to the “Youth+Sports” guidelines (Y+S). In order to prepare our camp leaders well, an annual camp leader training course is offered. The language courses are held in cooperation with renowned language schools.

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) organised nine children’s holiday camps this summer. A total of 339 children between the ages of 8 and 14 from over 70 countries participated. In the summer, the Youth Service organised five youth camps, three language courses and several stays with a host family. A total of 200 young people from over 60 countries participated in the youth programmes. It is a pleasure to note that all the camps and courses of both the FYSA and the OSA Youth Service were fully booked.



- 1) Aiming high: Young people on a via ferrata in Saas Grund.
- 2) The Youth Service’s outdoor camps are also group experiences. On the Euschel pass in the Jaun region.
- 3) Learning languages also means getting to know Switzerland: Language students on a day trip to the Chillon Castle.
- 4) Summit meeting with a goat: A special kind of encounter at the sports camp for young people in Saas Grund.

- 1) 1 August celebrations on the Ballenberg.
- 2) The crowd of children meets the Federal President. Alain Berset (centre, back row) hosts a "Meet'n'Greet" in the Federal Palace.
- 3) "Swiss wrestling" in the children's camp: Approaching an old Swiss tradition – all while wearing traditional wrestling breeches.
- 4) Visiting the Swiss Air-Rescue (Rega) in Samedan (GR).



Summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

From the end of June to the end of August 2019, Swiss children living abroad can have a fantastic time with around 40 other children from all over the world while also discovering Switzerland and its culture at summer camps lasting two weeks. Registration for the summer camps will begin on 7 January 2019. The summer camps 2019 will take place on the following dates:

Sat. 29.06. – Fri. 12.07.2019

Sat. 13.07. – Fri. 26.07.2019

Sat. 27.07. – Fri. 09.08.2019

Sat. 10.08. – Fri. 23.08.2019

The exact details of the various offers (locations, age groups, etc.) will be available from the middle of December 2018 at: www.sjas.ch/en. We would also be pleased to send you our information brochure with an overview of the offers available by post on request. The registration deadline is 15 March 2019.

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad wishes to give all Swiss children abroad the opportunity to discover Switzerland in this way on at least one occasion. We can therefore offer reduced rates in justified cases. The required form can be requested on the registration form. For further information, please contact the FYSA office:

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Bern, Switzerland

Tel. +41 (0)31 356 61 16, Fax +41 (0)31 356 61 01

Email: info@sjas.ch / www.sjas.ch/en/

The Youth Service's summer offers of 2019

Next summer, the Youth Service of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) will be offering language and holiday camps for young Swiss Abroad aged 15 and over. You can find more information about the camps and, starting on 7 January 2019, will be able to register at www.swisscommunity.org/en/youth/youth-offers. It is possible to apply for financial support for all camps. Our offers at a glance:

13.07. – 26.07.2019 Sports camp 1 and Swiss Challenge

13.07. – 26.07.2019 German and French language camps

27.07. – 09.08.2019 Sports camp 2 and outdoor camp

03.08. – 18.08.2019 Politics and culture camp

We would also be pleased to send you our information brochure with an overview of the offers available by post on request. The registration deadline is 15 March 2019. For more information, feel free to contact the Youth Service:

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), Youth Service,

Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Bern, Switzerland

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Email: youth@aso.ch

www.swisscommunity.org/en/youth/youth-offers

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) is an independent organisation recognised by the Zewo foundation, which offers ten camps per year for children aged 8 to 14. The Youth Service is a department of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), which organises leisure, educational and political activities for young people aged 15 and over. Both partner organisations work independently of each other, have their own websites and registration procedures, but cooperate closely.

Federal elections 2019: The official election portal is online

Elections 2019
ch.ch

ch.ch/elections2019 is the link to the official election platform for the federal elections of 2019. The website will be updated regularly with information for the electorate and candidates until the election results are published. It also contains a section for Swiss Abroad.

An important vote is set to take place next year. On 20 October 2019, Swiss voters will elect the members of the National Council and Council of States (Switzerland's two chambers of parliament) for the 2019-2023 legislative period.

A few weeks ago the Federal Administration launched an information portal for citizens. The portal is jointly operated by the Federal Chancellery and ch.ch, the website of the Confederation, the cantons and the communes.

ch.ch/elections2019 already contains a section with detailed information from each canton about all those standing as candidates for the National Council or Council of States. General information about the organisation of the elections of both chambers, an election dictionary, a FAQ page and a quiz about the elections, where you can test your knowledge of the elections, can be found online.

During the electoral year, new content will continuously be uploaded to ch.ch/elections2019: In the spring of 2019, detailed explanations of the electoral arrangements for the National Council and Council of States will be published for each canton. The portal features answers to questions like: When will I receive the election materials and who should I contact if I don't receive them?; How do I fill in the ballot paper?; What mistakes should I avoid?; Who is eligible to vote?; Where and when can I vote?; and Do I need to register in order to vote? The website also contains practical information on how people with disabilities can vote.

On 20 October 2019, the results of the elections to the National Council and the Council of States will be published on ch.ch/elections2019, in cooperation with the Federal Statistical Office.

Swiss Abroad may also participate in the federal elections. There is a special section for the "Fifth Switzerland" on ch.ch/elections2019, which will be updated regularly with useful information for candidates as well as the electorate, in each case per canton.

The electorate can also obtain information about the elections via multimedia resources, such as interactive diagrams, illustrations and

especially explanatory videos. The official voting guide for the National Council elections completes the offer.

The portal ch.ch/elections2019 is available in five languages (German, French, Italian, Romansh and English). All explanatory videos are also available in sign language, allowing deaf and hearing impaired people to follow the election explanations. In addition, the content is adapted to the needs of the blind and visually impaired.

Federal referendums

Proposals submitted to a popular vote are determined by the Federal Council at least four months before the voting date. The following proposal will be put to the vote on 10 February 2019:

- Stop urban sprawl – for sustainable urban development (Urban sprawl initiative)

Other voting dates in 2019: 19 May, 20 October, 24 November

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

For information about the National Council elections of 20 October 2019, visit www.ch.ch/en/elections2019

Popular initiatives

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

- 'For lower premiums – a cost brake in the healthcare system' (16.04.2020)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found in German at www.bk.admin.ch > Politische Rechte > Volksinitiativen > Hängige Volksinitiativen

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Online registration for Swiss citizens travelling abroad
www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris



Plan well.
Travel well.

App available for free for iOS and Android

New: Customs clearance via smartphone

With QuickZoll, the Federal Customs Administration (FCA) is taking an important step towards digitisation. The smartphone app, which was launched in spring 2018, is aimed at private individuals entering Switzerland with goods intended for private use or as gifts.

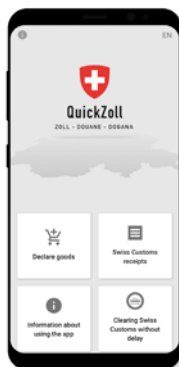
Previously, travellers were required to declare their purchases abroad, holiday souvenirs or gifts for customs clearance verbally or in paper form (declaration box) when crossing the border into Switzerland. This was particularly inconvenient for those arriving by train if they did not intend to disembark at the border. Now goods can be cleared digitally, irrespective of the location and up to 48 hours before crossing the border and duties can subsequently be paid directly.

Domicile plays an important role in customs clearance. For Swiss Abroad, QuickZoll is relevant if they bring gifts for family and friends or import food, tobacco and alcohol for their own final consumption in excess of the permitted allowances (e.g. 1 litre of spirits per adult). On the other hand, personal effects, such as one's own skiing equipment, are tax-exempt.


QuickZoll simplifies the importation into Switzerland. However, the digital processing of export certificates is not (yet) possible. VAT refunds also remain the responsibility of the country from which the goods are exported.

The smartphone app QuickZoll is one of the first results of the DaziT transformation programme, which will systematically simplify and digitise FCA services for private individuals and companies by the end of 2026.

More information: www.quickzoll.admin.ch



Consular services
anywhere, conveniently
on your mobile devices


 Guichet en ligne DFAE
 Online-Schalter EDA
 Sportello online DFAE
 Online desk FDFA

www.fdfa.admin.ch
Kenya (2018)

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THE SWISS ABROAD ON INSTAGRAM



Aroma of spices woos Swiss lawyer out of his office

When backpacking, lawyer Raphael Flury fell in love with East Africa and its natural products. The 28-year-old Swiss Abroad is now managing a certified organic spice production company on the Tanzanian spice island of Zanzibar.

My Job: I followed my desire to take an unconventional step towards an interesting but business-related life. It's very fulfilling to work with natural products such as cinnamon, vanilla and cloves as well as learn from the small farmers how these products are produced and processed.

My Tanzania: The country is enormous and has many different climatic zones, which makes the living space and outdoor activities so attractive. My Sunday trips to the pristine beaches of the island seem almost surreal in comparison with the turbulences of everyday life.

My Switzerland: Our place of birth is one of the few crucial things in life we have no influence over. Therefore, we should be grateful to have grown up in such a stable, safe, peaceful and well-organised country like Switzerland. Once you live abroad though, you get to know many other ways of living that could actually help some Swiss be more content.

My heart: As a matter of conviction, I used to cast my ballot in every single election or popular vote, something I no longer quite manage to do since I have moved here. This is why I deeply regret that a few years ago, e-voting was suspended due to a security gap in my home canton.

The original interview was published on swissinfo.ch, the online service of the Swiss Broadcasting Company, which is available in ten languages. Do you live abroad too? Then tag your Instagram photos [#WeAreSwissAbroad](https://www.instagram.com/WeAreSwissAbroad).



Serge Brignoni
Érotique-végétal I, 1933
wood



Jean Viollier
L'épouvantail charmeur III, 1928
oil on canvas



Alberto Giacometti
Fleur en danger, 1932
wood, plaster, wire and string



Paul Klee
Marionettes, 1930
oil on cardboard

André Thomkins
Knopfe, 1973
eggshell, button, thread spool and thread



The alternative reality

The Aargauer Kunsthaus is currently showing a large-scale exhibition devoted to Surrealism – the enigmatic, magical and at times threatening art movement. Salvador Dalí, René Magritte, Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst or Yves Tanguy are the names that first come to mind when thinking about Surrealism. There is also Meret Oppenheim, whose fur cup is probably one of the most famous works of Surrealism and can now be found in the MoMA in New York, and Alberto Giacometti and Serge Brignoni, who were active members of the movement as early as the 1920s. The Aargauer Kunsthaus is currently showing around 400 works by Swiss artists from the Surrealist period in an impressive exhibition.

"Surrealism Switzerland", Aargauer Kunsthaus, Aarau, until 2 January 2019
www.aargauerkunsthaus.ch; The exhibition is accompanied by a richly illustrated publication with various texts and 61 artist portraits in German and Italian.
 288 pages, 300 colour images, CH 59.-



Ernst Maass
Nächtliches Keimen II, circa 1938
oil on cardboard

Max von Moos
Schlangenzauber, 1930
tempera and oil on cardboard



Immigration and emigration in Switzerland



ANDRÉ HOLENSTEIN,
PATRICK KURY,
KRISTINA SCHULZ:
"Schweizer Migrations-
geschichte"
Hier und Jetzt Verlag 2018
384 Seiten; CHF/€ 39.-
E-Book (epub) € 30.-

"Migration is normal for Switzerland" is written on the back cover of the non-fiction book "Schweizer Migrationsgeschichte". The three historians André Holenstein, Patrick Kury and Kristina Schulz provide the first comprehensive description of migration movements in Switzerland from their beginnings to the present day. The starting point is the period of ancient history after the last ice age around 15,000 B.C., when humans started to arrive in the Swiss Central Plateau region. The book then covers a wide chronological range up to the French Revolution, a long period during which Switzerland as we know it today did not yet exist. Afterwards, the focus lies on immigration and emigration in the modern federal state of the 19th century up until the two world wars. The last chapters are dedicated to

the time between the post-war period and the present day.

The authors illustrate the economic, political, religious or ethnic, private and family-related reasons why individuals, families or entire population groups immigrated to or emigrated from Switzerland. All migrants had, and certainly still have, in common the desire to start a new life in a foreign place. In the last chapter called "insights and outlooks", the authors summarize how decisive migration was for Swiss history. The migration movements are the foundation of Switzerland's multiculturalism and multilingualism, and have contributed to the great economic prosperity of our country.

The authors have succeeded in vividly illustrating the significance of migration by focusing on individual fates. The content of the book, which is clearly formulated and easily accessible for non-experts, is based on research conducted by the authors and further studies. A highly interesting and far-reaching non-fiction book, which shows how immigration and emigration have shaped Switzerland.

Prof. Dr. André Holenstein is full professor of early Swiss history and comparative regional history at the Institute of History of the University of Bern. Prof. Dr. Patrick Kury teaches modern general and Swiss history at the Historical Seminar of the University of Lucerne and is co-director of Stadt.Geschichte.Basel. Dr. Kristina Schulz is a lecturer for migration history at the Institute of History of the University of Bern. "Schweizer Migrationsgeschichte" is currently only available in German.

RUTH VON GUNTEN

"It's profitable, and that's a privilege"



The duo Lo & Leduc created "079", the most successful pop song in Swiss music history to date. It has more than 3.5 million plays and was at the top of the Swiss charts for weeks. Nevertheless, Lo alias Lorenz Häberli needs his office job.

DANIEL DI FALCO

Of course he is one. But he doesn't like the word "star". Lo from Lo & Leduc, also known as Lorenz Häberli, prefers to call himself a "musician". Even when it comes to the problems that such a star-musician can experience when one of his songs conquers a country, the school playgrounds, the public pools, club meetings. "On the street people I don't know feel like they know me. They expect closeness, but this closeness has nothing to do with me." Häberli says this apologetically. He is talking about the "imbalance" in the relationship between the "musicians" and their fans. And about how that gives him a bad feeling. "You have a certain amount of social energy per day. At some point it gets exhausted. Then you become taciturn."

It's easier for him at the office. There he is not Lo, but "Lorenz who works here", and that's how it should remain. Häberli works in the field of corporate communications, in other words PR; he edits communiques, manages websites, writes blog posts. "Everything is sector-specific." He's in the media industry, but Häberli does not want to reveal his employer. The reason is that Lorenz doesn't want to be bothered by Lo.

It all began a little over ten years ago; Lorenz Häberli and his current partner Luc Oggier played in a high school band. Then came dialect rap. And the decisive idea of adding something else to their rap: a musicality influenced by Caribbean, African and South American music. Häberli and his companion Oggier continued their ad-



vance into the radio pop universe. And then this spring, they released their catchy tune, “079”, that has broken all the Swiss charts records.

Pop is a fickle business. But currently Häberli & Oggier are able to live off Lo & Leduc. “Very well, actually,” says Häberli. With his 70 percent workload he earns around four thousand Swiss francs a month in the office. “That’s enough for everything I need for myself.” That’s three and a half days in the office. The other days are dedicated to music. The earnings from making music can be added to what he makes from his office job. This won’t make him rich. “But it’s profitable. And that’s a privilege.”

The question is, why does Lorenz Häberli still need his office job? He’s 32 years old now. But he doesn’t want to have to stand on festival stages when he’s 50 and might have a bad back or to run out of ideas for new songs. “Years ago, Luc and I decided that we always wanted to do something else alongside making music.” In addition, there’s the orderliness that the office brings into a musician’s life. “If a significant part of the week is already structured, then I can structure the rest of the time more easily.” This results in the routine and concentration that Häberli needs to write his songs. And finally: It’s about the same stuff, whether it’s pop or PR – language. So it’s about “why and how I say what I say”. Häberli says that what interests him in music is the opportunity of working with language.

It is said that there are people who still don’t have “079” stuck in their heads. But you don’t have to like the song in order to notice the clever way in which a story is told during it. So someone falls in love with a voice on the information telephone line and ends up getting hit by a tram while talking on the phone – not even three and a half minutes, but an entire drama. And, according to the NZZ, “Every line is an aphorism”.

The album “Update 4.0”, which includes the song “079”, can be downloaded for free at: <http://lo-leduc.ch/>

Two resignations from the Federal Council

5 December 2018 promises to be a day of great suspense in the Federal Palace. The United Federal Assembly will simultaneously elect two new Federal Councillors, following the announcements by Federal Councillors Doris Leuthard (CVP) and Johann Schneider-Amman (FDP) that they will resign by the end of the year, as had been expected for some time. Leuthard has been in office since 2006 and headed the Department for Economic Affairs until 2010, followed by the Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications. Schneider-Amman has served as the Minister for Economic Affairs and Head of the Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research since his election to the Federal Council. (JM)

Paediatrician Beatocello has passed away

On 9 September 2018 Beat Richner, arguably Switzerland’s most well-known paediatrician, passed away at the age of 71. In 1974/1975, Richner worked in Cambodia but had to leave the country after the Khmer Rouge offensive, whereupon he returned to Zurich. In 1991, King Sihanouk asked him to rebuild the Kantha Bopha Children’s Hospital in the capital city of Phnom Penh, since it had been destroyed by the Pol Pot regime. Four more clinics were opened up between then and 2007. Today, the five hospitals treat over 80 percent of the country’s sick children free of charge. They are financed by the Swiss Confederation, the Cambodian government and private donors. Richner, who was also known as the cello-playing musical clown Beatocello, played an important role in collecting donations for this cause. (JM)

An unusual number of fatal accidents in the mountains

The persistently sunny summer of 2018 drew a particularly large number of hikers and alpinists to the Swiss mountains, which in turn resulted in an unusually large number of accidents in the mountains. In the first half of the year alone, 80 mountain climbers were killed in accidents (first half of 2017: 38 casualties). Ten people lost their lives on the Matterhorn during the first six months alone. According to the Swiss Alpine Club (SAC), most fatal accidents in the mountains occur in July and August. Therefore, the SAC expects a record in mountain emergency statistics for the current year. (JM)

St. Gallen also introduces burqa ban

In the canton of Ticino, covering one’s face in public spaces has been banned since 2016. In September 2018, St. Gallen became the second canton to introduce a burqa ban by popular vote. Violations will be fined at between 100 and 200 Swiss francs. In St. Gallen, the ban only applies when public safety or religious or social peace is endangered. This gives the police a great deal of discretion. (JM)



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