

SWISS REVIEW

The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
December 2016



**Threat to the rural idyll:
tough times for Swiss dairy farmers**

**Business and ethics:
arms exports under fire**

**Swissness on a French mountain:
the Swiss side of Mont Blanc**

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Politics in Berne is currently being overshadowed by federal spending cuts. The debt brake and stabilisation programme are omnipresent issues. Savings need to be made in development aid, in education and at all levels. At all levels? Agriculture got off more lightly than expected in the latest round of cuts. It receives over CHF 2.5 billion in direct payments each year. While farmers believe this is justified, some citizens,

who have nothing to do with farming, are bewildered by federal government's agricultural policy.

The farming lobby's power in Parliament is beyond dispute. Parliament's new make-up with an even stronger SVP is a factor with around two dozen farming representatives currently sitting as MPs for the SVP, CVP and FDP in the National Council. They have significant influence, as is shown not just by the fact that the association's president, CVP National Councillor Markus Ritter, has often been seen with a smile on his face recently, but also by a number of decisions taken during the autumn session.

It is nevertheless important to differentiate. While large farms primarily benefit from the distribution formula of direct payments, smaller ones – not least owing to various legal amendments – are left with nothing. The assets and income threshold has been removed from the Agriculture Act and the gradation of contributions based on area has been moderated. This means that small and medium-sized farms which were already struggling are increasingly coming under pressure and are continuing to disappear. Dairy farmers are particularly hard hit currently.

This is the other side of the coin. The story of each individual farm fighting for survival is also that of the fate of an individual, and that deserves attention. This includes the story of Res Burren, the last dairy farmer in the hamlet of Aekenmatt, which we have focused on in this issue.

MARKO LEHTINEN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Cover photo:
Res Burren, a dairy farmer from
Aekenmatt (photo by Adrian Moser)

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If the UK leaves the EU. Brexit's impact on Switzerland



The article on Brexit in the last issue of "Swiss Review" is too one-sided. It does not take account of the wide-ranging opportunities that will open up for the UK upon leaving the EU as it will cease to be bound by ex-

cessive EU laws and regulations. The pound's low value, for example, will benefit exports enormously. The unimagined benefits for the world of finance should also be mentioned. Switzerland would do well not to put up with everything from the EU and move more into line with the UK.

JEAN DUVIDE, FRANCE

The UK's exit may prove "slightly" disadvantageous for the finance sector, but may represent a real opportunity for other aspects of Europe as the British only had one word to say on anything that did not concern finance, a word resembling the Soviet "niet".

MICHEL PIGUET, CZECHIA

The fight for darkness. The certified star-lit sky



I live on the Danish island of Mön which is also attempting to become a dark sky park. We are hoping to achieve this soon. I must say that rarely have I seen such a lustrous starry sky as we have here. We already have tourists coming from

the capital city of Copenhagen to look at the stars. I wish you every success with your venture in Switzerland. It is an important issue!

CLAUDIO BANNWART, DENMARK

Editorial. Casting your vote – even if it is sometimes a chore

I am writing to you because your editorial in the August Swiss Review really touched a raw nerve with me: I have always tried to vote but in the last couple of years I have not anymore, because our Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga cancelled the e-vote. I tried voting by mail but it seems that the US Post Office does not know where Switzerland is or does not recognize the type of voting envelope used. Or the address format is not to their standards. In any case I received my envelope back with postage due some six weeks later – It had been to Swaziland in Africa! Voting through the US Post Office just does not work, unless I can use standard envelopes and standard address format. I wrote to the Embassy in New York but only got confirmation of the termination of e-vot-

ing rather than a valid explanation. It was the same when I wrote to the Stadtskanzlei in Schaffhausen, my home canton, it appeared they did not like the termination either but could not tell me anything further. So, why do I vote? Because I am Swiss. And you would have to live in the USA, like I do, to appreciate the clear, precise and balanced explanation I get in the "Erläuterungen des Bundesrates" in respect to every vote.

MARK STRASSLE, USA

A place of symbolism. The Area for the Swiss Abroad needs help



Silvia Schoch evoked memories of the Area for the Swiss Abroad very well in her article. I will try to raise a contribution from my Swiss society to help make up the shortfall to pay for the area's renovation.

WALTER ISLER, UNITED KINGDOM

Being Swiss in the pop music industry. An interview with Adrian Sieber from Lovebugs



Germany is an important market for Swiss musicians. They don't care too much about the "farmer accent" of the Swiss, because they have it themselves too. And of course it's close to Switzerland, you

can go there with all your equipment by car to play smaller venues. And it's not only like that in rock music, it's the same for the Schlager scene. People like Francine Jordi make a lot of money from German audiences – also on TV.

UELI KELLER, GERMANY

Swiss weapons exports – an explosive business

Weapons exports are a long-running political issue in Switzerland. The Yemen conflict has now rekindled the debate and presented the Federal Council with a challenge. A look at the current state of affairs.



Swiss weapons exports take place in a sphere of conflicting economic, ethical and moral interests. Checking 9-millimetre shells in Ruag's munitions department. Photo: Keystone

HEIDI GMÜR

Saudi Arabia announced “Operation Decisive Storm” on 25 March 2015. Air attacks on Yemen aimed to bring the Shiite Houthi rebels to their knees and return to power the government under President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi which had been driven out. On the same day the first bombs hit the Yemeni capital of Sana’a.

The start of the military intervention in Yemen – a desperately poor country in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula – had direct implications for the Swiss weapons industry. In consultation with the Federal Council, two days later the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) blocked all pending applications for the export of war material to states in the Saudi-led military coalition. In addition to Saudi Arabia, the effective moratorium on exports also included Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Over a year later, on 20 April 2016, the moratorium was lifted despite the war in Yemen continuing to rage on to the present day. On that same date, the Federal Council dealt with over 50 expired export applications from Swiss companies while the Yemen conflict was going on and finally approved exports worth a total of CHF 185 million after a month of wrangling between the two Free Democrat Federal Councillors Johann Schneider-Ammann and Didier Burkhalter. The great majority of items were spare parts and components for air defence systems sent to Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. However, the Federal Council also gave the go-ahead for the export of “replacement parts and components for F-5 fighter jets” to Bahrain as well as “replacement parts for M109 tank howitzers” to the UAE. “Misuse to commit violations of international humanitarian law and seri-

ous violations of human rights,” wrote the Federal Council, could be “largely” ruled out in the case of such war material.

This decision did not concern the fundamental question of yes or no to weapons exports. This had previously been taken by the Swiss electorate in November 2009 when the popular initiative “for a ban on the export of war material” put forward by a left-wing alliance was overwhelmingly rejected with 68.2 % of voters opposed. It was instead much more about the interpretation of the applicable legal provisions on the export of war material. The case is nevertheless a good example of the complex sphere of conflicting interests in which weapons exports have always found themselves – namely between economic and security policy arguments, on the one hand, and international law and the neutrality and humanitarian principles of Swiss foreign policy, on the other.

The economic importance of weapons exports

These aspects are also covered by the first article of the War Material Act. The act aims “to fulfil Switzerland’s international obligations and the respect of its foreign policy principles by means of controlling the manufacture and transfer of war material and related technology, while at the same time maintaining an industrial capacity in Switzerland that is adapted to the requirements of its national defence”. It should be noted that this act covers only war material in the narrow sense, such as weapons, munitions and defence equipment items “that are designed or modified specifically for use in war or armed combat”, according to SECO. War material is therefore differentiated from “special military goods”, such as training aircraft and reconnaissance drones as well as so-called “dual-use goods”, which cover tooling machines, for example, that can be used for both civil and military purposes.

It is difficult to quantify the economic importance of the Swiss weapons industry precisely as it is not listed separately in statistics. The figures available nevertheless show that it is a comparatively small sector in the Swiss economy. The Swiss ASD division, created with the merger of aeronautics, security and defence within the umbrella or-

ganisation Swissmem, indicates a total of around 10,000 employees at 50 companies. It can therefore be very important locally. Mowag in Kreuzlingen, for example, which is renowned for its armoured vehicles such as the Piranha, employs around 650 people and is therefore the largest employer in the small town on Lake Constance. The company belongs to the US group General Dynamics. Other large corporations include Ruag, which is wholly owned by the Swiss Confederation, and Rheinmetall Air Defence, which emerged from Oerlikon-Contraves and is under German ownership.

The proportion of weapons exports in relation to total Swiss exports can nevertheless be calculated. War material worth CHF 447 million was exported in 2015, which makes up just 0.22 % of all exports. Even in 2011, when weapons exports amounted to CHF 873 million, they accounted for just 0.44 % of all exports.

An army requirement

The fact that war material exports in 2015 fell by around 20 % compared with the previous year had nothing to do with the moratorium on exports to the Middle East. SECO confirmed that this was not yet reflected in the figures. In terms of value, the approval of export applications increased by 35 % last year – despite the moratorium – which points to a recent upturn in future weapons exports. The moratorium nevertheless caused significant anxiety in the weapons industry, particularly since it was already suffering as a result of the strength of the Swiss franc and a decline in exports to European countries for years whereas the Middle East is one of its most important growth markets.

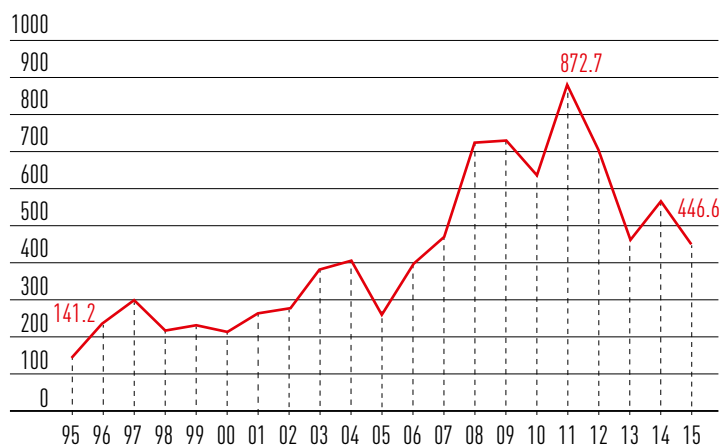
Business leaders and a lobby organisation known as the ‘working group for security and defence technology’, to which over 30 conservative MPs belong, put increasing pressure on the Federal Council to relax the policy on exports to Middle Eastern states again. In February, they complained in an open letter to the Federal Council, pointing out that around half of jobs in the weapons industry depend directly upon exports. They warned of job losses and the possible closure of entire plants and reminded it of the “security policy-motivated mandate set out in the War Material Act to maintain an industrial capacity in Switzerland that is adapted to the requirements of its national defence”.

They found Schneider-Ammann, Minister for Economic Affairs, a receptive listener. However, the approval of applications does not just require the authorisation of SECO but also that of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) led by FDP Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter. In this particular instance, the FDFA insisted on the ban on exports to states “involved” in the Yemen conflict.

A restrictive approval policy

It referred to the War Material Ordinance. This establishes the basis for a relatively restrictive approval policy in comparison with other European states, such as Germany and France, despite Parliament low-

Development of Swiss war material exports 1995 to 2015 (in CHF million)



Graphic: SECO

ering the threshold again two years ago. The criteria for the approval of export applications reflect the humanitarian principles of Swiss foreign policy but they should also minimise the risk of Switzerland's reputation being damaged owing to the prohibited deployment of Swiss war material. This does not always succeed. In 2008, Chad violated SECO's stipulations by using a Pilatus aircraft, which was only intended for training purposes, in combat missions against Sudan. In 2011, it became public that Saudi Arabia had used Mowag armoured personnel carriers to suppress protests by the people in Bahrain.

The ordinance specifically stipulates that when issuing export licences "maintaining peace, international security and regional stability" must be taken into account but also respect for human rights within the destination country as well as adherence to international law. Since 2008 the ordinance has also listed explicit grounds for exclusion. For example, authorisation must be refused if the destination country "commits systematic and serious violations of human rights" – unless there is "a small risk of the exported war material being used to commit serious human rights violations". Approval may not be granted either if the destination country is involved in an internal or international armed conflict.

Wrangling in the Federal Council

These grounds for exclusion were also invoked by the FDFA in relation to the Yemen conflict. In view of the fact that the war in Yemen is still raging on, it saw no reason to lift the moratorium on exports. Schneider-Ammann's department, meanwhile, took the view that the or-

dinance should be interpreted differently – only exports to Yemen itself were explicitly prohibited, especially since any other interpretation would also rule out the export of weapons to nations involved in war, such as the USA or Germany. As the two departments failed to reach agreement, the entire Federal Council eventually had to make a decision. Contrary to Schneider-Ammann's assumptions, his request for approval of the blocked applications did not immediately receive majority support here either. In addition to Burkhalter, the two SP Federal Council members proved awkward and the CVP Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard was hesitant.

It required the mediation skills of Federal Chancellor Walter Thurnherr for the Federal Council to reach a decision at the third attempt approving most of the blocked applications as mentioned at the beginning. However, it rejected those export applications "where there was suitability for use, and an increased risk of use, in the Yemen conflict". This concerned small weapons, their ammunition and 25,000 hand grenades. Contrary to Schneider-Ammann's request, the Federal Council also rejected the export of a Piranha armoured personnel carrier to Qatar. Mowag had wanted to supply this for test purposes and, according to information from the NZZ, was hoping to secure a subsequent order for the export of 400 Piranhas worth billions.

The issue remains on the agenda

While the weapons industry breathed a sigh of relief after the Federal Council's decision, politicians on the left and organisations

The weapons group Mowag in Kreuzlingen employs around 650 people and is the largest employer in the small town on Lake Constance.

Photo: Keystone





The view of **Chantal Galladé**, SP National Councillor for the canton of Zurich, member of the National Council's Security Policy Committee:

“Without security there is no quality of life. Security is the result of a society that supports freedom for everyone – and of a functioning constitutional state and good governance. This also includes the capability of the legitimate state authority to ensure the protection of the civilian population with (armed) force within the limits of human rights. Supplying weapons to those who guarantee that they will only be used for the protection of the civilian population and will adhere to human rights is legitimate. Swiss legislation is also based on such considerations. The War Material Ordinance categorically prohibits transactions if the destination country is involved in an internal or international armed conflict or if the destination country violates human rights systematically and seriously. This makes all the more intolerable the Federal Council's decision of 20 April 2016 – which is erroneous on moral, political and legal grounds – not to stop the ongoing export of war material to the war alliance which has caused a catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen and to even authorise new weapons exports to these warring states based on dubious grounds. Blood-stained deals are unworthy of humanitarian Switzerland and are unacceptable.”



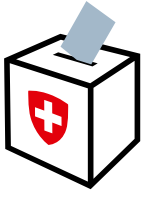
The view of **Corina Eichenberger**, FDP National Councillor for the canton of Aargau, co-chair of the Security and Defence Technology Working Group, chair of the National Council's Security Policy Committee:

“The Swiss security and defence technology industry is a cornerstone of Swiss security policy. Our nation has a strategic interest in a modern weapons industry to ensure it is not completely reliant upon defence technology imports. In order for the security industry to perform its mandate in the interests of national defence, it is dependent upon both orders from the Swiss army and export opportunities. The Swiss people voted against banning war material exports in 1972, 1997 and most recently in 2009. We are aware that weapons are no ordinary products – they can kill but also protect. The export of arms is subject to rigorous legal provisions in Switzerland. The Federal Council recently evaluated export applications for the Middle East on a country and material-specific basis. The lack of scope for differentiation concerning the internal conflicts criterion in export policy is problematic, which effectively restricts exports to the Middle East to the extent that the industry is greatly disadvantaged compared with its European competitors. Exporting goods of a defensive nature and which cannot be used against the civilian population is right.”

such as the Group for Switzerland without an Army were outraged. Motions from the SP and Greens calling for a renewed halt to war material exports to Middle Eastern states are currently pending in Parliament. The demand is also being supported by EVP, CVP and BDP politicians as well as the Green Liberals. This political issue will continue to run and not just because of the critics of weapons exports. The weapons industry also remains unhappy and continues to complain about not having a level playing field with its European competitors. Mowag CEO Oliver Dürr is annoyed that Germany could supply vehicles to Qatar for demonstration purposes whereas the Federal Council denied his company an export licence, as he told the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” in September.

The humanitarian situation in Yemen has since further deteriorated over recent months and the number of civilian victims is growing. According to the UN, in August at least 10 children were

killed in an air attack on a school by the Saudi-led military coalition while 19 people lost their lives in an attack on a hospital. At the beginning of October, over 140 people died in the capital of Sana'a in a suspected Saudi air attack on a funeral and hundreds more were injured. The conflict had claimed over 10,000 lives by the end of August.



September's referendum was marked by a "no risk" approach

No higher old-age pension and survivors' insurance (AHV) benefits, no "green economy" and greater powers for the intelligence service were the decisions reached by the Swiss people on 25 September.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Who does not gladly hold out their hand when offered the prospect of money? The referendum in September concerned a 10 % increase in the AHV pension. The Swiss nevertheless spurned the offer. Almost 60 % of voters rejected the "AHVplus" popular initiative put forward by the trade unions and left-wing parties. The authors

over the coming years, the existing financing problems would be further exacerbated if the initiative were adopted. The opposition contended that future generations should not be further encumbered.

During the referendum debate, besides the usual trench warfare between left and right, a row between experts erupted over which of the two

cit in future than the pension funds, mainly in view of the huge falls in returns on the capital markets. For example, Cédric Tille, an economics professor, financial market expert and member of the Bank Council of the Swiss National Bank, supported the initiative. He maintained that the importance of the second pillar should be limited and the first pillar, namely AHV, strengthened.

Stabilisation instead of top-ups

The initiative was thrown out despite AHV being extremely highly valued by the Swiss people. On the one hand, the argument that this insurance scheme should be stabilised in light of the forthcoming problems rather than financially topped up at a delicate moment clearly won the day. On the other, Parliament was in the middle of the debate about the "Pensions 2020" reform package put forward by the Federal Council at the time of the referendum. This provides a complete overview and covers not just AHV, but also the pension funds. Had the initiative been approved, the entire reform package would have been jeopardised. The electorate's rejection of the popular initiative therefore represented a vote of confidence in Parliament in the hope that the ongoing pension reform will result in a balanced solution capable of attracting majority support. However, the outcome of the parliamentary procedure was not yet known at the time when this issue went to print.

The "green economy" popular initiative, which advocated a "sustainable and resource-oriented economy", also failed to win favour. The initiative launched by the Greens and supported by left-wing parties and a number of organisations and associations that focus on environmental issues fell much further short than the AHV initiative, with 63.6 % of voters



The trade unions and left-wing parties failed with their AHV initiative. The photo shows Vania Alleva, President of Unia, after the defeat in Berne.

Photo: Keystone

were seeking to give AHV greater weight in the overall system of retirement provision. The Federal Council, Parliament and the conservative parties rejected the proposal primarily based on demographic grounds. As the high number of people born in the 1950s and 1960s will reach pension age

key pillars of old-age pension should be strengthened – state AHV or occupational pensions, that is to say the pension funds. One side primarily emphasised the looming AHV shortfall owing to the demographic trend. Others argued that AHV was better placed to make up the financial defi-

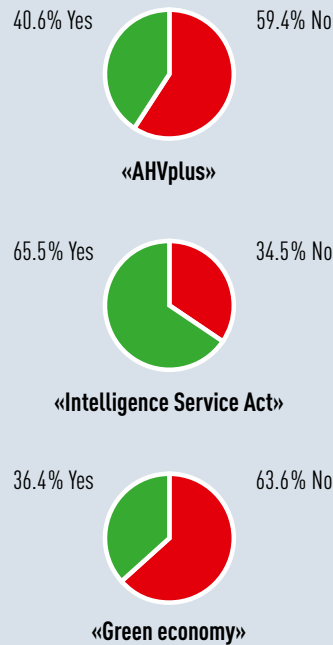
opposed. The popular initiative sought to make more efficient use of natural resources, such as water, soil, air and raw materials, thus better protecting them. As with the AHV initiative, this popular initiative was also based on arguments about concerns over future generations who will have to deal with the negative consequences of our economic activity. In particular, the economy should be made to use raw materials sparingly and to generate as little waste as possible. This should in turn be recycled and reused in the economic cycle as raw materials. The authors wished to reduce consumption by 2050 to the extent that it no longer exceeds the capacity of our single planet. If everyone in the world used as many natural resources as in Switzerland, three planets would be required over the long term.

Too much too soon

The initiative's fundamental concerns were also recognised by the Federal Council. It even wanted to put forward a counterproposal and to update the Environmental Protection Act. However, Parliament opposed the Federal Council's plan and only the initiative was put to the people. This went too far for the government, Parliament and, above all, large sections of the economy and sought to achieve too much in too little time. Far-reaching measures for the economy and a negative impact on competitiveness, growth and employment were presented as arguments. Opponents also maintained that lots of measures have already been introduced.

The consumption cuts highlighted by the opposition referendum campaign may have swayed many voters to reject the proposal. While the personal restrictions were often exaggerated, significant reductions

Referendum results of 25 September 2016



would probably have been required to achieve systematic implementation of the new constitutional provisions. However, the main reason for the “no” vote may have been the spirit of the times – environmental issues are currently not amongst the major concerns on the Swiss public’s “worry barometer”.

Trend towards security

In contrast, the new Intelligence Service Act is very much in line with current trends and was overwhelmingly approved by 65.5 % of voters. The very first sentence in the official “Federal Council’s explanatory statements” – commonly known as the “Bundesbüchlein” (government pamphlet) – captures the current mood: “The Federal Intelligence Service (FIS) aims to ensure Swiss national security. Its task is to detect threats at an early stage, such as those posed by terrorism.” The FIS shall in future also be permitted to infiltrate com-

puters, tap telephone calls and bug private rooms, according to the new Intelligence Service Act. This regulates the duties but also the limits and control of the FIS. It provides for new measures to obtain information – for example, through surveillance of the postal and telecommunications services – concerning terrorism, espionage and attacks on critical infrastructure. The FIS is subject to multi-level control by the bodies of Parliament, the administration and the Federal Council.

An “alliance against the snooping state” – consisting primarily of small, left-wing parties and youth parties – called the referendum against the Intelligence Service Act. Opponents pointed to the end of privacy: “Everyone is under surveillance, not just criminals as is often claimed. The tapping of telephone calls, reading of emails, Facebook, WhatsApp and SMS messages as well as the monitoring of the internet through keyword searches are means of mass surveillance irrespective of suspicion,” they contended. Experience has shown that comprehensive surveillance has “not prevented one single terrorist attack”, the authors of the government pamphlet claim.

Such arguments failed to convince the majority of voters, with fears that Switzerland could also be hit by terrorism one day proving too strong. In light of this situation, the view that the realigned intelligence service will at least make some contribution to greater security is understandable.

The last dairy farmer in the village

Swiss farmers are receiving an increasingly low price for their milk, which has major repercussions. Fewer and fewer farmers are keeping dairy cows, and if they do, they have ever larger herds. This is slowly changing the appearance of the Swiss countryside.



MARC LETTAU

Aekenmatt, a small hamlet on the edge of the Bernese alpine foothills, is how many people might imagine a typical Swiss farming village to look. Sizeable farms are found here on the undulating landscape. Splendid box-tree-lined farmers' gardens, burbling fountains and sun-beaten timber-framed buildings create the impression that little has changed here over the past two or three centuries. Except for when the commuter traffic runs through the village in the morning and evening tranquillity prevails. This impression is nevertheless deceiving. The

characteristic hamlet also typifies the far-reaching change that is commonplace in rural Switzerland. All the farms in Aekenmatt were dairy farming a generation ago. Every morning and evening, all the farming families would cart the fresh milk to the "Chäsi", the cheese dairy, in the centre of the village. It was made into Emmental in the neighbouring village.

But today 55-year-old Res Burren is the last dairy farmer in the village. He actually lives right next to the cheese dairy. However, the last time that milk from Aekenmatt was used for cheese production was in 1999. The

Aekenmatt once had lots of dairy farms. Today Res Burren is the last remaining dairy farmer in the village.

Photo: Adrian Moser

cheese dairy even ceased to be a milk collection point two years ago. A tanker comes to the village every two days to collect the milk from the village's last dairy farmer. Instead of travelling 20 metres to the cheese dairy, today it is transported 20 kilometres from the outset to a large-scale, industrial processing plant in the conurbation of Berne. The only rural thing about it is its address, which is 9 Milchstrasse (milk street).

Sharp drop from 100 to 50 cents

The village's only dairy farmer may also be its last. Burren is not sure

whether he will continue milking in future. He is faced with a fight for survival. When he was training it was drilled into him that average production costs in Switzerland stood at 70 cents per litre of milk. He later received government subsidised milk prices of 100 cents. Today he just gets around 50 cents. When analysing his business, he always comes to the same conclusion: "If I gave up the cows and just kept a few beef cattle, I would earn just as much as it involves far less expenditure."

The reasons for not – or not yet – giving up are unmissable on the farm built in 1833. Worn placards on the wall of the building document outstanding success as a breeder. In the sheds the names and dates neatly written on blackboards in white chalk point to an animal-loving nature. It is not abstract units of cattle found here, but instead Lolita, Naomi, Prag, Regula, Rosette, Ricola, Selina, Tamara, Tiffany and 11 other individuals with udders who have melodious-sounding names.

Rapid structural change

The hamlet of Aekenmatt is a reflection in extremis of what is happening throughout Switzerland. The number of farms supplying milk to dairies or cheese-making plants is continually declining. Of the 26,000 dairy farms recorded six years ago, 6,000 have now disappeared. In July 2016, the number of dairy cows stood at a record low of 550,000. Farmers whose milk ultimately ends up in shops are under severe pressure. Like Burren, they currently receive very poor prices. Dairy farmers whose produce is used for cheese-making are slightly better off. However, only around 40% of the milk is turned into cheese.

Burren revealed that it is not just falling earnings that concern him but also the uncertainty caused by short-term price fluctuations. While the

price of milk only goes up or down by a few cents from month to month, when applied to the 12,000 litres of milk that he delivers on average each month, this means significant fluctuations in income: "It would be like a workman finding out halfway through the month whether he is going to have 300 Swiss francs more or less in his pocket at the end of the month." A clear trend is evident when the overall picture is considered. The income generated on farms fell by 6.1% in Switzerland last year. The milk price is a key factor in this decline. It might seem that the problem could easily be resolved if farmers increased the size of the herds in their cowsheds. Burren nevertheless points out that this would require investment that would barely pay off owing to the poor milk prices.

More and more farms with small numbers of cows are therefore giving up dairy farming while the number of large farms with 100 cows or more has doubled within 10 years. On balance, only slightly less milk is being produced but under increasingly industrial conditions. Burren calls it a trend towards "factories" where automated milking robots handle entire herds. "But the introduction of robots means there is no longer a relationship with the animals," remarks the farmer from Aekenmatt.

The falling number of dairy cows and significant increase in the size of farms is gradually changing the appearance of rural Switzerland. "Lots of people have this notion that there will be a few cows grazing wherever you see lush green meadows in Switzerland," says Burren. But the picture is changing. You either no longer see any cows at all or large herds of them on semi-industrial farms. Jürg Jordi, spokesperson for the Federal Office for Agriculture, shares this view: "In Switzerland, as a country of pastureland, dairy farming is not just a key sector of production, it also contributes to

Radical change in Swiss farming

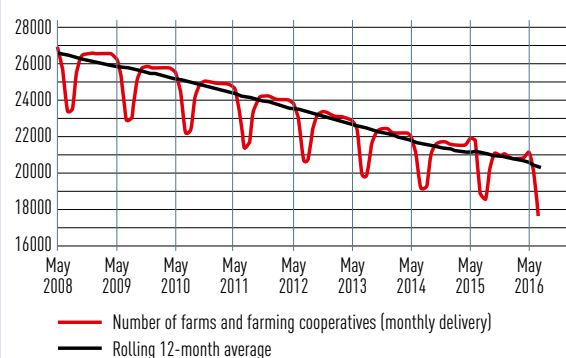
Swiss farming has been undergoing major structural change for years. "But that is certainly not just down to the milk price," remarks Jürg Jordi, spokesperson for the Federal Office for Agriculture. Technical progress and significant changes in general conditions have also played a huge role. The low milk price is nonetheless an additional and direct factor in driving change: farming incomes are falling, farmers are attempting to make up for declining prices by producing more milk which has led to the price falling further and spurred structural change on. "The current prices farmers receive for dairy milk are so low that they are jeopardising the survival of many dairy farms," explains Jordi. Guaranteeing production of Swiss milk is also at risk from a farming perspective. In other words, Swiss milk, which is quite simply part of the cultural heritage in terms of Swiss national identity, is finding itself under pressure.

The Swiss National Bank's decision on 15 January 2015 to unpeg the Swiss franc's exchange rate to the euro had huge ramifications, according to Reto Burkhardt from the umbrella organisation of Swiss dairy farmers, SMP: "This increased the price of Swiss cheese exports enormously. Exports were made difficult and import pressure grew. As a result, there was too much milk on the market in Switzerland in 2015 which drove prices down."

There is sustained pressure from the low price of milk in the EU. The SMP is nevertheless calling upon Swiss supermarket chains to put up the price of dairy products. This is the only way to ensure the farmers at the start of the value chain are paid better. Burkhardt believes this demand is a logical step. Switzerland has some of the tightest animal welfare legislation which it also implements. Swiss farmers do not use any genetically modified fodder, and dairy farming makes environmental sense in Switzerland – a country with much pastureland. These are "all criteria that consumers recognise".

The supermarket chains are at least willing to emphasise the "Swissness" of domestic dairy products more. Many of their products have carried a label since July that would have left people shaking their heads just a few years ago – "Swiss milk inside".

Dairy farmers



The curve shows a constant downward trend: Of the 26,000 dairy farms recorded in Switzerland six years ago, 6,000 have now disappeared. The large fluctuations are seasonal.

Graphic by SMP



the Swiss landscape.” He also confirms: “We are observing a trend towards larger farms.”

Swiss high-yield animals

The relationship between humans and animals is changing more quickly than the landscape: “Farmers with 200 cows cannot look after individual animals as well as those with 20 cows,” says Burren. However, the approach to cows as livestock is also changing in the smaller sheds as traditional farmers with small herds are trying to make up for the poor milk price with increasingly high-yield cows. Breeder organisations boast that more and more cows are now exceeding the “magic number of 100,000 kilograms in a lifetime” each year. In layman’s terms, there is an increasing number of cows on Swiss pastures which have already

Cows grazing on a luscious green meadow – an increasingly rare sight. Outdoors you either see no cows at all or large herds on semi-industrial farms.

Photo: Adrian Moser

supplied 100,000 litres of milk during their lifetime. The last dairy farmer in the village of Aekenmatt also sees himself as a traditionalist in this respect: “I am very much someone for whom increasing the milk yield is a target.” He supplies around a fifth more milk than his father Alfred did with the same number of cows in the shed. He is therefore pursuing a different approach to many younger Swiss farmers who no longer get subsidies for their produce but instead receive direct government payments, such as those for setting aside parts of the farm as environmental compensation areas which are used less intensively. This is also changing the landscape. Flower meadows with a diverse range of species between lush green high-yield meadows are an ever more common sight. Burren admits that he finds it hard to see himself as

a “manager of the landscape” rather than a productive farmer.

It is the turn of the letter “W” in the cowshed this year. This year’s calves will be given a name beginning with this letter. Waldi and Wiki have been on the meadow for some time. They have recently been joined by the calf named Wellness. Wellness? There could be no starker contrast between the name of the calf and the mood in farming. Burren smiles: “Perhaps Wellness will manage to cheer us up a bit.”

MARC LETTAU IS AN EDITOR
WITH “SWISS REVIEW”

A restless woman goes travelling

When trips to Africa were still known as “expeditions” and were reserved for men, Geneva-born Isabelle Eberhardt rode through the desert in men’s clothing, leaving behind writing of oppressive intensity.

CHARLES LINSMAYER

It was not just the desert and the sea, but primarily also the world of Islam that fascinated Isabelle Eberhardt, who was born in Geneva on 17 February 1877. It is unclear whether her father was the anarchistic Russian Orthodox priest Alexander Trofimovsky from Armenia or perhaps the poet Arthur Rimbaud. The only thing beyond doubt is that her mother was Nathalie Eberhardt, of German-Baltic origins, with whom the 20-year-old, who was privately tutored by Trofimovsky, first set foot on African soil in 1897 in Bône in Algeria.

Both mother and daughter immediately converted to Islam and when Nathalie Eberhardt died of heart failure in the same year, Isabelle – dressed in men’s clothing and under the name of Si Mahmoud – set off on an Arabian stallion on that ride through the Sahara Desert to the Bedouin tribes which she described in her “Journaliers”. She only returned to Switzerland on one single occasion to look after cancer-ridden Trofimovsky in the final months of his life. By 1900 she was back in Algeria, however, where she wanted to get to the bottom of what had happened to the missing Marquis de Morès. She went on another long ride into the desert and fell in love with the handsome Algerian Slimène Ehnni whom she married in Marseille in October 1901.

Expelled for being an agitator

However, prior to this in early 1901 she had been fortunate to survive an attempt on her life by a religious fanatic who tried to chop off her head with a sabre. While the man was convicted, his victim was expelled from the country as a “foreign agitator”. She returned with Slimène a year later as a married woman, worked as a war reporter and won considerable acclaim after the publication in France of her previous reportages. But she was not happy. Suffering from serious alcohol abuse and depression, she wanted to com-

mit suicide together with Slimène. She did not take her own life but died at the age of 27 when, after torrential rainfall, a surge of water submerged the military hospital in Aïn Sefra where she had sought refuge after a bout of malaria.

From forgotten figure to cult author

Incredibly, the manuscripts and journal sheets she had with her only suffered minor damage and could be added to the other writings which made Eberhardt something of a cult author for many readers in 1905/06 and 1922 in French and since 1981 also in German. She was a writer for whom the adventure of the desert, encountering Islam, the experience of loneliness and sense of feeling lost combined with the search for her own identity between the genders and beyond any conventions ultimately became a fatal odyssey.

“What a pleasure it is to meet somebody who is completely their own person – devoid of all prejudices, hypocrisy and clichés – who lives life as freely as a bird in the sky,” said the French General Lyautey, who had recruited her as a spy, at her grave.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: In German, “Sämtliche Werke” is available as a Rororo paperback, while “Briefe, Tagebuchblätter, Prosa” is published by Lenos, Basel. Alex Capus portrayed Isabelle Eberhardt in “Himmelsstürmer”, Knaus, Munich 2008, and Alexandra Lavizzari described her final months in “Nach Kenadsa”, Friedmann, Munich 2005.

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH



“In these days of fear, uncertainty and sorrow, I have a heightened awareness of how much I depend on this country and how much I will desperately long for it throughout my life wherever I go in future – the land of sand and sun, deep gardens and the wind which blows sand clouds over the dunes.” (Tagwerke (Journaliers), 28.1.1901, in “Sandmeere”, volume 1, März-Verlag, Berlin, 1982, p. 137)

Adventure and great emotion on Charlie Chaplin's Swiss estate

Chaplin's World opened in April and provides an intimate insight into the life of the British genius who lived on the estate in Corsier-sur-Vevey from 1952 until his death. Chaplin's work can be explored in an enjoyable way in the studio.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Chaplin's World opened its doors in Corsier-sur-Vevey on 16 April, the birthday of the creator of "The Tramp". The attraction, which is both a place of commemoration and an interactive studio, has been installed on a four-hectare site where the manoir de Ban sits imposingly. This mansion, built in the 19th century, was bought by Charlie Chaplin at the end of 1952. It was within these walls that his wife Oona brought up their eight children and where the couple saw out their last days. "Their sons Michael and Eugene attended the official opening. I watched them looking at films from their childhood in this very place. It was a touching moment, as was opening with them a sealed chest containing costumes from 'The Tramp'," says Annick Barbezat from the Chaplin's World team.

For anyone who grew up with Chaplin's films, visiting the manor house – three rooms of which have been renovated to match their exact condition in the 1970s – is quite a poignant experience. Visitors can see the actor's office, his library, his biography notes and draft screenplays, including the storyboard for "The Freak", a film never made. In the lounge, whose windows look out over a wonderful park with the Chablais Alps in the background, you can imagine the atmosphere when the host entertained guests such as Michel Simon, Serge Reggiani and Yul Brynner with whom he can be seen playing "pétanque" in front of the house. A photograph of the pianist Clara Haskil, dedicated to the father of "The Tramp", is placed on the piano. The artist came to play in residence.



A museum born out of passion for Chaplin

Chaplin's World was the brainchild of the Vaud architect Philippe Meylan, who knew members of the Chaplin family, and Yves Durand, a museologist from Quebec, whom Meylan was able to persuade to take part, recalls Annick Barbezat, communications manager. At the time the project was begun around 15 years ago the manoir de Ban had fallen into a state of disrepair. Eugene and Michael Chaplin had moved in after the death of their mother Oona in 1991 but the estate had become difficult to manage. The architect and museologist received support from the local communes and the canton. They secured two key investors for their initiative – the Luxembourg-based company Genii Capital and Grévin International, the site's current operator. The venture cost 60 million Swiss francs, reveals Annick Barbezat. On very busy days, the venue can attract up to 2,000 people. "Charlie Chaplin is a very strong and positive brand," remarks the communications manager who estimates there will be 300,000 visitors during the first year of business.

Further on in the bedroom, an old TV is placed at the foot of the bed. "This is where Chapin died and some people cry when visiting this room," says Barbezat. In the dining room, where the family gathered each evening at 6.45 pm, home movies are played. They show the table brought to life by the patriarch. Magic acts, tricks and pulling faces, the greying man on the screen reminds us that he was a master of silent emotion. "Words seem so feeble," he is heard saying in archive footage of the 1972 Oscars ceremony when he received the famous award.

The manoir de Ban, the vineyards of Vaud, the quaint villages on the Riviera – Chaplin's surroundings in Switzerland, a country where he spent 25 years of his life, seem to have made him happy after his exile from the USA in 1952 for supporting Communism when travelling in Europe. "We love Switzerland more every day," he wrote in a letter in 1954, confiding in another that he had spent his best years in Corsier-sur-Vevey.

Chaplin did not seem overly bothered by the fact that the estate was situated above a firing range, known as Gilamont, a situation that the local authorities failed to resolve. Chaplin can be seen, in films and photographs, getting involved in local life. He had his routines in the village and went to the Knie Circus every year in Vevey where each time the orchestra played the music from "Limelight" in his honour. However, the actor, musician, screenwriter, director and producer never managed to learn French. "I am ignorant in the French language," he says in one of the manor's exhibits. The house also provides reminders of less happy

times, such as Chaplin's depression after his last film "A Countess from Hong Kong" flopped in 1967.

The Chaplins in wax

Apart from exploring the park, the rest of the visit is dedicated to the studio – a vast enclosed space on two floors embellished with around 30 wax figures created by Grévin International. Visitors spend a few minutes at the studio entrance but without wasting time as a screen showing Chaplin's silent movies has them in guffaws of laughter. The show begins in a movie theatre with a wonderful 10-minute film without voiceover. The screen is then raised enabling visitors to cross this barrier to find themselves immersed in the setting of a wretched back alley in London at the end of the 19th century. They are surrounded by a cardboard replica of the world that little Charlie and his brother Sidney would have experienced before being taken from their mother. It is an exact copy of scenery created for one of Chaplin's films, the room of "The Kid" (1921). Further along visitors come across the facade of a shop on which the word "Jew" is daubed, a piece of scenery from "The Great Dictator" (1940). Sitting on a low wall, the blind florist in "City Lights" (1931)

The actor's office in its 1970s decor can be visited in the mansion.

Photos: Chaplin's World



smiles when a screen projects the scene where, having regained her sight, she recognises her benefactor – the tramp – just by touching his hands. This silent movie's word card simply reads "You!" when this moment of dramatic climax is reached.

Incredibly realistic, Grévin's wax figures compete to make Charlie Chaplin and his world tangibly present. You sometimes mistake the waxworks for real people, and even vice versa! The young visitors are enchanted. The studio also invites the audience to enter the stage of the creator's world. You can sit in the armchair of the Jewish barber in "The Great Dictator" and have photos taken under his razor. Visitors can also don the uniform with black crosses

In the studio visitors are immersed in the world of famous films, such as "The Great Dictator" from 1940.



and the cap of the dictator Adenoid Hynkel, sway in the cabin hanging over the precipice in "The Gold Rush" (1955), with the "Tramp" petrified under the table, or pose in the cogwheels in "Modern Times" (1936).

Careful approach to historical detail

As well as being highly entertaining, every part of the exhibition "has been produced with great attention to detail", underlines Annick Barbezat. Visitors learn, for example, that Hitler apparently watched a screening of the film dedicated to him alone. "The first time I saw Hitler and his little moustache I thought he was trying to imitate me and cash in on my success," wrote the creator of "The Tramp" in his memoirs, adding that he would not have made the feature film had he known about the Holocaust. On a less serious note, this part of the studio is dedicated to the production of Chaplin's films. As the first films he made were improvised, there is a scene in a restaurant that does not lead to anything. Then Chaplin had an idea. He depicts a gallant tramp with his sweet-heart but who does not have the money to pay for his meal. Tension is thus created. "The film reel is cheap but ideas are precious," was the artist's view.

STÉPHANE HERZOG IS AN EDITOR
WITH "SWISS REVIEW".

Mont Blanc – a Swiss mountain in the imagination

The silhouette of Mont Blanc is very familiar to the French-speaking Swiss. The Swiss de Saussure invented mountaineering there. The new Refuge du Goûter is also the work of two Swiss architects.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

In Geneva, tourists heading down Rue du Mont-Blanc towards the lake – in good weather – see the immaculate and rounded profile of a mountain rising up in front of them that towers above all others – it is of course Mont Blanc. Further on towards Lausanne on the hills overlooking Lake Geneva, the great protrusion – on which Horace-Bénédict de Saussure, a scientist from Geneva, set his heart in the 18th century – tantalises those on the ground. “There is a superb view of Mont Blanc from Bussigny where my wife lives,” remarks Jérôme Terrettaz, a mountain guide from Valais, who has climbed this peak more than 15 times, with an element of emotion and pleasure on each occasion, despite the summit’s great popularity. Standing at 4,808 metres, it attracts 20,000 climbers a year, only half of whom make it to the top.

“Once on this viewpoint, you see all the summits you have already scaled around you. It is like a history of the past. You also make plans for the future,” adds the 43-year-old mountaineer who has experienced some unexpected adventures with his clients on these slopes. On one occasion, a highly trained climber from Vaud completely lost his nerve just 200 metres from the top. On another, a customer who did not practise mountaineering, got to the peak as fresh as a daisy. It was his first 4,000-metre ascent. Stress is sometimes a factor but also altitude sickness, the cold or fatigue. “Up there, the wind and temperatures are different to those you experience on all other surrounding mountains. It’s like

another layer of atmosphere,” explains Yoann Burkhalter, a mountain guide from Vaud. Between two and five people lose their lives each season on the normal route, known as the Goûter, according to the French National Ski and Mountaineering School.

An aura equal to that of the Matterhorn

Owing to its familiar and lofty position in the landscape, Mont Blanc holds an attraction or fascination for the inhabitants of the arc of Lake Geneva comparable with that of the Matterhorn’s aura. “From the shore you see how high this place is, as if it belongs to another world,” says Yoann Burkhalter. Passe Montagne, the guide company he works with, never fails to feature this climb in its itinerary. “We highlight Mont Blanc in the same way as the Matterhorn because it represents a milestone in a mountaineer’s career,” explains the young guide. Preparation for climbing this mountain is often undertaken in Switzerland. “Typical preparation is climbing to the French Albert Premier hut, before carrying on to sleep on the Swiss side in the Trient hut, doing a climb in the area, for example the Aiguille du Tour,” explains Jérôme Terrettaz. The Swiss certainly do not claim Mont Blanc as one of their own 4,000-metre peaks.

They are not like the Italians who believe the Italian-French border passes through the summit while the French contend that it belongs entirely to them. “The Swiss maps see it in the

same way but the Italian ones do not,” points out Burkhalter. Map or not, Mont Blanc is part of the Swiss imagination.

In the specialist mountaineering shops in French-speaking Switzerland, it is a big part of business. “In summer people set off on this ascent every two to three days,” says Nicolas Fouchereau, manager of Passe Montagne in Geneva. The store hires out between 40 and 50 sets of equipment a year for Mont Blanc – consisting of an ice axe, helmet, crampons and boots. Some customers opt to kit themselves out from head to toe and novices are not uncommon. That is the paradox of this mountain – it is easy to access thanks to the Mont Blanc Tramway and is close to Switzerland, attracting vast numbers of people, some of whom do not have the ability to accomplish an ascent deemed technically straightforward but nevertheless not always easy to complete. “Of all those who fail, one third do not reach the summit for physical reasons, one third due to a lack of training or acclimatisation and the final third because of the weather conditions,” explains the French guide Daniel Traber, who has been involved in rescue missions in the mountains for 20 years. “It’s crazy to think that Mont Blanc can be climbed in a day (editorial note: departing from the Aiguille du Midi) thanks to cable cars, while just the ascent to the Dent Blanche hut takes six hours,” states Terrettaz. When he meets French guides on this Swiss peak, they tell them they find it “enjoyable and



A Swiss hut on the normal Goûter route

Standing at 3,835 metres on the ice of Aiguille du Goûter, the new hut of the same name is the work of Swiss architect Hervé Dessimoz and his partner Thomas Büchi. Opened in 2013 in an atmosphere of bickering between the commune of Saint-Gervais and the French Alpine Club, the Refuge du Goûter was portrayed as a pinnacle of technology and ecology. However, not everyone agrees. For example, the smell of the sewage system is noticeable on the approach to the hut. "It's badly designed," says the Swiss guide Burkhalter. "The overuse of the Goûter, where people arrive without booking, puts strain on the system," remarks French guide Daniel Traber. "You have to understand that you see people here who don't know that they have to take off their crampons before going in," said Valais-born Terrettaz. However, the criticisms frequently aimed at the Goûter, another of which is the narrowness of the entrance area, are perhaps inevitable. "The challenge presented by the Goûter's high level of usage – from the route to the hut itself – is unique in the Alps," acknowledges

Burkhalter. Otherwise, the Goûter hut, with its attractive framework and ingenious and pleasant dorms, remains a real feat of architecture.

But how should you prepare for climbing Mont Blanc? By scaling steep slopes of around 1,500 metres and sleeping at altitude but by taking things step by step. The easy Swiss summits, such as Weissmies, Bishorn and Breithorn, are often attempted as part of training. And Mont Blanc itself? A good approach is to take three days. Day 1: ascent to the Tête-Rousse hut (3,167 metres) from the terminus of the Mont Blanc Tramway (over 800 metres ascent). Day 2: climb to Mont Blanc over 1,700 metres in total) and spend the night at Goûter. Day 3: return to the valley. This option offers two benefits – it means you do not sleep too high on the first day and cross the Goûter corridor – known as the "corridor of death" – early in the morning to minimise the risk of rock fall.

Full equipment costs around 2,000 Swiss francs. Scaling the summit with a week's preparation with a Swiss guide is priced at 3,600 Swiss francs all in, according to Yoann Burkhalter.

The Goûter hut designed by the architects Hervé Dessimoz and Thomas Büchi standing at 3,835 metres above sea level

Photo: Keystone

quiet". Burkhalter dubs the Goûter the "Gotthard Tunnel of mountaineering", without denying either the beauty or legendary nature of this ascent. Its importance in the sport's history should not be overlooked either. "It was Gaston Rebuffat (editor's note:

a famous French mountaineer) who said that de Saussure had invented mountaineering by gazing at Mont Blanc from Geneva. This mountain appealed to the scientist. It inspired a fascination which has driven many other discoveries."

Vote for the new Council of the Swiss Abroad!

The elections for the delegates of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) will take place worldwide between January and June 2017. You will find the answers to the most frequent questions about the CSA and the elections here. Additional information is available on the homepage: www.aso.ch.

What is the Council of the Swiss Abroad?

The Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) represents the interests of all Swiss citizens abroad vis-à-vis the authorities and public in Switzerland. It is therefore also often referred to as the “Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland”.

Since when has the CSA existed?

The CSA has existed in its current form since 1989. Its predecessor organisation was the Swiss Abroad Committee of the Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft (NHG) constituted in 1919.

How is the Council made up?

The CSA has a total of 140 members: 120 delegates of the Swiss communities abroad and 20 representatives from Switzerland.

How are the seats allocated?

The allocation of seats is based on the size of the Swiss community in the respective country or continent and is regularly updated in line with statistics on the Swiss Abroad. The seats are currently distributed as follows:

■ Europe	60 seats
■ Americas	30 seats
■ Africa	8 seats
■ Asia	16 seats
■ Oceania	6 seats

Why are there representatives from Switzerland?

They have the task of conveying the concerns of the Swiss Abroad and decisions by the CSA to the competent bodies in Switzerland (Parliament, administration) and effectively representing these concerns at political level. Some domestic representatives

are members of the National Council and Council of States, while others represent institutions or organisations. They are elected by the CSA after nomination by the Executive Board of the OSA.

How and by whom are the delegates abroad elected?

The umbrella organisations or, where these do not exist, Swiss societies appointed by the CSA in the various countries elect the delegates based abroad. The umbrella organisations or Swiss societies can expand the circle of candidates standing for election to include persons who are not members of societies. In this case, the societies can if needed organise a direct election (by post or electronically).

Who can vote abroad?

All Swiss citizens abroad provided they are a member of a recognised Swiss society.

When will the elections be held?

Between January and June 2017. The organisations in charge in the individual countries determine the election dates. “Swiss Review” provides information on the elections and presents the candidates in its regional news issues. The newly elected CSA will meet for the first time on 18 August 2017.

What requirements do delegates abroad have to meet?

They have to be Swiss citizens, live abroad, speak German or French, maintain contact with the Swiss community within the represented region



Continued on page 22

On the occasion of the 100 years of the OSA, the Council of the Swiss Abroad met in the National Council chamber in Berne in August 2016. Photo: OSA





and be able to travel to Switzerland twice a year to attend CSA meetings. The electing umbrella organisations and Swiss societies may also determine special requirements for eligibility to stand for election. The delegates receive a modest attendance allowance but are not reimbursed for the costs of travel and accommodation.

What powers does the CSA have?

It is the senior management body of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, which represents the interests of the Swiss Abroad in Switzerland as an independent foundation. The CSA can take up positions in consultation procedures and on political issues, make demands and resolve and issue referenda and voting recommendations. It does not have any legislative powers.

What are the CSA's most important achievements?

- The enshrining of the Swiss Abroad in the federal constitution (Art. 40)
- The preservation of voluntary old-age and survivors' insurance/invalidity insurance (AHV/IV)
- The promotion of education for young Swiss Abroad

- The introduction of the postal vote for referenda and elections
- The introduction of the Swiss Abroad Act

What are the CSA's main issues for the future?

- Introduction of e-voting
- Preservation of a functional consular network
- Drawing-up of provisions that facilitate emigration and return migration (for example, social insurance contributions)



More information on the elections

As the election of the CSA delegates is not based on the same procedure in all countries and cannot therefore be organised centrally, the details of the elections in individual countries and regions are published in the regional news issues of "Swiss Review". The Swiss societies and umbrella organisations responsible for holding the elections will provide information there on the exact procedure and organisation of the elections. Candidates can contact the regional editorial teams in order for their profile to appear in "Swiss Review".

The election campaign will take place here

SwissCommunity.org will play a key role in the elections. Voters can engage with candidates, ask questions, voice criticisms, make suggestions and present and discuss issues on this website.

www.swisscommunity.org

The new Council

The newly elected CSA will meet for the first time on 18 August 2017 in Basel at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad. The delegates from Switzerland will also be elected there upon nomination by the Executive Board.

100 years of the OSA and six priorities for the future

2016 will remain in the memories of members and friends of the “Fifth Switzerland” as the centenary year of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA). The celebratory year was marked by events, exhibitions and publications. But what will be the legacy at the end of it?

ARIANE RUSTICHELLI, FOR THE DIRECTION OF THE OSA

Having officially begun on 2 March, a day before the issue date of the special stamp commemorating 100 years of the OSA, the anniversary year had two highlights. Firstly, the ceremony marking 25 years of the Area for the Swiss Abroad in Brunnen attended by Johann Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation, during which a permanent exhibition of posters on the history of Swiss emigration was officially opened. The second memorable moment was the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Berne. On 5 August, the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) delegates had the honour of sitting in the Federal Palace. This shows just how important the 762,000 Swiss Abroad are



Sarah Mastantuoni (left) and Ariane Rustichelli, directors of the OSA. Photo OSA

to the Swiss Confederation. The presence and speech by Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter on the Bundesplatz during the official part of the event in front of hundreds of people and 170 young Swiss Abroad who had come especially for the occasion further underlined this message. With free concerts and activities for everyone, the celebrations were a huge success.

Under the motto “Switzerland in the world”, the anniversary year set out to look back on 100 years of history of Swiss emigration and the OSA. However, this reflection on the past primarily sought to look

to the future. The international migration of our fellow citizens continues to increase and to take new forms. What will be the specific requirements of future emigrants? Questions are consequently also raised about the role of the OSA and the services it will make available. To provide answers, a questionnaire was sent to the delegates of the CSA. The results were made public at the CSA meeting on 5 August in Berne. On this basis, six development priorities were defined and adopted by the Council’s members. They represent a roadmap for the OSA in the years to come and to some extent a legislative programme. Their aim is to:

- improve information for the Swiss Abroad, above all through the “Swiss Review”, but also through other existing OSA information channels.
- better integrate young people in the OSA’s structures, ensuring in particular a minimum number of seats for young people on the CSA.
- open up the electoral base of the Council of the Swiss Abroad so that all Swiss Abroad can elect their delegates to the CSA.
- encourage the political participation of the Swiss Abroad by introducing electronic voting.
- increase contact between the Swiss societies worldwide through an information and exchange of expertise initiative undertaken by the OSA.
- raise the profile of the OSA in Switzerland and abroad through promotional campaigns.

These goals, some of which are already in progress, are certainly ambitious. However, it is vital that they are achieved in order for the OSA to ensure its services meet the challenges of future migration and the specific requirements involved. This is crucial if it is to continue to carry out its mission in an optimal way which involves representing and protecting the interests of the Swiss Abroad.

The detailed results of the questionnaire and further information about the future development priorities are available at: <http://aso.ch/en/about-ourselves/the-osa/aims>.

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Hans Ambühl – the new President of educationsuisse

The umbrella organisation of the Swiss schools abroad and advisory service for young Swiss Abroad said farewell to Derrick Widmer, its President for many years, in fitting style at its annual conference. Thanks to his remarkable commitment, the association has developed into a powerful organisation, providing many services for the schools and representing their interests in public life.



Education Suisse's association members voted Hans Ambühl as its new President at the General Assembly, which took place on the periphery of the Conference of the Swiss Schools Abroad in Lenzburg on 12 July. Hans Ambühl, who grew up in Lucerne, worked as a lawyer and notary in Sursee after his law degree at the University of Fribourg. In 1988, he was appointed Department Secretary of the canton of Lucerne's

Education and Culture Department. He has been Secretary General of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) in Berne since January 2000. He is stepping down from this position in March 2017.

Hans Ambühl has extensive knowledge of the Swiss education system and Swiss politics. He is also very well acquainted with the issue of Swiss schools abroad, given that he has been a member of education Suisse's Executive Board since 2013. In spring 2017, he will also become a member of the OSA's Council of the Swiss Abroad in his capacity as President of education Suisse.

As President of education Suisse, Ambühl hopes to establish excellent links between the Swiss schools abroad and the Swiss education system and to provide the schools with optimal conditions for ensuring genuine Swissness. In return, the Swiss education system will obtain benefits from the educational presence abroad and learn to take advantage of this to greater effect.

A recent interview with Hans Ambühl can be found on our website www.educationsuisse.ch/Publications in our November 2016 news.

Further information on the Swiss schools abroad and the advisory service for young Swiss Abroad and pupils at Swiss schools abroad who would like to undertake courses of education or training in Switzerland can be found at www.educationsuisse.ch.

RUTH VON GUNTEN, EDUCATIONSUISSE

OSA advice

I would like to study in Switzerland. What would happen in terms of military service?

In Switzerland, all men are obliged to carry out military service before the end of the year in which they turn 30 years of age or 34 years of age if they had already completed military training school before leaving Switzerland. Upon your return to Switzerland, you will therefore be called upon to fulfil your military obligations based on your age and level of suitability. Swiss citizens can be recruited until the end of the year in which they turn 25 years of age. They will then be asked to attend military training school before the end of the year during which they turn 26 years of age. An exception exists for men who have already carried out military service in Switzerland, who have been granted military leave to go abroad or who have not been in the country for an uninterrupted period of over six years and are no longer needed by the army. Citizens not recruited owing to their age do not have to complete military training school but have to pay military service exemption tax. Swiss citizens abroad who wish to stay in Switzerland for a period of over three months have to notify the relevant cantonal district command within 14 days of their arrival.

If you hold dual nationality and have already carried out military service or alternative civilian service or have made an exemption payment in your country of origin, you no longer have to carry out military service in Switzerland. However, this does not release you from the obligation to provide notification of your arrival to the district command, and you may have to pay the military service exemption tax. If you have carried out military service or alternative civilian service in Germany, Austria, France or Italy, you will be exempt from paying the military service exemption tax owing to agreements that Switzerland has concluded with these countries.

You can also voluntarily decide to attend military training school in Switzerland as a Swiss citizen abroad. Requests in such cases should be addressed to:

Führungsstab der Armee,
Personelles der Armee (FGG 1)
Steuerung und Vorgaben
Rodtmattstr. 110, 3003 Bern
Tel. +41 58 464 20 63, Fax +41 58 464 32 70,
Email: personelles.FSTA@vtg.admin.ch,
Website: www.vtg.admin.ch

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA): Summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) is celebrating its centenary in 2017. To mark this important anniversary, it has organised special activities, in addition to the usual ones, for summer 2017, such as a circus camp and a second Swiss Trip.

Programme

Participants in the summer camps held in July and August have the opportunity to gain fascinating insights into Switzerland. We look at the Swiss languages, Swiss songs, Swiss recipes and typically Swiss games and sports.



The interaction with participants from other countries and the exchange across linguistic, cultural and national boundaries present a unique opportunity to make new friends and enjoy some unforgettable moments.

Camp language

Those taking part in our programmes come from all over the world and speak various languages. The FYSA therefore tries to provide its programmes in German, French, Italian, Spanish and English. The language at each camp is not determined by the language spoken at the camp venue.

Prices

The prices of the offers are set out in the list below. The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad wishes to give all Swiss children abroad the opportunity to enjoy a holiday in Switzerland at least once if possible. We therefore offer the possibility of reduced camp rates. The relevant application form can be requested with the registration form.

Travel / meeting point

The meeting point is around lunchtime at Zurich airport. Travel to Zurich airport and the return journey home from there are organised and paid for by parents.

Leaders

Experienced, well-trained and multilingual teams of leaders ensure that the two-week holiday camps are well organised and offer a wide variety of activities.

Registration

The exact details of the individual holiday camps and the registration form will be available from January 2017 at <http://sjas.ch/en/camps/>. We would also be pleased to post you our information brochure on request. The registration deadline is 15 March 2017.

Please contact our office for further information:

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)

Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Bern/SCHWEIZ

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

Email: info@sjas.ch, <http://sjas.ch>

2017 summer camps

Dates, camp location und age groups

- **Saturday, 24 June to Friday, 7 July 2017:**
Engelberg (OW) for 42 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900
Mariastein (SO) for 42 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 900
- **Wednesday, 12 July to Friday, 21 July 2017:**
Swiss Trip for 24 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 950
- **Saturday, 8 July to Friday, 21 July 2017:**
Vignogn (GR) for 42 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900
Vallorbe (VD) for 42 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 900
- **Saturday, 22 July to Friday, 4 August 2017:**
Hergiswil (LU) circus camp for 40 Swiss children from abroad and 40 living in Switzerland aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 950
Satigny (GE) for 42 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900
- **Saturday, 5 August to Friday, 18 August 2017:**
Valbella (GR) for 42 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900
- **Wednesday, 9 August to Friday, 18 August 2017:**
Swiss Trip for 24 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 950



Stiftung für junge Auslandschweizer
Fondazione per i giovani svizzeri all'estero
Fundazioni per giuvenes svizzers a l'ester

Youth Service offers

Each year, the OSA's Youth Service organises winter camps, summer camps, language courses in French and German, seminars and individual trips to Switzerland for young Swiss Abroad aged 15 and over. Find out about the latest offers and take part.

There are still a few places available on the following winter programmes:

- New Year's camp in Valbella (Grisons) for those aged 15 and over (27.12.2016 to 6.1.2017)
- Winter camp in Grächen (Valais) for young adults aged 18 and over (27.12.2016 to 6.1.2017)
- Language course in Berne (9.1. to 20.1.2017)

Discover Switzerland

If you are unavailable during the camp weeks but would still like to visit Switzerland, you can also do so alone or with friends. You can stay with a welcoming host family in one of the four linguistic regions for a week or more. From there you can set out on a new journey of discovery every day, visiting famous places and museums. We will put together an interesting and diverse sightseeing itinerary for you.

Summer camps 2017: advance notice – start of registration

Preparations for the summer camps are already in full swing. The camp accommodation has been organised, and the teams of leaders are being put together. From 1 January 2017, you can find out about our extremely varied programmes and register for the 2017 camp season on our website. So, save the date and see you next summer.

Subsidy

Thanks to the Pro Patria Foundation and the FDFA, the Youth Service has funding available to support participants faced with financial hardship. The application form can be found on our website. All information and registration forms can be found at www.aso.ch or www.swisscommunity.org.

The 2017–2019 stabilisation programme and other federal government cost-cutting measures

The Federal Council adopted the 2017–2019 stabilisation programme in May 2016 and referred it to Parliament for deliberation. Parliament will decide on the 2017 budget and stabilisation programme in December. However, the government is already planning further cost-cutting measures.

A year ago we informed you about federal government's savings measures which were introduced owing to the deficit in 2014: an adopted austerity package for 2016 with savings of around CHF 1 billion and a planned stabilisation programme for the period 2017–2019. The stabilisation programme has now been presented and passed to Parliament for a decision. Discussions have already taken place in the parliamentary committees responsible. Parliament will adopt the stabilisation programme together with the 2017 budget in the December session. Parliament can still make amendments to the stabilisation programme, but details of this were not known at the time when this issue went to print. The total figure is unlikely to change much.

2017–2019 stabilisation programme

The stabilisation programme adopted by the Federal Council provides for annual reductions to the federal budget of CHF 800 million to CHF 1 billion in the period 2017 to 2019. With 24 measures in total, all federal government's areas of responsibility will contribute to budget cuts.

With a share of over a quarter in the package for 2019, development aid and foreign relations are severely affected. Distributed across the three years, the cuts in this area amount to CHF 613.5 million. Education and research as well as social welfare will also make a significant contribution to cutting costs with shares of 17.9% and 17% respectively in 2019. The savings measures affect federal government staff too. General salary increases and federal government's financial contribution to early retirement are to be axed.

The 2017–2019 stabilisation programme does not provide for the closure of any representations. However, the FDFA will not be able to avoid introducing additional measures to increase efficiency in order to continue to provide services on the same scale and of the same high quality.

Stabilisation programme 2017–2019 by areas of responsibility:

	Expenditure* 2019 in millions	Reduction in millions			Share of 2019 package as %
		2017	2018	2019	
Inst. and financial requirements	2,710	65.4	75.2	77.2	7.9 %
Public order and security	1,270	24.7	27.0	31.4	3.2 %
Foreign relations and int. cooperation	3,790	151.2	209.7	252.6	25.8 %
National defence	5,320	147.9	18.3	18.6	1.9 %
Education and research	8,060	143.3	169.7	175.6	17.9 %
Culture and leisure	520	8.5	8.6	8.6	0.9 %
Health	260	1.7	1.7	1.7	0.2 %
Social welfare	24,810	10.5	160.2	166.1	17.0 %
Transport	10,580	130.1	99.0	111.2	11.4 %
Environment and land use	1,550	22.4	26.6	20.8	2.1 %
Agriculture and food	3,570	78.8	90.1	101.5	10.4 %
Economy	2,030	11.6	12.4	12.9	1.3 %
Finance and taxation	10,730	–	–	–	–
Total	75,200	796.0	898.4	978.2	100.0 %

Further cost-saving measures

According to the Federal Council, the stabilisation programme measures will not be enough to adhere to the debt brake provisions. From 2018 – even with the implementation of the proposal – the prospect of a structural deficit of up to 1.5 billion is looming, as Finance Minister Ueli Maurer told the media. The reason for this is growing expenditure on asylum and additional outlay on retirement provision and expanding the motorways. And less revenue will come in. The corporate tax reform III adopted by Parliament in June 2016 will result in a shortfall of around CHF 1 billion a year.



Responsible for the FDFA official communications:
Peter Zimmerli, Relations with the Swiss Abroad
Effingerstrasse 27, 3003 Berne, Switzerland
Tel. +41 800 24 7 365 or +41 58 465 33 33
www.eda.admin.ch, email: helpline@eda.admin.ch

Over 58,000 aerial photographs of Switzerland have been digitalised in the archive, including this one of Mauvoisin reservoir.



This reportage photo shows medical missionary Albert Schweitzer in a hospital in Lambaréné in the 1930s.

From photographs of glaciers to everyday items

The Federal Institute of Technology Zurich has a remarkable picture archive. It contains around three million analogue images, and around 350,000 digital photos of all kinds of subjects are available online. They can be downloaded at no cost in most cases. It is well worth having a browse.

LEH

ba.e-pics.ethz.ch

Photos of everyday items are also archived at the Federal Institute of Technology. In this photo: A Bally shoe from the 1870s.





The Swissair archive is part of the Federal Institute of Technology library. This historical photo shows a meteorologist with a weather balloon in Dübendorf.

The Federal Institute of Technology archive contains thousands of scenes from everyday life, such as these ice skaters on a frozen Lake Zurich in 1891.



The Federal Institute of Technology's picture archive contains many photos of nature, such as this one of Lake Thun.



The archive also includes famous figures such as Max Frisch, pictured here in 1974.

Swiss construction projects in the archive: a photo of the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne from the 1970s.



Stories in and around the Sevilla bar



ALEX CAPUS:
"Das Leben ist gut",
Hanser Verlag, 2016.
240 pages, around CHF 28.

"I understand her. She has to get away from this backwater again. It's different for me..." – Alex Capus' latest novel begins with these words. The first-person narrator Max is an author who owns and runs the Sevilla bar in a small Swiss town. His wife Tina now travels to Paris for a guest professorship and leaves him and their three sons alone during the week. The novel is set over a few days during the first week of her absence.

Max recounts day-to-day life in the bar, thinks about his wife in Paris and his own roots in the small town and relates the stories – sometimes succinctly, at other times in great detail – of friends and visitors to the bar. Male friendships are explored, such as that between Max and Miguel, the son of Spanish guest workers, and that between his former teacher Toni and the American Tom. The novel concludes with a great declaration of love to Tina when Max writes her dozens of postcards from the swamps of Florida in a surreal dream-like sequence.

It is not difficult to spot the biographical similarities between Max and the author. Capus owns the Galicia bar in Olten where he has lived since his childhood. But if readers think they have obtained an intimate insight into the author by the end of the book, they would be mistaken. In the final section, Capus takes them into a surreal dream where Max goes on his trip to see the American Tom in the swamps of Florida. Here we see the author's uninhibited storytelling prowess and ability for profound reflection in little stories. Every individual story about the bar's guests is developed into an independent tale that we find engrossing. It is a novel in which nothing earth-shattering happens and nobody is murdered. Subtly written, unpretentious and straightforward, it is nevertheless touching without ever being clichéd. It is a highly pleasurable read that creates a wonderfully positive mood. And the story about the stuffed Spanish bull's head is probably true as one hangs in the bar in Olten.

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Alex Capus, born in Normandy in 1961, has a French father and a Swiss mother. As a young boy he moved with his mother to Olten where he still lives today with his wife and five sons. As a freelance writer, Capus writes short stories, reportage and novels, such as the wonderful love story "Léon und Luise", published in 2011.

RUTH VON GUNTEN

On safe ground



YELLO: "Toy", Universal Music

Let's be honest: No one expected Yello to stake out new ground on their thirteenth album. Dieter Meier and Boris Blank have been moving in their own musical cosmos since the late 1970s. They developed their sound early on, one that later influenced generations of electronic musicians and that is more than simply a brand. Combined with their extravagant imagery, it is a unique form of expression. The world discovered this years ago. The dadaist

avant-garde disco numbers and the high-quality aesthetic video clips resulted in major international acclaim for the duo from Zurich. Today, Yello are one of very few Swiss bands to have helped create their own genre and justifiably enjoy cult status.

So, why change the concept now? Never change a winning team! And so with the new album "Toy", 62-year-old Boris Blank returned once again to the successful musical components of Yello, in peppy samples that are sometimes jazzy, sometimes house groove, but always rhythmic. To those 71-year-old Dieter Meier added his familiar deep and rhythmic talking/singing. A typical example is the single "Limbo", a house number with cow bells and unemotional rumblings. In some of the songs there is also the usual ethereal guest singer – this time it is Malia and Fifi Rong. And the song "Magma" features the German trumpet player Till Brönner, who also played on the last Yello album from 2009.

In other words, a lot of familiar stuff. But the mood of "Toy" is somewhat more subdued and quieter than the Yello of the past. Here and there we hear murmuring for several minutes – more like music for the lounge than for the dance floor. These are nuances, however, that do not detract from the overall sound. But even though you can certainly admire the fact that Blank and Meier are still out there creating music, it doesn't diminish the feeling that you could have hoped for more from these two musicians than the anaemic self-plagiarism of this album.

As a result expectations for the concert in February in Zurich are even higher. This will be only the second venue they have played at live in their long career. The first four performances were in October in Berlin. Yello had never performed live before due to Boris Blank's stage fright. So, something is changing in the cosmos of Blank and Meier after all.

MARKO LEHTINEN

Pepe Lienhard



It was a long time ago, in spring 1977, that the Pepe Lienhard Band entered the Eurovision Song Contest with a pop ode to the alphorn and finished in sixth place. The position represented a triumph that Switzerland could only dream of in today's Eurovision Song Contest. The song title was "Swiss Lady". It was an homage to his homeland, clichéd but insouciant and fresh-sounding – a catchy tune that has survived the years remarkably well. The song still has something. Perhaps it is the refrain? In any event "Swiss Lady" became a Swiss pop classic and still remains the nation's only entry in the competition to have topped the charts.

Forty years on and the musician and arranger from Lenzburg is primarily known as a big band leader. He has been filling concert halls for years and appears at galas and events. He has also accompanied Sammy Davis Junior and Frank Sinatra with his orchestra. In particular, Pepe Lienhard has been in the spotlight over the past three decades as the musical companion of Udo Jürgens. His orchestra played with the German entertainer until his unexpected death two years ago.

Pepe Lienhard has recently also featured more frequently in the media's celebrity columns. He celebrated his 70th birthday this year and explained in various media how he enjoys working in his garden but prefers to leave the weeding to his wife Christine. His concerts today are more swing than pop, but "Swiss Lady" remains unmatched.

MARKO LEHTINEN

11.11 billion for development aid

The funds available for Swiss development aid for the next four years amount to 11.11 billion francs. In its autumn session the Swiss Parliament approved this framework credit for international cooperation. The development aid is to be linked strategically with immigration policy. The National Council agreed with this proposal, which was presented by the Council of States.

Extremism prevention office starts work

Urs Allemann has started his work as the head of the new "Extremism and Violence Prevention" department in Winterthur. The city government decided in May to create this office when numerous cases of radicalised young people came to light. The aim of the department is to reinforce the network of integration promotion, youth employment, schools and city police. A specific aim is to recognise early on when a person is becoming radicalised.

Europe's highest wind park

On the Nufenen Pass in Valais four wind turbines were recently erected at 2,500 metres, making them the highest in Europe. The turbines produce 10 gigawatt hours per year, enough to supply 2,850 households. The cost of the wind park was approximately 20 million francs. Photo: Keystone



Binningen wants to keep the night dark

The commune of Binningen in Baselland has launched an initiative to combat light pollution. In future, street lights and other lights must shine downwards and advertising lighting must be switched off late at night. Spotlights shining into the sky will be banned. The redrafted SP initiative for the "prevention of unnecessary light emissions" was originally submitted in 2012, but an objection to the initiative delayed its processing. It has now been approved at the ballot box with a vote of 2,434 in favour and 2,019 against.



Switzerland.
get natural.

#INLOVEWITHSWITZERLAND
because you can but you don't have to.



Hasilberg, Bernese Oberland. © Christian Perret

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