



# SWISS REVIEW

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The magazine for the Swiss Abroad  
January 2017

**Focus on apprenticeships –  
the Swiss system proving a successful export**

**Row over cross-border commuters –  
the controversy over priority for Swiss citizens in Ticino**

**A picture-book location –  
Morcote, “Switzerland’s most beautiful village”**

# In 2017, the Swiss abroad will elect their Council members.

*Who would you like to see as a representative on the Council of the Swiss Abroad? And who are the candidates in your country?*

*Information for voters, candidates and Swiss societies is included in this issue of the «Swiss Review» and also available on [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch).*

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## Right-wing populists in the ascendant



What was the most misused term of the past year? "Establishment" and "elite" are leading contenders. Both expressions have been used excessively as soon as there is any mention of supposed political grievances and the grave mistrust of the ordinary man. Right-wing populists have used these buzzwords in their search for people to blame for their anger in the name of the forgotten and neglected.

Right-wing populists became increasingly vindictive throughout the entire western world last year, including in France, Germany, Hungary, Finland and Austria. They also received support in elections and polls. While moderates rubbed their eyes with disbelief, those opposed to refugees and foreigners and – as mentioned – to the establishment and the elite were in the ascendant.

The situation was no different in Switzerland. When the rise of the populists reached an unexpected peak with Donald Trump's election as President of the USA in November, his kindred spirits in Switzerland celebrated the triumph as if he were one of their own. They could barely conceal their joy – or *schadenfreude* – at the election of the New York billionaire who has disparaged women, Mexicans and gay people in equal measure. They dubbed the election result a resounding blow to the establishment by the people.

They also attempted to harness the populist momentum abroad and to transfer the mood directly to Switzerland, which was clearly absurd. While the impoverished lower middle classes in the USA have been suffering and have actually turned the urban elite into the enemy, the anger of the people conjured up here by the right is less understandable. There are obviously also people in Switzerland who are underprivileged and justifiably discontented. However, the social divide is small compared with that in the USA. Unemployment is low at 3,3 % and general satisfaction and trust in the authorities, such as the judiciary, are high, according to representative studies.

So, where is this seething anger of the Swiss people? And what is it actually based on? And who are the "people" who the right-wing populists are claiming for themselves? And who are the establishment in Switzerland who are deserving of such mistrust?

The fact is that Switzerland is performing very well compared to neighbouring countries. The breeding ground for right-wing populism should therefore stay sparser here than in France or Germany, where campaigners like Marine Le Pen and Frauke Petry are seeking power.

MARKO LEHTINEN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cover photo:  
Apprenticeships in Switzerland – welding the connections of a thermal element using a micro-welding burner. (Photo: Keystone)

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## The waning of an idyll – the last dairy farmer in the village



Farmer Burren would be well advised to rethink his strategy in view of the never-ending glut of milk. Various options are open to him, one of which would be to combine the dairy business with tourism. All visitors to the Alps today like the idea of being a direct customer through agri-tourism.

WILHELM TSCHOL, GERMANY

If a litre of milk only costs one franc in the shops, nobody can be expected to make a profit. It is a disgrace that the government does not raise prices and increase customs duty at the border. Isn't it the government's job to protect our country and citizens? In America there is Walmart which operates on the same basis as the EU – if price pressure is applied for long enough, smaller competitors will soon shut up shop! I hope small Swiss farmers find a way of preserving their livelihood and continue with their healthy approach to livestock farming. Something must be done to get out of this mess. I also hope the Swiss people appreciate what they will lose if they do not start supporting the local economy and local farmers.

E. KUNKLER, CANADA

In France, dairy farmers face the same situation, causing many problems. Those faring best have returned to a system where producers supply consumers directly with associations such as Amap. I am sure this solution will also be given an opportunity in Switzerland. Good luck to you!

BARBARA DEMOULIN, FRANCE

For part of the year we live in Bruggnascio near Airolo. This village only has one farmer left, and we buy our milk directly from the farm – for one Swiss franc per litre. Perhaps we are imagining it but we find this milk much better than the organic milk at the Coop, for example. Last summer we could not wait for the cows to come back from the alpine pastures. I don't understand why this kind of milk does not get a quality label for which people like us would be willing to pay more. Why do we spend two francs on a good beer and 20 francs on good wine but only one franc on high-quality milk?

DIETER SCHELLING, SWITZERLAND

## An explosive business. Swiss weapons exports under fire



I believe any export of weapons contravenes Swiss neutrality and humanitarian principles. Then when I read what a small percentage these export products actually make up, I am more than a little perplexed as to why so much importance

is attached to this export sector. I am personally opposed to the export of weapons in general.

RENATA NEUWEILER, GREECE

Mrs Chantal Galladé's views are interesting. Unfortunately, the general hypocrisy over Switzerland's economic activities on the international stage and their direct impact on the people in crisis-torn countries are overlooked. If "Any blood-stained market is unworthy of humanitarian Switzerland and unacceptable," we would like to see Mrs Galladé show greater commitment to combating the real criminal activities controlled from Switzerland, which are the real causes of the blood spilled – oil trading, the agro-chemical industry and the banking activities of the financial centres of Geneva and Zurich, etc. These activities are the real causes of economic inequality, political tension, the destruction of the environment and the factors behind conflict where only one type of weapon is prohibited or where weapons of Swiss origin are used.

ALEXANDRE MEDAWAR, LEBANON

## CSA elections in 2017

There was a lack of clarity concerning the article "Vote for the new Council of the Swiss Abroad" (CSA) in the last issue of "Swiss Review". The answers to the questions "How and by whom are the delegates abroad elected?" and "Who can vote abroad?" led to misunderstandings.

The situation is as follows. The delegates abroad are elected by the umbrella organisations in the various countries or, where these do not exist, by the Swiss societies. Both entities can extend the electorate to non-society members. In such cases, the societies can organise direct elections – by post or electronically – if required. Membership of a Swiss society is therefore not absolutely necessary unless required by the organisations responsible for running the election.

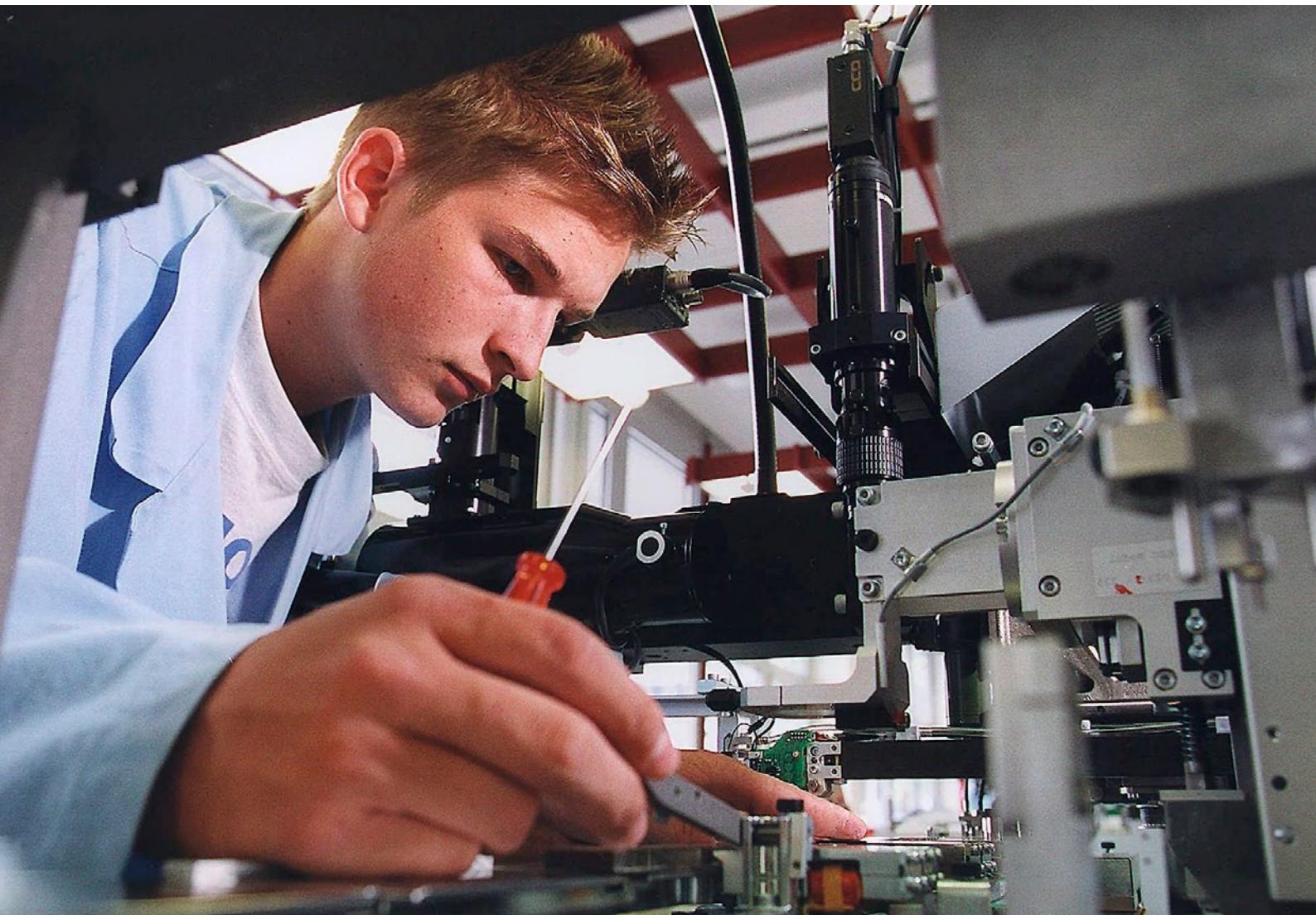
We also wish to point out that the Council of the Swiss Abroad adopted the inclusion of the following recommendation on the electorate in its guidelines at its last meeting: "The CSA recommends that all Swiss Abroad registered on an electoral roll are permitted to take part in the elections." This is a recommendation that the societies can implement if they wish but is not mandatory. The CSA's aim here was to take a step towards opening up the electoral base. The societies nevertheless remain free to decide who can take part in the elections within the scope of the guidelines.

The guidelines and further information on the elections can be found at:  
<http://aso.ch/en/politics/csa-elections-2017>.



## How Switzerland exports its pride in craftsmanship

It combines application and theory uniquely well, ensures incredibly low unemployment and is deemed a successful export. The Swiss dual track vocational education and professional training system is being used as a template by many countries for their own education systems. However, exporting it is not that straightforward.



MARC LETTAU

It must be tangible – that was the principle adopted in the early 1960s when Switzerland began providing government development aid. “Tangible” meant ridding the world of hunger and poverty but through substantive projects that conveyed typically Swiss application-oriented knowledge and skills as well as Swiss values. As a nation of mountains, cows and skilled cheese-makers, Switzerland did the

obvious thing. Swiss development aid workers spread out across the Peruvian Andes and trained impoverished hill farmers in purpose-built cheese dairies. Non-governmental development aid workers from Switzerland had previously done the same thing in the mountains of Nepal. Peru and Nepal represent the idea of driving forward broad development by conveying professional expertise, helping those in need to find employment and

**The dual-track system has great prestige in Switzerland, unlike in many countries, for instance, in eastern Europe.** Photo: Keystone

improving their diets – thanks to good milk.

What was achieved was, of course, not quite as perfect as hoped for. The “export” of the Swiss dual track vocational education and professional training system has nevertheless been an enduring issue ever since. There is a long list of Swiss vocational training projects covering Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Myanmar and many other countries extending right back to Nepal, the country where the first pilot projects took place. Today, Switzerland is helping to set up courses there which can be attended whilst also in employment.

The reputation of the Swiss vocational training system even impresses major industrial nations. In 2015, the USA signed an agreement with Switzerland on vocational training. The USA hopes to discover why Switzerland is so successful at producing the professionals sought by the business community. Suzi LeVine, US ambassador in Berne, finds it “fascinating” how companies and state vocational schools interact in Switzerland.

## Two thirds opt for an apprenticeship

Swiss professionals are not surprised. The dual track vocational education and professional training system enjoys great prestige in Switzerland. Two thirds of all young Swiss people opt for an apprenticeship over pre-university education spent entirely at a grammar school. They do so because the dual track system is an unequivocal success story. Switzerland’s competitiveness is attributable to the country’s well-educated specialists, and the dual track vocational education and professional training system is arguably the main reason for the low rate of youth unemployment. The system does not turn out unemployed graduates. While the average rate of unemployment in Europe stands at 10 %, it is

3.3 % in Switzerland. The demeaning experience of not finding a role in the modern working world is not something shared by the vast majority of young adults in Switzerland.

This result is astonishing as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is a regular critic of the Swiss education system. It complains that the rate of those obtaining entrance qualifications for higher education is the lowest of any European country. While well over 60 % of all young people achieve such qualifications on average in Europe and then go on to enrol at university, the rate only stands at 20 % in Switzerland. This supposed distance from the academic world is a consequence of the “successful product”. The Swiss dual track vocational education and professional training system is integrated into an extremely permeable education system that provides alternative routes to higher education. Every vocational qualification without exception provides opportunity for further education. It is commonplace in Switzerland today for young people to opt for the dual track vocational education and professional training system and to sit university-entrance examinations either in parallel to their training or during the first few years of their career. This “vocational baccalaureate” opens the door to universities of applied sciences as well as traditional ones. Around 40 % of students today went through the application-oriented dual track vocational training system first, and this number is rising.

## A tendency towards idealisation abroad

A low rate of university entrance qualifications, low youth unemployment and no major shortages of specialist workers – these key points explain why the Swiss model is regarded as a paradigm. Last summer, Serbia joined

the list of nations keen to adopt the model. Serbia’s neighbour Bulgaria, where a rapid reform of vocational training is underway, is much further along the road. Swiss education experts talk of a “highly promising” transformation in the case of Bulgaria. However, such reports can result in idealisation. The experiences of the last 50 years show that the transfer of the dual track vocational training model has its limitations. It can almost never be transferred directly. Modifications to take account of country-specific circumstances are inevi-

### The dual track vocational education system

Technical and academic subjects are taught in tandem in a dual track vocational education system. Trainees spend three days of the week working at their training enterprise, for example, and attend technical college for two days where general subjects are also on the curriculum. In Switzerland, federal government, the cantons and industry organisations work together on vocational training. This means that the business world is not a “recipient” of trained specialist workers but instead has a considerable degree of responsibility for their training. (mul)

table. First and foremost, it is necessary to remember that Swiss vocational training is based on the fundamental principles of a nation forged by the will of the people and a system whereby local politicians work only part-time under their public mandate. The economy and training enterprises assume a great deal of responsibility and the state creates the stable legal framework required. Such conditions rarely exist in developing countries in particular. From an historical perspective, the Swiss dual track vocational education and professional training system has been developing for over 200 years – emerging from the guild system that put great emphasis on and took pride in crafts-





The dual track vocational training system is also actively promoted in Switzerland, such as through this campaign by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation.

manship. Artisans' professions shaped their identity and ensured social status. That continues to apply today.

The tangible approach of long ago – teaching farmers in remote mountain regions how to make cheese – sometimes leads to a glorified portrayal of Switzerland's current efforts in support of vocational training in developing and transitional countries. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) now invests barely 4% of its resources in vocational training projects in the strict sense of the term. It is much less still for the countries of eastern Europe. Rudolf Strahm, an economist who is an expert in education and development aid, is critical of this development.

Swiss development aid has neglected its original principles in this respect, he says. Today it spreads its funding across many countries and issues. Experts from different backgrounds concur with Strahm's criticism or at least explain the trend apologetically. Development targets are constantly being shifted worldwide. With the UN's Millennium Development Goals, supported by Switzerland, the emphasis in education has moved away from vocational training towards basic education and literacy. The logic behind this is understandable. The best vocational training system is of little use if underprivileged youngsters do not learn to read and write. But the wind is now changing direction again as the new UN Agenda for Sustainable Development is calling upon the international community to pave the way to affordable and high-quality vocational training for everyone.

### Tool of economic diplomacy

The transfer of education is obviously not solely the remit of the SDC in Switzerland. Simonetta Sommaruga (SP), Minister of Justice, is now also an advocate for vocational training projects abroad. She wants greater investment in vocational training in the countries where asylum seekers come from. As migration from poverty has become a permanent phenomenon, this approach may become more important in future. However, the dual track vocational education and professional training system as an export success has the most indefatigable of supporters in Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann. He has turned this system into a tool of Swiss economic diplomacy. The number of foreign trade delegations which are closely scrutinising the Swiss vocational training system is constantly increasing.

This offensive is nonetheless not without dissonant voices. Mauro Dell'Ambrogio, State Secretary for Ed-

ucation, Research and Innovation, bluntly declared at the end of 2015 that he knew of a handful of successful "isolated experiments" at most, but not of any country that had set up a dual vocational training system from scratch. The "global admiration for the Swiss education system" was seductive, he said. However, the fact that "incompatible application of the model" can actually result in damaging consequences – such as older employees having to accept lower wages on the pretext of a lack of vocational training – is overlooked. Apprenticeships require prestige in order to be attractive. "However, prestige is only achieved as a result of qualified trainees going on to enjoy successful careers, and such examples do not exist in the beginning."

### Prestige is key

Dell'Ambrogio's views were widely criticised. Many experts nevertheless essentially endorse them. The success of training is heavily dependent upon its prestige. Whereas Swiss apprentices proudly point to the education pathways open to them, there are often huge reservations about application-led training in the destination countries of the "educational export". Trades are often seen as having a lower status and offering few prospects. There is certainly no lack of examples illustrating this view. When Caritas wanted to implement vocational training projects in Kosovo, the local authorities gave the charity a warm welcome. However, the authorities were initially not interested in vocational training. They wanted university courses. Caritas had to put a slant on its argument and advised running some vocational education courses under the aegis of a university for image reasons.

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MARC LETTAU IS AN EDITOR  
WITH "SWISS REVIEW"



# Bulgaria – Swiss training provides “all the answers and the best solutions”

The vocational school in Thun frequently receives guests. After delegations from South Korea, Cambodia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Greenland, it is now the turn of groups from Bulgaria to visit Thun. Sofia has sent over company representatives and vocational college lecturers who are meant to take on board the concept of the interconnected Swiss vocational training system where vocational schools, industry associations and the govern-

ment mutually complement one another. Today, we are observing with concern that youth unemployment is high while companies complain that they cannot find skilled specialists.” This paradox – lots of people seeking work while many firms say they cannot find workers – is the principal driving force behind the reform of vocational training based on the Swiss model.

Meglana Plugtschieva, Bulgaria’s ambassador in Berne, is a passionate

failed. Switzerland’s involvement has “resulted in a huge opportunity to push forward a fundamental reform of our vocational training system”, she says.

It is striking how broadly based the reform is. On the one hand, companies are directly involved. On the other, the highest level of government also lends its support. Bulgaria’s President Rosen Plevneliev focused heavily on vocational education and professional training during his first term of office that ended recently. On a state visit to Switzerland in 2014, Plevneliev even left Didier Burkhalter, President of the Swiss Confederation at the time, waiting because he wanted to visit the vocational school in Berne first and talk to apprentices.

Within a year of this faux pas, the first classes of prospective cabinet makers, automotive mechatronics specialists, electronics technicians and dairy technologists began their training in Bulgaria. The first apprentices in other careers will start their courses in 2017. A legislative reform enabling young people to enter into apprenticeship contracts was also pushed through.

“The pressure of reality” has meant reform taking place at a great pace, says Plugtschieva. In addition to its speed, the extent of change is also a key factor. The “Swiss project” extends far beyond education policy: “By increasing the prestige of careers and vocational education, we are changing the mindset. We are creating prospects. We are providing grounds for saying: there is a future in our country for our young people,” she says. That is vital for their self-esteem, especially as everyone knows that “turning our young people into economic refugees is not good”.

MARC LETTAU



Bulgaria is relying on the Swiss model to improve its training system. (Image: A vocational training delegation visiting the vocational school in Thun) Photo: Manu Friederich

ment mutually complement one another.

Vassil Radoynovski of the Bulgarian-Swiss Chamber of Commerce believes there are compelling reasons why his country should rapidly reform its vocational training system. Vocational training had been neglected since the political change in 1989. “There were still vocational schools,

supporter of the Swiss dual track vocational education and professional training system. She says the Swiss model provides “all the answers and the best solutions” for the current challenges facing young people in her country. Plugtschieva also made a strong appeal for Swiss support after the first attempts at improving the education system in her country



Corporate tax reform, a new roads fund and simplified naturalisation for third-generation foreigners – the Swiss people will decide on 12 February.

## A complex tax reform

JÜRIG MÜLLER

“Corporate tax reform” sounds neutral and rather dry. It is nevertheless an extremely explosive political issue and brings back bad memories. The referendum on Corporate Tax Reform II in 2008 is seen as “a low point in Swiss democracy”, according to “Der Bund” newspaper. The Federal Council publicly estimated tax shortfalls of around CHF 80 million a year prior to the vote. The government was way out as the actual figure was several times higher. The Federal Supreme Court even had to examine the case and indicated a “gross violation of voting freedom” and “misinformation by suppressing facts”. Some judges even referred to voters being “systematically misled”.

The Corporate Tax Reform III (CTR III), which is now being put to the people, is probably one of the most complex tax reforms in Swiss history. While the content is different, the level of tax shortfalls is now being contested even more fiercely than nine years ago in the referendum campaign owing to the experience with the 2008 proposal. The Swiss Social Democratic Party, other left-wing parties and the trade unions called the referendum against the proposal.

### Abolishing tax privileges

All political camps were initially more or less in agreement over this. Privileges criticised internationally as tax dumping were to be abolished. Put simply, profits made by companies abroad were taxed at a lower rate than those generated in Switzerland. The reform aims to get rid of these different tax rates applied by the can-

tons. However, the abolition of the cantonal tax status without replacement would result in a loss of competitiveness for Switzerland. This system would be compensated for by other, internationally accepted measures. Royalties would benefit from tax breaks and expenditure on research and development would be taken into account through an increased allowance. The cantons could also reduce profit tax.

However, Parliament has added several elements to the Federal Council’s proposal, or overloaded it, in the SP’s view. The interest-adjusted profit tax is “an unprecedented scam”, according to SP National Councillor and economics expert Susanne Leutenegger Oberholzer. This would allow notional interest to be booked to so-called excessive equity in the profit and loss statement. The CTR III would lead to “tax reductions based on a scattergun approach” and has nothing to do with the abolition of the special status companies, wrote Leutenegger Oberholzer.

### Referendum – playing with fire

François Nordmann, leader of the SP parliamentary group, fought vehemently against the bill in the National Council. It was argued that it would have a devastating effect on public services, increase their cost and result in higher taxes for natural persons. The Greens National Councillor Louis Schelbert also declared it was a “redistribution bill that would cost the public billions”. However, spokespersons for the conservative parliamentary groups presented different lines of argument. Martin

Bäumle, President of the Green Liberals, said that the Corporate Tax Reform III could lead to tax shortfalls but that the deficit without reform would be about ten times higher. The SVP, CVP and FDP talked of a compromise. CVP spokesperson Markus Ritter said that thousands of companies and tens of thousands of jobs were at stake. “Those seeking to defeat the bill through the referendum are playing with fire and it could easily get out of control,” he remarked.

### Financial consequences unclear

The proposal’s financial consequences are largely unclear. Nordmann, the leader of the SP parliamentary group, indicated that tax revenues of at least three billion Swiss francs would be lost if CTR III were adopted. The federal treasury alone would lose 1.3 billion Swiss francs. The remaining tax losses would be incurred by the cantons and communes, according to SP estimates. These figures are difficult to calculate as it is still unclear how significantly profit tax rates would fall at cantonal level.

Conservative politicians and the economy have a different take on the situation. They warn of the risk of companies relocating abroad if the bill is rejected. They say the status quo will cease to apply in any event, even if the bill is rejected, as the existing privileges would not be maintained owing to international criticism. The loss of tax revenues could be even higher if companies move away. Economiesuisse, the Swiss Business Federation, maintains: “The companies directly affected alone currently contribute over 5 billion





Anyone seeking to defeat the Corporate Tax Reform through a referendum is “playing with fire”, according to Markus Ritter of the CVP. Photo: Keystone

motorway network as well as transport projects in urban agglomerations. The mineral oil surtax would be raised from 30 to 34 cents. The Motorways and Agglomerations Fund would enable the investment required to be better planned and financially secured.

Swiss francs a year to federal government, the cantons and the communes. The tax reform will secure this tax base over the long term. The short-sighted referendum called by the left

jeopardises locational advantages and puts many jobs at risk. The companies subject to special taxation to-day employ around 150,000 people in Switzerland.”

## After the railway fund now the roads fund

On 9 February 2014, the Swiss people approved the proposal to fund and expand the railway infrastructure (FERI) with 62% voting in favour. This means the operation, maintenance and expansion of the railways can be funded uniformly from a new railway infrastructure fund. It is now the turn of the roads on 12 February. A fund solution is also being sought for motorised transport. The Motorways and Agglomerations Fund is intended to secure the long-term funding of the motorways and the federal contributions to transport projects in urban agglomerations.

Swiss roads are often congested and reports of traffic jams are heard ever more frequently on the radio. Some 85 to 90% of all tailbacks occur on motorways in urban regions. Private motor vehicles have increased over five-fold in Switzerland since

1960, the infrastructure is being pushed to the limit and operating and maintenance costs are soaring. As with the railway infrastructure fund, all existing and new revenues would be fed directly into the Motorways and Agglomerations Fund in future on a ring-fenced basis. In contrast to the current infrastructure fund, the Motorways and Agglomerations Fund would be permanent and therefore enshrined in the Federal Constitution. Thus the Swiss people will also have to vote on it.

The current funding is only sufficient for the increasingly costly maintenance but not for the completion of the motorway network or the elimination of bottlenecks. A funding shortfall of over one billion Swiss francs a year is predicted. The new fund would finance operation, maintenance and the completion of the

## Simplified naturalisation

The path to naturalisation is to be made easier for young, third-generation immigrants. While the issue addressed by a parliamentary initiative put forward by the Vaud SP National Councillor Ada Marra was adopted by Parliament, the National Council and Council of States decided on rigorous requirements. There should be no automatic naturalisation in future either. The grandchildren of immigrants should only be granted citizenship after applying. An application would have to be made before the age of 25 and by 35 during a transitional period. Parliament fears that foreigners could avoid compulsory military service through later naturalisation.

At least one grandparent must have been born in Switzerland or have the right of residence, and one parent must have been born in Switzerland, have lived there for 10 years and attended school there for five years. The applicants themselves must in turn have been born in Switzerland and have completed at least five years of mandatory schooling there. The proposal must now be definitively adopted by the Swiss people and cantons because as well as the Swiss Citizenship Act the Federal Constitution will have to be amended.

JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR WITH “SWISS REVIEW”

# Nuclear power stations can continue to operate

The Swiss people rejected the Greens' initiative on withdrawal from nuclear power on 27 November. Withdrawal is nevertheless still on track.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

The shock waves from the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011 have ebbed away. In any event, the Swiss electorate does not favour a rapid withdrawal from nuclear energy. They clearly rejected the Green Party's withdrawal initiative, with 54.2% voting against. Only the four French-speaking cantons of Geneva, Vaud, Neuchâtel and Jura as well as the two half-cantons of Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft approved the initiative. The Swiss have voted on the issue of nuclear energy eight times since 1979. And, with one exception, they have always supported it. Only in 1990 did they approve a ten-year moratorium on the



construction of new nuclear power stations.

This time, however, they had to vote on a complete stop. The Greens were not just calling for a ban on new nuclear power plants but also sought the decommissioning of all five existing Swiss nuclear reactors by 2029 at the latest. Three plants would have been forced to stop operating in 2017. The arguments of the initiative's authors focused on the devastating consequences of a major

**Swiss nuclear power stations will continue to operate for the time being – such as the one in Leibstadt in the canton of Aargau.**

Photo: Keystone

nuclear accident in densely populated Switzerland. After all, Switzerland has the oldest nuclear reactors in the world. Withdrawal from nuclear power is essentially not in dispute, they argued, given the Energy Strategy 2050; it is just that no structured timeframe has been established. They also said security of supply was guaranteed, with renewable energies from water, solar power, wind and biomass as well as, over the short term, with imported power.

## Fears over security of supply

The financially powerful opposition picked up on this point. Over the course of the referendum campaign, they succeeded in undermining confidence in the initiative which initially had good support in surveys. They argued that the popular initiative's roadmap was far too ambitious. Security of supply was a major issue. There was a risk of supply bottlenecks and power outages, not least owing to the overloading of the network infrastructure, contended opponents. Switzerland would make itself dependent on countries abroad and would be forced to buy dirty electricity from foreign coal-fired power plants and nuclear power stations.

There was also intensive debate over the cost of early withdrawal from nuclear energy. The Federal Council anticipated high compensation claims from nuclear power operators. The operators themselves estimated even higher figures during the referendum campaign. The energy group Axpo, for example, spoke of compensation payments of over four billion Swiss francs for the Beznau and Leibstadt nuclear power stations alone.

## A soft variant of withdrawal

A further reason for the no vote to the popular initiative was the Energy Strategy 2050 adopted by Parliament last autumn. It acted as an indirect counterproposal to the withdrawal from nuclear power initiative and a kind of soft variant of withdrawal. The building of new nuclear power stations is also prohibited under the strategy. However, the existing nuclear power plants can continue to operate unrestrictedly provided the supervisory authorities deem them safe. In addition, the Energy Strategy 2050 contains a raft of measures aiming to increase energy efficiency and expand renewable energies.

In the opinion of the Berne-based newspaper "Der Bund", the rejection of rapid withdrawal from nuclear energy was "not to be equated with withdrawal from withdrawal. This vote was not about whether but rather how the energy transition should take place". The "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" in turn saw the rejection of the initiative as an absolute vote of confidence, "but it also sets federal Berne the task of initiating the energy transition and the withdrawal from nuclear energy to ensure that this takes place smoothly and in a financially viable way".

The SVP takes a different view. It has called a referendum against the Energy Strategy 2050 as it opposes any state-controlled energy transition which it deems a "planned economy" measure. This should be determined by the market alone, it says. The Swiss people therefore look likely to be voting again soon on the matter of energy.



# A charismatic Swiss President

Doris Leuthard is the Swiss President for the second time in her term in office. She is seen as the epitome of a Swiss consensus-seeking politician and is also highly respected by her opponents.

MARKUS BROTSCHI

53-year-old Doris Leuthard is the second-youngest member of the seven-strong Federal Council, but at the same time the longest-serving. Media speculation suggests the CVP Federal Councillor could step down in the middle of the legislative period. Her departure by the end of the year is nevertheless not certain. She is showing few signs of being weary of office and still appears fully committed in her public appearances. She also still seems to have the desire to clearly explain infrastructure proposals to the Swiss people that can be very dull at times. In her department she has control over environmental, transport, energy and media policy.

Leuthard's political career is based on her instinct for political feasibility and majorities. When the former CVP President Philipp Stäelin stepped down at the end of 2003 after another election defeat for the Christian Democrats, the National Councillor was the firm favourite to succeed him. However, she only led the CVP for just over two years. After Joseph Deiss stepped down in 2006, she was his natural successor on the Federal Council and initially took over the Federal Department of Economic Affairs.

## A godsend for the CVP

Leuthard was and remains a godsend for the CVP. The Federal Councillor enjoys great popularity which means she was predestined for the role of "first among equals". She is close to the people but refrains from chummy populism. It is not by chance that her High German is marked by a homely note of Swiss dialect. This means the qualified lawyer avoids coming across as aloof.

The native of Freiamt is the epitome of a Swiss consensus-seeking politician and the embodiment of the political centre as the CVP Federal Councillor. On the Federal Council, she and Didier Burkhalter have the task of securing a centre-left or centre-right majority. In light of the departure of Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf and the election of a second SVP Federal Councillor, Leuthard's role as a bridge builder has been further reinforced. For her department's infrastructure proposals worth billions, in particular, she has to tie up packages that take account of many interests in regional politics and business. That is politics based on consensus and compromise par excellence.

While Leuthard has also lost a number of referendum battles during her career, she has always taken defeat in her stride thus far. When delivering addresses and during debates she exudes tremendous composure rarely found in Swiss politicians. However, her aplomb sometimes takes on a condescending and admonishing tone. Members of Parliament and participants in debates who have provoked Leuthard's



**Doris Leuthard always comes across as calm and composed when delivering addresses. While the CVP Federal Councillor has also lost referendum campaigns during her career, she has always taken them in her stride.** Photo: Keystone

wrath or tested her patience with their remarks or questions will have experienced this. Whereas other Federal Council members maintain a dignified tone even after contemptuous votes, Leuthard makes opponents very aware when she thinks a contribution is not up to the mark.

## Quick-witted in debate

Her quick wit during debates and her engaging manner protect Leuthard against personal attacks, such as those suffered by her fellow Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga at the hands of the SVP. Leuthard also goes down well with her political opponents. Even the CVP's election defeats have failed to tarnish her image. Admittedly, she has been fortunate on the Federal Council to have avoided contentious portfolios such as policy on asylum and foreign nationals.

Leuthard is rumoured to harbour ambitions of international office. She moves effortlessly on the international stage and regularly fosters relationships with foreign ministerial counterparts. Her good command of English and French help her in this respect. Even if her French betrays strong Aargau vowel sounds, she can easily hold her own in debates in French-speaking Switzerland. As Swiss President, she will probably not make as many trips abroad as her predecessor, Johann Schneider-Ammann. She will nevertheless undertake an impressive array of visits. However, there is no space in her diary for the SVP conference in Albisgüetli where Christoph Blocher challenges the incumbent Swiss President to a battle of words. Leuthard's refusal does not come as a complete surprise. She previously turned down the SVP during her first year as President in 2010.

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MARKUS BROTSCHI IS THE FEDERAL POLITICAL AFFAIRS EDITOR FOR THE "TAGES-ANZEIGER" AND "DER BUND".

# An ongoing row in Ticino over cross-border commuters

Commuters from Italy are increasingly entering the employment market in little Ticino. This has sparked a defensive response from the local population. A popular initiative giving priority to Swiss citizens has even been approved. The issue is causing annoyance in Italy.

GERHARD LOB

Cross-border commuters prefer to travel to work by car. This explains the endless flow of vehicles which pour into Ticino every morning from the Italian border regions of Como and Varese and back again in the opposite direction in the evening. At the Chiasso border crossing, the “Frontalieri” even have their own lane at rush hour. Canton Ticino, with a population of 350,000, now has around 62,500 cross-border commuters. The figure has risen sharply in just a few years. Even more significant than the absolute number is the fact that over a quarter of all jobs are held by border crossers. No other major Swiss region has a comparably high proportion. Another important factor is that the cross-border workers in Ticino – unlike in the 1990s – no longer exclusively work in the industrial sector but are instead increasingly active in the services sector.

A row has been raging for years over whether the incomers are taking jobs from local people and contributing to social dumping because they are willing to work for lower pay than Swiss workers. The border between Switzerland and Italy actually also represents a divide in terms of salary. Pay is at least two or three times higher in Switzerland than in Italy. Even on low Swiss wages, Italian commuters earn much more than they would in their own country. Studies have shown that no other border in central Europe has such a great wage gap. On top of this, lots of Italians are willing to undertake long journeys owing to the prolonged economic crisis and high rate of unem-



**The Italian cross-border commuters are a concern for the people of Ticino – not just with respect to jobs but also because of the congestion at peak times, such as here on the A2 near Mendrisio heading towards the border.**

Photo: Keystone

ployment in Italy. Their main concern is finding a job. Conversely, there is a lack of specialists in Ticino. Many positions cannot be filled with Swiss employees.

## Locals have not been ousted

A study by the economic research institute of the Università della Svizzera italiana (University of Italian-speaking Switzerland) concluded in 2016 that “the increase in the number of cross-border commuters and resident foreign nationals as a result of the agreement on the free movement of persons has not increased the risk of unemployment for the local Swiss population in Ticino”. While isolated cases of Swiss employees being replaced by foreign workers could not be ruled out, there was no evidence of systematic displacement. The unemployment rate remains low at around

3.5 % and is in line with the Swiss average.

However, many people in Ticino feel that their jobs are under threat because the pressure has increased. They are also worried about their salaries. They are fed up too with the daily gridlock in the border areas. The referendum result on 9 February 2014 reflected this sensitivity: 68 % of Ticino’s electorate voted in favour of the federal popular initiative “against mass immigration” launched by the nationalist, conservative SVP party. It was the highest proportion of yes votes out of all the cantons. In contrast to German-speaking Switzerland, where the main factor in the referendum result was immigration itself, in Ticino the phenomenon of cross-border commuters played a key role in the demand for the reintroduction of quotas for foreign workers.



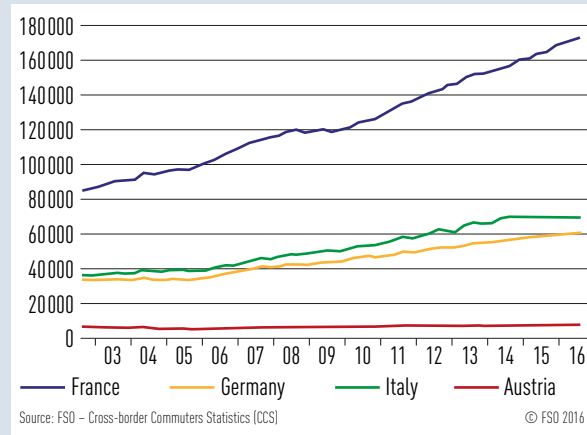
In light of the outcome, the Ticino SVP immediately replicated the proposal with a cantonal initiative under the slogan “Prima i nostri!” (Our own people first!). This bill called for priority for Swiss people on the employment market to be incorporated in the cantonal constitution. The number of signatures required was quickly collected and at the end of September 2016, 58 % of voters in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino approved this constitutional initiative.

### Combatting social dumping through priority for Swiss citizens

The cantonal constitution now stipulates that priority must be given to Swiss citizens if they hold similar qualifications. Giving priority to Swiss workers aims to prevent social dumping. Canton Ticino has also been assigned the task of “monitoring international treaties agreed by the Swiss Confederation”. This refers, for example, to the tax agreement on cross-border commuters between Switzerland and Italy.

Appeals by the cantonal government and the parliamentary majority to reject the SVP initiative because it would introduce provisions on social, economic and foreign policy which do not fall under the canton’s remit fell on deaf ears. An expert opinion commissioned from Giovanni Baghini, professor of constitutional, administrative and European law at the University of Zurich, came to the conclusion that the initiative would be almost impossible to implement. A special parliamentary committee is now working on drawing up proposals for those areas where implementing priority for Swiss citizens appears possible, such as in the public administration. In the same way as with the implementation of the mass immigration initiative at national level, which the Swiss Parliament is having

Foreign cross-border commuters by country of residence



In 2001 – i.e. before the entry into force of the free movement of persons with the western EU states – the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) recorded 151,133 cross-border commuters in Switzerland. There are now 314,110 (as at: 3rd quarter 2016). Most of them come from France and primarily work in the Lake Geneva region. No other major Swiss region employs more cross-border workers. In second place comes northwestern Switzerland with the border city of Basel. In all, 72,556 cross-border commuters work there and predominantly come from Germany but also from France. Most Italian border crossers commute to canton Ticino but others travel to Grisons or Valais. In terms of the total number of commuters employed, little Ticino comes in third place behind the arc of Lake Geneva and northwestern Switzerland. Cross-border commuters make up just 10 % of all those in gainful employment in the Lake Geneva region while their proportion stands at a similar level in northwestern Switzerland. The proportion is highest by some margin in Ticino where 26.2 % of the workforce are border crossers.

a tough time with, the Ticino laws must be compatible with the bilateral agreements with the EU and the free movement of persons.

### Tensions running high in the border region

In Italy, an EU state, there is annoyance over the general efforts to reintroduce priority for Swiss nationals in Switzerland. The adoption of the “Prima i nostri!” popular initiative has not exactly eased existing tensions between Ticino and the Italian border regions. This is because the referendum result has obviously been perceived in Italy as a vote against cross-border commuters. The

referendum result even made front-page news in the leading daily newspaper “Corriere della Sera”. The idea of a strike by cross-border workers was also briefly discussed.

Various Italian politicians have indicated that the economic boom in Ticino after the entry into force of the bilateral agreements and the resultant opening of the market is partly attributable to the cross-border commuters. Italian workers are also vital to ensuring that public institutions, such as homes for the elderly and hospitals, can run properly. These factors are nevertheless not recognised. “Workers from Lombardy cannot be humiliated on a daily basis and treated like illegal residents,” complained Roberto Maroni of the Lega-Nord, who is President of the Lombardy region, at first. But after the initial strong response to the approval of the popular initiative the tone has since been moderated. After a meeting with Ticino’s cantonal government in Bellinzona, Maroni declared that, “cooperation between the border regions would remain constructive”.

Previously, only canton Geneva had a protective cantonal clause for the employment market. However, the provision in force there since 2012 only applies to the cantonal administration, institutions of public law and publicly co-financed foundations. Before a position is publicly advertised and filled, it is mandatory for the regional employment agencies to check whether a person residing in the canton can be found for the job.

## 7,528 Swiss Abroad from Basel are unable to vote

In canton Basel-Stadt, the Swiss Abroad have no right to vote at cantonal level. The situation is different in the neighbouring cantons of Basel-Landschaft, Solothurn and Jura as well as in seven other cantons. The Cantonal Parliament has thus far consistently rejected an extension of the right to vote in Basel-Stadt.

PETER SCHENK

The Swiss Abroad from canton Basel-Stadt have been able to take part in the Council of States elections since the end of 2013. The Cantonal Parliament's clear decision was preceded by fierce debate; in particular the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) refused to give way. They argued that only those affected should be able to have their say. This was not the case for people living in Timbuktu, said André Auderset (LDP) at the time on behalf of his parliamentary group. However, the main argument for giving the right to vote to Swiss Abroad from Basel was the fact that they have been able to take part in National Council elections since 1992. Excluding them from the Council of States elections was therefore illogical. The legislative amend-

Basel-Landschaft, for example, where the Swiss Abroad can also vote at cantonal level. Exactly the same provisions apply in the cantons of Solothurn and Jura. Extending participation to cantonal elections and referenda has been "discussed several times but rejected by the Cantonal Parliament thus far", according to government spokesperson Marco Greiner. At the Cantonal Council and Cantonal Parliament elections last October, the 7,528 former Basel residents, who were able to take part in the Council of States elections for the first time in 2015, therefore still had no say.

### A voice through the referendum

This is not the same everywhere. There are ten cantons in Switzerland where the Swiss Abroad can vote at cantonal level. In the neighbouring canton of Solothurn, this goes back to a referendum in 1980 while in Basel-Landschaft the applicable law entered into force in 1981. The issue was discussed three times in the Cantonal Parliament in 1978, according to Basel-Landschaft's Cantonal Chancellery. In Jura, the provision has existed since the canton was founded in 1979. In contrast, Zurich, like Basel, restricts the right to vote to the Council of States elections.

In northwestern Switzerland, canton Aargau is the most restrictive when it comes to voting rights for the Swiss Abroad. The 7,005 Swiss Abroad registered here can only take part in the National Council elections. Participation in the Council of States elections is only possible if provided for by

cantonal legislation, which it is not. Aargau's Cantonal Council justified its rejectionist stance in November 2012 in its response to an interpellation submitted by Kim Lara Schweri (Greens) which was only signed by one other Council member.

### "The connection disappears"

On the subject of Swiss people who have lived abroad for a long period of time or on a permanent basis, the council said: "The connection with Aargau disappears over time and cantonal issues and elections become of much less interest than to citizens living here. Such persons eligible to vote sometimes no longer even have a command of the German language." Guy Morin (Greens), the former President of the Cantonal Council in Basel, uses a similar line of argument in relation to cantonal voting rights for the Swiss Abroad: "There has to be a relationship for cantonal elections, which is lost when people are away for a long period of time." He also argues that Basel is a city canton and he cannot imagine that the Swiss Abroad have a vote in other cities.

The conservative politician Baschi Dürr is more open. He could personally understand the argument that "it would be strange if a citizen of Basel residing abroad in Argentina could vote on the redesign of a square in Basel but not someone from Basel-Landschaft or a foreigner living in Basel who passes through it every day." He could nevertheless envisage an amendment and wrote: "I would not rule out the idea of a general right to vote for the Swiss Abroad in canton Basel-Stadt if this were put forward from the ranks of the Cantonal Parliament."



The Swiss Abroad from canton Basel-Stadt can still only take part in national votes. In the photo: Polling station in the Basel Rathaus

Photo: Keystone

ment was eventually approved with 80 votes in favour and 7 against.

The Swiss Abroad from Basel are nevertheless still prevented from taking part in cantonal elections. In this, the otherwise liberal canton Basel-Stadt is more conservative than

PETER SCHENK IS A JOURNALIST WITH "BZ BASEL"





A beggar asking passers-by for money in Lausanne.

Photo: Keystone

## French-speaking Switzerland seeks to eradicate Roma beggars through fines

Since 2004, western Swiss cities have been faced with an influx of beggars on their streets. Most of these are Roma. Cities and cantons are attempting to remove them by amending legislation, but without success.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Begging – mainly but not only by Roma people – has once again become a prominent issue this past autumn in French-speaking Switzerland. In October, the Swiss People's Party (SVP) in canton Vaud secured majority support in the Cantonal Parliament for adopting a ban on begging throughout the canton through a parliamentary initiative. This vote sought to bring canton Vaud into line with Geneva, which banned begging within its territory in 2008. However, the left-wing parties in Vaud have launched a referendum against the ban.

At the bottom end of Lake Geneva, the law has failed to achieve its im-

PLICIT objective of removing beggars, most of whom are from Romania. The cantonal police force, assisted by their colleagues at communal level, process thousands of fines each year. These fines of 100 Swiss francs, plus 100 francs in fees, are sent to Romania by registered mail. They usually remain unpaid or are contested before being turned into days in prison. But before that the total penalty amount is reduced by a judge who generally takes the offenders' financial hardship into account. The number of begging offences is not falling, with 4,500 cases in 2013, 5,600 in 2010 and 5,700 in 2015, according to the cantonal police. In 2015, the total figure for fines and fees came close to 670,000 francs.

"Most of these fines concern the Roma community," confirms spokesperson Silvain Guillaume-Gentil.

### Suspicion of mafia networks

Aside from the fact that begging bothers some people, right-wing parties believe banning it is justified because Roma beggars are the victims of mafia networks. "If our canton is to combat organised begging effectively, it has to introduce dissuasive legislation throughout its territory," stated a minority report of the Vaud Cantonal Parliament on the Cantonal Council's position on the SVP's popular initiative seeking to "prohibit begging and the exploitation of people for the purposes of begging in the territory of canton Vaud". According to the minority report, "the orchestrators who bring in people from eastern Europe" are the real recipients of the money given by Swiss people.

Several investigations into this issue that have been carried out by the press – but also by researchers, nota-

bly Jean-Pierre Tabin, a professor at the Haute Ecole de travail social (University of Social Work) in canton Vaud – have been unable to confirm the existence of such networks. In 2015, a ruling against Romanian nationals for human trafficking – bringing Roma people to Switzerland by bus – was overturned in Geneva by the Cantonal Supreme Court. “Whether or not the owners of the bus recruited their passengers for the purpose of begging or exploited the labour of people travelling with them has not been determined,” ruled the court. The canton of Geneva had to pay the two Romanian transporters over 60,000 Swiss francs in compensation for the moral wrongs of their unjustified detention.

However, in May a Roma woman and her son received a suspended three-year prison sentence for human trafficking. They had exploited a young man of unsound mind who had been sold by his own father. “My client’s father lives in dreadful conditions,” revealed the legal guardian of the disabled Roma youngster forced

to beg on the streets of Geneva. In Tarnaveni in central Romania, the Geneva investigators discovered shacks built on the outskirts of an abandoned industrial estate, according to the “Tribune de Genève” newspaper. The man was living with his sick, bedridden mother in his father’s house. Other children were in a smoke-filled room heated by a drum filled with burning coals. The father of the family lives on 200 euros a month. “It’s migration from poverty by people ostracised in their own countries. Begging is not a cultural phenomenon but rather a socio-economic one,” remarks Jean-Pierre Tabin, who has published a book on this issue.

### CHF 23 million in Swiss aid for Romanian Roma

On an RTS programme broadcast in September, Marc-Olivier Buffat, leader of the Vaud Liberals (FDP) group in the Cantonal Parliament, argued that Switzerland has already contributed “almost 400 million francs” to help Roma people as part of European enlargement support measures in Romania and Hungary. “Switzerland has invested 185 million francs in Romania over a five-year period in order to help Roma people, but completely in vain,” Buffat said. Tilman Renz, spokesperson at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, denies this. “The financial support that Switzerland has provided in this country to improve the situation of the Roma from 1992 to the present day amounts to around 23 million francs,” he says.

“It’s easy to accuse the Roma of immorality. They don’t have a lobby to defend them,” stresses Tabin. Are the Roma themselves victims of racist attacks? The Vaud researcher points to municipalities such as Tolochenaz and Goumoens-le-Jux, where the act of begging will ironically be banned by the new legislation, even though there are hardly any beggars outside the

centre of Lausanne. “A survey conducted in France shows that the Roma are the population group with the most negative stereotypes,” he says. According to Tabin, whose work has just been republished – as “an indication that people are taking an interest in this issue” – canton Vaud does not differ greatly from other European cities. “All forms of restricting begging – whether in Belgium, Austria or Germany – come down to criminalising poverty. Destitution is becoming an act punishable by law that can result in prison or expulsion, turning beggars into foreign criminals.”

### Swiss people are also forced into begging

“They want to get rid of Roma beggars as if it were like clearing our streets of rubbish,” tweeted Romain Papilloud, a member of the Vaud Young Socialists, in October. The young man believes the left in Vaud has shown courage by launching the referendum against the law on begging before the cantonal legislative elections in the spring. “We do not support begging, which is visual evidence of poverty, but hiding such misery is not a solution,” he remarks, highlighting the difficulty of combatting simplistic arguments aimed directly at the Roma. Papilloud, who is standing for election, points out that it is not just gypsies who beg. “Those who support the ban on begging say that Swiss people are not affected by this law because they have access to welfare benefits. But some people slip through the safety net.”

## The act of begging is punished from Zurich to Basel

Begging is banned by a cantonal law in Zurich. “The communal police do not carry out targeted checks but offenders are systematically prosecuted,” reveals spokesperson Marco Bisa. In such cases, beggars have their money confiscated and are served removal orders. The cost of this offence can reach as much as CHF 500. In Basel, the police also carry out confiscations and report cases of foreign beggars to population control. “Organised groups are aware of this policy and the objective of removal has been achieved,” says Martin Schütz, communications officer at the Department of Justice and Police. By the end of October 2016, 330 fines had been issued to beggars in Basel, a small number compared with the figure in Geneva. In smaller towns such as Neuchâtel, the police “spot offenders immediately”, points out Daniel Favre, a spokesperson for the police. In this canton, the law provides scope for punishing people who exploit public credulity, for example by pretending to be deaf. Of 80 fines issued in 2016, 20 resulted in CHF 300 fines for this reason. In Berne the situation is slightly different. The general ban on begging in the canton was annulled in 1991. The city has since attempted to introduce bans on beggars, but without success. The only place where begging remains prohibited is the railway station and the surrounding area. However, these regulations are down to the Swiss Federal Railways.

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STÉPHANE HERZOG IS A JOURNALIST WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”



# “In the Champions League of winter sports”

The forthcoming Alpine World Ski Championships will take place in St. Moritz. The jet-set destination in Engadine has extensive experience of organising international sporting events.

RENÉ WEBER

“Top of the World” is an unmistakable advertising slogan – St. Moritz is a brand and a location unlike any other. The fame of the upmarket ski resort has always gone hand in hand with sporting events. The ski marathon, two Winter Olympic Games, the “White Turf” horse race and several Alpine World Ski Championships have helped to make St. Moritz what it is today.

From 6 to 19 February, the Alpine World Ski Championships will be held in Engadine for the fifth time, following 1934, 1948, 1974 and 2003. That is a record. “We’re starting to get excited,” says Hugo Wetzel, Organising Committee President. This veteran knows what he is talking about when

**Franco Giovanoli, Director of the Alpine World Ski Championships in St. Moritz, was a snowboarder in the days when the sport first emerged.**



it comes to his job. When the last World Championships event was held here 13 years ago, he presided over it along with Martin Berthod, Head of Race Organisation. The new Director of Sport, Franco Giovanoli, is now benefiting from their experience. This former snowboarder has been working on February’s 60 million Swiss franc event since 2014. His predecessor, Gian

Gilli, also changed career – the Director of Sport for the 2003 World Championships came from cross-country skiing.

It is remarkable that not just 48-year-old Giovanoli himself comes from St. Moritz, but all the key positions on the Organising Committee have been filled with local people. “St. Moritz is part of the Champions League of winter sports, so to speak. We’re very proud of that,” explains Hanspeter Danuser, Director of the St. Moritz tourist board from 1978 to 2008. Lots of people from Engadine are involved in these events, he says. The priority is to ensure that thanks to the World Championships the destination remains at the very pinnacle of mountain holiday resorts.

## A celebration but no festival hut

The World Ski Championships will adopt the maxim of “take your time”. The aim is to enjoy the greatest luxury there is – that of time. In addition to the competitions, the fringe programme will therefore play a major role. Giovanoli promises a vibrant and diverse World Championships. The opening celebration, victory ceremonies and start-list draws will not take place on the Schulhausplatz, as in 2003, but instead in the historic Kulm Park. This green space hosted the Winter Olympic Games in 1928 and 1948. The heritage-protected pavilion has been specially restored for the World Championships. Celebrations will also take place in the pedestrian zone where a street festival featuring a wide range of events will be held. The national reception centres will also be located there. “It has everything to ensure the fans enjoy themselves,” points out Giovanoli. Or-

ganising Committee President Wetzel is nevertheless keen to ensure St. Moritz is not turned into a “festival hut” like Kitzbühel during the World Championships. “We want to appeal to our own target group,” says Wetzel.

Those responsible for the World Championship slopes, which have all been tried and tested at the World Cup, have few concerns. The infrastructure at the Salastrains venue has been upgraded and the site expanded. Over 120 containers have been installed, and the grandstand for 5,000 spectators is ready.

## With 1,300 volunteers

With World Championships ambassadors such as Dario Cologna, Maria Höfl-Riesch, Nino Schurter, Marcel Hirscher, Christian Gross, Nino Niederreiter and Nicola Spirig, the Organising Committee will bang the drum until the start of the event. “Then we will throw a party for the 140,000 fans,” remarks Giovanoli.

And the 1,300 volunteers will have their own centre at the Schulhaus Grevas school building. Here they can meet up, chat and look forward to the 2026 Winter Olympic Games, assuming they actually take place in Grisons and, of course, in St. Moritz in ten years’ time.

On Sunday, 12 February, during the Alpine World Ski Championships, the people of Grisons will vote on the first loans for the million-franc project. The fact that the Organising Committee of the Alpine World Ski Championships supports the Olympic bid goes without saying.

RENÉ WEBER IS A SPORTS JOURNALIST WITH “SÜDOSTSCHWEIZ”

## The picture-postcard village

A stroll through the village of Morcote in Ticino. The hamlet idyllically located on Lake Lugano was recently crowned Switzerland's most beautiful village.

GERHARD LOB

The best way to arrive is by ferry in the sunshine. Then the view of Morcote is truly breathtaking. It nestles along the slopes at the foot of Monte Arbostora – old fishermen's houses, aristocratic villas, jetties and red shingle roofs. Towering above it is the village's religious centre with the parish church of Santa Maria del Sasso, its distinctive bell tower and the monumental cemetery built on terraces. It can be reached by walking up 404 steps – a strenuous undertaking during the summer. Those who climb even higher will find vineyards.

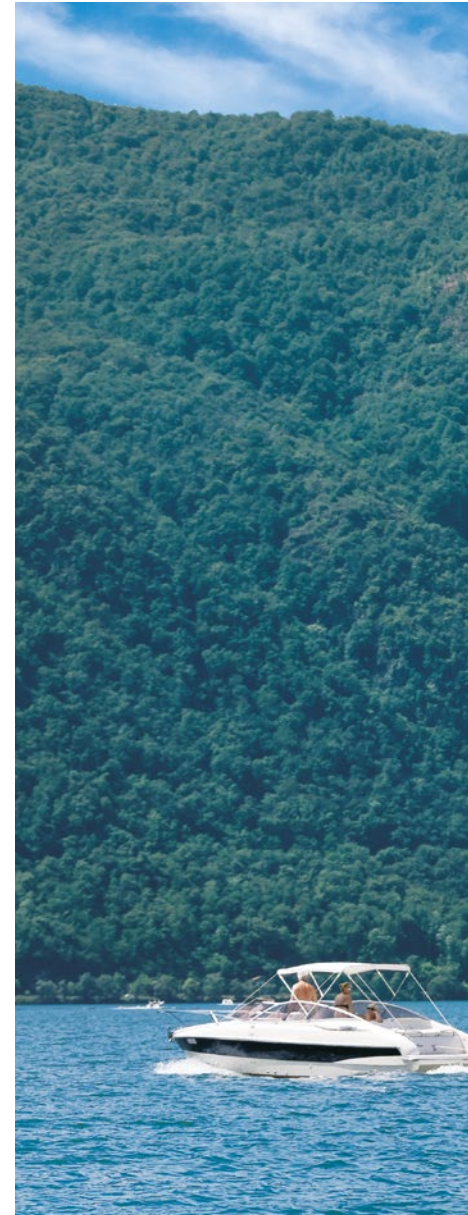
Morcote has long been a magnet for tourists. The village with its narrow winding streets and quaint arcades, restaurants on the shore of the lake and numerous attractions appeals to holidaymakers from Ger-

Morcote is the fifth place to be voted Switzerland's most beautiful village. While the competition was restricted to French-speaking Switzerland until 2014, it has been open to nominations of villages from all over the country since 2015. Villages in German-speaking Switzerland are having a tough time though. The finalists in the second last event were villages from Valais, the Jura and Romansh-speaking Grisons – and the competition was won by Soglio, a place right on the edge of Switzerland.

man-speaking Switzerland and Germany in particular. It therefore did not come as a great surprise when Morcote won the prize of "Switzerland's most beautiful village 2016" last October, a competition launched by "Schweizer Illustrierte", the French-language "L'illustré", the Sunday newspaper "Il Caffè" published in Italian and the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation (SRG). It should be pointed out that only communes with no more than 3,000 inhabitants were considered in the online vote. Morcote has a population of just under 750.

### Historic privileges

The village can look back on a history spanning many centuries. In around 1100, Morcote was the site of a castle for surveillance of maritime traffic. In 1422, it obtained privileges from the Dukes of Milan, including tax exemptions and self-administration, fishing and market rights. Morcote came under Swiss rule in 1517 and was allocated to the bailiwick of Lugano. Trade, fishing and farming made it wealthy. There was also significant revenue from emigrant artists. As nearby Bissone produced the world-famous Francesco Borromini, Morcote can boast the architect Giuseppe Fossati. His last descendant, Gaspare Fossati, built palaces in Is-



tanbul and restored the Hagia Sophia mosque.

These figures could hardly have imagined Morcote's latest architectural achievement, a gigantic, seven-storey car park built into the mountain that was officially opened in December 2015. It has 300 parking spaces, half for local residents and the other half for visitors. This resolved a tricky issue for the village – the shortage of parking. The traffic passing through the main street nevertheless continues as it is a shortcut for cross-border commuters during rush hour. "We plan to block off the road running along the lake completely at certain times and turn it into a pedestrian area," remarks Nicola Brivio, Morcote's mayor. These plans are currently still some way off.





## A visit in late autumn

“This place is an absolute gem,” enthuses a German tourist wandering through the narrow streets in late autumn. There are only a few visitors at this time of year. An indication of this is also provided by the shops, some of which close until March. The tourist office is only open in the mornings. “People are now still visiting at weekends thanks to the award,” reveals the manager of the grocery store called La Botega.

The impressive Parco Scherrer, on the road out of the village towards Figino, is also closed during the winter. In 1930, Hermann Arthur Scherrer, a wealthy textiles trader and art lover from St. Gallen, purchased the land to create oriental terraced gardens there.

**A view of “Switzerland’s most beautiful village” from Lake Lugano in summer. Morcote, a hamlet steeped in history with a population of 750, primarily appeals to tourists from Switzerland and Germany.**

*Photo: Ticino Turismo*

Amidst cypresses, camellias, camphor trees, eucalyptus, cedars, palm trees and bamboos there is also a Siamese tea house and an Egyptian temple in miniature. It is well worth visiting this unique location as well as exploring the many historical buildings.

The honour of being crowned Switzerland’s most beautiful village was greeted with great excitement in Morcote. The award ceremony was even broadcast on live television on RSI. Nobody here doubts the beauty of this place, which is included in the Inventory of Swiss Heritage Sites (ISOS). Certain reservations have nevertheless been raised about practical considerations. “Visiting a place like Morcote as a tourist is one thing, but living here is something entirely different,” observes an estate agent in the arcades.

The residents of the historic centre have nowhere to park their cars. Satellite dishes are also banned. The mayor, Nicola Brivio, does not regard such restrictions as significant, commenting: “Living in Morcote is about opting for a certain lifestyle, not convenience.”



# The Mythen mountains from an Australian perspective

Lucienne Fontannaz-Howard, a Swiss artist living abroad, was invited to Lake Lucerne to paint the mountain landscape around Brunnen. She had previously produced 50 paintings of the same subject on canvas in Australia, where she has chosen to live – all from memory and based on photographs.

MARKO LEHTINEN

The scenery is idyllic. The artist's studio lies right on the Pacific Ocean. The sun is shining, and it is hot as usual. However, photographs and pictures that depict a very different mood hang on the wall. Green meadows, forests and mountain ranges can be seen instead of sea and beaches. The landscape around Brunnen on Lake Lucerne, dominated by the Grosser Mythen, is omnipresent in Lucienne Fontannaz's studio in Sydney. Here the 71-year-old dedicated herself entirely to this picture-book Switzerland and produced 50 small-sized paintings before setting off to paint the same scenery again in situ.

She has been invited to Lake Lucerne by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, the Galerie am Leewasser and the Foundation for the Area for the Swiss Abroad as an artist in residence – an inspiring experience, as the artist discovers.

**Ms Fontannaz, you produced paintings of the same landscape in Sydney before visiting Brunnen for the first time. How did that come about?**

Lucienne Fontannaz-Howard: I collected postcards, brochures and photos from books and the internet. In these photos the sky over Brunnen was always steely blue, as was the lake, so I drew inspiration from this mood. I think my initial interpretations of the landscape were rather imaginative – in anticipation of actually visiting the place myself.



**Lucienne Fontannaz-Howard** is originally from Bex in the canton of Vaud and has lived in Sydney, Australia, since 1976. She has a master's degree in art education, art administration and visual arts. She has taught art and worked as a curator, and her paintings and books have been exhibited in Canada, Australia, China and Switzerland. The main sources of inspiration for Fontannaz's art were and remain landscapes – the coast of the Pacific Ocean around Sydney and the Australian Outback, but also Swiss landscapes, such as the meadows in the Alpine foothills near Gruyères or views of the Alps themselves.

**When you arrived in Brunnen, did you find the place inspiring?**

Absolutely, I was overwhelmed by the view of the majestic mountains. I could see uniquely shaped peaks in every direction. There were green meadows stretching right up high and forests running to the shores of the lake. And the sky above this scenery was actually steely blue.

**To what extent did the paintings you produced in Sydney reflect the reality in Brunnen?**

In Australia, I consciously focused on a positive portrayal of the landscape based on the legends of the "Golden Age". Remarkably, the paintings reflected the reality that stood before me quite accurately.

**You then painted in situ. How much did the paintings produced in Brunnen differ from those painted earlier?**

The direct view of the landscape, the light at different times of the day and the colours that appeared in the evening before sunset allowed me to extend my palette and to explore new ways of applying colour. Observing the different shades of grass, foliage and trees was a wonderful experience. I soon had to buy additional greens to cover this colour spectrum. I also learned a great deal about Brunnen's history, for example, the fact that it was once a fishing village. This inspired me to produce paintings that reflected my first-hand experience of this special place.

**As far back as the early 1990s you painted Swiss mountains on the other side of the world. Why is that?**

I wanted to paint my own soul in a sense and to evoke the essence of the Swiss mountains and lakes. I had vivid recollections of them and missed them dearly. I still felt a close affinity with the mountains I had known. It was as though they were part of me and sometimes invitingly drew me back but they were also unpredictable and possessed a dark side. I wanted to explore and express these feelings in my art.

**The motif of "mountains" has always stayed with you as a Swiss Abroad...**

Yes, I miss the Alps, the mountain lakes and walking in these wonderful landscapes at different times of the year. When the cloud formations on the horizon over the Pacific Ocean turn into a distant mountain range, clearly present but unreachable, or when I'm swimming in the sea and I see tall waves with surfers riding them like skiers on powdered snow, the landscape of my childhood is everywhere.



# An anti-war novel written in General Guisan's headquarters

The endless rice and grain fields of Italy's Po Valley are the setting for Orlando Spreng's 1941 homecoming novel "Il reduce".

CHARLES LINSMAYER

In 1936, a young man returns from Mussolini's war in Abyssinia to his native village of Sesto Cremonese in the Po Valley. Rico is sun-tanned, but his outward appearance is deceptive. The horrors in which he played a part have psychologically disturbed the farmer's son and alienated him from his former life. When he seeks solace from Daria, the wife of Beduino, the betrayed husband brutally beats up Rico and Daria and disappears from the village forever. However, Rico can no longer bear civilian life in the village. When he returns to Africa, the young Nera, who remained loyal to him from the start, is at his side.

The novel convincingly portrays the rural Cremonese landscape, the flooded rice fields, the never-ending roads through countless fields, the unswerving canals and the gigantic, impenetrable cornfields which give events a particular magic.

## A writer who worked for the post office

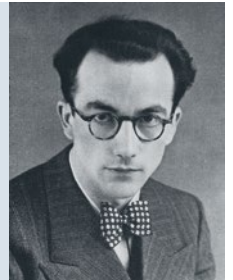
"Il reduce", the subtlest and most unconventional anti-war novel in Swiss literature, was typed in 1940 at the headquarters of the Swiss general Henri Guisan near to Berne on an army typewriter. The author was Bernese postal worker Orlando Spreng, who was born on 30 October 1908 in Sesto Cremonese, the very same village where his novel is set, as the son of a master cheesemaker from Berne who had emigrated to Italy. The family lived in Switzerland from 1914, Orlando became a post office employee and eventually took a position at Berne's Kornhaus post office. He caused a stir in 1939 with a kind of Swiss Svejk novel entitled "Le recluta Senzapace", the story of a good-natured but blundering recruit from Ticino by the name of Senzapace who as a sort of regiment fool becomes an entertainer for his brigade and eventu-

ally captivates the whole of Switzerland. Spreng nevertheless produced his best work in "Il reduce", the novel in which he expresses his homesickness for Italy, the country of his boyhood, and which could have had the makings of a success as part of the emergence of neorealism in Italy. However, only the traditional writer Francesco Chiesa had opportunities there under Mussolini, while Spreng had to be content that his very untypically Swiss novel was included in Guido Calgari's series of books about home entitled "Terra nostra" and that its translation by Jakob Bühler was looked upon favourably by the "Büchergilde Gutenberg" book club to whose members it was restricted.

When the borders reopened, nobody remembered the Swiss "homesick Italian", and his last book, the acerbic novel set in Ticino called "Il Lago", which dealt with the "colonialists" from German-speaking Switzerland, was forgotten until it was published in the same series of books about home in 1952. Two years earlier, on 27 January 1950, Spreng had died in an Italian hospital in Viganello after suffering a fatal brain haemorrhage at the age of 41, which he had foreseen years before and also touched upon in "Il Lago".

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Jakob Bühler's German translation "Der Heimkehrte" with an epilogue by Charles Linsmayer is available as volume two of "Reprinted by Huber".

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST



The old woman went on,  
"Can you tell me why this war is  
being fought? Or any war come  
to that? Why do we kill when  
every man on both sides has a  
mother, wife and family?  
A piece of land is not worth  
the tiniest drop of human blood!"  
(Orlando Spreng:  
"Der Heimkehrte",  
Verlag Huber, Frauenfeld 1988,  
p. 204)

## The new series – reflections of the outside world in Swiss writing

In his new literature series Charles Linsmayer presents Swiss authors who reflect foreign countries and cities in their work. This may be as a lost homeland, a country yearned for or an exotic fascination. It includes Hamo Morgenthaler's Indonesia, Daniel de Roulet's New York and Corinna Bille's summer idyll Le Pradet near Toulon.

## Centenary of the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) has existed since 1917. It all began under the name of “Schweizerhilfe” (Swiss Aid), which sought to accommodate Swiss children living in war zones abroad with families in Switzerland to allow them to recover from the events of war. Its main sphere of activity later shifted from host families to holiday camps. The FYSA continues to work on behalf of Swiss children abroad to enable them to maintain their ties with their native country, regardless of their family’s financial situation.

The FYSA has organised a number of surprises to mark its centenary. The “Swiss Trip”, its most popular but also oldest offer, will take place twice as part of the celebrations. Swiss children from abroad will spend 10 days travelling right across the country to discover Switzerland’s diversity in terms of landscape and culture. In addition to these two offers, seven other summer camps will be held at various locations in Switzerland. At these camps participants will visit attractions, discover lakes, mountains, rivers and landscapes on short hikes and explore cities. Some days will be spent at the camp base where we will enjoy games, sporting activities and various workshops. Participants will also have the opportunity to gain fascinating insights into Switzerland.

In cooperation with the Circolino Pipistrello, the FYSA is also organising a circus anniversary camp. At the Circolino Pipistrello interactive circus, Swiss children from home and abroad will jointly put together a circus gala event under the guidance of experienced circus instructors on the theme of “100 years of the FYSA – at home in Switzerland – at home in the world”.

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.

There are still places available on these nine summer camps. You can register at <http://sjas.ch/en/camps/>. We would also be pleased to send you our information brochure with an overview of the offers available by post on request.

The Foundation has also set up a fund which provides less well-off families with a financial contribution to the camp costs of their children. The FYSA encourages families to register with it to provide their children with the opportunity to enjoy such a special experience. The relevant form can be ordered on the registration form or downloaded from our website at: <http://sjas.ch/en/camps/reductions/>. We would be pleased to provide you with further information and look forward to a fantastic anniversary summer.



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

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

## Education in Switzerland

The educationsuisse team provides advice and support each year for many young Swiss Abroad as well as pupils at Swiss schools abroad who are keen to pursue or complete their education in Switzerland. Our staff provide them with information and advice on education in Switzerland. They give an overview of the possible courses of education and answer questions on, for instance, university admission criteria, linguistic knowledge, the search for apprenticeship places, possible grants, insurance, accommodation and much more besides.

In collaboration with BIZ in Bern-Mittelland, an occupational, educational and career guidance service, educationsuisse provides advice on career choices and courses of study. These discussions take place with qualified BIZ professionals and can be held in various languages via Skype or in Berne. Educationsuisse is also able to award small additional grants or loans thanks to various funds. A new fund provided by the “Gazzetta Svizzera” has also been available since the 2016/17 academic year which is aimed specifically at young Swiss Abroad who have grown up in Italy and are receiving education or training in Switzerland.

Visit our website at [www.educationsuisse.ch/en/education-switzerland](http://www.educationsuisse.ch/en/education-switzerland) or contact us directly via email or by telephone. Advisory consultations can also be provided in Berne by prior appointment. Our employees speak German, French, English, Italian and Spanish.



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Alpenstrasse 26  
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Tel. +41 31 356 61 04  
[info@educationsuisse.ch](mailto:info@educationsuisse.ch)



## OSA advice

*We plan to move to Switzerland with our beloved pets, a cat and a dog. Where can we find information about whether our two pets can enter Switzerland?*

When entering Switzerland, household effects (household items, clothing, paintings, valuables, etc.) can be brought in duty-free if you are transferring your place of residence to Switzerland. Special customs import provisions apply to pets, such as those concerning veterinary examinations, vaccinations and epidemic-prevention measures. Species protection regulations also apply to plants and animals. You will find all the information and factsheets on the Federal Customs Administration's website:

[www.customs.admin.ch](http://www.customs.admin.ch) > information individuals > animals and plants.

If you click on the link "Crossing the border with dogs, cats or ferrets", you will be directed to the website of the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office. Here you can access the provisions that apply directly to your specific situation by providing individual details (species, age, country from which you are travelling).

We recommend that you contact the information desk of the Federal Customs Administration to find out the exact procedure:

Federal Customs Administration (FCA)  
3003 Berne

Tel +41 58 467 15 15

[www.customs.admin.ch](http://www.customs.admin.ch) > contact

OSA LEGAL DEPARTMENT

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

## Offers for young people in summer 2017

Entertainment, outdoor activities, fun and adventure in Switzerland – all this is again on offer at OSA's Youth Service's summer camps this year. You can also improve your language skills in German and/or French or enjoy an educational holiday at the Seminar at the Congress. We offer a diverse and varied programme.

### Two recreational camps in Leysin and one in La Punt

The recreational camps now provide an even wider range of activities. They do not focus solely on sport but instead also include lots of cultural activities. The best thing is that you can design part of the itinerary yourself to suit your own interests so that you have even more fun!

### 18+ sport and recreational camp in Sörenberg

Our sport and recreational camp in Sörenberg this year is aimed at young adults aged 18 and over. The days will be spent in the moorland landscape of the UNESCO Biosphere Entlebuch. The region offers plenty of opportunities to enjoy various types of sport and a rich culture.

### Outdoor camp

Do you love the countryside and feel at home out of doors? A two-week adventure awaits you! You will have an unforgettable time and explore the many facets of the Swiss natural environment. Guided by an experienced team of leaders you will learn how to survive in the outdoors without luxury items.

### Discover Switzerland extended

Would you like to spend your holidays in Switzerland and visit its cities and mountain regions? Then this is the perfect offer for you. You will spend two weeks as a guest with a host family and discover a different city or region every day. "Discover Switzerland extended" will take you right across Switzerland.

### Summer language courses in German and French

Our German and French courses cater for both beginners and advanced learners. In addition to the basic course, you can also register for the focus group (eight additional lessons). We organise a recreational programme every afternoon. Our welcoming host families will make you feel at home and provide you with an insight into everyday Swiss life.

### Seminar at the Congress in Basel

This year's Congress in Basel is on the topic of "The Swiss at home and abroad – one world". It will focus on dialogue between Swiss people living in Switzerland and those abroad. A week full of exciting encounters and a programme rich in variety await you.

### Register now!

All the information and registration forms can be found at [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch) and [www.swisscommunity.org](http://www.swisscommunity.org)

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



# Obtaining Swiss citizenship abroad

For Swiss citizens living abroad who have married a foreign national, the new Swiss Citizenship Act will apply from 1 January 2018 with regard to simplified naturalisation for their spouse. People living abroad will still be able to apply for simplified naturalisation in future. However, the requirements have changed in several respects.

Around 11,000 people are currently naturalised through the simplified process each year, around 2,000 of which live abroad. These are mainly the foreign spouses of Swiss citizens who, primarily because of their family situation, feel a close association with Switzerland even while living abroad. They maintain regular contact with Swiss people and frequently visit Switzerland.

## Integration

“The aim is to naturalise people who are well integrated in Switzerland,” remarked Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga during the parliamentary debate on the new Swiss Citizenship Act. A good degree of integration is already required by the law as it is now. However, the new law sets out what this means even more clearly. The integration criteria are specified in detail in the new ordinance in order to provide greater clarity. These integration criteria must also be met correspondingly by applicants living abroad. This analogous application means that applications from abroad are to be treated in the same way as those for simplified naturalisation from Switzerland. However, the circumstances abroad cannot be directly equated with those in Switzerland in all cases.

## Application procedure

Spouses of Swiss citizens must have been in a conjugal partnership for at least six years and have a close relationship with Switzerland. Provided these requirements are met, an application for simplified naturalisation can be made to the Swiss representation responsible. The naturalisation fees of the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) have to be paid when making the application as before. However, the fees are no longer reimbursed if the naturalisation application is rejected. The Swiss representation checks how familiar the person seeking naturalisation is with Switzerland in an interview and produces a report for the SEM. The SEM then checks that all naturalisation requirements have been met, obtains refer-



ences and grants Swiss citizenship in the event of a positive decision.

## Close association with Switzerland

The “close association with Switzerland” is a key naturalisation requirement for applications from abroad in particular. The applicable requirements have been tightened slightly under the new law. A person seeking naturalisation must have visited Switzerland at least three times for a minimum of five days on each occasion in the six years prior to the application being made. References must also be provided by persons residing in Switzerland who know the naturalisation applicant personally and can confirm their visits to Switzerland. Applicants are also generally required to pass a test proving basic knowledge of Swiss geography, history, politics and society. The applicant for naturalisation must also maintain contact with Swiss citizens and have a good knowledge of a Swiss national language. The citizenship ordinance does not specify a level of linguistic competence. As at present, language skills are assessed by the Swiss representation responsible in a personal interview.

### HELPLINE FDFA

☎ from Switzerland +41 800 24 7 365  
 ☎ from abroad +41 58 465 33 33  
 E-Mail: [helpline@eda.admin.ch](mailto:helpline@eda.admin.ch)  
 Skype: helpline-eda

### Travel advice

[www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise](http://www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise)  
 ☎ from Switzerland +41 800 24 7 365  
 ☎ from abroad +41 58 465 33 33  
[www.twitter.com/travel\\_edadfae](https://www.twitter.com/travel_edadfae)

### itineris

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



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## Summary

Foreign nationals who, owing to their family situation, feel a close association with Switzerland even while abroad can also apply for simplified naturalisation under the new law. However, the requirements concerning applications from abroad have been made more stringent in some areas. Anyone seeking simplified naturalisation from abroad should find out about the process from the Swiss representation responsible in good time. Further information on this matter can be found at: [www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/buergerrecht/faq.html](http://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/buergerrecht/faq.html) > Entry & Residence > FAQ > Swiss citizenship / Naturalisation > Fragen zum neuen Recht.

## Other changes concerning renaturalisation

A close association with Switzerland is now also required for applications from abroad for re-naturalisation. This represents a tightening of the currently applicable provision. If the loss of citizenship took place more than 10 years ago, the applicant can only apply for re-naturalisation if they have resided in Switzerland for three years. A child whose grandmother possessed Swiss citizenship could previously apply for simplified naturalisation. Now, a child from a marriage between a Swiss woman and a foreign national whose mother possessed Swiss citizenship before or at the time of the child's birth can make an application for simplified naturalisation. The child must also have a close association with Switzerland in such cases. Simplified naturalisation will no longer be possible in future if only the grandmother or great-grandmother was a Swiss citizen.

Responsible for the FDFA official communications:  
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## Federal referenda

Voting proposals are determined by the Federal Council at least four months before the voting date. The following three proposals will be put to the vote on 12 February 2017:

- Federal decree of 30 September 2016 on the simplified naturalisation of third-generation immigrants
- Federal decree of 30 September 2016 on establishing a fund for national roads and urban traffic (NRUTF)
- Federal act of 17 June 2016 on fiscal measures to increase the competitiveness of Switzerland as a business location (Corporate Tax Reform Act III)

Further voting dates 2017: 21 May, 24 September, 26 November

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

## Popular initiatives

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

- "For a Switzerland without synthetic pesticides" (29.05.2018)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found at [www.bk.admin.ch](http://www.bk.admin.ch) under Aktuell > Wahlen und Abstimmungen > Hängige Volksinitiativen.

## Important notice

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

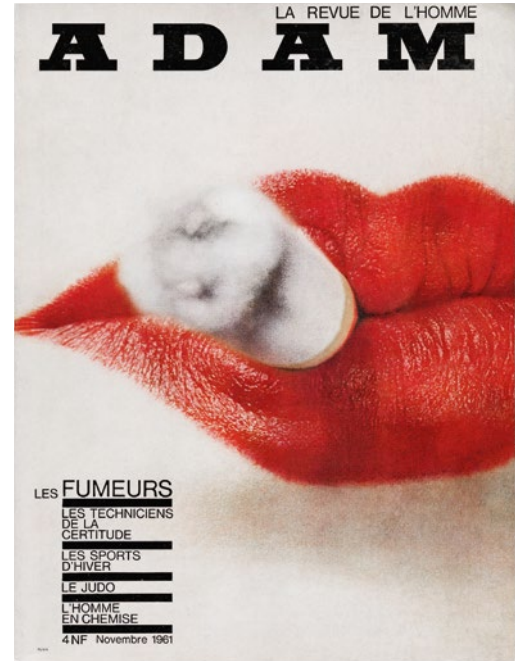
The latest issue of "Swiss Review" and previous issues can be read and/or printed out at any time at [www.revue.ch](http://www.revue.ch). "Swiss Review" (or "Gazzetta Svizzera" in Italy) is sent free of charge to all households of Swiss Abroad who are registered with an embassy or consulate general either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



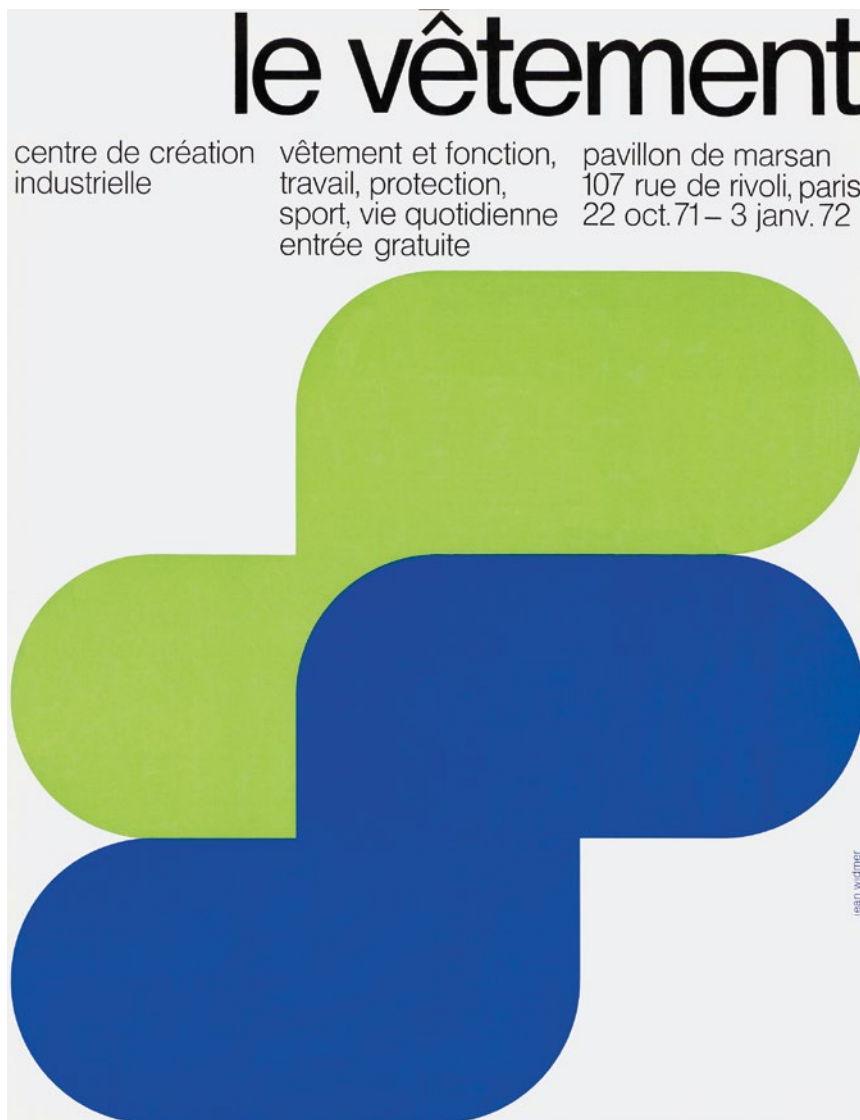
## The Swiss in Paris

In the decades after 1950, many Swiss graphic artists and typographers moved to Paris to turn the city's design scene upside down, and they have continued to influence it to the present day. Lettering for the metro, cover photos for magazines and the design of perfume bottles – the exhibition entitled “Les Suisses de Paris” is dedicated entirely to successful Swiss designers in the city on the Seine. LEH

The exhibition “Les Suisses de Paris” at the Museum of Design in Zurich runs until 19 March 2017.  
[www.museum-gestaltung.ch](http://www.museum-gestaltung.ch)



A cover of Friedrich Schrag's men's magazine “Adam” from 1961.



An exhibition poster for the “Centre de Création Industrielle” from 1971 designed by Jean Widmer. He later also created the visual identity of the Centre Georges Pompidou.

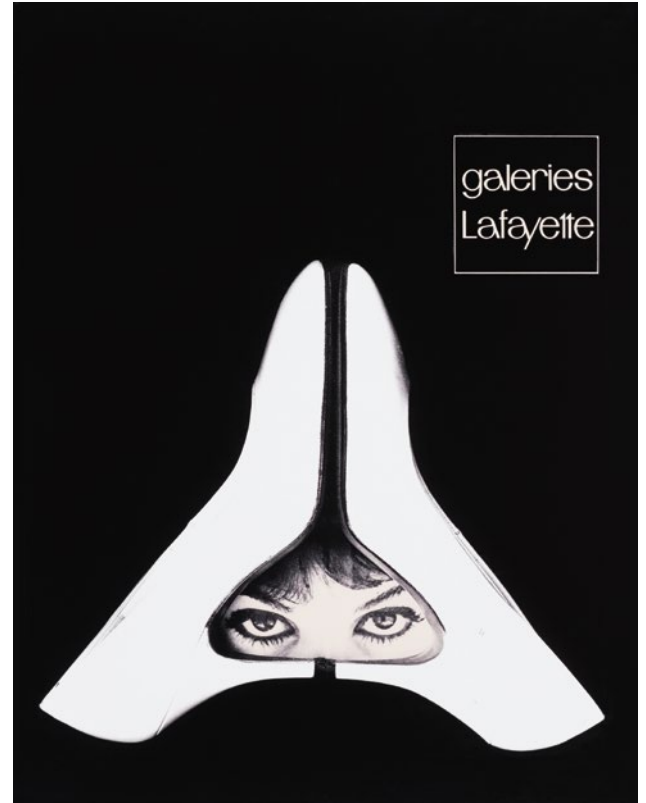


Fragrant design: Fred Rawlyer designed this perfume bottle for Courrèges in 1977.





Bruno Pfäffli's refinement of Adrian Frutiger's "Univers" font family. Pfäffli worked in Frutiger's studio from 1961.



At the start of his career, Jean Widmer worked for the Galeries Lafayette for which he designed this advertisement in 1959.



The famous Swiss typographer Adrian Frutiger designed the signage for the Paris metro in 1973.



An advertisement by Bruno Suter from 1990. The Swiss designer also launched campaigns for Benetton and Hermès.



A special kind of invitation designed by Fred Rawlyer in summer 1967 for the fashion show of the Indreco collection.

## Keen on travel and outward-looking



RUDOLF WYDER:  
"Globale Schweiz:  
Die Entdeckung der  
Auslandschweizer",  
Stämpfli Verlag,  
Berne 2016,  
256 pages, CHF 34

Migration and mobility are the predominant issues of the present day. Tens of thousands of Swiss leave their native country every year and around the same number return. The Swiss are amongst "the keenest travellers in the modern day", according to Rudolf Wyder in the foreword of his book "Globale Schweiz: Die Entdeckung der Auslandschweizer" (Global Switzerland – the Discovery of the Swiss Abroad). It was not so long ago that the state was pleased to see as many people as possible leave and never return. Government promotion of emigration was still being used as a means of combating unemployment in the 1930s.

Wyder explores this and many other fascinating facets of Switzerland's relationship with its diaspora in his book published to mark the centenary of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA). It does not focus on emigrants' adventures. The author, who was the Director of the OSA from 1987 to 2013, writes history in a traditional fashion, adopting a chronological and thematic approach.

It is the first time the political preferences of expats have been documented in such depth based on representative surveys and analysis of voting patterns at elections and referenda. "Their greater receptiveness to specific foreign policy issues and proposals concerning the role and image of Switzerland in the world" is clearly evident, according to Wyder. For example, the approval of the first package of sectoral agreements with the EU in 2000 and of accession to the Schengen and Dublin agreements in 2005 was well above the average. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that "the initiative against mass immigration in 2014 was rejected by the Swiss Abroad with two thirds voting against it on average in all eight cantons that disclose how they voted". Voters abroad vote in favour to a much greater extent than the Swiss average on issues concerning Switzerland's openness and international commitment. What is more, "parties favouring international presence and participation fare better amongst the Swiss Abroad at elections. Voting patterns amongst citizens abroad at elections and referenda are almost completely in line with those of urban areas in Switzerland," writes the author.

Rudolf Wyder has written a standard reference work on Swiss emigration history and has raised awareness about the great importance of Swiss emigration during the 20th and at the start of the 21st century.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

## Reflections of a family man



ADRIAN STERN:  
"Chumm mir singed  
die Songs wo mir  
liebed und tanzed mit  
ihne dur d'Nacht",  
Sony Music, 2016.

Adrian Stern has always seemed like a carefree youngster going through life with a smile on his face. Someone who is so endearing that you forgive him his confirmed naivety. The singer is now 41 but somehow still looks like the young man with the friendly smile of yesteryear. His lyrics nevertheless reveal the reflections of a family man slowly ageing.

The long title of Adrian Stern's new album is "Chumm mir singed die Songs wo mir liebed und tanzed mit ihne dur d'Nacht" – but its tracks are not mainly about dancing the night away to your favourite music but instead responsibility, partnership, doubt, getting older and the hints of a first midlife crisis.

Thirteen years ago on his debut album "Stern", the artist from Baden sang frothy love songs. Later, his fourth album "Herz", which achieved double platinum status, featured the typical wanderlust songs of a not-quite-so-young man still wishing to explore the world.

Adrian Stern then started a family and began writing more serious songs in 2013 on his album "1+1". This suited the performer who sings in dialect. It is therefore pleasing to see that he has maintained his approach to lyrics on his latest album. The twelve tracks on "Chumm mir singed..." show genuine maturity and the reflections of a music-writing 40-something father of two: In "Älter" the singer questions whether he can live up to his role in life and if all his efforts make any sense. In "Irgendwie" he sings about the oppressive insecurity he feels when his relationship changes over the course of time and with the arrival of children. He also explores other themes, such as his love of his home town of Baden expressed in beautiful lyrics in "Chlini Stadt und wildi Ross".

Musically, Adrian Stern sticks with the catchy, melodious pop music of his recent albums, which is sung in dialect and supported by an acoustic guitar. The sound is nevertheless electronically enhanced here. This lends an interesting dash of colour to the mature songs of the artist who was once a young gun.

MARKO LEHTINEN



# Markus Seiler



How do you picture the head of a secret service? He presumably has cold, impenetrable eyes and a stern facial expression. Though, it is even more likely that you would not have the opportunity to see him in the first place. The faceless, powerful figure in the background provides great scope for paranoid fantasies and conspiracy theories – in Switzerland, too. The Director of the Federal Intelligence Service has therefore been appearing in public more often recently.

Before the referendum on the new Intelligence Service Act, Markus Seiler appeared first on “Arena” where he defended the bill, which gives the service extensive powers, in a composed but determined and, above all, successful way. The Swiss people placed their trust in him by adopting the new law. The 48-year-old from Thurgau then provided remarkably detailed and candid information in the media about the tasks and day-to-day activities of his team in combating terrorism and right-wing extremism.

Of course, this unusual amenability, composure and the sometimes ingenuous look of the very likeable director do not disguise the fact that the public will never know exactly what goes on behind the scenes at the FIS. That is the nature of the business. However, Markus Seiler, a political scientist and father of four, gave a face to the intelligence service last year and made a small contribution towards bringing the FIS a tiny bit closer to the public.

MARKO LEHTINEN

## Swiss are the wealthiest

In no other country in the world are people as wealthy on average as in Switzerland. Private assets stand at USD 561,900 on average (the equivalent of around CHF 568,000). That is the highest figure, followed by Australia, the USA and Norway. Swiss private individuals own assets worth USD 3.5 billion in total. They make up only 0.1% of the global population but own 1.4% of global assets. And their position is set to get even better. Forecasts indicate that average wealth will increase to USD 606,000 by 2020. These figures come from the latest “Global Wealth Report” published by the Credit Suisse Research Institute.

## Police want covert surveillance of travel

The Federal Office of Police is to covertly monitor the journeys of potential terrorists in future. The Council of States’ Security Policy Committee has unanimously backed a National Council motion to this effect. The aim is to follow the movements of suspects without their knowledge within the framework of the Schengen Information System. The committee believes this is an effective means of detecting and identifying criminal offences. The Federal Council has already begun work on this issue. The Federal Council imposed entry bans on 26 jihadists between January and the end of October 2016.

## Basel wants cleaner heat

Oil and gas are not to be used for heating anymore in Basel-Stadt from 2050, as far as possible. The cantonal parliament of the city canton adopted a corresponding amendment to the energy law by a large majority. The amendment came about as a result of the “Basel renewable” initiative, submitted two years ago, in addition to federal government’s energy strategy and almost 20 motions put forward in the cantonal parliament. The initiative called for the cantonal constitution to stipulate that energy consumption from 2050 would “essentially be met by sustainable, renewable sources of energy”. That would also have included means of transport. The fact that petrol and diesel for vehicles are now excluded at legislative level is one of the most significant adjustments of the legal amendment. The principle of eliminating the use of fossil fuels for heat generation by 2050 through incentives and in a cost-neutral way as far as possible has nevertheless been retained.

## Volunteers solve 5,751 puzzles

The library of the Federal Institute of Technology Zurich has around three million photographs, including from the former Swissair archive. However, the press photos in particular are poorly labelled. The library’s management therefore called on the help of crowdsourcing to solve the problem. Hundreds of volunteers helped to improve the information and to classify the photos by contributing their knowledge. Over 8,000 tips had been received by last November. The information on 5,751 images was significantly enhanced as a result.



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