



SWISS REVIEW

The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
November 2015

**Wolves, lynxes, bears and otters –
the once extinct predators are back**

**Switzerland after the elections:
the problems remain**

**Trail runners, mountain bikers and
slackliners – the alpine region is being overrun**

Double citizenship in Switzerland

746,000 Swiss citizens live abroad and 73% of them hold a double citizenship. Is someone with a double citizenship less Swiss? Does possessing two passports diminish the sense of belonging and the loyalty to their home country?

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Life sometimes springs unpleasant surprises on us, leaving us wondering what we could have prevented had we only paid closer attention and recognised the signs. A sentence on page 29 of this issue may harbour an unpleasant surprise for you, my dear readers. It is located in the top right-hand corner of the page: “In future, would you prefer to subscribe to the electronic version and continue receiving six issues?” This refers to the “Swiss Review”. The unpleasant surprise is that the DFA and the directors of the OSA plan to send just four of the six issues a year to subscribers who opt for the printed version of the “Swiss Review”. Only those who subscribed to the electronic version would continue to receive all six issues. This means that subscribers to the print version would be provided with only some of the information. We are interested to know what you, our readers, think of these plans. You can also write directly to those responsible: juerg.burri@eda.admin.ch, mastantuoni@aso.ch or rustichelli@aso.ch

The outcome of the elections on 18 October was no great surprise. As predicted, conservative parties gained a lot of ground in the National Council. In the last legislative period, we saw how the Swiss People’s Party (SVP) – which is now the strongest party by far – used initiatives and referenda to push its policies through. The will of the people was declared to be the highest authority and the role of the constitutional state was sidelined to some extent. However, democracy and the constitutional state belong together. This also means that none of our organs of power – neither Parliament, nor government, nor the people – should have sole authority. Those in government must also abide by the law because if laws are adapted arbitrarily to suit different situations, the outcome is nothing short of dictatorship. Our election reports can be found on pages 12 to 15.

And finally, on a personal note, this is the last issue of the “Swiss Review” for which I will be responsible as editor-in-chief. Because I will be retiring in February 2016, I will hand over editorial control to my successor, Marko Lehtinen, at the beginning of November. The past five years have been a tremendously enriching experience for me as editor-in-chief. Together with the editorial team, we have succeeded in adapting the “Swiss Review” to the modern requirements of communication. Many of you, my dear readers, have written to us. You have made suggestions, voiced praise and sometimes also criticised us. I would like to thank you most sincerely for this. Because without such feedback, journalism takes place in a vacuum.

BARBARA ENGEL, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Cover photo:
The wolf, the scientific term for which is *Canis lupus*, migrated from Italy to Switzerland in 1995. It has since caused emotions to run high. Photo: Keystone

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Erbe gesucht

In einer Erbschaft wird als Erbe gesucht:

Hermann Reichmuth, geb. am 18. August 1931,
von Unteriberg, Kanton Schwyz.

Bitte Kontakt aufnehmen mit Jakob Wolfensberger,
Lerchenbergstr. 12, 8703 Erlenbach, Schweiz.

I feel ashamed

I've lived in Germany for 26 years and have always received a warm welcome as a Swiss citizen. Today on 21 September 2015 I'm deeply ashamed to be Swiss. A village in canton Aargau is supposed to accept eight (!) refugees but would rather pay 20,000 Swiss francs. Poor prosperous Switzerland.

R. G., ERKRATH, GERMANY

Supposed to sound educated

I rarely write comments or voice criticism in newspapers. But it is just too much this time. "POINTIERTER, SALOPP, DIF-FAMIERT, KONKORDANZ, KONKORDANZDEMOKRATIE, KONSENSES etc." ("more pointedly, sloppy, defamed, concordance, concordance democracy and consensus etc.") – is this supposed to sound educated? My mother would turn in her grave if she could see such mutilation of the (Swiss) German language – and written by the editor-in-chief of a Swiss magazine that people enjoy reading worldwide. Kind regards.

RENÉ GRAF, MAPLE BAY BC, CANADA

Poorly represented

As SwissAbroad we are generally poorly protected and represented. All we hear from politicians and the administration are empty words. You can feel the reluctance to take the Swiss Abroad seriously as fully fledged Swiss citizens (including at many consulates and embassies). After all we are not all billionaires living in the US. The Swiss Abroad have long since failed to receive the recognition they deserve from any party and are represented abysmally. The Committee for the Swiss Abroad is a playground for good-for-nothings and lacks any purpose, specific mandate and effective approach.

WAVE DANCER, ARGONAUT51@HOTMAIL.COM

We are foreign Swiss

Professor Kohler's "Shadow war and interpreting the present times" is an astute and non-judgmental short essay on the dilemma of the Swiss at Home at the present time. However, it has little to do with the Swiss Abroad, myself included, who make up the so-called 5th column. We truly have no identity at all. We are foreign Swiss, and have been treated as such, es-



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pecially if one happens to be American Swiss or Swiss American. If we become the 27th canton one day, we will be divided at least into five parts: the EC Swiss, the Swiss American (the American Swiss who are presently treated the worst by our banks – all thanks to the Americans of course!), the Common Wealth Swiss, the South American Swiss, and for brevity the Rest of the World Swiss. In terms of Switzerland, we often older folks are mostly Heimweh-Swiss, who may be in search of a bank account in order to buy a Swiss cup of coffee.

ROBERT ENGGIST, HAMILTON, NEY JERSEY, USA

Putting in our two cents' worth

I find the demands of many Swiss Abroad concerning political representation and their own electoral constituency downright impudent. It was our decision to leave Switzerland!!! I believe it is an extremely generous display of social solidarity that we can still vote – or put our two cents' worth in – at all despite no longer living in Switzerland and the fact that our everyday lives are barely affected by ballot results (except where issues of the Swiss Abroad are directly concerned). I am very much opposed to a special constituency for the Swiss Abroad. I would never vote for a Swiss Abroad either. Anyone wishing to be actively involved in Swiss politics should kindly return there to live. In my view it is a privilege that we can take part in elections and referenda at all and one that far from every country grants to its citizens residing abroad.

SUSANNE BOSS, S-BOSS@ONLINE.NO

A shift to the right please!

It is high time that the Swiss reflected upon their 724 years of independence. Instead of edging its way towards the EU while spouting empty phrases that have no clear meaning (with the exception of the straight-talking SVP), Parliament would do well to use its precious time for better purposes, namely Switzerland and the Swiss people. Only the SVP is doing this. I urge MPs and Federal Councillors from the other parties in Switzerland to shift significantly to the right towards the SVP. The Swiss people will be grateful to you. Europe is a corrupt union that squanders taxpayers' money rather than looking after it. Just look at Greece and the unfortunately ever-more corrupt "Podemos" socialist/communist party in Spain. Andalusia is the best example of the problem.

DANIEL OPPLIGER, DANIELEUFEMIA@GMAIL.COM

The pessimist and the dreamer



ARNO CAMENISCH:
"Die Kur"; Engeler-Verlag
Solothurn, 2015;
96 pages; CHF 25;
around 19 euros.

"The dead are dancing too tonight" or "you feel an outsider in your own living room, and you are happy when you can leave again". These are sentences uttered by the man who travels with his wife to Engadine. The recently retired couple of modest means have won first prize in the village tombola – several nights at a five-star hotel. Readers accompany the disparate couple in 47 scenes set in and around the hotel. The husband constantly has his plastic bag with him from which he pulls all sorts of items, ranging from a pocket torch to chocolate. He is always looking for something to eat, while his wife's hunger is for

life. The habitual moaner ponders death fantasies and the passing of friends. His wife, the proud owner of a sequin dress, wants to see something of the world. Will their stay at the luxury hotel turn out to be therapeutic or a macabre nightmare?

The individual scenes read like stage directions to a comedic theatrical production where the two main characters talk at cross purposes. The husband, a pessimist, and his wife, a dreamer, are completely incompatible but nevertheless treat one another respectfully and lovingly. As close as they are after over 30 years of marriage, they still remain strangers to one another. The exaggerated characters are often close to us as readers but yet remain nameless. The situations switch between tragedy and comedy, making it easy reading. Despite focussing on the dialogue, the author's attention continually zooms in on the surroundings like in a film. The retired couple's conversations – no real dialogue – are sprinkled with expressions from Swiss dialect. It will be interesting to see how that is dealt with in translation.

Arno Camenisch tackles major issues, such as death, but often only goes halfway. Greater depth is required, but this is nonetheless a highly stimulating read. The author born in Grisons in 1978 writes in German and Romansh. He worked as a teacher at the Swiss school in Madrid and then studied at the Swiss Literature Institute in Biel where he lives today. The media like to call him a rising star of Swiss literature. He has received many awards for his work. His books "Sez Ner" (The Alp) and "Hinter dem Bahnhof" (Behind the Station) are available in French, Italian, English, Dutch, Spanish, Hungarian and other languages. Anyone fortunate enough to attend one of his readings will also enjoy Camenisch's theatrical talents.

RUTH VON GUNTEN

A portrait of work

Work is not the same today as it was 150 years ago. It is not just the activities that have changed; the social importance of work and the relationship between employers and employ-

ees has also altered. Photographs of people at work taken between 1860 and 2015 are currently on show at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich. They impressively document the changes in the world of work and people's relationship with their jobs.



The workers at the Levy butcher's shop in Basel, taken between 1890 and 1910



Switzerland's first female shoemaker, taken in 1944 in Lachen



The mechanical brickworks in Allschwil, taken around 1898

The exhibition at the Swiss National Museum in Zurich runs until 31 January 2016.
 Limmat-Verlag has published a book on the exhibition entitled "Arbeit – le travail";
 224 pages containing various articles and 218 photographs; CHF 48, Euro 52.
www.limmatverlag.ch, www.nationalmuseum.ch



Welders, taken around 1940 in Frauenfeld



Seamstresses, taken around 1940



Traffic policeman in Zurich, taken around 1960



Director of the Swiss National Museum in Zurich with his secretary, taken around 1975



Rocket construction in Emmen, taken around 1992

The quartet of predators is complete again

Switzerland is becoming wilder – indigenous but eradicated predatory animals are returning. City dwellers far removed from nature are thrilled at the prospect but sheep and mountain farmers are outraged. Especially as far as wolves are concerned, society fluctuates between glorification and primordial fear.



The last bear killed is proudly presented in 1904

MARC LETTAU

We are going back in time a long way. On 4 September 1904, Padruot Fried and Jon Sarott Bischoff, two hunters from Grisons, were trying to ambush chamois on the side of Piz Pisoc when a bear suddenly appeared nearby. Bischoff, the more experienced hunter of the pair, took aim. But his shotgun failed and no sound was heard other than a metallic clicking noise. Now it was down to Fried. He pulled the trigger and the

animal weighing just under 120 kilograms slumped to the ground. Fried became a hero, the much-lauded bear slayer, as he had killed the very last bear in Switzerland. The animal was dismembered, pickled and served to guests at the Tarasp casino.

State-supported eradication

The images from the time are part of the Swiss collective visual memory – including as a memorial. Because it was not just the bear that was wiped out – the last lynx was sighted on the Simplon Pass in the same year. The eradication of the otter, the agile fish predator which occupied all Swiss rivers at the time, was also approved through state bounties. The indigenous wolf had long been extinct. Even the chamois hunter Fried only knew of them from hearsay.

A clicking sound was nevertheless heard again in 2015. Only this time it was not the firing of a shotgun but the flash of a camera trap. Wildlife biologist Christof Angst was simply seeking to obtain photographic evidence of how happily the once extinct beavers were splashing around in the river Aare. Instead a whole family of otters passed by his lens. Experts were thrilled as the discovery marked a turning point: Well over a century after the accurate shot was fired on the Piz Pisoc, all members of the key quartet of indigenous predators – the bear, lynx, wolf and otter – are present again in Switzerland.

Wolves form first pack

The first to return was the lynx. It did not come voluntarily but was instead brought back. Lynx were relocated in 1971 and have since established themselves in the forests of Jura and the central and western Alps. In 1995, the wolf returned to Switzerland from Italy. Its offspring are today forming the first packs in Grisons, in the Calanda region, and in Ticino. Since 2005 individual bears have continually roamed into Switzerland from Trentino through the mountains of Grisons. The otter, whose fur was used as headgear until well into the 20th century, is the last of the quartet to return. “What’s really surprising,” explains Christof Angst, “is that the quality of our waters is now so good that the otter can breed here again.”

The otter has come home, proving how much the condition of the waters has improved. Wolves are back, un-



The M13 bear, photographed in Engadine in April 2012, migrated from Italy and was shot in February 2013

derlining just how much the forests destroyed by charcoal burning in the 19th century have recovered. The return of the wolf nevertheless divides society. Wildlife biologists and urban nature-lovers are delighted, but sheep and mountain farmers are furious. Those who are pleased obviously include the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) which has been observing the wolf's return for years: "Wolves are an asset for Switzerland," remarks Martina Lippuner of the WWF. Their increasing numbers are changing the balance in the Swiss animal kingdom for the better, she says. The settlement of wolves means an improvement in mountain forests in particular. These forests, which also protect valley communities against avalanches, have been adversely affected by extremely high numbers of deer in many places. Deer eat the shoots of young trees on a large scale, damaging the vitality of the forests. "The deer are becoming more timid due to the presence of wolves and are behaving in a way more appropriate to their species. "That is having a positive impact on young forests," indicates Lippuner. The lynx had a similar effect to wolves 20 years earlier in the Bernese Oberland.

Using the shotgun against the "wolf problem"

The lynx, the silent hunter on soft paws, is also flourishing. Lynx numbers have already climbed to around 200 adult animals, which means the authorities responsible occasionally intervene with corrective measures. Animals are caught and released elsewhere – such as in Germany or Slovenia – without making any headlines. It is a very different story with wolves. The question of how many of these predators confined Switzerland can sustain has been at the heart of fierce debate for years. The outcry

A wolf photographed in May 2013 in Obergoms in Valais



Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf

"My, what a big mouth you have, grandmother." "All the better to eat you with!" The wolf had scarcely finished speaking when he jumped from the bed with a single leap and ate up poor Little Red Riding Hood. As soon as the wolf had satisfied his appetite, he climbed back into bed, fell asleep and began to snore very loudly.



is particularly loud in Valais where herds of sheep until now spent the summer on the Alps without shepherds or protection. This is not altered by the fact that federal government invests three million Swiss francs a year in the protection of herds despite a situation where damage caused by wolves – around 300 sheep attacked a year – only amounts to around 150,000 Swiss francs on average.

Relaxing protection of the species?

Those opposed to wolves are now trying to force Switzerland to leave the Bernese Convention, the species protection agreement supported by 42 European countries. This would mean the wolf losing its protected species status, allowing it to be hunted. The association known as Lebensraum Schweiz ohne Grossraubtiere (Swiss habitat without large predatory animals) is vehemently campaigning for this. The wolf "simply no longer has a place here" says Georges Schnydrig, the association's president. He is also opposed to livestock guardian dogs whose task it would be to protect herds from wolves. Such protected herds would not be in keep-

ing with the "traditional self-perception" and would present new problems in tourist regions. Having "snarling guard dogs" blocking the path of tourists is not a feasible option, in his view. Alleviating people's fear of wolves is also an impossible task. "Our children are growing up with computers and cannot suddenly be expected to deal with wild animals again," says Schnydrig. The return of the wolf is therefore "out of the question". While in mountain regions the wolf signifies the loss of civilisation, urban nature-lovers like to see in them a warning against excessive civilisation.

The homecoming affects everyone

The federal hunting inspector Reinhard Schnidrig (see interview) advises against drawing city-countryside boundaries: "The return of the wolf will have implications for us all." Sheep farmers now face a significant challenge, he says. However, the wolf will not remain in the mountain regions. "It will also roam into central Switzerland," points out Schnidrig. Urban Switzerland, in particular, where the alpine region is heavily used as a "recreational arena", will be faced with

changes: “People from the city with little direct experience of nature will suddenly find themselves confronted with real animals when hiking or mountain-biking, most likely a livestock guardian dog that will bare its teeth and defend its sheep.” The hunting inspector said his most difficult task two years ago was ensuring objective debate about wolves in his home canton of Valais. Today he faces an additional problem: “The difficulties presented by city dwellers who are not prepared for dealing with the consequences of the return of wolves.”

Around 30 wolves are today roaming the Swiss Alps. Asked what that figure could rise to, Schnidrig replies: “Leaving aside people and their needs, Switzerland has space for around 300 wolves or some 50 to 60 packs. “That’s ecologically feasible.” However, if the question is how many wolves are required to ensure the

survival of the wolf population in the Alps over the long term, the answer is: “Around 125 packs between Nice and Vienna of which 15 to 20 would be found in Switzerland.” What is socio-politically feasible – in other words, the answer to the question of how many wolves people consider

An otter on a log in the river Sihl in the canton of Zurich

acceptable – lies “somewhere in-between”.

Countless endangered species

A further question: Is the reappearance of the lynx, wolf, bear and otter evidence of Switzerland’s fauna



“Large predatory animals remind us of where we come from.”

“Swiss Review”: Once extinct animals are returning to Switzerland. That has to be good news for you, doesn’t it?

Reinhard Schnidrig: Most certainly. However, the good news began with the introduction of the first Swiss legislation on the forests and hunting in 1876. Switzerland was responding to the major biodiversity crisis of the time. Our forests were being overused and the wildlife overhunted. There were no deer, ibexes, wild boar or roe deer left.

The return of the predators does not come as a surprise to you then?

From a long-term perspective, it is an entirely logical development. Short-term it is remarkable. When Switzerland put wolves under protection 25 years ago, nobody anticipated that they would return within a few years or that we would have to consider how to deal with damage caused by wolves.

Sceptics say that confined Switzerland cannot sustain any large predatory animals. Wolves have more room to roam in the Carpathian Mountains.

The notion that wolves are better suited to Siberian expanses or Carpathian forests is incorrect. Large predatory animals also play a key role in the structure of fauna here. But above all,

we share – as part of a family of countries – a common habitat in which we wish to adopt a unified approach to protect the species which have a right to live in their ancestral habitats. This also applies to wolves – if they find a habitat in Switzerland, they have a right to live there.

Not everyone sees it that way.

Think about it on a small scale. What would happen if farmers in Fricktal suddenly declared that wild boar would be better suited to regions where fewer crops susceptible to damage are grown. How could this unreasonable request be conveyed to the wild boar? What about the other farmers? The example shows that we require a unified approach to the protection and management of wild animals that roam extensively and can potentially cause damage.



Wildlife biologist Reinhard Schnidrig, head of the wild animals and forest biodiversity unit at the Federal Office for the Environment, provides an insight into the habitat of predatory animals and their coexistence with humans

Could the demand for an “alpine region with no large predators” not actually be met then?

This demand is illusory. This option no longer exists. If we were to decide to keep Switzerland free of large predatory animals, such a proposal could not be implemented. The ani-



being intact? Martina Lippuner from the WWF does not believe so. The red list of flora and fauna at risk in Switzerland is “constantly growing”. The population size of many animals is “in clear decline”. Natural diversity should not just be measured by the number of ani-

mals but instead by the diversity of habitats in particular. No all-clear is given here either.

In fact, quite the opposite, according to Reinhard Schnidrig: “Humans have taken many types of habitat away and radically transformed them, such as through urban development

There are supposedly around 200 lynxes in Switzerland. They are very shy and rarely sighted

or intervention in bodies of water. “There are lots of losers in the animal kingdom,” he says. It is particularly striking how the straightening of rivers and intensive use of hydropower has changed Switzerland’s waters: “They have been drained over the course of the past 100 years.” The once extensive marshlands, flood plains and wet mountain meadows have all but disappeared.

This is having dramatic consequences. 40% of all Swiss nesting birds are endangered. As many as 80% of all amphibians are deemed at risk in “drained” Switzerland. It is nevertheless the wolf that is stirring emotions.

MARC LETTAU IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

mals would come in any case. Those who hold out this illusion are acting unfairly towards our sheep farmers: We have to help them to change their mindset and, in their own interests, come to terms with the wolf staying.

Many people are simply terrified of wolves, though.

Throughout human history wolves have been met with either adoration or fear and hatred. The mythology masks the experience that people and wolves actually coexist really well. The wolf clearly also always represents a certain wildness. We definitely move differently and more carefully when we cross a landscape where we know large predators live.

So, Switzerland should become wilder to teach us humility?

The primitive nature of wild landscapes contrasts starkly with the almost acid green that is found in many parts of Switzerland. From this perspective, we need the wild. The large predators not only convey a sense of wilderness, they also remind us of where we come from.

So, where is that then? From forests full of snarling beasts of prey?

We can look back on one and a half million years of human history. We have only been farming the land and living in towns for 10,000 years. That is a tiny fraction. We have lived through most of our history with wild animals, fearing, revering, hunting and eat-

ing them. Mankind’s behavioural repertoire emerged in that world, not in the digital age.

You think in large spans of time. What do you see when you look forward a mere 50 years?

The habitats of wolves and deer will expand because man will abandon certain areas. Wolves and lynxes will populate our country on a fairly widespread basis. I’m not sure about bears. The adventure of the bear has only just begun. There will be more vultures, beavers and otters.

That would practically complete the indigenous animal family?

In 100 years from now Switzerland will only be missing a few animals from the period when Europe was wild. There is little chance of the moose returning, though. They would clearly not find the extensive river landscapes. The reappearance of the bison is also unlikely. But we can anticipate seeing the jackal.

Excuse me? Is the jackal part of Switzerland’s fauna?

As far as the jackal is concerned, we’re talking about a “natural expansion of its area”. This is related to climate change and the lengthy absence of the wolf. The jackal is expanding its territory from south-eastern Europe into the area north of the Alps. It will soon enrich Switzerland, too.

INTERVIEW: MARC LETTAU

Concordance – a synopsis with question marks

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

First of all, three observations on the Swiss federal parliamentary elections in autumn 2015. Since the introduction of proportional representation in 1919, never has a party won such a large share of the vote as the Swiss People's Party (SVP), which secured almost 30%. That is a fact worthy of being described as historic.

Secondly, despite everything, in the main things remained within Swiss norms, even at these elections.

Maximum gains and losses of just under 3% are nothing out of the ordinary even in Switzerland's stable political landscape. It was a different story in terms of the gain of seats. Eleven additional seats for the SVP, a 20% increase – that is undoubtedly remarkable (for a major party). This outcome is explained not least by favourable circumstances with the distribution of the remaining seats, known as “proportional luck”. A familiar picture nevertheless emerged with regard to turnout. Just under half of those eligible cast a vote.

Thirdly – and most importantly – these elections have not proven decisive for the major issues facing the nation, indeed quite the opposite. What will happen regarding relations with the EU, international law and the supranational institutions that implement human rights law remains open as either-or decisions require a further turn of the screw. Why is that? Quite simply because the positions held by the second-largest party in the alliance of the “conservative” National Council majority, the Free Democrat-Liberal Party (FDP), on the issues mentioned contrast starkly with those of its partner to the right. They tend to be more laissez-faire and rather complex.

What does that mean for the next four years? The short-term forecast is straightforward. The SVP will in all likelihood obtain its desperately sought-after second Federal Council seat, and Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, despite performing well, will not be part of Switzerland's next government. The decisive factor here is not the position of the FDP but the fact that the severely reduced “centre” (CVP and GLP, above all) is not united in support of Widmer-Schlumpf's third term in office – the condition which would have to be met to seal victory for the Fed-



eral Councillor from Grisons is therefore null and void.

A medium-term prognosis is not too difficult either. It can be defined simply by the voting ratio on Switzerland's most powerful executive body. On all the issues that concern the nation's relationship with international or transnational legal obligations and treaty communities, such as the extremely importunate problem of certainty over the previously predictable viability of the bi-

lateral approach between Switzerland and the EU, voting in the Federal Council might no longer be 1:6, but instead 2:5 or even 3:4. However, the majority (regardless of the SVP's electoral success in 2015) will continue to lie with the “centre-left” – to once again use this actually unsuitable categorisation.

What is the upshot of this analysis? As the FDP has clear commitments, it needs no further discussion. Consideration should instead be given to whether the SVP finds itself in a cul-de-sac that is uncomfortable for both itself and our nation. With its policy of high-risk and ruthless renationalisation of state sovereign powers and all its strategic issues in terms of foreign policy, it can unquestionably count on a third of the electorate. That constitutes a veto power which has continually been deployed during this decade – in directly democratic referenda – as part of Switzerland's isolationist model and which the party promotes and defends with increasing tenacity.

To pursue such an approach is nonetheless only possible at the expense of any substantive concordance which in its time, when the magic formula was created in 1959, was a self-evident requirement. In short, arithmetical concordance, which the SVP will successfully call for at the Federal Council elections in December, is essentially nothing short of the denial of the form of concordance that characterised Switzerland during the post-war period and saw it flourish. But, given that the recipe for success put forward by the SVP, Switzerland's most strongly supported party by far, as previously mentioned, is the exact opposite of this, we must brace ourselves, whether we like it or not, for difficult times and major turmoil.



ELECTIONS
2015

Switzerland shifts to the right

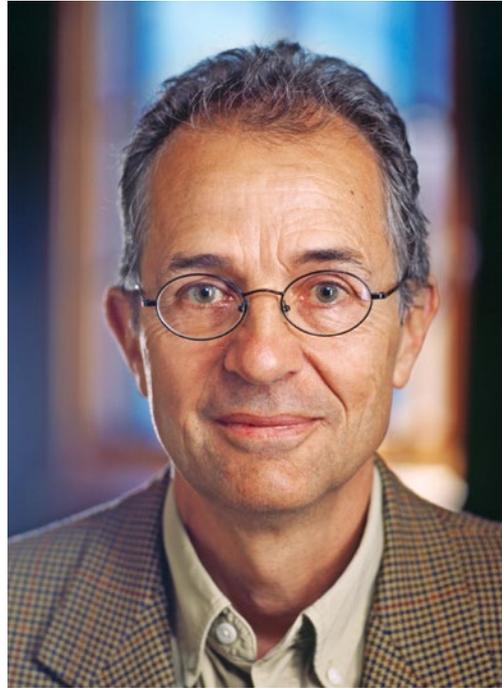
The Swiss People's Party (SVP), the largest political party, made significant gains while the small centre parties lost ground, with the left also emerging weakened from the federal elections.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Switzerland's political landscape is much changed after the parliamentary elections of 18 October 2015 – the 50th in the nation's history. The anniversary elections also proved historic as a single party has never achieved such a strong position in the National Council since the introduction of proportional representation in 1919. The SVP's overwhelming electoral triumph was topped off by the no less important increase in support for the Free Democrat-Liberals (FDP). Virtually all the other parties essentially collapsed. The election result is particularly bitter for the new centre parties which were amongst the winners at the last election in 2011. These are the Swiss Conservative Democratic Party (BDP), which split off from the SVP, and the Green Liberals (GLP).

The winners: SVP and FDP

■ The SVP increased its share of the vote to 29.4%. At the last election in 2011, its share fell to 26.6%, which meant it had lost ground for the first time since 1987. It has now won no fewer than 11 additional seats in the



National Council, making it the biggest party by some distance with 65 representatives. Two personal stories are indicative of events. The SVP candidate and newcomer to politics Roger Köppel, the publisher and editor-in-chief of "Weltwoche", enters the National Council with the highest personal number of votes in Switzerland ever. And the Blocher era con-



Tim Guldemann (left) and Roger Köppel provided surprise results: Guldemann, a member of the SP, was elected to the National Council as a Swiss citizen abroad, while Köppel, from the SVP, secured the highest election result of all time, garnering 178,090 votes

tinues in female form. Christoph Blocher's daughter Magdalena Martullo-Blocher, CEO of Ems-Chemie, has been elected to the National Council.

■ The FDP succeeded in turning its fortunes around after a 30-year period of decline. Its share of the vote increased from 15.1 to 16.4%, and it now has 33 seats, having gained three.

More candidates, more lists

A National Council seat must be a really attractive proposition. Never before have so many men and women shown the desire to take on the onerous task of an election campaign. According to figures provided by the Swiss Federal Chancellery, 3,788 candidates (compared with 3,458 in 2011) stood for election in the 20 cantons with proportional representation, representing a 9.5% increase. In addition, a further 14 candidates stood in the six cantons with a majority voting system, each of which is allocated just one National Council seat (Appenzell-Ausserrhoden, Appenzell-Innerrhoden, Obwalden, Nidwalden, Glarus and Uri). In total, 3,802 people sought a National Council seat.

The proportion of female candidates rose slightly compared to 2011, climbing from 32.8% to 34.5%. Since 2007, the figure has remained at around a third. The number of lists in the cantons with proportional representation has also increased, rising from 365 in 2011 to 422 lists.

A Swiss Abroad elected for the first time

The interest from the Swiss Abroad in a National Council seat declined slightly compared to the last election. This year 56 Swiss Abroad stood for election compared with 73 in 2011. Various parties offered "international lists". The SVP, which had international lists in 10 cantons, was ahead

in this respect. An element of disillusionment may explain the waning interest. While the political significance of the Swiss Abroad has grown since the introduction of postal voting in 1992, the chances of election have remained slim as most candidates are virtually unknown. The exception was the Social Democrat Tim Guldemann, a resident of Berlin who was a high-profile crisis situation diplomat and ambassador at important posts until his retirement in Germany in May 2015. He pulled off a coup in no time by becoming the first genuine Swiss citizen abroad ever to be elected to the National Council.

(JM)

■ The Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP) remains the second-strongest party with its share of the vote remaining absolutely stable (2011: 18.7%, 2015: 18.8%), but the party lost three seats. Even Andy Tschümperlin, the chairman of its parliamentary group, was voted out in the canton of Schwyz.

■ On the left, the Green Party was dealt a blow. It was already one of the losers at the last election, and its share of the vote has now fallen from 8.4% to 7.1%. The Greens now have just 11 seats as opposed to 15.

■ The CVP also lost ground as part of the downward trend of the centre parties. The party, which has a rich tradition, saw its share of the vote slip from 12.3% to 11.6%. Having lost just one seat, the party escaped with a black eye and now has 28 representatives. It nevertheless suffered its worst election result of all time.

■ The Swiss Green Liberal Party (GLP) had a major setback, especially in light of its spectacular gains in 2011 when it increased its number of seats from 3 to 12 after securing 5.4% of the vote. It has now slipped back to 4.6% and has seen its number of seats, now standing at 7, almost halved.



Presidents of the conservative parties await the election results: Toni Brunner (SVP), in front, and behind him Philipp Müller of the FDP

■ The Swiss Conservative Democratic Party (BDP), the party of Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, which was also amongst the winners in 2011, endured losses too. Its share of the vote dropped from 5.4 to 4.1%, with its seat count falling from 9 to 7.

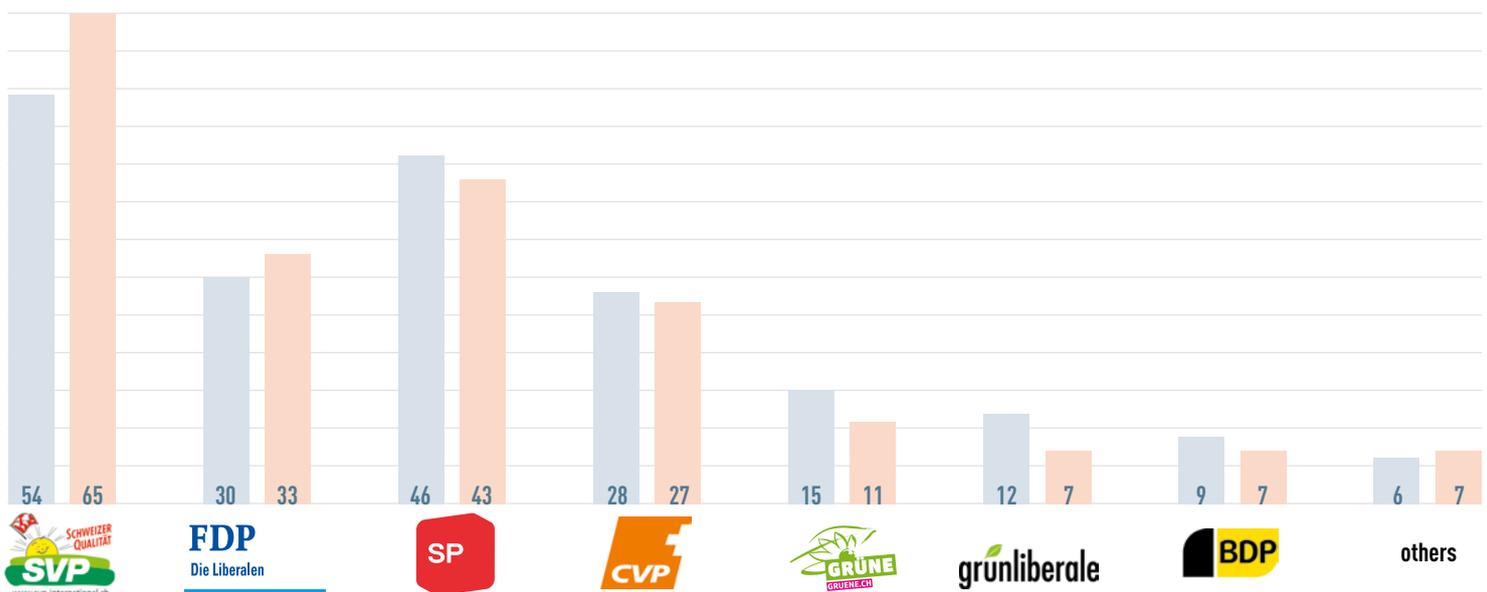
The conservative camp regroups

The spectacular election victory of the SVP and FDP is further accentuated by the fact that the right-wing conservative block in the National Council, in-

cluding the small right-wing parties Lega dei Ticinesi (2 seats) and Mouvement Citoyens Genevois (1 seat), now has an absolute majority with 101 seats. However, that does not mean an automatic majority. This majority may be significant in economic, social and tax policy issues, but it is meaningless in other areas. The FDP's position differs greatly from that of the SVP over policy on Europe as the Free Democrats firmly support the bilateral approach.

However, one thing should not be forgotten as regards the election result:

The distribution of seats on the National Council before and after the elections of 18 October 2015



Switzerland has always been a typically conservative country with a clear conservative to right-wing majority. The political landscape was previously dominated by the once powerful Free Democrats and the no less dominant Catholic Conservatives, the CVP's predecessor party, in alliance with the smaller Farmers', Trades' and Citizens' Party (BGB, today the SVP). The political forces have now regrouped after a process lasting many years. The right-wing conservatives are hugely strengthened today in the form of the populist, right-leaning SVP and are thus following a Europe-wide trend.

The collapse of the centre parties is primarily explained by their lack of clear profile. They were also unable to join forces with the CVP. The surge of the Green Liberals and BDP may also turn out to be a flash in the pan. There have always been parties in Switzerland that have achieved remarkable success for a period before disappearing again. A shining example is the Alliance of Independents.

The current refugee crisis and the consequent accentuation of immigration policy proved disastrous for the SVP's rivals. All other areas of politics, such as environmental issues, withdrawal from nuclear power and social matters, were overshadowed, and this also had an adverse impact on the Greens' electoral performance. Uncertainty over the future of the economy probably brought the FDP votes, attracting many people to the business-oriented party with its long tradition.

Stability in the Council of States

A second round of voting will be required in many cantons: 19 seats were not allocated in the first round.

The final party-political make-up of the Federal Assembly will not be decided until the still pending second round of voting, required in 12 cantons for the Council of States, has taken place. Only 27 of the 46 seats were awarded on 18 October. The Free Democrats secured eight seats, the CVP seven, the SP six and the SVP five. Thomas Minder, an independent candidate from Schaffhausen and the figure behind the successful fat-cat initiative, was also re-elected. The CVP and Green Liberals each lost a seat.

The situation in the Council of States is generally very stable; no huge shifts are anticipated nor significant moves to the right, like in the National Council. However, it is very possible that the FDP will challenge the CVP's

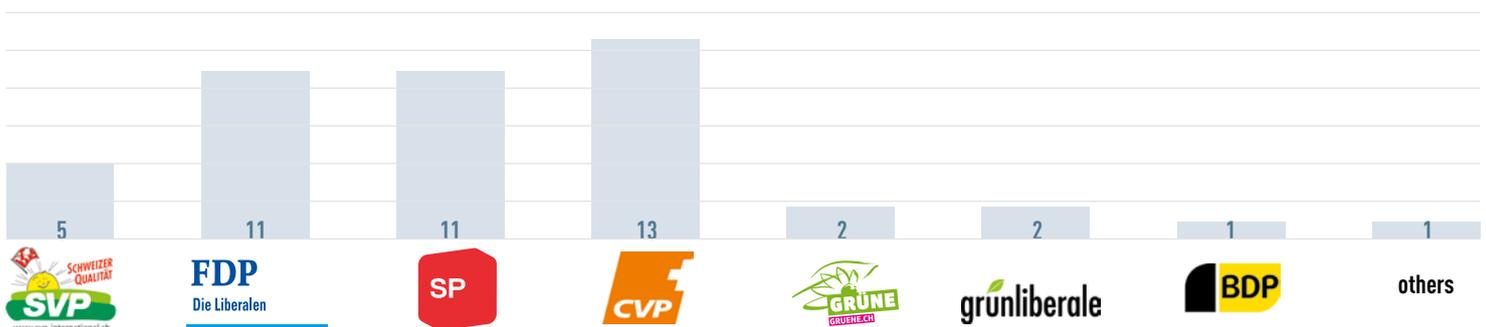
traditionally dominant position. It remains to be seen whether the SP can hold the 11 seats it won four years ago in the subsequent rounds of voting. There are nevertheless some realistic chances of success: The SP candidate Daniel Jositsch surprisingly secured election in the first round of voting in Zurich. The SVP can also hold out hope of making gains. However, in the canton of Berne National Councillor Albert Röstli, the head of the SVP's national election campaign, only finished in third place behind the current Council of States members Werner Luginbühl (BDP) and Hans Stöckli (SP). The SVP generally finds it more difficult to win seats in elections based on majority voting systems and personality. (JM)

Tensions run high over the Federal Council elections on 9 December

The complete re-election of the Federal Council promises to be exciting. The victorious SVP is demanding a second Federal Council seat. This may happen if it puts forward moderate candidates. The election will be made easier if Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf decides not to stand for re-election. The Federal Councillor elected in 2007 is under tremendous pressure owing to the poor performance of her party, the BDP. If she stands again, the SP, Greens, CVP, BDP, GLP and

EVP could attempt to defend her seat. This would be based on the argument that the centre is also entitled to a Federal Council seat. The SVP and FDP are however in favour of a "mathematical magic formula" according to which the three largest parties would each be awarded two seats on the Federal Council and the fourth-largest party one seat in government. That would mean two seats for the SVP, two for the FDP, two for the SP and one for the CVP.

The distribution of seats in the Council of States before the elections of 18 October 2015





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A mountaineer as Mr Europe

His task is to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for Switzerland in Brussels – State Secretary Jacques de Watteville was appointed chief negotiator in the talks with the EU in August.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Dark clothing was prevalent at the Credit Suisse Forum St. Peter in Zurich – epitomising the subtle charm of the banking fraternity. In the middle of the banking quarter, the Zurich banking association held its general meeting on a late afternoon in September. The main speaker was Jacques de Watteville, State Secretary for International Financial Matters since 2013. He presented an overview of Swiss financial diplomacy, outlining what has been achieved altogether thus far and where work still has to be done. The questions raised by the bankers ranged from critical to extremely critical: the Fatca agreement, the automatic exchange of information and stolen banking data were all touched upon. De Watteville was in his element. Relaxed but fully focused, he provided information with extreme precision, always with a smile on his face and sometimes even with a touch of humour. Here was someone who cannot easily be led up the garden path and who enjoys elegantly playing the ball back into the court of the questioner at just the right moment. He is also someone not just familiar with the broad outlines but who knows the details of his portfolio inside out.

Dependable chief negotiator

He will require these abilities even more so in future, as well as his sharp analytical mind, his tenacity as a negotiator and his stamina. The 64-year-old Jacques de Watteville is a keen alpinist (ski touring, mountaineering). He has now also reached the peak of his career professionally.



Jacques de Watteville (left) shortly after being appointed chief negotiator with Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter on the Bundesplatz

The Federal Council appointed the tall, slim senior diplomat with an engaging personal manner as the chief negotiator in the talks with the EU in August. He remains head of the State Secretariat for International Financial Matters (SIF), but now has the task of coordinating the negotiations in the seven different portfolios open with the EU. But it is not simply a question of coordination: “I support the other lead negotiators and, in close contact with them, drive forward the overall negotiations with Brussels as well as their priorities and timeframe,” explains de Watteville.

The Federal Council is aiming for an overall result. However, the bilateral agreements III will only come within grasp if the issues concerning the agreement on the free movement of persons are resolved to the satisfaction of all parties (see the article on the “out of the cul-de-sac” initiative in this issue). Is there any chance at all of a successful outcome to negotiations on this extremely contentious issue? Jacques de Watteville tells “Swiss Review” that he is confident: “Ultimately there has to be a solution because neither the EU nor Switzer-

land can afford to fail. The damage would be too great for both sides.”

Outstanding reputation

There is a great amount of goodwill for de Watteville – including on the EU side. Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament, told SRF radio in September: “The newly appointed chief negotiator seems like someone with enough experience to build the bridges that we have to cross.” That may be diplomatic etiquette but according to the NZZ Jacques de Watteville enjoys “an outstanding reputation in administrative, diplomatic and business circles”. Originally from Lausanne, he studied law and economics and obtained his doctorate in law. His wife is Syrian, he is the father of three children and he has an exemplary diplomatic career behind him: After his studies and undertaking a mission on behalf of the ICRC in Lebanon, he joined the diplomatic service in 1982. He was diplomatic advisor to foreign minister Pierre Aubert and then held posts as secretary, councillor of the embassy and ambassador in London, Damascus, Brussels and Beijing amongst other destinations. He was head of the FDFA's Economic and Financial Affairs Section from 1997 to 2003. In this role he undertook negotiations with the EU, the OECD and the USA and had a major impact on the development of Switzerland's international financial and taxation policy. He was ambassador and head of the Swiss mission to the EU in Brussels from 2007 to 2012. Since holding this post he has been seen as a well-connected expert in the complex mechanics of Brussels.

JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR WITH “SWISS REVIEW”

The emergency plan for policy on Europe

The popular initiative “out of the cul-de-sac” is to be put to the vote. It is intended as “a kind of insurance policy” if the initiative on mass immigration cannot be implemented in a way that is compatible with Europe.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Few people believed it would succeed. However, in mid August, around nine months before the collection deadline expired, those behind the “out of the cul-de-sac” proposal announced that they had achieved the goal of collecting 100,000 signatures. This is significant because the popular initiative demands the rescission of the yes vote on the Swiss People’s Party’s (SVP) initiative on mass immigration of 9 February 2014 or, in other words, the deletion of the applicable article in the federal constitution that aims to allow Switzerland to manage immigration independently through quotas and maximum figures. Such a popular initiative has never been put forward before.

The emergence of the “out of the cul-de-sac” initiative has significantly enriched the debate over Swiss policy on immigration and Europe. Those behind it are promising nothing less than a way “out of the cul-de-sac”. At the same time, they are also adopting a flexible approach. They did not rule out the withdrawal of the initiative even during the collection of signatures. They refer to the proposal as “a kind of insurance policy” or “plan B”: “If the Federal Council and Parliament succeed in putting forward a better solution and implement the initiative on mass immigration without jeopardising the bilateral agreements, we will withdraw our initiative,” says Thomas Geiser, one of the key figures behind the proposal. Geiser is a professor of private and commercial law at the University of St. Gallen.

Such a solution does not seem likely at present. The EU does not appear to be willing to relax the principle of the free movement of persons

for Switzerland. The Federal Council has appointed a chief negotiator in State Secretary Jacques de Watteville (see profile on page 17) and has defined the key tenets of its policy: maintaining the bilateral agreements and the agreement on the free movement of persons but conducting negotiations with the EU on an amendment to the agreement in accordance with the constitutional obligation.

Is the initiative undemocratic?

But what will happen if this approach fails? What if Switzerland is only able to choose between the systematic implementation of the initiative on mass immigration and the bilateral approach? Will the “out of the cul-de-sac” initiative really resolve the issue? Or is it downright undemocratic because it sabotages the will of the people? Political scientist Georg Lutz does not believe so. With a result as tight as that on the initiative on mass immigration it may be entirely reasonable to put the question to the people again in changed circumstances, he remarked on the SRF television channel. Voting several times on the same issue is also nothing new in a direct democracy as this happened with female suffrage and the introduction of proportional representation for the National Council.

The “out of the cul-de-sac” initiative’s chances of success are currently difficult to assess. Thomas Geiser is optimistic: “Collecting the signatures was a very easy task which is an indication of the mood amongst the people.” However, when collecting the signatures the organisers of the initiative focused primarily on French-speaking Switzerland and the urban centres of Ger-

man-speaking Switzerland where the initiative on mass immigration was rejected by the majority. This is one of the initiative’s weaknesses: a cantonal majority, which is required with popular initiatives, will be difficult to attain. There are no powerful associations or political parties backing the initiative. The initiative committee is almost exclusively supported by 400 individuals, including prominent figures such as the artists Pipilotti Rist, Gardy Hutter and Dimitri, the footballer Andy Egli, former President of the Federal Supreme Court Giuseppe Naya and professors Georg Kreis (historian) and Andreas Auer (expert in constitutional law). High-profile politicians are conspicuous by their absence.

“Risky undertaking”

However, support for the “out of the cul-de-sac” initiative may grow depending upon how events unfold. Regula Rytz, Co-President of the Greens, has called the proposal an “important safety net” should “all else fail”. SP President Christian Levrat expressed a similar view but nevertheless believes that supporting the initiative is “a suicide mission because the risk of losing the ballot is so great”. National Councillor Christa Markwalder, a Free Democrat representative on foreign policy and a well-known euro advocate, summed up the situation in the “*Berner Zeitung*”: “I think it’s great that a civil committee has launched such an initiative. But it’s also a risky undertaking. If the Swiss people reject this proposal, we will not have solved the problem but will instead have affirmed it.”

JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR WITH “SWISS REVIEW”

The sea and the vast expanse of Asia were her home

Through her books Ella Maillart allowed countless readers to take part in her journeys all over the world.

CHARLES LINSMAYER

“Except when I was sailing or skiing I felt lost, only half alive.” That sentiment is completely understandable given that Ella Maillart, born on 20 February 1903 in Geneva as the daughter of a fur trader and a Danish sportswoman, excelled in both areas. The twenty-year-old and her friend “Miette” de Saussure sailed in the “Perlette” off Cannes before she headed to the Greek islands on the yawl “Bonita”, spending the entire summer as a deck-hand on British yachts. But she found her enjoyment in single-handed sailing, competing for Switzerland at the Olympic Games in 1924. She was also an outstanding skier and took part in world championships for Switzerland on four occasions between 1931 and 1934.

Travel as an intense way of living

She discovered travel, which she saw as an intense way of living, early on. She was living in Berlin when she received 50 dollars as a gift from Jack London’s widow in 1929, enabling her to set off for Russia to discover for herself what the revolution had done for the people. She returned after six months and was asked to write a travel report by the publisher Charles Fasquelle. “I hate writing,” she replied, to which the publisher retorted “But what an opportunity”, and in 1932 the young woman’s fresh and unabashed report was turned into the bestseller “Parmi la jeunesse russe”. It was received as a sensation in Paris and provoked a scandal in Geneva, but for Ella Maillart herself it was her debut as one of the period’s most-read travel writers.

In the same year she embarked on a journey which she would portray in “Turkestan solo” in 1938 – her trip through Turkestan and Kyrgyzstan to the 7,000 metre-high peaks of Tian Shan. In 1935, she crossed the whole of China and India, together with Peter Fleming in the middle of the Chinese civil war, using routes prohibited for Europeans. Her report in 1937 was entitled “Forbidden Journey”. Fleming had already described the adventure in 1936 in “News from Tartary”, in which he said of his partner’s role: “We both knew that she was the better man, so to speak.”

In 1937, she travelled to India passing through Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, and reported on her experiences in 1938 on a lecture tour. During this she met Annemarie Schwarzenbach who she persuaded to repeat the journey with her by car. The journey in the Ford Roadster in 1939 was Ella Maillart’s most challenging trip of all – she failed valiantly in her attempt to cure her companion’s drug addiction. She left her behind in Kabul and set off alone for India where she remained through the war and explored the “unchartered regions of her own soul” in an ashram. She depicted the journey to Kabul in 1948 in “The Cruel Way”, in which she presented her now deceased friend as Christina.

She returned to Switzerland in 1946 and settled down for the first time. She had the chalet “Atchala” built in the village of Chandolin in Valais at an altitude of 2,000 metres and lived there until her death on 27 March 1997. She continued to travel the world for as long as she could. She stayed in Nepal in 1951 where she wrote the book “The Land of the Sherpas” and gave many visitors an insight into Asia between 1957 and 1987 as a travel guide. “Continually ask yourself the question: Who am I?” she advised her travel companions. “And through this constant seeking it will become clear to you that you yourselves are the light of knowledge.”

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH



“In India I have started on a new journey which, I know, will take me further than before towards the perfect life I was instinctively seeking. To embark upon this journey I firstly had to explore the unknown spheres of my own soul. This venture is as vast as life itself because it requires the analysis of our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual being.” (from “Cruises and Caravans”, 1950)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: “Auf kühner Reise”, (Parmi la jeunesse russe), “Der bittere Weg” (The Cruel Way) and “Verbotene Reise” (Forbidden Journey) are available from Lenos.



Traditional mountaineering roped together in a group is no longer so popular among people who enjoy alpine sports

Traditional mountaineering is in decline

Traditional mountain climbing is undergoing a transformation. Faster mountain pursuits, such as mountain-biking and trail running, in addition to climate change, are altering the face of Alpine sport

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Who wants to set off for two days or more into the Alps with climbing partners to scale a long-coveted peak after waiting weeks for good conditions on the ascent? The traditional culture of “slow” mountaineering is losing ground to increasingly varied and fast-paced activities, such as trail running – running events or mara-

thons in the mountains – and mountain-biking.

A well-known figure in the mountain scene in Geneva, Bernard Wietlisbach, the owner of the Cactus Sports store, has been observing these changes since 1986, when he set up his small business in a garage. “A lot of the equipment we sell here could be used to climb a mountain –

Mont Blanc or a 4,000-metre peak. 95% of the time, our gear is bought for sport climbing,” explains the mountaineer, who has scaled the Grandes-Jorasses.

But there is a huge difference between climbing a rock face or an indoor wall and a north-face expedition. In Bernard Wietlisbach’s view: “The change is rooted in our society.”

“We are living in an age where everyone wants everything instantly. People are no longer willing to wait for good conditions on an ascent. A lazy mentality has set in which refuses to accept uncertainty and the possibility of defeat.”

Less spirit of adventure

The notion of climbing without a map and route description has almost become heresy. “If there is no information available on the route or if details cannot be accessed online, it is almost as though it does not exist,” remarks the climber. He has no doubt that the number of people mountaineering is falling sharply. However, there has been a significant rise in the number of people embarking on one single ascent in the mountains over the years. There has also been a ten-fold increase in hiking, ski-touring and snowshoeing.

“Swiss Review” enquired about the decline in mountaineering on www.camptocamp.org (“C2C”) – an international mountaineering website of Swiss origin which has over 44,000 contributors – prompting almost 100 responses or comments (Link to the online forum at the end of the article). In this historically masculine sport, which some have seen as the height of manliness, it was a woman who was amongst the first to express her views.

Easy routes preferred

Violette Bruyneel, a French physiotherapist, has been mountain climbing since the age of ten. She first states that mountaineering is becoming concentrated in certain locations which are easy to access and well-documented online. Ascents with short approach routes are becoming increasingly popular. “Today, mountaineers like to have a good balance between the approach route and



Hörnlihütte

“People are mountaineering less,” remarks Kurt Lauber, who has looked after the Matterhorn hut for 21 years

Born in Zermatt, 54-year-old Kurt Lauber completed his 21st season as the warden of the Hörnlihütte in September 2015. Lauber, who has taken part in 3,000 mountain rescue operations, talks about the Matterhorn and the change of mentality in mountaineering.

“The mentality has changed greatly in the 30 years I’ve been climbing mountains. The first thing that strikes me is a tendency to pass the buck. If something goes wrong on the ascent to the summit of the Matterhorn, whether it is rockfalls or the weather turning bad, a third party is always blamed, even though that is absurd. This attitude did not exist in the past. Another change is in the perception of danger. Twenty years ago, journalists presented this ascent as being easy and the number of accidents was high. That has changed, which is a welcome development, as the Matterhorn has killed between 500 and 600 people since the first ascent in 1865 and is one of the hardest peaks in the Alps. Today, the number of ascents embarked upon with a guide has doubled, reaching 80 % of attempts on the summit. This is helping to reduce the number of accidents.

“I believe the number of people participating in mountaineering is falling overall, although this is not the case with the Matterhorn, which sees around 3,000 ascents a year. It’s a general trend in sport in an age in which parents and children spend more time in front of a computer than in the outdoors. The figures on the use of the huts do not tell the whole story because lots of people who stay in them do not go on to climb a summit.

“Finally, the approach adopted by professional mountaineers has completely changed over the past ten years – climbing has become a race with flag-bearers like Ueli Steck, Dani Arnold and Kilian Jornet (who climbed the Matterhorn in under three hours setting off from Cervinia). This approach to climbing is not bad in itself but I’ve told the three of them that they have to make it absolutely clear to the public that this is reserved for professionals. The reality is that traditional mountaineering involves risks. One way of reducing them is to climb with a guide, but it’s expensive – that’s the dilemma people have to deal with.”

Located on the north ridge of the Matterhorn, the Hörnlihütte was renovated as part of the 150th anniversary of the ascent of the Matterhorn. As it is more comfortable (it has showers) and more expensive than before, with 130 beds compared to 170 previously, it will restrict the number of ascents to the summit. According to the hut’s managers, this will improve climbers’ experience of the mountain.





Mountain bikers on the Monte Rosa circuit



Mountain marathon on the Eiger Ultra Trail 2015

technical challenges. They are more apprehensive about unknown factors and physical exertion than before," she believes. Most mountain climbers today want "moderate terrain in terms of safety but also perfect weather conditions and ideally a comfortable mountain hut which provides information about local conditions online", says the Frenchwoman. She also points to a certain amount of male chauvinism in the mountains. "I've lost count of the number of times when leading a rope team, I've received unpleasant remarks or have been confronted by men wanting to explain techniques to me that I'm already familiar with."

Old-style mountaineering has apparently had its day. "My uncles embarked on some incredible challenges in the 1950s with a rope tied around their stomach and a bottle of red wine in their backpack and they didn't even consider themselves mountaineers or hikers, they just enjoyed walking in the mountains," re-

counts one "C2C" user. The perception or acceptance of danger has changed. "Even if practised carefully and correctly, this sport entails the acceptance of a certain element of risk," says another. As a result there has been a decline in mountaineering as well as the time dedicated to it. "Visiting a climbing rock with in situ protection 15 minutes away from the car park where 4G internet access is also available is much more in keeping with the current age," says the same website user, who ironically refers to himself as an "old fogey".

The appeal of "a light load" and gliding and sliding

Proclaiming his love of ski-touring and ice climbing, another participant points out that "these pursuits can be enjoyed in a day or a half-day in splendid scenery with slightly less risk than mountaineering". The adventurous version of this sport combines technical and psychological challenges. "The

Huts and figures

The use of mountain huts remains steady

Most mountaineering ascents go via a hut. However, by no means all those staying overnight at huts are on their way to climb a summit. In Switzerland, the number of nights spent in huts, which can vary significantly depending upon the season, has remained above 300,000 a year since 2003. The Swiss Alpine Club has never had so many members (over 143,000 at present), but the growth rate fell below 2% in 2014 for the first time in 10 years. Furthermore, there has been a slight fall in the number of young people in the club and 46% of its members are aged over 50.

Another figure: the number of deaths in the mountains has fallen in line with "the improvement in equipment, weather forecasting and rescue operations", according to Ueli Mosimann, who is responsible for the statistics on distress situations at the Swiss Alpine Club. "More people are visiting the mountains but they are not necessarily mountaineering," adds Mosimann. In 2013, this sport saw 21 fatalities in Switzerland compared with 71 in 1985 and 40 in 1994. By comparison, 39 people died while hiking in 2014, a figure close to the average number of deaths in this activity over the past 30 years, which stands at 44.

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Ueli Steck, a Swiss extreme mountaineer, trail running on the Eiger



Slacklining on a tubular tape is the latest trend in the mountains

actual risks of the mountain – crevasses, falling seracs and falling rocks – are greater than in sport climbing,” underlines the same mountain enthusiast. Another obstacle is the physical fitness and acclimatisation required for the long traditional ascents which can take 10 to 15 hours. “Mountaineering at a certain level requires experience, equipment and readiness to cope with the vagaries of the weather,” says another “C2C” member.

More profoundly, the change in mountain pursuits is “related to the surge in lightweight activities offering direct emotion without the complex logistics of mountaineering” according to one climber. “Who wants to spend a week organising everything, getting agitated and dealing with a whole host of finicky equipment issues and then start over again at the weekend to embark on an ascent?” This approach is becoming increasingly less acceptable for a large number of people who enjoy scaling peaks.

Global warming is having a major impact on the mountains

Finally, there is the impact of climate change. On the Mer de Glace in the Mont Blanc massif, for example, the descent on ladders to the glacier has

completely changed over 20 years, having a significant impact on access time. Routes have changed everywhere: exits have become longer or more complex and thawing permafrost is increasing the number of rock falls. These changes in the Alpine region are encouraging mountaineers to undertake tours earlier in the season or in winter to find suitable snow and ice conditions. “Retreating glaciers, ice disappearing from rock faces, landslides and rock falls have all emerged in the space of a generation. It is incredible and may put participants off,” remarks one website user.

STÉPHANE HERZOG IS AN EDITOR WITH “SWISS REVIEW”

Link to the online forum: www.camptocamp.org/forums/viewtopic.php?id=280238

New types of sport

Faster and lighter – the appeal of the new sports

A large number of users who voiced their views on the camptocamp website more or less agree that there has been a decline in mountaineering (see figures opposite) but opinion is split over the reasons why. One of the major changes observed is an increase in the types of sport practised in the mountains, starting with trail running, which involves lightly equipped participants running up hills.

Climbing itself has divided into a raft of specialist disciplines – sport climbing in a sports hall or along a via ferrata, climbing in crampons on icefalls or on mixed routes, not to mention canyoning and slacklines suspended over a void.

The mountains are now also explored by mountain bikers. The Swiss Alpine Club has equipped some of its huts for this activity and has just published a dedicated route guide.

Slow climbing “devalued”

Sports involving sliding or gliding, such as paragliding, para-mountaineering, speed-flying, wingsuit jumping, base-jumping, free-riding and ski-touring, are growing rapidly. What these sports have in common is not necessarily the level of risk. “The extreme trail running trend, with minimally equipped runners practising their sport on their own, is devaluing amateur mountaineering, as it is no longer perceived as an elite discipline but is instead seen as using heavy and cumbersome equipment to achieve the same goal,” explains one “C2C” user. “One reason for this decline lies in the very nature of mountaineering – its isolation and the need for mountaineers to be able to cope alone in an unfamiliar environment,” states a respondent called Fredoche.

The Swiss Abroad Act sets out the duties of all parties concerned

The Swiss Abroad Act (SAA) entered into force at the beginning of November. This Act is important to Swiss citizens living abroad because it clearly defines federal government's obligations towards the Swiss Abroad but also their rights and duties.

The Swiss Abroad Act (SAA) resulted from a parliamentary initiative put forward by Filippo Lombardi, the Ticino Council of States member. He spent years fighting for this Act together with Rudolf Wyder, the former Director of the OSA.

The SAA is not actually a new law but instead the unification of all the provisions concerning the Swiss Abroad which were previously distributed across various laws, ordinances and regulations. These include matters such as political rights, welfare benefits, consular protection as well as information and institutional support for the Swiss Abroad. The Act sets out the rights and obligations as well as services and support in a general overview but does not, however,

centralise and unify all aspects. The SAA aims to foster communication between the various authorities as well as between the public and private persons. One example is the Consular Directorate at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Together with the Swiss representations abroad, it will act as a single point of contact for all matters concerning the Swiss Abroad in future.

The SAA applies to both legal entities and individual persons and concerns all Swiss citizens who are outside the country – i.e. not just those who reside abroad but also those staying abroad for a short period, such as on holiday. The principles of subsidiarity and individual responsibility (see box bottom right) are key and expressly mentioned in the Act.

The Swiss Abroad Act in brief

SCOPE OF VALIDITY

The SAA governs the rights and obligations of Swiss citizens abroad, the support of the institutions of the Swiss Abroad, support for all Swiss citizens if they face emergency situations while staying abroad and consular protection for legal entities.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

The SAA declares that individual responsibility is a fundamental principle. Federal government expects all citizens to assume personal responsibility when preparing and undertaking stays abroad or working abroad, to conduct themselves in a risk-appropriate way and to attempt to overcome any difficulties that may arise by their own means.

SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT

The FDFA is the point of contact which Swiss citizens can turn to with questions on issues concerning the Swiss Abroad. This single point of contact notably consists of the FDFA helpline (tel. +41 800 24-7-365) and the Swiss network of representations.

DUTY OF REGISTRATION

It is mandatory for Swiss citizens living abroad to register with the representation re-

sponsible for them (consulate or embassy). Registration is required for the exercising of political rights and now in order to receive welfare benefits.

NOTIFICATION OF CHANGES

The Swiss Abroad must update the personal information provided with their registration at their own initiative. This obligation applies to changes in civil status irrespective of the SAA, pursuant to the Swiss Civil Code. The SAA simplifies the procedure for registering a change of address. Anyone living abroad who takes up a new place of residence in a different consular district only has to register the change of address with one of the two representations which will update the Swiss Abroad register.

POLITICAL RIGHTS

The exercising of political rights by the Swiss Abroad is being simplified, on the one hand: Those eligible to vote no longer have to renew their registration in the electoral roll every four years. On the other hand, persons will be removed from the electoral roll if the voting papers are returned three times consecutively because the recipient could not be reached at the address indicated. Swiss Abroad eligible to vote can now notify their electoral commune of their relin-

quishment of the exercising of political rights. This decision can be revoked at any time. Those newly registering on the electoral roll exercise their right to vote in their last Swiss commune of residence. Nothing changes for persons already registered on an electoral roll. They can also vote in their commune of origin.

WELFARE BENEFITS

The previous provisions governing welfare benefits for the Swiss Abroad have largely been transferred to the SAA. Only those Swiss citizens who are entered in the Swiss Abroad register are eligible to apply. An exception can temporarily be made in urgent cases.

CONSULAR PROTECTION AND TRAVEL ADVICE

The travel advice enshrined in federal law through the SAA is aimed at all Swiss travellers including the Swiss Abroad. When calculating the charges and reimbursement of costs for consular protection support, whether the person concerned has adhered to the recommendations published in the FDFA's travel advice is taken into account. According to the SAA, federal government can now also grant entitlement to consular protection to Swiss citizens abroad during travel outside their country of residence.

The act does not contain anything revolutionary

Individual responsibility

The principle of individual responsibility is a key element of the Swiss Abroad Act. Article 5 stipulates: "Responsibility lies with each person in preparing and undertaking trips abroad or in working abroad." In practice, this means there is no absolute right to consular protection from 1 November. The state will only act in a subsidiary capacity, such as by granting welfare benefits, for example.

If someone acts negligently when preparing or undertaking a journey, a charge will be incurred for consular protection services in future. An example of negligent behaviour is disregarding FDFA travel advice. However, not taking out travel insurance also constitutes negligent behaviour.

Swiss citizens sent abroad by a company must also pay particular attention to this provision. They should check with their employer beforehand whether an insurance policy has been taken out covering staff during stays abroad.

In any case, it is essential that the travel advice on the FDFA website or its helpline is consulted before a journey or stay abroad. (BE)

FURTHER CONSULAR SERVICES

The SAA does not result in any changes with regard to administrative services or other consular services, such as civil status, Swiss citizenship, identity documents, Swiss old-age and survivors' insurance/invalidity insurance and the military registration system.

"Swiss Review": What in your view are the most significant changes involved in the Swiss Abroad Act (SAA)?

Hans Stöckli: One extremely important aspect is that it's now much easier to find out what provisions apply to the Swiss Abroad. Before you had to read countless laws and ordinances whereas today you only have to take a look at the SAA. There's nothing revolutionary about the act but there are nevertheless a few significant changes.

What are they?

They concern political rights in particular. The electoral roll entry no longer has to be updated every four years. However, the option of choosing between the last place of residence and the place of origin for the electoral commune has been eliminated. The reason for this change is that voters residing in Switzerland do not have this choice.

Are there provisions that require particular attention to avoid problems?

Yes, there are. These include provisions on individual responsibility and subsidiarity in particular. Anyone who acts negligently will have to reimburse costs to federal government if he or she requires assistance abroad.

Is negligent conduct defined?

No, it isn't, so we will have to see what happens in practice. Negligence is a complex area of law, and I'm sure there will be court cases sooner or later.

The registration obligation for Swiss citizens living abroad has been contentious for some time. Why is that?

The Federal Council wanted to abolish the registration obligation – which was previously known as matriculation – because there are no sanctions that can be applied against people failing to comply. It was argued that it is not legally tenable to provide for obligations in a law without stipulating a punishment for violation of the



Hans Stöckli is a member of the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP). He was mayor of Biel from 1990 to 2010. He has been a Council of States member for the canton of Berne since 2011 and previously spent eight years in the National Council. He was heavily involved in the drafting of the SAA as a lawyer and as a member of the Political Institutions Committee and President of the "Neue Helvetische Gesellschaft" (New Helvetic Society).

law. I believe registration abroad is important because Switzerland should know how many of its citizens live abroad and where.

One of the major problems facing the Swiss Abroad at the moment is their relationship with the banks in Switzerland. Why does the SAA not contain any obligation for Swiss banks to make their services available to Swiss citizens abroad?

That point was discussed. However, the problem is that federal government cannot oblige any bank to maintain a relationship with someone. Banks are private enterprises and can choose their business partners freely. A possibility might be to oblige Postfinance, which is under federal government ownership, to accept Swiss Abroad as customers. However – and this is where the problem starts – Postfinance would argue that relationships with the Swiss Abroad are not simply business as they would entail significant costs for which Postfinance would have to receive compensation. The question as to whether providing ordinary banking relationships for the Swiss Abroad in their home country is part of public service will be discussed in Parliament shortly as relevant proposals are pending.

INTERVIEW: BARBARA ENGEL

OSA advice

I've been away from Switzerland and have been domiciled abroad for the past few years and have not made contributions to the old-age and survivors' insurance (OASI) scheme. Can I make up for these missing years by contributing when I return to Switzerland? I've heard that contributions can be paid retroactively for a five-year period.

It is no longer possible for those returning from abroad to make retroactive contributions for missing years.

The option of paying contributions retroactively for a five-year period exists but only for people who were subject to OASI contributions during that period, primarily due to being domiciled in Switzerland.

People living abroad are not subject to OASI contributions unless exceptional circumstances apply. They can therefore no longer contribute retroactively for the missing years.

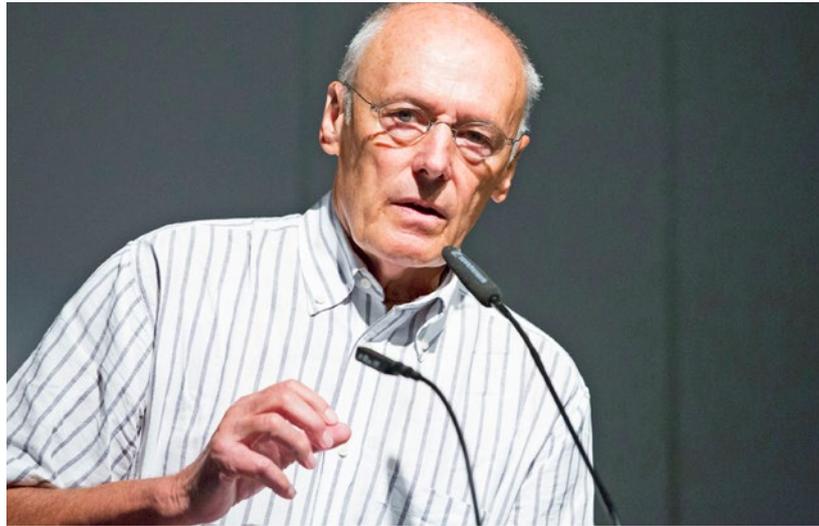
It is advisable to contact your cantonal compensation office for more detailed information before leaving Switzerland. Making arrangements to accrue pension assets - either by taking out optional OASI with the Swiss Compensation Office in Geneva, where possible, or by taking out a private insurance policy - is also recommended.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT OF THE OSA

Swiss compensation Office:
www.zas.admin.ch > Swiss compensation Office SCO

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.

New OSA President



Remo Gysin, who was previously Vice-President, was elected receiving 67 of the 71 valid votes. The 70-year-old from Basel succeeds Geneva's Jacques-Simon Eggly, who had been OSA President since 2007. Council of States member Filippo Lombardi has been appointed Vice-President.

Gysin was a cantonal councillor in the canton of Basel-Stadt from 1984 to 1992 and a National Councillor from 1995 to 2007. He has been a member of the OSA's Executive Board since 2001.

He takes over a challenging task as the OSA has been in some disarray since its long-standing Director Rudolf Wyder stood down at the end of 2013. Around three quarters of the staff at the office in Berne have left the OSA, resulting in a huge loss of expertise. This has also led to criticism from Swiss associations and clubs abroad, which have complained of a lack of support and poor communication.

Remo Gysin is aware of the problems and willing to focus intensively on the OSA. He is also in a position to do so as he no longer holds any professional or political mandates. He is regarded as an analytical thinker and an integrative figure.

The delegates of the Council of the Swiss Abroad met in Geneva on Friday, 14 August, the day before the Congress of the Swiss Abroad, for their second meeting of the year. The most important item on the agenda was the election of the new President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA).

Disappointment over e-voting

The Council of the Swiss Abroad has unanimously adopted a resolution on e-voting. This was triggered by the Federal Council's decision two days before the Council meeting not to permit nine cantons, which had made an application, to use electronic voting at the 2015 elections for security reasons. Instead of the expected 85,000, only 34,000 Swiss Abroad can now exercise their right to vote via the internet.

The Youth Service's winter offers

The Youth Service of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) is offering young people various programmes again this winter. These include two winter camps and a German course in Berne.

German course in Berne
 from 3 to 15 January 2016

Easter camp in Saas Grund
 from 19 to 27 March 2016

Further leisure and educational offers will be published on the OSA's websites on an ongoing basis.

Information and registration:
www.aso.ch > Offers or
www.swisscommunity.org > Youth > Leisure offers

The OSA's Youth Service would be pleased to provide further information on
 +41 31 356 61 00 or via youth@aso.ch

Summer camps for 8 to 14-year-olds

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA) will again be organising various holiday camps next summer for Swiss youngsters abroad aged 8 to 14.

The exact details and the itinerary of the individual camps as well as the registration form will be published in January 2016 at www.sjas.ch and in "Swiss Review" from February 2016. An application for financial support with the camp costs can be made for all camps.

The foundation would also be pleased to send you its information brochure by post upon request. The registration deadline is 15 March 2016.

Summer camps in 2016 – Overview of dates, camp locations and age groups

- Sat 25/6 to Fri 8/7/2016: Stäfa (ZH) for 36 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900
- Sat 25/6 to Fri 8/7/2016: Obersaxen (GR) for 40 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 900
- Wed 29/6 to Fri 8/7/2016: Swiss trip for 24 children aged 12 to 16, price: CHF 950
- Sat 9/7 to Fri 22/7/2016: Venue yet to be decided for 42 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 900
- Sat 9/7 to Fri 22/7/2016: Buochs (NW) for 36 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900
- Sat 23/7 to Fri 5/8/2016: Weggis (LU) for 42 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 900
- Sat 23/7 to Fri 5/8/2016: St-Cergue (VD) for 36 children aged 8 to 12, price: CHF 900
- Sat 23/7 to Sun 7/8/2016: Magglingen (BE) sports camp for 42 children aged 11 to 14, price: CHF 950
- Sat 6/8 to Fri 19/8/2016: Bevaix (NE) for 42 children aged 8 to 14, price: CHF 900

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA), Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND,
Tel. +41 (0)31 356 61 16, Fax +41 (0)31 356 61 01,
email: info@sjas.ch,
www.sjas.ch/en/



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

Frequently asked questions about education in Switzerland

How can I find an internship?

There is no official or central agency for internship places in Switzerland. Finding a suitable internship requires a great deal of initiative. Candidates must proactively search for appropriate places. Internships are also advertised alongside job vacancies on various websites.

Students wishing to go to a university of applied sciences after obtaining their school-leaving qualifications can contact their chosen institution directly. Many offer support with finding internship places either by providing a list of places that may offer internships or by offering information on partner companies. Some of these universities also provide preliminary courses which include internships and support interns during the pre-study placement.

Will my qualifications in Switzerland also be recognised abroad?

A distinction has to be made between professional and academic recognition with regard to the acknowledgement of degrees. Professional recognition is required to practise a profession or for professional accreditation. In contrast, academic recognition is important for admission to further courses of education or post-graduate study.

Professional recognition of a Swiss degree abroad must be verified with the authorities in the country concerned and not in Switzerland. It is generally assumed that courses of study in the EU/EFTA Member States are essentially equivalent. Each EU/EFTA country has a point of contact responsible for the recognition of professional qualifications. http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/qualifications/docs/contact-points/info-points_en.pdf

The vocational qualifications of some professions, such as doctors, dentists, vets, chemists, general care staff, midwives and architects, are subject to specific guidelines.

What opportunities are available to bridge the period between school and education?

It is often actually quite difficult to find a training position directly after mandatory education. This not only applies to young Swiss people abroad but also to many youngsters who have grown up in Switzerland. Various reasons exist for this including, for example, insufficient linguistic knowledge, inadequate general education or the fact that the youngsters have not yet made a definite decision on their education. To provide these young people with more time, many private and public schools run special courses (10th year of school, career preparation courses and integration classes for youngsters speaking a foreign language, etc.). However, these bridging opportunities vary depending upon the canton. It is advisable to find out which bridging option is most suitable at an early stage.

Can I do a medical degree in Switzerland?

Places to study medicine are restricted in Switzerland. This means either that admission is based on a suitability test (in German-speaking Switzerland) or more stringent selection takes place after the first year of study (French-speaking Switzerland). Registration for medical degrees is carried out centrally and electronically and is mandatory. The registration deadline is 15 February 2016.

Candidates must check whether foreign school-leaving qualifications meet the admission criteria before registration.

We also recommend the online self-assessment test for checking a candidate's suitability. More detailed information can be found at www.swissuniversities.ch

Further FAQs and information on education in Switzerland is available at www.educationsuisse.ch or can be obtained directly from the staff of [educationsuisse](http://www.educationsuisse.ch).

RUTH VON GUNTEN, EDUCATIONSUISSE

Federal government's cost-saving programmes

Federal government posted a deficit – for the first time in almost ten years – of 124 million Swiss francs in 2014. Shortfalls running into billions of francs are forecast for 2016 and 2017. The Federal Council is planning cost-saving programmes to prevent this from happening. The FDFA must also make cuts.

The days of plentiful tax revenues are over. Federal government went into the red in 2014 for the first time since 2005. The deficit is primarily attributable to lower revenues in direct federal taxation and VAT. The SNB's net earnings have also decreased due to euro support buying. The federal treasury, which receives a proportion of this income, has felt the impact.

Debt ceiling

The debt ceiling has been adhered to despite the shortfall as this permits a cyclical deficit of 450 million Swiss francs. The fact that federal government has previously avoided running high deficits in the national budget is due to this fiscal regulation introduced in 2003. The debt ceiling ensures that the federal budget's expenditure and revenues are balanced over the long term. It permits a deficit during a recession but requires a surplus during times of economic prosperity. Only in exceptional circumstances can the provision be deviated from and extraordinary expenditure incurred. However, this then has to be made up over the subsequent years. Despite the financial crisis from 2006 to 2013, Switzerland posted budget surpluses and reduced national debt to under 50 % of GDP.

2016 cost-saving measures

As higher revenues are not anticipated over the coming years, the Federal Council has approved cuts to federal government's budget of around 1.3 billion Swiss francs for 2016. According to the Federal Council's stipulations, the FDFA must make a contribution with sav-

ings of 189.3 million Swiss francs. A large proportion of the savings will concern development cooperation. The FDFA must also save 1% of the 2016 budget on personnel expenses.

An extensive, global network of representations is one of the FDFA's top priorities, and it will make every effort to restrict the closure of representations to a minimum. It will therefore focus on the following measures:

- Regionalisation of the consular services and visas for the Baltic states: Transfer of responsibility to the regional consular centre in Stockholm.
- Regionalisation of consular services and visas for Kuwait and Bahrain: Transfer of responsibility to the regional consular centre in Doha.
- Appointment of local staff in certain chancelleries instead of dispatching Swiss personnel.
- Merger of the chancelleries of the Swiss representations in Brussels (embassy, mission to the EU and mission to NATO).
- Additional savings through cooperation with external service providers in the field of visas.
- The planned opening of a consulate general in Almaty will be postponed.
- Promotion of the electronic dispatch of "Swiss Review".

The savings target has not been achieved despite all of these efforts, which is why the Federal Council has felt compelled to close the Swiss embassy in Paraguay and to replace it with an honorary consulate general under the embassy in Buenos Aires. This step was required owing to the relatively high savings target that has to be met in 2016.

2017 to 2019 stabilisation programme

The latest economic forecasts indicate that further savings measures will be required for the 2017 to 2019 financial plan years. The Federal Council therefore adopted a resolution on 1 July 2015 to present a stabilisation programme to Parliament for the three-year period indicated. It intends for this stabilisation programme to enter the consultation process in November 2015. The key figures will be published here as soon as they have been announced.



Phone from Switzerland: 0800 24-7-365
Phone from abroad: +41 800 24-7-365
E-Mail: helpline@eda.admin.ch
Skype: helpline-eda



Travel advice

www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise
Helpline DFAE: +41 (0)800 24-7-365
www.twitter.com/travel_edadfae

itineris 
Online registration for Swiss citizens
travelling abroad

www.fdfa.admin.ch/itineris

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Have you had “Swiss Review” sent to your postal address in the past?

In future, would you prefer to have it delivered electronically and continue to receive six issues?

Register your request on the FDFA’s website www.eda.admin.ch/swissabroad or at the Swiss representation responsible for you.

The address directory for embassies and consulates general can be found here: www.eda.admin.ch > Representations and travel advice.

It is also essential that you register changes to your postal or email address so that you can do not miss a copy of “Swiss Review”.

Have you already subscribed to the electronic version of “Swiss Review” or do you receive the printed version as requested? Then you do not need to do anything else.

The magazine’s website provides access to all electronic issues and further information: www.revue.ch.

“Swiss Review” is also available as an app: iPad and for Android tablets.

If you encounter problems with the delivery of “Swiss Review”, please contact your Swiss representation or the FDFA’s helpline: +41 (0)800 24-7-365, helpline@eda.admin.ch and not the “Swiss Review” editorial team which has no access to your address and administrative data.

Voting

The following four proposals will be put to the vote on 28 February 2016:

- Popular initiative of 5 November 2012 “Für Ehe und Familie - gegen die Heiratsstrafe” (For marriage and family - against the marriage penalty)
- Popular initiative of 28 December 2012 “Zur Durchsetzung der Ausschaffung krimineller Ausländer (Durchsetzungsinitiative)” (For the enforcement of the expulsion of foreign criminals - (enforcement initiative))
- Popular initiative of 24 March 2014 “Keine Spekulation mit Nahrungsmitteln!” (No speculation with foodstuffs)
- Amendment of 26 September 2014 to the Federal Act on Transit Road Traffic in the Alpine Region (TRTA) - renovation of the Gotthard road tunnel

Further voting dates in 2016:

5 June, 25 September and 27 November

Popular initiatives

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

- Initiative for “Mehr bezahlbare Wohnungen” (More affordable homes) - (01/03/2017)

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

FDFA Official Communications Officer:
Peter Zimmerli, Relations with the Swiss Abroad
Bundesgasse 32, 3003 Berne, Switzerland
Tel. +41 800 24 7 365
www.eda.admin.ch, email: helpline@eda.admin.ch

www.swissworld.org

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Well-protected feet

Now, when our feet are starting to get cold again in Europe, is the perfect moment to tell the story of Dan and Galina Witting, two Swiss Abroad. Several years ago when Dan was



working for a Swiss company in Indonesia, Galina, recalling her childhood in Russia, began making felt boots, known as valenki, in her garage. She put her products on display at an exhibition, and a large company gave her an order to supply 700 pairs of felt boots. That moment marked the birth of the company Baabuk and today, just over three years later, Baabuk has a 20-strong workforce in Nepal – where felting is a well-known technique – manufacturing boots, sneakers and slippers in a wide range of varieties. In an email to the editorial team, Dan

Witting explained that Baabuk attaches great importance to environmental protection. The shoes are made from wool and recycled, renewable materials, keeping feet warm and snug at really cold temperatures. Prices range from 50 euros for children’s slippers to 120 euros for sneakers.

BE

Full details about products, the company’s history and shipping can be found at www.baabuk.com



An insight into the very “little freedom” of the Yeniche “Kleine Freiheit” (little freedom) is the title Michèle Minelli and Anne Bürgisser have given to their book about the Yeniche in Switzerland. They dedicate the carefully produced publication particularly to the minority who have not permanently settled. Minelli opts for very personal access to her subjects, but at the same time produces a comprehensive and well-founded portrayal of the 3,000 to 5,000 travellers whose “lit-



tle freedom” sometimes really is very restricted when considered in the clear light of day. The book does more than paint an atmospheric picture. It



also shows change. Minelli carried out her research right at the time when a change of mood was occurring amongst Yeniche travellers. Since their protests in spring 2014, a self-assured generation of younger Yeniche has emerged who are asserting their rights (also see “Swiss Re-

view” 4/2014). Seen from this perspective, the book is an important and carefully compiled contemporary document.

MUL



“Kleine Freiheit – Jenische in der Schweiz”, Michèle Minelli (editorial) and Anne Bürgisser (photos); available in German; Verlag Hier und Jetzt, Baden; 2015, ISBN 978-3-03919-359-2; CHF 49, EUR 49



Polyphonic but harmonious Parliament

Just imagine the scene – a group of visitors suddenly break into song in the middle of the National Council chamber, some of the parliamentary secretaries join in and in the end the liveried ushers, photographers and journalists are also part of an impressively melodious choir which brings the business of Swiss government to a standstill for six minutes. One is tempted to say that there has never been such a movingly polyphonic and harmonious exchange beneath the Federal Palace’s cupola. The omnipresence of Swiss television cameras in the Federal Palace means that non-parliamentarians can now also



share in the musical event. Viewers will see that the apparently flabbergasted President of the National Council, Stéphane Rossini from the SP Valais, had to abandon the agenda as Parliament looked on in amazement and then applauded generously. But what was it actually all about? An attack on Parliament by musicians? The first flash mob to

gather in the National Council? The secret lies with Rossini, who was only feigning surprise. He had organised the event with the Ardent choir as a genuine surprise gift for Council members who will no longer be there next year.

MUL

Link to the National Council choir: www.ardent.ch



Abolishing dual citizenship

The Swiss People's Party (SVP) wants to ban dual citizenship in Switzerland. In three cantons, Basel-Landschaft, Zug and Nidwalden, SVP MPs are calling on the canton to submit a cantonal initiative so the federal government amends the Swiss Citizenship Act accordingly. Lukas Remann, the SVP National Councillor from St. Gallen, has also submitted a motion. He wants to ensure that citizens from countries that do not allow Swiss citizens to hold dual citizenship are in turn not entitled to dual citizenship. The justification of the proposals: dual citizenship undermines loyalty to Switzerland and is detrimental to integration. This opinion is clearly shared by Roland Rino Büchel, the OSA Executive Board member and SVP National Councillor, who asked the Federal Council how many dual citizens are performing military service with the Swiss Border Guard and whether loyalty issues existed. A ban on dual citizenship would be a big blow to the Swiss Abroad: 73 % of the 750,000 Swiss Abroad have dual nationality.

Initiative target reached

Enough signatures have been collected for a vote on the popular initiative "Schweizer Recht statt fremde Richter" (Swiss law instead of foreign judges). SVP President Toni Brunner announced at the beginning of October that his organisation had gathered 110,000 signatures. Those behind the initiative are demanding that national law takes precedence over international law in Switzerland. The initiative primarily seeks to prevent the European Court of Human Rights finding fault with Swiss popular initiatives if they infringe upon international law.

Naturalised citizens integrate better

A study conducted by the universities of Zurich, Stanford and Mannheim, which was supported by the Swiss National Science Foundation, has concluded that naturalised citizens integrate better and more quickly into society. The researchers found that the naturalisation of immigrants acted as a catalyst for integration for all groups analysed – from well educated to poorly educated.

Adrian Frutiger

We have all seen his work – usually unknowingly but almost on a daily basis. Adrian Frutiger is a legendary figure amongst typographers, printers and designers. His most famous creation, the "Frutiger" font, was produced in 1975. He also designed the family of "Univers" fonts and finally the "Astra Frutiger", the typeface used on all traffic signs in Switzerland. Born in 1928 in Interlaken, Frutiger undertook an apprenticeship as a compositor there, attended the school of applied arts in Zurich and went to Paris in 1952. He finally returned to Switzerland – after a highly successful career – to Bremgarten near Berne. He died there in September at the age of 87.



"A people is entirely responsible for who holds power."

PAUL BERTOLLOLY (1892 TO 1972), GERMAN DOCTOR AND AUTHOR

"The SVP is willing to take on additional government responsibility. If they don't give us the Federal Council seat then what is the point of holding elections?"

TONI BRUNNER, SVP PRESIDENT ON ELECTION DAY

"He knows nothing and thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career."

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW (1856 TO 1950), IRISH DRAMATIST AND POLITICIAN

"After 36 years of losing, a small victory is still a triumph."

PHILIPP MÜLLER, FDP PRESIDENT ON ELECTION DAY

"Try not to suit everybody; to please everyone is fatal."

FRIEDRICH SCHILLER (1759 TO 1805), GERMAN POET AND DRAMATIST

"The immigration crisis had a major impact on the election campaign. This is just what the SVP had been waiting for."

CHRISTOPHE DARBELLAY, CVP PRESIDENT ON ELECTION DAY

"First comes eating, then comes morality."

BERTOLT BRECHT (1898 TO 1956), GERMAN DRAMATIST

"The fact that the Federal Council wants to put Switzerland under the control of European judges is a ludicrous policy."

ROGER KÖPPEL, THE NEWLY ELECTED NATIONAL COUNCILLOR AND CHIEF EDITOR OF "WELTWOCHTE"

"It is an old adage that you often have to learn from your enemies in politics."

LENIN (1870 TO 1924),

RUSSIAN POLITICIAN AND REVOLUTIONARY

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