

# SWISS REVIEW<sup>+</sup>

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The magazine for the Swiss Abroad  
June 2015

**The Swiss National Bank's monetary policy  
is highly contentious**

**Everyone is talking about integration but  
nobody really knows how it works**

**Women's football – scant regard paid to the  
Swiss ladies playing at the World Cup**



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# Forecasts in election year

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Switzerland's political analysts were engaged in intense activity on 12 April. The elections in the canton of Zurich caused a buzz of excitement from Romanshorn to Geneva. Everyone wanted to know whether the results in Zurich would provide some indication of the outcome of the parliamentary elections in October. So what did the experts say? Opinion was divided, but they all eloquently explained their stand-

points. In actual fact, nobody knows. What is evident is that the Radical Free Democratic Party (FDP), once a party that formed and underpinned the state, has recovered after being in decline for almost 20 years. That is a pleasing development primarily because in the complex discussions currently taking place over Switzerland's relations with its neighbours in Europe, a strong conservative voice is needed, which, in contrast to the Swiss People's Party (SVP), does not regard the EU as an enemy but instead as a close neighbour and important trade partner with whose destiny Switzerland is closely entwined. Fostering the image of the EU as an enemy and nationalistic self-righteousness will certainly not bring any benefits for Switzerland.

From page 17 onwards, editor Jürg Müller reports on the current state of affairs concerning the implementation of the initiative on mass immigration and the extremely difficult situation facing the Federal Council. The upshot of his analysis, which is clearly a snapshot, is that the Federal Council is attempting to fit a square peg into a round hole.

The "focus" article in this issue tackles the topic of integration. Integration is obviously closely related to immigration and will therefore be a recurrent topic during election year. But what exactly does integration mean? How does someone integrate into a society? Or is it more a question of being integrated by a society? And is everyone expected to demonstrate commitment to integration to the same extent? Our editor Marc Lettau has been searching for answers. His article appears on page 8.

To return briefly to the elections in Zurich, only just over 30% of the electorate turned out to vote on 12 April. This is disappointing because it means a minority decided. With regard to the national election, I wish to remind you that as Swiss citizens abroad you have to be registered on the electoral roll in order to take part in the election. A registration form can be found on page 25.

BARBARA ENGEL, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Cover photo: The Swiss flag in front of the euro symbol at the European Central Bank (ECB). Taken in Frankfurt am Main  
Photo: © Keystone Martin Ruetschi

## Fair and balanced, please

Dear Editor, why do I feel that Swiss Review tends to provide fairly liberal “reportage”, when it should be informing us Swiss Abroad of the ongoing political affairs within Switzerland in a fair and balanced way? There has not been one issue of “Swiss Review” that has looked at conservative ideology even in a rudimentary way. Most of the countries surrounding Switzerland have a liberal or socialist form of government. Could it be that the average Swiss leans more to the right than the left in their political thinking and that for that reason the country has long been a haven of stability and prosperity? I ask you to consider that when Switzerland’s political views are commented on by “Swiss Review” it is done with fairness and balance.

HANSJÖRG FRICK, CANADA

## Who do the politicians think about?

In your editorial “No interest in the people” you hit the nail right on the head. That is exactly how I see the political scene in Switzerland. There are so many important issues to address. But, like everywhere in the world, politicians think firstly of themselves, then of their parties, then of the major companies and industry and then maybe – but really only maybe – of the ordinary people who go to work day after day, clean the streets, dispose of refuse and drive people to work, etc. That is the reality of the situation we currently live in. But the politi-

cians are playing with fire. Perhaps one day the cleaners, refuse collectors, drivers and workers will say enough is enough. What will happen then?

FELIX ROSHARDT, GMUNDEN, AUSTRIA

## Keep up the good work

A big thank-you for the latest edition of “Swiss Review”, which is an extremely interesting read. While your work is certainly not always easy in light of the questions and topics that have to be addressed, I was nonetheless highly impressed by the latest issue. Keep up the good work.

ADRIAN K. H. KESSLER, PENANG, MALAYSIA

## Equal rights for everyone

The Swiss remain citizens of the confederation even when living abroad. It is therefore right that the Swiss Abroad should be represented in Parliament. It is inconceivable for ten percent of the Swiss population not to be granted equal rights by the government.

MAURO MATTIOLI, FRANCE

## Am I dreaming?

Dear Madam, Reading your article makes me think I must be dreaming! Have you really considered the problems experienced by those

## A 27<sup>th</sup> Canton for the Swiss Abroad

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

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living in the EU? The loss of civil liberties owing to the submission of states to European directives, the abandonment of sovereignty and an economic slump. I live in France and will not go into the problems associated with migration. I can only say that voting no longer makes much sense. The party system distorts everything it seeks to organise. While you do not like direct democracy much, it is nevertheless the people's weapon. If the Swiss people think wrongly, you and your party friends believe they have to be changed. Continuing to call this democracy is illogical to say the least.

VÉRONIQUE D'ACORSI-DECAILLET, FRANCE

### I would like to see better representation

I am a Swiss citizen abroad and work in the UK. I do not belong to a political party, I vote regularly and keep myself informed about Swiss affairs. I actually believe I have a much better understanding of what is going on than many of my compatriots living in Switzerland! Switzerland is not an island, but despite lying at the heart of Europe it still appears very isolated and short-sighted to me. I appreciate that Swiss Abroad in Thailand have different concerns to those living in Uruguay, in the UK or wherever else. Policy on Europe and that beyond Europe differ greatly. By way of example, Swiss Abroad in the EU can no longer pay voluntary old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) contributions from the age of 30 – they are forced to have gaps in their AHV cover – whereas outside of the EU people can continue to make voluntary contributions. This results in heavily reduced pensions for Swiss Abroad in the EU. I therefore strongly believe there is a need for the Swiss living in the EU to be represented in Parliament. It is very common nowadays for young people to spend a few years working in the EU. I would be pleased to see their and my interests and rights better represented in Parliament.

CLAUDIA STUSS, ENGLAND

### 20 % in Switzerland without the right to vote

If we consider democracy in Switzerland, the most important thing for starters is that all permanent residents of Switzerland have the right to participate in determining what happens in the country. Unfortunately, over 20 % of Switzerland's permanent resident population is excluded from political participation because they do not possess, for whatever reason, a little red booklet. This is now a much more serious issue than that of the Swiss Abroad deserving representation in Parliament. I would hope that we as Swiss Abroad would like to see an end to this infringement of the political rights of residents (which some of us almost certainly experience ourselves in our adopted countries). I believe campaigning on this issue to be even more important.

ANDREAS BÜRKI, BERLIN

### Urgently needed

Having an authority to deal with the concerns of the Swiss Abroad and to also represent them in Parliament is an absolute necessity. In his 1 August address in Thailand, Federal Councillor Berset emphasised how important the Swiss Abroad are to Switzerland and what a contribution they make on behalf of Switzerland. But this raises the question of what Switzerland does for the Swiss Abroad. In any event, parliamentary representation to take up and seriously represent the issues of the Swiss Abroad is urgently needed.

HERBERT STÄHELI, PATTAYA, THAILAND

## Surviving the winter in two senses



CHARLES LEWINSKY:  
"Kastelau". Verlag Nagel  
und Kimche, Munich 2014.  
398 pages. CHF 35.90,  
around EUR 33.70.

What do you do if you find yourself in Berlin at the end of 1944 where military collapse is imminent and the only thing you want is to save your own skin? The Swiss writer Charles Lewinsky has created an outstanding tragic, comedic novel out of this apocalyptic mood. A team from the film company UFA is commissioned to make a propaganda film in the Bavarian Alps to boost resolve. A motley film crew sets off, and it is – more or less tacitly – clear to everyone that the primary objective is not the film but escape from the witch's cauldron of Berlin.

The real challenges begin in Kastelau. This is the name given to the remote and fictitious small town where they have to survive the winter in two senses. At least they must pretend to. Nobody in the village must suspect that work is not being carried out in earnest on a film to help ensure ultimate German victory. There is also a split amongst the film crew – half are true to the regime, half are deserters. As the Americans approach, the few unenthusiastically filmed scenes must quickly be recut and supplemented so that the Nazi film entitled "Song of Freedom" becomes an heroic documentary about the opposition to the regime. They do not want to fall into the hands of the advancing Allies as a group of Nazi propagandists.

The presence of the film crew turns Kastelau, a conservative village, into a bizarre stage for all the characters found in a dictatorship: ardent Nazis, followers, opponents of the regime, those who cheat their way through and turncoats. Indeed one such turncoat plays a major part in events. Walter Arnold initially enjoyed a career as an actor in Nazi Germany and then as Arnie Walton in Hollywood. The American Samuel A. Saunders picks up the trail of this story, carries out research, discovers papers and conducts interviews. At the start of the book, Charles Lewinsky produces a rather chaotic collage of these – entirely fictitious – documents but they rapidly turn into an increasingly fast-paced novel. What is more, fundamental questions concerning human behaviour in extreme situations are dealt with sublimely and in an entertaining and exciting way despite all the tragedy and drama. Lewinsky, who has already written masterful historical novels such as "Melnitz" and "Gerron", proves himself to be one of the most imaginative authors in the German language in this double-edged work of fiction, "Kastelau", also in terms of narrative technique and plot construction.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

## An Iraqi family scattered all over the world

Samir came to Switzerland from Iraq at the age of six. That was in 1961. He is today one of Switzerland's best-known film directors. Around ten years ago he began conducting research into the life stories of his Iraqi relatives, exploring the destinies of siblings, uncles, aunts and cousins who fled their native country and live dispersed all over the world. "Iraqi Odyssey" is the title of the resultant documentary.

Samir contrasts the images we have of Iraq today – of destroyed, dusty areas of land, bearded fighters, bomb terror and women in black chadors – with those of his recollections. These are images of Iraq from the 1950s to the 1970s, images of a vibrant city with women dressed in western clothing, who studied at university and enjoyed the company of gallant men. Samir himself takes us through his film, which is both a family epic and a history lesson, from the off. The eastern flair for narration and the sense of humour displayed by Samir and his uncle Jamal from London produce an uplifting film despite the often hard lives of the exiles.

BARBARA ENGEL



The director Samir with his sister Hayath in 1958 in Iraq in front of their father's car

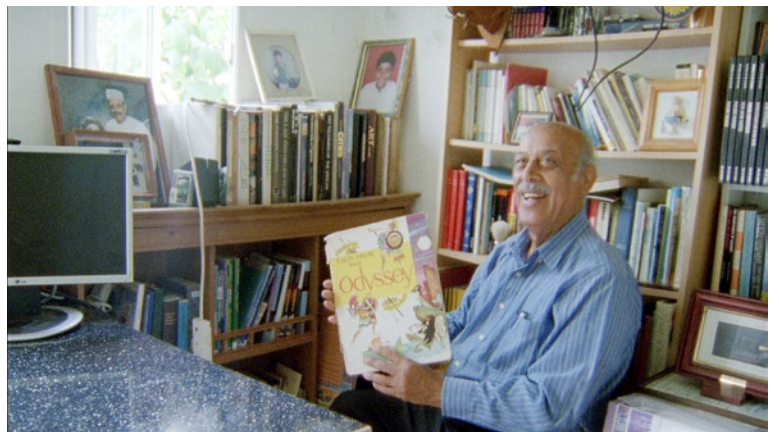
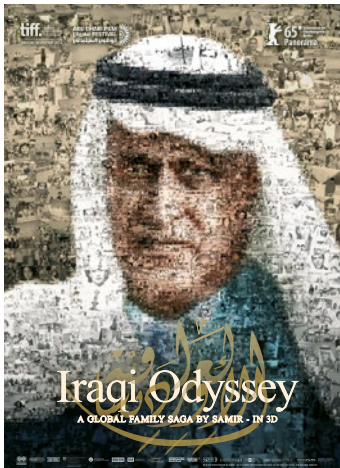


Samir with relatives in 1967 at the ruins of Baalbek in Lebanon

The film will be in cinemas in Germany and Italy from July 2015 and in the former Yugoslavia in early autumn 2015. Screenings in other countries have

not yet been scheduled. It will be available on DVD and VOD from February 2016.

A project is being carried out on the [www.iraqiodyyssey.ch](http://www.iraqiodyyssey.ch) website enabling other Iraqis to recount their stories.



Sabah Jamal Aldin, Samir's uncle, who today lives in London





Samir's father Riad (at the back, 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left) with friends and cousins around 1935



A family picnic in 1959 near Baghdad with Samir as a young boy



Rashid Street in Baghdad in 1956



Souhir, Samir's half-sister. In the background a meeting of the Muqtada militia in 2007



Samir with his cousin Jamal al Tahir, who lives in Moscow

# A look at the major issue of integration

Immigration is the biggest political bone of contention in Switzerland this year. For immigrants already here, how Switzerland envisages integration in future is a particularly highly charged issue. Should the state demand and promote integration to a greater extent? Or is integration solely the duty of immigrants?

MARC LETTAU (TEXT)

ANDREA CAPREZ (ILLUSTRATIONS)

Let's call the man with his sleeves rolled up Enver. This 34-year-old Kosovan, who lives in Basel, is skilled at using a trowel and mortar. He turns up at his workplace day in day out with Swiss punctuality. But he is not considered "well integrated". He speaks German poorly. If the caretaker at his apartment block writes "do not put rubbish bags outside the evening before collection", Enver misunderstands the notice and puts his refuse in front of the door. He doesn't want to be the last. He often settles invoices much later than is customary in Switzerland. He is often not in credit. Enver has debts and is paying off various small loans.

## Integration by contract

Enver is today sitting in the migration office reading a document written in his mother tongue: "Kjo Marrëveshje e Integritetit duhet të kontribuojë që të nxitet integrimi në rrafshin individual...". He puts his signature at the bottom without hesitation. He has just signed an integration agreement – a contract between himself and the canton of Basel Stadt. He has contractually undertaken to learn German and to attend the debt advice centre. His goal is simple – the Kosovan wants to improve his and his family's future prospects. If Enver had aggressive tendencies, he could also have been obliged to attend a course on the prevention of violence. But this measure is not required in his case.

## Great emphasis on promotion

Every year his home canton of Basel Stadt requests around 50 foreigners

from non-EU states to sign an integration agreement. This is carried out as an "integration promotion measure", explains Andreas Knuchel, spokesperson for the Department of Justice and Security in the canton of Basel Stadt. What is referred to as integration promotion is nevertheless coupled with requirements. Anyone who does not pursue the agreed objectives receives a caution and then, as a second step, a warning. In extreme cases, those who fail to comply lose the right to stay in the country. The objectives are fully or partially achieved in two thirds of all cases, points out Knuchel. In the other cases the migration office considers "further measures". Basel is no exception. More and more cantons are adopting this approach in order to encourage foreign citizens to show greater awareness of the practices of Swiss life and everyday rules.

## Everything's clear in principle

It is obvious why integration is an issue for federal government, the cantons and the communes. On the one hand, it is an experience common to all that well integrated immigrants frequently make a significant contribution to the nation's prosperity. On the other, the widely held view is that everyday life – such as at school – is more difficult without integration. But, above all, integration is a statutory duty. The Swiss Foreign Nationals Act indicates why: it strives for the "co-existence of the resident Swiss and foreign population on the basis of the values of the Federal Constitution and mutual respect and tolerance". However, the act also sets out how this is to be achieved. Integra-

tion can only succeed if it is supported by the resident population. It depends not just on the will of the immigrants but in equal measure also on "the openness of the Swiss people".

## Change in political mood

The limited linguistic skills of the construction worker Enver have one advantage – it means he is not so directly aware of how contentious the current debate over the future direction of Swiss integration policy is. The buzzword of immigration ostensibly dominates the discussion. However, the struggle over the implementation of the initiative on mass immigration adopted by the Swiss people on 9 February 2014 is also seeing a change in the political climate for immigrants already in Switzerland. The Federal Council sought to amend the Swiss Foreign Nationals Act long before the referendum because it wants to strengthen the principles of integration promotion and commitment. The country's biggest political party, the Swiss People's Party (SVP), is opposed to greater state intervention. The party which is calling the tune over policy on foreigners adopts an apodeictic stance in its position paper on integration: "Integration is not a duty of the state but primarily one of the immigrants – it is a consequence of their decision to choose to live and work in Switzerland." The phrase coined by the SVP is: "Integration is not a self-service store." Integration is viewed as a reciprocal act, on the one hand, and as a private duty on the other. The positions are far apart and it is consequently unclear where the journey will end.





## Hardening of views

Those supporting foreigners with their efforts to integrate regard the referendum of 9 February 2015 as a major turning point. Heidi Mück from FIMM (Forum for the Integration of Immigrants), the umbrella association of immigrant organisations in Switzerland, views it as a setback: “Many of the foreigners living here feel they are no longer wanted after the referendum.” “Conditions have become tougher” for integration policy and its actual objectives of “granting those who live, work and pay taxes here the greatest possible participation”, according to Mück. Switzerland is currently a long way off an objective debate on integration. As evidence of this she points to the lowered thresholds in the media. With generalising statements – such as about “Kosovan speed merchants” – prejudices are being fostered and reinforced. Mück’s greatest concern is that “the political

debate has also taken on a harder tone. Buzzwords such as ‘bogus asylum seekers’ and ‘welfare benefit cheats’ are entering the vocabulary of national politicians.”

## Demographic change continues

While Enver studies German and the politicians struggle to find solutions to immigration and integration, demographic change in Switzerland continues. Major upheaval is taking place. The number of people emigrating is high, reaching 78,000 in 2013. But the number of immigrants is significantly higher at 167,000. There is a significant positive net migration balance overall. The number of immigrants is significantly lower than in the 1960s when up to 210,000 people (1962) flooded into the country, including many Italians keen to work. Integration experts also like to highlight this as an example of Switzerland’s great capacity for integration.

## Comprehending the country and its people is no easy task

The current evidence of this capacity is the fact that most of the 1.8 million foreigners living in Switzerland have integrated into society without major issues.

## Grounds for controversy

It is just that the commitment to integrate being demanded has not been equal for all foreigners for some time. This leads to unequal treatment. It is possible theoretically that EU citizens living in Switzerland can be obliged to meet requirements through an integration agreement, in the same way as the Kosovan Enver. However, this does not happen in practice. And the requirement that those who reside here cannot live in a parallel world and must therefore speak a national language does not apply to everyone: Well-healed and exclusively English-speaking specialists, who – like those in the financial sector – live in

a parallel world completely divorced from everyday Swiss life, remain unaffected by the integration requirements. In contrast, there are those willing to integrate whose integration is viewed as highly contentious by the majority of the population. It is believed that perhaps 100,000 immigrants live in Switzerland illegally – they are known as “sans-papiers” – in some cases having lived and worked here for decades. As they have no residence permit, the “sans-papiers” are often exploited. Left-wing parties and human rights organisations are therefore urging the legalisation of their residence status. At the other end of the political spectrum, such issues spark absolute outrage. “This trivialisation of the ‘sans papiers’ issue by the centre-left majority and references to supposed basic rights undermines Swiss policy on foreign nationals,” says the SVP. Its simple demand is: “Those living here illegally must leave Switzerland.”

### The example of religion

Should foreigners earn respect by proving their willingness to integrate? Or must respect be shown in order for them to demonstrate their willingness to integrate in the first place? This question raises its head time and time again. It is particularly pertinent in relation to Switzerland’s relationship with the around 400,000 Muslims living in the country. The proposal to consider recognising Muslim faith communities to improve the integration of young Muslims and to prevent the formation of a parallel society does not currently have majority support in Switzerland. Muslims are therefore not just under pressure to assimilate but also under continual pressure to justify themselves. Muslim pupils at the Niederhasli secondary school in the canton of Zurich recently expressed their feelings in a report on the Ger-

man-language Swiss radio station SRF. They constantly have to apologise for acts of terrorism despite the fact that they are just as appalled and shocked by them as their non-Muslim friends.

The perpetual shifting between marginalisation and the requirement to assimilate has seen the integration of Muslims in Switzerland decline over the past decade. At least this is the conclusion pointed to by federal government’s marriage statistics. In 2001, half of all Muslims married someone from another religious community. Inter-marriages are still regarded as a reflection of an unstrained exchange between cultural groups. Twelve years later, in 2013, marriages between Muslims and persons of other faiths were the exception. Over 80 % married within their own faith community. This is explained by the continuing scepticism of mainstream society towards Muslims, according to the sociologist Farhad Afshar who is originally from Iran. This view is also shared by the Swiss Bishops’ Conference.

A challenging issue for Sommaruga  
“Immigration is a difficult issue. There is tremendous pressure.” This

is the view of President of the Swiss Confederation and Minister of Justice Simonetta Sommaruga (SP) a year after the adoption of the initiative on mass immigration. The wrangling with the EU continues owing to the curbing of immigration demanded by the Swiss people. In spite of the uncertainty, the Minister of Justice has clearly indicated that the new regulations on immigration must not be allowed to create a new integration problem. In particular she opposes the idea of again bringing labour into the country without the right for family members to follow. “The Federal Council does not want any more seasonal workers. We had a statute on seasonal workers. This had the dramatic effect that women and children had to hide themselves away for years,” Sommaruga said. The Minister of Justice is facing a cool response over the issue of immigration and integration from both the left and right of the political spectrum. Election year is making matters more difficult. As the temperature of the political debate rises, the political will to reach consensus dwindles.

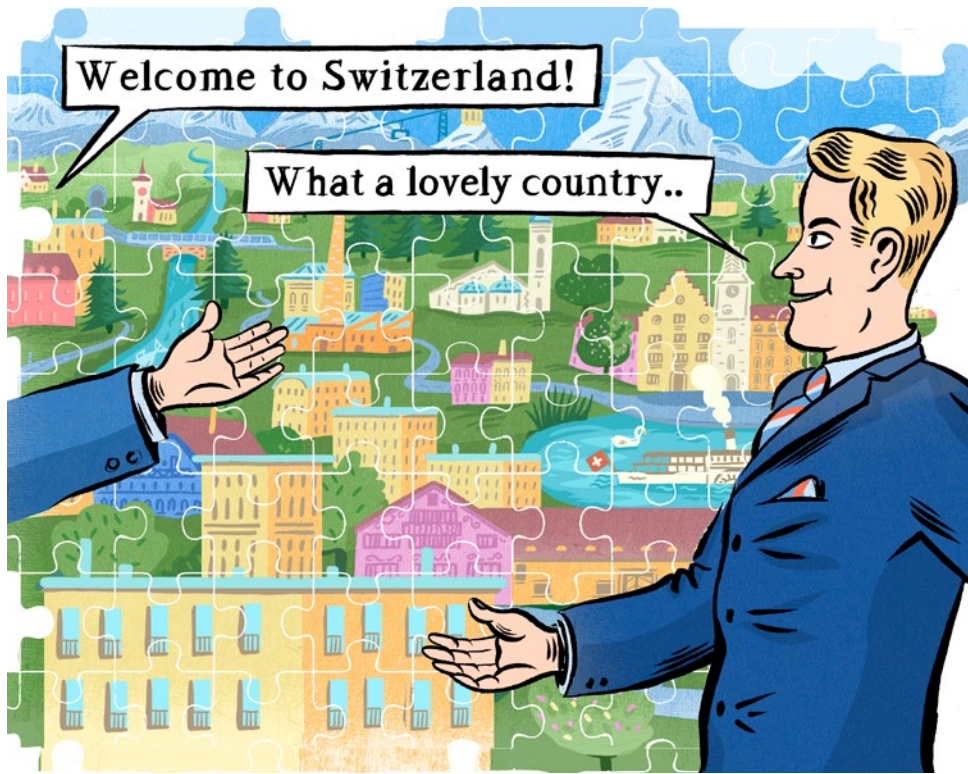
**Integration means understanding step by step how life works but also how it should be perceived as a whole**

### Switzerland – a country of migration

Switzerland has seen high levels of migratory activity for centuries. A large wave of immigration during the 16th century led to an increase in the population. At the end of the 17th century, tens of thousands of Protestant refugees immigrated to Switzerland from France. The French Revolution also led to







**Staff at management level are very welcome: integration here is a secondary issue**

### Adaptation or assimilation?

Those dealing with specific integration issues on a day-to-day basis are also bracing themselves. FIMM representative Heidi Mück anticipates “further battles to protect basic rights”. A constant contentious issue is that many people talk about integration but mean assimilation. However, when pressure on foreigners increases not just to integrate but also to adapt to the point of surrendering their cultural identity, matters become extremely complex: “If assimilation is the objective, this raises the question of assimilation to what? The ‘Swiss’ is still a very heterogeneous being. There is no such thing as a typical Swiss person.” The Zurich-based philosopher and expert on the ethics of immigration Andreas Cassee underlines this point even more emphatically. In most European countries, there is no longer any “uniform culture” into which people can be expected to assimilate. “A Catholic from a remote valley in Valais has little in common with an urban hipster from Zurich,” he says. While foreigners are accused of lacking the

desire to integrate, it is in truth often more an expression of discontent over the diminishing acceptance of one’s own nostalgia, explains Cassee.

### The building site as a school room

On every building site there are practically minded people who adopt a pragmatic approach without talking politics at length. This has not escaped the notice of Enver, the worker to be integrated who has been requested by the authorities to finally learn German. He is making good progress as he is not just attending the stipulated language course. His employer is providing him with additional tuition during working hours. “German lessons on the building site” is the name of the pilot scheme being run by the Swiss Construction Federation (SBV). Such commitment stands to reason from the federation’s point of view as the construction sector employs a disproportionately high number of people with foreign mother tongues, as Matthias Engel from the SBV indicates. But construction firms also offer other opportunities. In Sursee in the canton of Lucerne those recently recognised as refugees and people with provi-

sional refugee status receive training on a one-year course. This enables them to subsequently complete brick-laying apprenticeships and help build Switzerland’s future.

19-year-old Elizabeth Okisai, who has just begun her apprenticeship as a car mechanic with the public transport company in Zurich, is also a symbol of this change. Why does she deserve mention? The young Kenyan, who once lived on the streets, is the first illegal immigrant to undertake a vocational apprenticeship in the canton of Zurich. Her case is representative of a gradual counter-trend: in the past, refugees, those with temporary refugee status and illegal immigrants were condemned to doing nothing upon reaching adult age. However, those unable to do anything cannot integrate or be integrated.

### Restrictions require integration

Eleonore Wettstein, head of the Basel integration information centre, is willing to see the “issue of integration” as an opportunity in light of such trends. If immigration were restricted and more demands were placed on immigrants already living in the country, this would also result in the “positive development of federal government making a greater effort to integrate refugees into working life, in particular in the care, construction and catering industries”. Wettstein remarks: “Refugees were often exploited owing to their poor knowledge of German or condemned to a life doing nothing.” The opportunity for initial or advanced training is now being opened up to them. As these people are extremely likely to remain in the country in any event, this approach is “very prudent”. They are effectively “also future Swiss citizens”.

MARC LETTAU IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

migratory movement eastwards. In contrast, the 19th century was marked by an exodus spanning decades, with the Swiss leaving Switzerland. Strong immigration only returned at the end of the 19th century owing to increased demand for labour from the Swiss economy. The proportion of foreigners climbed to almost 15% by 1920. Most immigrants at that time came from Germany. (mul)

# What does conservative mean? Common sense and election campaign logic

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

GEORG KOHLER

After the first decisions made in 2015 – the elections to the cantonal parliaments of Basel-Land and Lucerne – conjecture that a factional election campaign will be carried out at the federal elections in the autumn has been confirmed: the conservatives against the rest. The centre is likely to fall by the wayside, as are the Greens and the left. In addition to the above-mentioned, this should also be a cause of concern for the BDP – which broke away from the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and whose full title is the Conservative Democratic Party – as well as the Green Liberal Party (GLP).

But what does “conservative” actually mean? And what does “centre-left” signify? This battle cry and term of differentiation is used by the right primarily to qualify the current Federal Council, along with Federal Councillor Widmer-Schlumpf who was ostracised from the SVP, as inadequate.

Four members of the current Federal Council belong to the conservative alliance made up of the Radical Free Democratic Party (FDP), the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and the Swiss Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP). To define Evelyn Widmer-Schlumpf as left-wing is impossible under the conventional criteria of political analysis. The two Social Democrats are faced with a solid non-social-democratic majority. The Federal Council accomplished the 2012/2015 legislative term very successfully. However, the leaders of the conservative parties declare that this dangerous centre-left alliance should be voted out of office.

The current election campaign rhetoric and the reality of Swiss politics to date are not really congruent. How can this be explained? And what does this explanation say about the (effective) Swiss way of government? Neither these questions nor the answers are particularly original, but they are nonetheless not redundant. They give an indication of the reality of Switzerland's public media which have also undergone transformation. It is a reality that no longer readily tallies with the long-established hallmark of Switzerland as a political nation with its steadfast common sense.

Why adopt a “factional election campaign” approach as a method in the quest for votes? Quite simply because it con-



curs best with the logic of modern-day media campaigns. The objective is simplification including the associated identification of the enemy. “Us against them” is the ethos. This reduces uncertainty and provides assurance of being on the right side.

The technique is as old as the laws of political power. It has been deployed by both left and right, by Lenin as well as Goebbels – and by many victory-oriented election campaigners in democratic countries. But does it fit in with Switzerland's special form

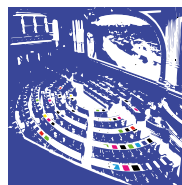
of democracy? Absolutely not in actual fact. This is because the Swiss constitution and the problem-solving processes contingent upon it are structurally geared towards compromise, integration and conciliatory, inclusive results which take account of all interest groups as far as possible.

To sum it up in a contrasting pair of notions, they are calibrated towards “conservative” agreements in the sense of republican public-spiritedness and not primarily focused on the “conservative” system in the sense of minimal-state economic freedom.

The reigning Federal Council that is democratically elected by a democratically elected Parliament only appears centre-left because it has conformed with the conservative-republican constitutional consensus over the past four years and by no means without success. It is only “un-conservative” to those who associate conservatism with everything that concurs with the either-or systems of UK-style, majority-based parliamentary democracy but not with Switzerland and its idiosyncratic concordance-oriented democracy which has developed over the course of history.

To reiterate the point, the Swiss system has encompassed – for many years and for good reason – the broad bearing of power, respect for differing opinions and the recognition in principle of the legitimate co-determination of the common *res publica* by the opposition.

One might contend that the modern electoral campaign now has its own laws. While that might be true, it does not alter the fact that this is not good for perhaps the best aspect of Swiss political culture, its common sense.



ELECTIONS  
2015



# The abandonment of the exchange rate cap reveals fears of a loss of control

Economists believe the Swiss National Bank's decision to abandon its policy of pegging the Swiss franc to the euro was swayed by a fear of losing control over the currency. A look at how the rising Swiss franc threatens the national economy.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

On 15 January, the Swiss National Bank announced the end of the exchange rate cap that set a floor of CHF 1.20 to the euro. The value of the Swiss franc, a safe-haven currency in Europe, immediately soared, reaching record levels, with the euro at times worth no more than CHF 0.80. At the same time, the Swiss stock exchange (SIX) recorded a fall of almost 15 % as a direct result of the announcement.

The Swiss franc rate has fallen significantly since then and Swiss shares have regained their value. However, the Swiss currency remains too high due to its attractiveness, increasing by 14 % from January to the end of March. Blaise Matthey, chief executive of the FER (Fédération des Entreprises Romandes) Genève, expects this situation, which is causing Swiss production costs to rise, to lead to a “slowdown in economic activity this year and probably a rise in unemployment”. Marcelo Olarreaga and Michel Girardin, professors of economics at the University of Geneva, believe Switzerland will be rocked by the decision.

## The reasons

Why has the SNB chosen this moment to unbridle the Swiss franc? And why did it decide to set a rate cap in September 2011? Both professors consider this to have been an “excellent” decision. “The European currency had fallen sharply owing to the debt crisis in the eurozone,” points out Marcelo Olarreaga. “Swiss goods were becoming more expensive and people were increasingly attracted to the Swiss currency. There was a risk of recession.”

Faced with a euro whose value had almost reached parity and under pressure from the business community, the SNB decided to set a rate capped at 1.20.

This independent body, which bears responsibility for the nation's monetary stability, therefore began buying and exchanging Swiss francs at this rate (and not below). “The SNB sold Swiss francs and purchased assets in euros as well as European bonds, which has enabled the country's economic activity to be maintained,” sums up Marcelo Olarreaga. However, by printing Swiss francs to buy foreign



currencies – in yen, dollars, roubles etc. – the SNB saw its balance sheet rise to CHF 550 billion, or the equivalent of 80 % of Swiss GDP, thus creating anxiety.

Marcelo Olarreaga believes the abandonment of the minimum rate was influenced by the SNB's fear of losing monetary control. “The fall of the rouble, the civil war in eastern Ukraine and the European Central Bank's announcement of its intention to make huge bond purchases sparked fears of a slump in the euro. In light of this situation, maintaining the Swiss franc at 1.20 would have required the purchase of even more euros to sustain the franc at acceptable levels,” he

explains. At the same time, the SNB believed that all of these Swiss francs in circulation created a risk of inflation in Switzerland. “The SNB feared losing its independence in a situation where those holding Swiss francs – banks, pension funds and private investors – would decide to sell their francs, producing a downward impact on the Swiss currency,” adds Geneva-based economist Olarreaga.

## 250 billion in the coffers

The two Geneva economists also point out that the SNB transfers a share of its profits to the cantons. The central bank was apprehensive about their reaction should these contributions dry up, suggests Michel Girardin. Knowing that the SNB at that point had almost EUR 250 billion in its coffers – currency purchased in part at between CHF 1.40 and 1.50 – “it decided to cut off its arm before the wound became too severe”. In other words, the SNB wanted to avoid further inflating its balance sheet and finding itself with mountains of depreciated euros when it decided to lift the minimum rate.

And the two Geneva economists agree on one further point: the decision was not taken at the right moment. Michel Girardin does not believe the SNB's main argument justifying the timing of its decision holds water. “The SNB said that the Swiss franc was less overvalued at the beginning of January 2015 than in September 2011, when the minimum rate came into force.” However, the situation had not changed between these two points in time. The evidence, according to Michel Girardin, is that the real parity of purchasing power be-

tween the two zones had remained stable (at CHF 1.31 to EUR 1.00). The professor's view is that the weakening of the Swiss franc since 2011 is solely due to movements in the dollar exchange rate which has had a positive impact on the section of the Swiss economy exporting goods to the dollar zone.

Marcelo Olarreaga points to the difficulty faced by Latin American countries in sustaining their currency, a policy which involves buying their own money with dollars. "Defending a floor rate is easier than supporting a ceiling. Switzerland did not need dollars to sustain its policy but instead

just francs which it prints itself. It could have maintained the minimum rate without major risks, reacting only in the event of a real fall in the euro."

The situation is even worse at the moment, in the view of this expert in development economics, because Switzerland will now have to intervene to a much greater extent on the market to convince people that the franc is not as strong as it seems. "The minimum rate gave an idea of the value of the currency. Furthermore, the SNB had not intervened for months before the end of 2014. Now there is no longer any reference point," he concludes.

### The implications of an excessively strong Swiss franc

Increase in export prices, rising relative wages, decline in the competitiveness of Swiss companies and growth in unemployment: these are the ills threatening the Swiss economy.

Blaise Matthey, chief executive of the FER Genève, provides two specific examples of the impact of the rise in the Swiss franc. The first concerns a Swiss manufacturing company that asked a foreign supplier – which is paid in Swiss francs – to adjust its prices. "It refused, leaving the Swiss business backed into a corner," sums up the head of the FER Genève. The second example relates to a Swiss company near France which prints books and exports them to the euro-zone. "It recently invested in a new production line. But now its export prices are too high. It therefore plans to cross the border to carry out the bulk of its production, just keeping its administrative activities in Switzerland," reveals

Blaise Matthey. The advice to companies from the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) provokes acerbic laughter. "Companies have already taken action in a number of areas to improve their productivity, innovation and so on," he underlines.

Describing an industrial sector under pressure, he believes that Switzerland's "going it alone" is no longer a tenable option in an economy now faced with major economic blocs, not least Europe and the US. He asks, "What is the value of a Swiss franc which is strangling its economy?"

With the end of the minimum rate, Swiss salaries rose sharply by 15 to 20%, points out Professor of Economics Marcelo Olarreaga. With a large share of its exports going to Europe, the country is seeing its prices increase, resulting in a fall or at best stabilisation of its GDP. "It's quite simple," he observes, "you can now go skiing in neighbouring France for far less."

## "The strong Swiss different approach"

A specialist in cutting production times



STÉPHANE HERZOG

American management professor Suzanne de Treville believes the abandonment of the minimum rate paradoxically represents an opportunity for Swiss companies. "Some business owners have told me they face a desperate situation. But at the same time their willingness to explore new opportunities will be greater, a bit like someone who has suffered a heart attack being more receptive to advice on their diet," explains the researcher and professor at the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Lausanne (HEC). It is also a chance to reaffirm their faith in the Swiss economy, which is based on "excellent foundations".

At the end of March, Suzanne de Treville flew to Washington to take part in a conference organised under the aegis of the US Department of Commerce. The relocation of firms was a subject under discussion. The Harvard-educated academic nevertheless believes that this often creates more problems than it resolves, not least because it



# franc? An opportunity to adopt a to manufacturing.”

American professor Suzanne de Treville sees the strong Swiss franc as an opportunity for Switzerland.

severs the link between research and development and production of goods. “Companies are obsessed with the cost reductions afforded by relocating,” laments the Harvard alumna. This is why she deploys an analysis tool that indicates the real costs, and therefore also the losses, of such relocations abroad: the Cost Differential Frontier.

A three-point overview of what it does

■ **Calculation of the real costs of relocation:** From the mid-1990s, Swiss companies began to relocate some or all of their production activities, in particular to Asia. What was the aim of this? A reduction in production costs of up to 30%. But Suzanne de Treville believes that the real costs of such decisions are hidden. Various factors

“Companies are obsessed with the cost reductions afforded by relocating”

enter into play here, including the lengthening of lead times, the difficulty of controlling product quality and the separation of production from research and development, undermining innovation. These costs are identified using qualitative financial analysis tools. This is the purpose of the Cost Differential Frontier, an analysis tool developed together with her colleague Norman Schürhoff, Professor of Finance at the Faculty of Business and Economics (HEC) Lausanne. “Managers have to do their sums,” concludes the researcher. In her view, this is the only way of applying measures that are “counter-intuitive” but necessary.

■ **Producing high quality and standard goods:**

Many Swiss companies supply high-added-value products. Suzanne de Treville cites the example of Fischer Connectors, a group supplying thousands of different connector and cable assembly solutions. “These are products for which demand fluctuates, requiring local and flexible production to meet and adapt to demand,” she explains. There is consequently no question of relocating their production at the risk of reduced competitiveness. This is what happened to Flexcell, a solar panel manufacturer, in 2012. It decided to shift towards standard products manufactured in China. However, these products no longer met Swiss requirements.

Suzanne de Treville suggests that Swiss companies should combine both approaches. This involves continuing to provide high-tech products while at the same time manufacturing “B products” which can be stored, an option not available with highly volatile goods. However, such a step again entails counter-intuitive decisions the benefits of which can only be shown by using mathematical analysis tools. “It is a matter of giving the machinery fleet surplus capacity,” indicates the academic. During peaks in demand, the plant produces the goods in which the company specialises, where margins are large and for which it has a customer base. During quieter times, it uses its capacities for standard products that do not require great production capacity. An increase in capacity therefore has to be accepted.

■ **Reduced lead times:**

“Lead times cannot be reduced without providing additional capacity,” observes Suzanne de Treville. On the other hand, lead times will increase at plants that only produce high-added-value goods but with just-in-time delivery. “During these periods, the competition will offer a standard product and the customer will abandon product A, even though it is closer to its requirements,” she remarks. Turning words into action, Suzanne de Treville introduced HEC students into four Swiss companies in March. They will identify a high-volatility product A in each company and a standard product B, which can be stored. Mathematical modelling will then enable the reduction of production lead times. “I sometimes ask managers if they would be able to reduce their lead times from 20 days to a week to enhance competitiveness. They often reply that they would like to but it is unfortunately impossible. They think that increasing capacity will reduce utilisation of the machine fleet. Our toolbox nevertheless reveals that it is a solution that works well.”

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STÉPHANE HERZOG IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

# The concerns of the Swiss Abroad are being neglected

Tim Guldemann, who has been ambassador in Berlin for five years, is a well-known figure in Switzerland's diplomatic corps. He is now stepping down but is ready for a new challenge. He wants to enter politics.



INTERVIEW: BARBARA ENGEL

**“SWISS REVIEW”: YOUR LONG CAREER AS A SWISS DIPLOMAT COMES TO AN END ON 29 MAY. WHAT WAS YOUR MOST DIFFICULT MISSION?**

**TIM GULDIMANN:** The most challenging was in Kosovo and the most spectacular Chechnya with the mediation of the ceasefire and the organisation of the elections. The most exhilarating was the five years in Iran representing US interests there.

**Why did you interrupt your diplomatic career at the end of the 1980s?**

After the end of the Cold War, I hoped we would also see a new dawn in Switzerland in terms of policy on Europe and found it frustrating that we allowed ourselves to get bogged down in a state of frenetic stagnation. I went over to the Department of Home Affairs to focus on science policy. I returned to the FDFA at the end of 1995 because Heidi Tagliavini - who at the time had returned from her OSCE mission in Chechnya - sought me out and said: “You have to come to Chechnya, we need someone who can speak Russian.”

**It is said that the relationship between Germany and Switzerland has become more fraught in recent years. Have you also experienced that as an ambassador?**

The relationship is very robust, in fact almost indestructible because the Germans like us. Whether that sentiment is always reciprocated is a question I'll leave unanswered. We have had disputes over taxation which have today been resolved with the abolition of banking confidentiality. The major issue now is the restriction on immigration we announced which may also affect German cross-border workers and place strain on our relationship with the EU in general. And in the southern Baden border region lots of people are still angry about air traffic noise.

**You intend to enter politics after your retirement at the end of May?**

Yes, I'd like to. The SP International has put me forward as a candidate for the National Council elections. On 29 May, I'll clear my desk as an ambassador in Berlin. On 30 May, the SP delegates of the canton of Zurich will decide whether to put me on their list.

**So, you would like to sit in Parliament in Berne as a Swiss citizen abroad?**

Exactly, I would remain in Berlin if I were elected and would work on the issues concerning the Swiss Abroad. I would nevertheless also feel a sense of commitment to the canton of Zurich and addressing the issues of the cantonal SP.

**In the April issue of “Swiss Review”, Stephanie Baumann, who sat on the National Council as a Swiss Abroad, said that such a mandate was an almost impossible task.**

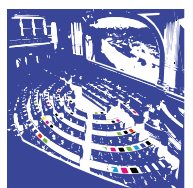
I would obviously not be able to represent all 730,000 Swiss Abroad. However, first of all the concerns of the Swiss Abroad deserve greater attention from our politicians as they are currently being neglected. Secondly, I would be able to make a useful contribution to the domestic political debate in Switzerland from my external perspective. The Swiss Abroad generally identify with the country overall whereas the Swiss at home increasingly just identify with their canton or region. This is reflected, for example, in the debate over the teaching of French in German-speaking Switzerland.

**You say that the concerns of the Swiss Abroad are neglected in Parliament. What do you mean by that exactly?**

The specific concerns are voluntary old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV), health insurance, the opportunity to hold a bank account in Switzerland and e-voting finally being introduced by all cantons.

**Tim Guldemann**

was born in 1950 in Zurich. He studied economics and political science. He joined the diplomatic service in 1982. The main postings during his career were in Egypt, Chechnya, Croatia, Iran and Kosovo. He has been ambassador in Berlin since 2010. Guldemann retires from the diplomatic service at the end of May. He is married to a German journalist, has two daughters and will continue to live in Berlin.



**ELECTIONS  
2015**

BARBARA ENGEL IS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”



# A journey into the unknown – immigration and the EU

Switzerland is struggling with the implementation of the Swiss People's Party's (SVP) immigration initiative – the deadlines are tight, the list of problems long and the solutions complex.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

In principle, there is great urgency – the highly complicated issue must be dealt with by February 2017. But more than a year since the adoption of the SVP's initiative on mass immigration on 9 February 2014, there is only one point on which everyone agrees: the situation is still very unclear. The confusion over free movement of persons – together with other economic problems, such as the strength of the Swiss franc – is becoming increasingly perturbing. "We require contractual security and legal certainty," remarks Eva Jausli, CEO of the tools firm PB Swisstools, in an interview with "NZZ-Folio". "We have come to terms with the bilateral agreements, and our business models are geared towards them. I cannot imagine having to abandon them." The monthly magazine of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" impressively documented the widespread anxiety and impatience in the economy in March 2015.

It is not politicians and association representatives who express their views in "NZZ-Folio" but various business leaders who feel the impact of the growing uncertainty every day over Switzerland's relationship with the EU. These include Bruno Chiomento, CEO of the internationally operating auditing and management consultancy firm Ernst & Young Switzerland: "The first effects of the impending restriction on immigration are being clearly felt. We are seeing that companies which originally intended to move to Switzerland are now opting for other locations and have set up in Ireland, for example."

## Mobilising women

How long this paralysing uncertainty will continue remains to be seen. Only the current state of affairs can be documented at present. The Federal Council put forward a new immigration system in February 2015 which will enter the consultation process by the end of May 2015. This contains annual maximum ceilings and quotas for all foreigners to be set by the Federal Council. Preference is to be given to Swiss labour when filling vacant positions. Federal government is now seeking to ensure, through a specialist worker initiative, that women and older employees in particular fill foreseeable gaps after a limitation on immigration.

The Federal Council's dual strategy Admission for EU citizens is to be governed, as in the past, by the agreement on the free movement of persons, "which has to be amended in accordance with the constitutional obligation", as the Federal Council indicates in its press release. For this purpose, the government has also adopted a negotiating mandate with the EU. The objective is "to amend the agreement so that Switzerland can in future control and restrict immigration independently". The bilateral approach is also to be secured as the basis of relations with the EU: "In accordance with the mandate, both objectives are to be pursued in equal measure," the government stipulates. It seems very much as though the Federal Council is trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. The EU has thus far given no indication of willingness to allow Switzerland to adopt special regulations on the free movement of persons.

Several key questions therefore remain unanswered in spite of the Federal Council's proposals: What will happen if the EU maintains its stance? Will Switzerland implement the constitutional obligation to the letter and actually also introduce the quota system for EU citizens? Will Switzerland then also terminate the agreement on the free movement of persons or will the EU take that step? And will the set of bilateral I agreements coupled to it also then possibly cease to exist?

The SVP talks of an EU veto right.

This still very uncertain situation also explains why the Federal Council's proposals have hardly been greeted euphorically. The Swiss Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP) has dubbed the procedure "faint-hearted", the Swiss Conservative Democratic Party (BDP) believes the bill is "inexpedient and tentative", and Economiesuisse, the Swiss Business Federation, has awarded it the mark "unsatisfactory" because the Federal

*It seems very much as though the Federal Council is trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.*

Council is targeting excessively rigid implementation and not using the room for manoeuvre provided for in the constitution. However, the Swiss FDP. The Liberals (FDP) and the Swiss Green Liberal Party (GLP) support the Federal Council in its efforts to implement the initiative correctly, while the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP), on the other hand, believes negotiations should first be held with the EU.

The SVP, which initiated the successful popular initiative, takes a fundamentally different view on precisely that point. It does not want the Federal Council to first hold negotiations with the EU. In contrast, the government maintains “that the results of the targeted negotiations with the EU are of importance to the proposed bill” as the “overall evaluation of the implementation of the new constitutional provision can only be carried out once the outcome of the negotiations on the amendment to the agreement on free movement of persons has been established.”

Not so, argues the SVP faction leader Adrian Amstutz. He writes in a propaganda sheet (“Extrablatt der SVP”, March 2015) sent to all Swiss households that by adopting this approach the Federal Council would “effectively grant the EU a right of veto. This makes the implementation of the popular initiative’s requirements dependent upon whether Brussels is willing to approve the inevitable amendment to the agreement on the freedom of movement.” The SVP is still insisting on “the systematic implementation of the popular initiative’s obligations, even if this means accepting the termination of the agreement on the freedom of movement”.

The SVP took a different line prior to the referendum. It declared that by adopting the initiative “we are giving the Federal Council a mandate to renegotiate the free movement of persons with the EU”. “The agreement on the free movement of persons will not have to be terminated.” What is more: “The initiative is neither seeking a gen-

eral halt to immigration nor is it calling for the termination of the bilateral agreements with the EU.” This is the statement on the initiative’s official website. However, SVP Vice-President Christoph Blocher is today already threatening an initiative aimed at terminating all bilateral agreements if the free movement of persons cannot be regulated otherwise. There is also talk of an enforcement initiative. And finally a referendum against the implementing legislation is also a possibility.

### RASA – an easy way?

Proposals have also been made in the opposite direction. A civic committee independent of any political party called “Raus aus der Sackgasse” (Out of the cul-de-sac), or RASA for short, is seeking to cut the Gordian knot by performing an about-turn. The popular initiative launched on 9 February 2015, exactly a year after the adoption of the SVP initiative, aims to achieve nothing more than to annul the applicable constitutional provision. The initiative is being touted as a plan B in the event that the negotiations with the EU fail, acutely jeopardising the bilateral agreements.

The think-tank “foraus” (foreign policy forum), set up at the universities of Geneva and Zurich in 2009, has identified “a fundamental conflict of objectives”. It says the “systematic implementation of the initiative on mass immigration is not feasible – only various compromises are possible. A political decision is required on which objective should be given greater priority: economic prosperity or ‘independently controlled immigration.’”

Such a compromise has been put forward by the former State Secretary Michael Ambühl. As a fixed quota would never be accepted by the EU, he proposes a safeguard clause. This involves provisional quotas for the event that immigration exceeds average EU/EFTA immigration by a threshold value defined beforehand. However, as this proposal is also based on a quota system, it is doubtful whether this solution would be compatible with the agreement on the free movement of persons. And that would take things back to square one.

The complicated situation is a result of the fact that the “will of the people is not unambiguously identifi-

The complicated situation is a result of the fact that the will of the people is not unambiguously identifiable.

able”, as the Swiss Foreign Policy Association (SGA) writes. The sovereign power “is in contradiction with itself and only it can find a way out of the conundrum”. Indeed, the Swiss people adopted the initiative on immigration but they have also approved the bilateral approach on several occasions. The SGA is therefore calling for a new referendum on the continuation of this approach. And it increasingly looks as though the Swiss people will have to make a fundamental policy decision sooner or later.

[www.foraus.ch](http://www.foraus.ch)

JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

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# Camille Bloch: investing in a 4<sup>th</sup> generation of chocolatiers

Established in the valley of Saint-Imier in 1935, the factory that makes Ragusa is seeking to double its production capacity. The Bloch family is making a big investment in business development.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Camille Bloch is set to invest CHF 30 million in its infrastructure at Courtelary. “The last major work here was carried out in the 1960s. We are investing for the future,” says Jean Kernen, Operational Director. A third of the investment will be allocated to production. The remainder will be used, among other things, to build a visitors’ centre for chocolate lovers. This facility, which will open in 2017, will explain all the steps in chocolate manufacture. Camille Bloch, whose factory is currently only open to visitors on weekday mornings, hopes to attract up to 100,000 visitors a year (compared to 8,000 at the moment, in addition to 30,000 visits to its shop).

The company is aiming – but without setting a date – to double its production capacity, which equates to making eight tonnes of filled chocolate a year. The management has indicated that development will focus on creating products based on the brand’s flagship bars. Camille Bloch is targeting an increase in exports, in particular in Europe and Scandinavia. And Asia? “China, for example, is not on the agenda for the moment. The

culture of chocolate is not very well established there and we remain a company that makes speciality rather than mass-market products,” explains company spokesperson Regula Gerber.

Jean Kernen points out that the family-run company has enjoyed strong growth for the past decade. It doubled its market share in Switzerland between 2003 and 2014, which now stands at 5.1%. The flagship product, Ragusa, has followed the same upward trajectory. Currently, 1,900 tonnes of it are made a year out of a total production of 3,700 tonnes. Camille Bloch has invested heavily in the Swiss chocolate market, securing Migros as a customer in 2013. The orange-branded giant has been added to its traditional retailer, the Coop. The company, which generated a turnover of CHF 63 million in 2014, anticipates a similar figure in 2015 owing to the strong franc.

The chocolatier has developed its portfolio by embellishing its flagship products. The traditional Ragusa product has already been made available in a dark chocolate variety, and now also in a caramel one for the



**Daniel Bloch, the grandson of the firm's founder Camille Bloch, is in charge of the company today**

younger generation. It is produced in 25-gram and 11-gram formats, whereas the traditional bar weighs 50 grams. The brand has also created chocolate mousses. It is also well known for its pralines with kirsch, cognac and so on. There are 70 different specialities in total, some of which are seasonal, including kosher chocolate for Jewish Passover.

How does it intend to entice the younger generation? Camille Bloch has recruited a Community Manager, who focuses on the products’ presence on social networks such as Instagram and Twitter. The brand has nevertheless reached a ceiling on the Swiss market. “Our distribution has almost reached its limits. We can therefore only grow through innovation and by launching new products,” says Regula Gerber. The manufacturer is also operating in a country where chocolate consumption fell in 2014 for the first time in many years, dropping to slightly below 12 kilos per person. The management attributes this decline, among other things, to a downturn in tourism last year. In addition, the share of foreign chocolates consumed is growing, says Regula Gerber.

**The model of the planned new facility in Courtelary**



At the age of 51, Daniel Bloch, the grandson of the company's founder, Camille Bloch, has taken over the management of the company as CEO and Chairman of the Board of Directors, on which his brother Stéphane also sits. There is a fourth generation able to take over the reins. Is the commune of Courtelary in the Saint-Imier valley still the best location for Camille Bloch? Jean Kernen is convinced it is. "We have enough space here to expand but also sustainable framework conditions and lower salary levels than in Geneva or Zurich. There are also good train connections to Biel," adds Jean Kernen. Developing while remaining the same is Ragusa's philosophy. As CEO Daniel Bloch puts it, "This chocolate is like an old friend who is always there. You don't want it to change too much."

### From Dubrovnik to Courtelary

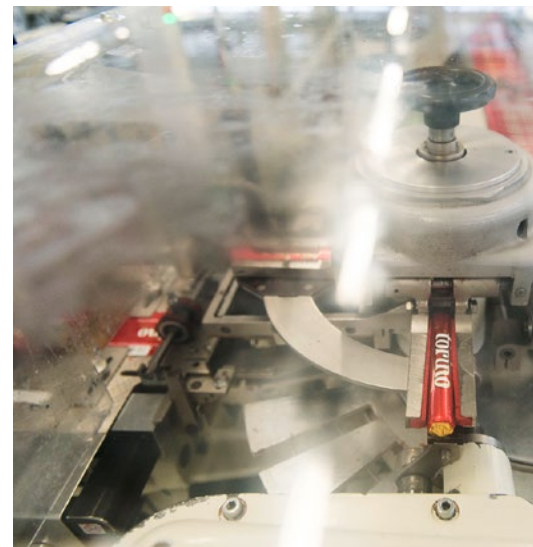
Like many Swiss people, Camille Bloch's background is very much European. The Blochs originally came from France. They arrived in Switzerland around 1850 and settled in Berne, where the Jews were permitted to reside, as the journalist Michel Bühler outlined in a book published to mark the brand's 75th anniversary. Camille was born (a French citizen) in 1891. He began his career as an apprentice at Chocolat Tobler in Berne. After being naturalised as a Swiss citizen and performing Swiss military service, he set up his own company in 1929. He relocated his plant to Courtelary in 1934, taking over a former paper mill.

The Second World War impacted upon the production of Camille's products. During the conflict, there was restricted access to cocoa for in-

dustry. The amounts customers could buy were rationed and they required food coupons. The owner of the Bernese company decided to put hazelnuts, which were not subject to embargoes, in his chocolates, enabling the manufacture of a product with fewer cocoa beans. He also decided to fill his chocolate with hazelnut praline, which was an innovation requiring technical improvements to be able to cut a substance that was both hard and soft at the same time without deforming it. Finally, he created 50-gram bars when ration coupons permitted the purchase of 100 grams of confectionery and 100 grams of chocolate. But Ragusa was classified in both categories!

It was now just a question of finding a name. The solution came from Europe, Ragusa being the former name of the Croatian city of Dubrovnik which Camille had visited. Then came Torino in 1948 as the name for his almond-filled chocolate.

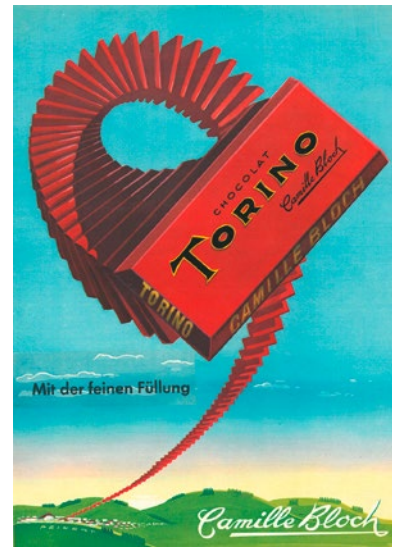
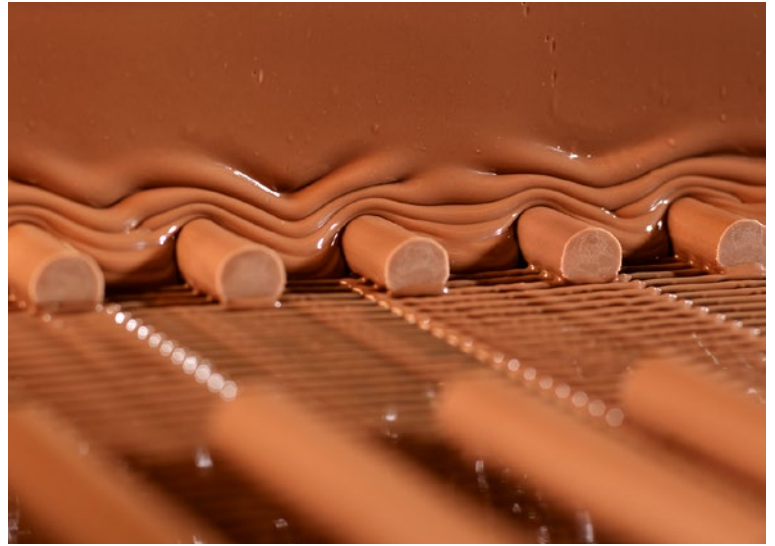
With Jewish origins, the Bloch family assumed positions of responsibility over the course of Swiss history. It appears that Nathan, Camille's grandfather, was one of the first leaders of the Jewish community in Berne. Rolf, the father of the current directors of the company, became president of the solidarity fund committee, which was set up after the unclaimed assets affair for Holocaust victims in need. In the depths of the war, people questioned whether it would be good for business for Dr Bloch to use his family name on his chocolates. He also received offers to buy his company – at a good price... Today, Ragusa is sold in some 30 countries and is part of Swiss heritage.



## *What's important is*

The production of Camille Bloch chocolates in Courtelary in the Bernese Jura begins in a modest warehouse. The product's key ingredient is found in bags one and a half times taller than a person, filled with a tonne of cocoa beans. These mainly come from central Ghana via the port of Amsterdam. Next to these big bags are stacked palettes full of Turkish hazelnuts – a delicate commodity, as the blossoming hazel trees in Trabzon suffered a frost in spring 2014, doubling the price of the year's harvest. A little further on, boxes of almonds imported from California are piled up on top of one another. These are the raw materials of Camille Bloch in the same plant where production began in the Saint-Imier valley 86 years ago.





## *the blend of Turkish hazelnuts and cocoa beans from Ghana*

In the first production hall, German-made machinery, some of it not so new but still gleaming, turns incessantly. This is where the roasting and grinding of the beans, hazelnuts and almonds takes place. It gives off a sweet, roasted aroma. The view from the large windows looks out over meadows. The fields extend to the edge of the forest running along the Saint-Imier valley and there is a real sense of isolation even though we are just 20 minutes away from Biel by train.

The raw materials used to make Ragusa and Torino chocolate bars are then transported by pipeline towards the plant's main building. Here, the moisture is removed from the cocoa and it falls as powder into the bottom of large heating tanks. It is now

transformed into a paste. After passing through the "kitchens" on the floor above, the mass re-emerges with cocoa butter and powered milk added to the mix. Enormous mixers – known as "conches" – knead the paste to turn it into almond or hazelnut praline. "The fillings are our speciality," explains company spokesperson Regula Gerber.

The heat on this floor is tropical and you cannot hear yourself speak for the noise. Torino bars, thousands of bars filled with almonds and hazelnuts, advance along the production line 20 abreast. Passing through chocolate rollers, the bottom of the pralines is covered with chocolate, before they receive an overall topping. The line then goes

through a cold section to solidify the bars before they are cut and boxed by Camille Bloch employees. Their heads covered in paper hats, there are around a hundred staff – operators, food product specialists, engineers, electricians and assistants – working for the Bloch family on production and machine maintenance. According to the management, the automation of processes will see the number of workers focussing on repetitive tasks fall in the future. The work will shift towards more complex procedures because, chocolate or not, Camille Bloch is still an industrial concern.

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STÉPHANE HERZOG IS AN EDITOR WITH THE "SWISS REVIEW"

# Overshadowed by their male counterparts

In June the Swiss women will take part in the World Cup for the first time in the history of football. Yet this success has not brought them much money or attention.

CLAUDIA SCHUMACHER

It is hammering down on the pitch. The women are battling valiantly while the men suppress a smile. FC Zurich's women's team are playing against the ladies from BSC Young Boys of Berne. There are also three internationals out on the pitch. They will travel to Canada for the World Cup in June – Fabienne Humm and Cinzia Zehnder from the Zurich-based club and Florijana Ismaili from Berne. It is the first time in footballing history that Switzerland's women have reached the World Cup finals.

A small group of the players' relatives sit amongst the spectators at Zurich's Heerenschürli field sports centre to watch this game on a Saturday in March. Women's football in Switzerland has continued to receive little media coverage in the last few weeks before the World Cup despite the historic success. On the sports desk of a leading national newspaper, nobody volunteers when asked who will go to Canada to cover the World Cup. The magazines, which report on male footballers' every romance and new car, make barely a mention of the ladies' team. Even "Playboy", which featured the German women's team, has not been in touch despite the fact that some of the Swiss women would undoubtedly look good in it.

## As exciting as the lottery draw

Why, you might ask, does the female team in a football-crazy nation like Switzerland continue to remain overlooked? "The bottom line is that the game is about as exciting as the lottery draw when you haven't bought a ticket," a columnist on the "NZZ am

Sonntag" once wrote about the spectator experience at women's football. The ladies are slow and not strong, including technically. There are around ten missed passes to every one which goes to a team mate. This rather scathing sums up the commonly held misgivings and prejudices about women's football. Many people also find it an unattractive spectacle. The sport still has a reputation for being a playground for aggressive lesbians with hair on their upper lip.

But does this image reflect reality? During the rain-swept match in Zurich, FCZ captain Humm scans the pitch. She is in possession, lifts her right leg in the air, misses the ball and trips. Two men in the stand laugh. But only briefly before biting their lips as they are aware of what is politically correct. Shortly afterwards a mishit ball lands in the refuse beyond the pitch. Another hits a spectator on the shoulder causing her to drop her hotdog.

But there are also players lacking concentration and sliced balls when the men are in action. Some female footballers are probably on a par with the men technically. The standard of women's football nevertheless varies widely. This is also explained by the fact that the sport is still largely amateur. There are currently just three Swiss women on professional contracts and none of them play for a Swiss club. Lara Dickenmann from Kriens was for seven years with the French side Olympique Lyon and plays now for VFL Wolfsburg, Ramona Bachmann from Malters plays in Sweden and Vanessa Bürki from Grenchen is under contract at FC Bayern Munich.

## No reason to look away

The women are certainly not as fast or powerful as their male counterparts, and that will probably never change. But this alone does not explain the lack of popularity of women's football. In athletics nobody cares that it takes women a second longer to race 100 metres or that their descent is a metre below the height reached by the men in the pole vault. In some Scandinavian countries, in Germany, the USA and Japan, women's football enjoys a different status to that in Switzerland. Football is actually perceived as more of a female sport in the USA.

Female players have been endeavouring for some years to shake off the image of manly women which makes the sport unappealing for many people. The women appear very feminine. The proportion of those with long hair amongst the Swiss women's team is higher than in the rest of society. Some players have a small frame, and many wear make-up on the pitch and move gracefully. In this respect, there is no reason even for more sensitive male eyes to turn away.

## Full-time jobs on top of training

The match between the teams from Zurich and Berne proves very entertaining after a while, watching the very direct Humm with her clean, incisive style of play. Then there is the talented, 17-year-old Cinzia Zehnder, who seems rather awkward on her long, slim legs and looks as though she is constantly wearing a question mark on her forehead. But then she scores a goal. And after the Bernese ladies equalise in the 70th minute, Zehnder channels her frustration into produc-



Cinzia Zehnder

## Facing the world champions in Vancouver

The FIFA 2015 women's World Cup will take place in Canada from 6 June to 5 July. The Swiss face a stern test from the outset. In the first match on 8 June, they will play the reigning world champions Japan in Vancouver. More than half of the Swiss players have contracts





(right) battling with England's Katie Zelem

with clubs abroad. FC Zurich, the best Swiss female football club, nevertheless provides the largest contingent of players to the national team. Fabienne Humm, Cinzia Zehnder and Nicole Remund are highly likely to be on the plane to Canada, and Selina Kuster also stands a good chance. If they reach the knock-out stage, the Swiss ladies will have achieved their goal.

ing a second goal which proves decisive in a 2:1 victory.

Zehnder still attends the cantonal school and is due to sit her Swiss school-leaving exams in the summer. She can, however, postpone them owing to the World Cup. Humm held a full-time position in business until recently. She has now reduced her level of employment to 80 % in the run-up to the World Cup in order to prepare better. The sport, which has thus far provided the national team players with little money and only marginal attention, makes great demands of them. It is a time-consuming pastime. They have to train five times a week and do everything for themselves. After the match, they

have to put the goalposts away before they can leave.

### "She's great, she believes in us"

The biggest problem facing Swiss women's football is its financial position. It is lacking in money. Women do not receive much support at the clubs. Even though girls increasingly enjoy playing football and fathers no longer kick up a fuss, they are still not fully fledged members. Talented young female footballers often do not even have their own showers at the local clubs. Such structural weaknesses have a very discouraging impact. The football association's reluctance to invest in women's football means the girls do not feel very highly valued.

At least the Swiss women's national team has received greater support since it was confirmed that they would take part in the 2015 World Cup in Canada. "Many female players have been given an individual training programme," explains Zehnder after the match. At 1.8 metres tall and weighing 60 kg, she will focus on building muscle. This means a protein-rich diet and sessions in the gym. Others have to work on their athleticism or fitness levels. The players have been given lectures on nutrition. They also receive psychological input, which has long been commonplace in elite sport.

The national team manager, Martina Voss-Tecklenburg from Germany, who has coached the Swiss ladies since 2012, takes care of the rest. Voss-Tecklenburg also once played herself. She made 125 international appearances, was crowned German female footballer of the year three

times and was a runner-up at the World Cup with Germany in 1995. Outlining her coaching ethos, she remarks: "I was an aggressive player myself and I like to see an aggressive style of football." Fabienne Humm says of Voss-Tecklenburg: "She's great, she believes in us." She has instilled "the German mentality" into the team, reveals Humm with a grin. The positive message she conveys is to never give up, chase every ball and believe in your own abilities. "She has shown us that we are a force to be reckoned with." The coach has turned a group of uncertain girls who enjoyed kicking a ball around into a team.

And what is a realistic goal for the World Cup? "Getting out of the group into the knock-out stage," indicate Humm and Zehnder.

### Provocative advertising

Female footballers promote themselves and their sport on YouTube and come across as brazen and bursting with energy. They pull tractors on a rope and shout across to the male professionals: "Do you have the balls to take us on?" This is despite the fact that it is precisely comparison with the men that has damaged women's football in the past.

Women's football still has a long way to go in Switzerland before it is taken seriously. Even if FIFA President Sepp Blatter recently proclaimed his intention to make women's football as big as the men's game, the 79-year-old will probably never see that day.

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CLAUDIA SCHUMACHER IS AN EDITOR WITH THE "NZZ AM SONNTAG"

## OSA advice

*The news has just shown a Swiss citizen returning from abroad who was able to vote twice in the recent popular vote. How has this come about?*

It is quite true that a Swiss citizen returning from abroad received two lots of voting papers for the ballot held on 8 March 2015: they were sent to his address abroad and then to his new address following his move back to Switzerland, after the voting papers had already been received abroad. In this regard, it should be noted that Swiss citizens living abroad must inform the Swiss office (embassy or consulate) where they are registered of any change of address. When people return to the country after the voting papers have been sent abroad, it can happen that the papers are received twice. However, it is illegal and an offence punishable under criminal law to vote twice on the same matter. This constitutes electoral fraud under article 282 of the Swiss Criminal Code. People who receive voting papers twice therefore only have the right to vote once. A criminal offence is otherwise committed.

LEGAL DEPARTMENT OF THE OSA

The OSA's Legal Department provides general information on Swiss law in the areas which specifically concern the Swiss Abroad. It does not provide information on foreign law or intervene in disputes between private parties.

## The Congress of the Swiss Abroad focuses on democracy

*The Swiss Abroad will meet for their annual congress from 14 to 16 August 2015. It is being held in Geneva at the CICG international conference centre this year.*

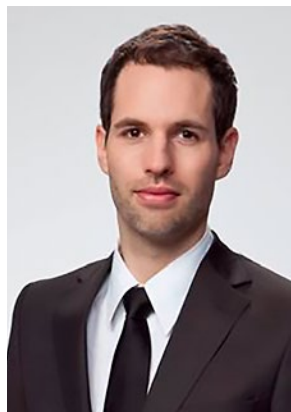


The electoral turnout in Switzerland has increased slightly over recent years – after reaching a low point in 1995 with a 42% turnout – but over half of the electorate still does not vote. Why is that? What motivates people to vote? This year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad tackles this and other issues. Its theme is "Educating citizens – a guarantee of a vibrant democracy".

In view of the federal elections in the autumn, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad wishes to highlight the importance of political participation through its choice of theme. This is a fundamental requirement for a vibrant democracy.

Prominent speakers will share their views on the theme of the congress. They will include Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, head of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC), Hans Stöckli, member of the Council of States for the canton of Berne and President of the New Helvetic Society, Manon Schick, Director General of Amnesty International Switzerland and Arthur Honegger, foreign affairs correspondent for the Swiss TV station SRF.

*Further information and the registration form are available on our website:  
german: [www.aso-kongress.ch](http://www.aso-kongress.ch) / french: [www.ose-congres.ch](http://www.ose-congres.ch)*



Arthur Honegger



Hans Stöckli



Manon Schick



# Meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad

*At its spring meeting the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) primarily focussed on the parliamentary elections of 18 October.*

An election manifesto setting out demands concerning the Swiss community abroad was the main item on the agenda at the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA) on 21 March 2015. The eight-point manifesto exclusively contains issues that have concerned the Swiss Abroad for years. A key matter is nationwide electronic voting (e-voting) to make it easier to exercise political rights.

By 64 votes to 2, the Council adopted the response of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad as part of the consultation process on the amendment to the Foreign Nationals Act required for the implementation of the initiative on mass immigration. The response expressly called for the free movement of persons with the EU to be continued. Suspension of the free movement of persons would have direct implications for the almost 450,000 Swiss Abroad living in the European Union. The Council of the Swiss Abroad previously adopted a resolution on the free movement of persons in 2011.

Once again the question as to whether the CSA should be directly elected in future instead of by the Swiss societies provoked a fierce debate. No decision was reached on this matter. (BE)



Jacques-Simon Eggly



Remo Gysin

## Jacques-Simon Eggly steps down

The President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) has announced that he will be stepping down from office at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Geneva in August. Eggly has been head of OSA since 2007. The OSA Executive Board has proposed the current Vice-President, Remo Gysin, as his successor. The Council of the Swiss Abroad is responsible for the appointment.

## The banks and the Swiss Abroad

The Swiss Abroad's increasingly difficult relationship with the Swiss banks, in particular over the closure of bank accounts without providing justification, was also an issue addressed by the CSA on this occasion. However, several banks have indicated their willingness to the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) to provide Swiss citizens abroad with bank accounts under certain conditions. OSA's Legal Department will publish a summary of the banking institutions and the conditions in the next issue of "Swiss Review" (to be published on 22 July 2015).

# Registration as Swiss nationals abroad entitled to vote

The form to register or renew an entry in the electoral roll can also be found at:

[www.fdfa.admin.ch](http://www.fdfa.admin.ch) > Services and publications > Services for Swiss nationals abroad > Political rights

<b>To</b> The Swiss diplomatic mission with which you are registered. (Please complete legibly in block letters)			
<b>From</b> Surname:	First name (s):		
Maiden name:			
Date of birth:	Place of birth:		
Civil status::	since:	Place(s) of citizenship	Canton (s) of citizenship:
Father's surname and first name:		Mother's surname and first name:	
Full address abroad:			
I wish to vote in the municipality:	Postcode:	Place:	Canton:
<input type="checkbox"/> Because I hold the right of citizenship in this municipality	<input type="checkbox"/> Because I lived there from	(year) to	(year)
<b>Choice of language :</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> French	<input type="checkbox"/> Italian <input type="checkbox"/> Romansh
Under the Swiss Federal Act of 19 December 1975 and the Ordinance of 16 October 1991 on the Political Rights of the Swiss Abroad, I wish to exercise voting rights in elections and referenda in federal matters and to sign federal popular initiatives and motions for referenda.			
Place:	Date:	Signature:	



## Well prepared for education

The school and academic year is coming to an end. Final examinations are approaching, perhaps followed by a degree award ceremony. Many students can then enjoy the long summer holidays. Swiss Abroad who have completed their studies in Switzerland will return to their families abroad or perhaps stay in Switzerland to earn some money and gain their first professional experience through a holiday job or an internship.

Most pupils who are now completing their mandatory education or leaving grammar school know which educational path they will pursue. The 2015/16 academic year begins in August for trainees and in September for students. There are still a few months to prepare for this new chapter.

Leaving the country where they have grown up to come to Switzerland for education or training is a big step for young Swiss Abroad. Even if they have built up a network of strong connections with their homeland, they have to get used to a new environment, different customs and new people, and they will face new challenges. A long way from their family, this is not always easy. They have to find accommodation and deal with administrative matters like insurance policies and healthcare schemes. Grant applications also have to be prepared in good time. Language barriers some-

times have to be overcome. The many summer language courses available are a great help here. If they are well prepared, there is nothing stopping anyone from enjoying a successful year of education or training in Switzerland.

RUTH VON GUNTEN,

HEAD OF THE EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND

DEPARTMENT



*The website [www.educationsuisse.ch](http://www.educationsuisse.ch) provides information about education and training in Switzerland. The staff at the *educationsuisse - Education in Switzerland* department would be pleased to provide you with further information.*

### Youth session from 24 to 30 August 2015

This year's youth session will take place during the summer owing to the parliamentary elections. 200 young people can take part – several places are reserved for the Swiss Abroad. Before the youth session begins, we provide participants with an insight into the procedures of Swiss politics, the political processes and the opportunities for political participation as well as preparing them for what is involved in the youth session at our workshops.

Full information can be found at [www.swisscommunity.org](http://www.swisscommunity.org) or [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch).

### Free participation in ski camp for youngsters

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

600 girls and boys from all over Switzerland will travel to Lenk in Simmental by special train on 2 January 2016. For the 75<sup>th</sup> time Swiss Ski and its partners are holding Switzerland's largest winter sports camp. This time it is the turn of children born in 2001 and 2002.

Swiss children abroad wishing to take part in the ski camp for young people (Juskila) should be able to speak German, French or Italian. A draw will be held for the camp places. The prize includes participation in the camp, winter sports lessons, food and accommodation. Parents are nevertheless responsible for organising and funding the outbound and return journeys. The winners of the 75 places for the Swiss Abroad will be announced at the end of September.

The registration form for the young people's ski camp will be included in the next issue of "Swiss Review".

Anyone interested can request advance registrations and information from the following address:  
*Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA)*  
 Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND  
 Tel. +41 31 356 61 16, Fax +41 31 356 61 01  
 Email: [info@sjas.ch](mailto:info@sjas.ch), [www.sjas.ch](http://www.sjas.ch)



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

### Services provided by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and partner institutions

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA), a foundation governed by private law, is a centre of expertise for safeguarding the interests of Swiss citizens living abroad. Besides the publication of "Swiss Review", it provides various services for Swiss citizens abroad in collaboration with its partner organisations.

■ **Legal advice.** Free advice on emigrating abroad and returning to Switzerland.

[www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch) – "Consultation" section

■ **Network.** The website [SwissCommunity.org](http://SwissCommunity.org) provides the opportunity to network with Swiss citizens all over the world. [www.swisscommunity.org](http://www.swisscommunity.org)

■ **Offers for children and young people.** Organisation of holiday camps and language courses, etc. for young

Swiss Abroad seeking a better understanding of their native country.

[www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch) > Offers

■ **Advice on education and training in Switzerland.** Young Swiss Abroad wishing to train or study in Switzerland receive support and guidance in selecting training and educational opportunities and making grant applications.

[www.educationsuisse.ch](http://www.educationsuisse.ch)



**Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)**  
 Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne,  
 SWITZERLAND  
 Tel. +41 31 356 61 00  
[info@aso.ch](mailto:info@aso.ch)



# The federal popular initiative

*This instrument enables a handful of citizens to put forward a partial or complete amendment to the federal constitution. This article, an extract from a master's thesis at the Swiss Graduate School of Public Administration, aims to explain the development of its use over the course of time.*

While the federal popular initiative is enjoying great success today, that has not always been the case. As the graphic below illustrates, it was a little used instrument until 1932, while its use has increased continuously since the 1970s.

While it is difficult to explain the increase in popular initiatives since the 1970s, two hypotheses are nonetheless outlined here, the first concerning federal politics and the second speed of action.

## Interest in federal politics

Until the 1874 constitution, the Confederation's powers were limited. It was in the cantons that the real political debate took place. From 1874 and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more and more powers were gradually transferred from the cantons to the Confederation. This may, on the one hand, explain the few initiatives between 1891 and 1932 and, on the other, why there has been a surge of interest in federal politics since the 1970s. In other words, the more power a government body holds, the greater the interest in the politics conducted there.

In his book "19 avril 1874 – L'audace de la démocratie directe", (19 April 1874 – the Daring of Direct Democracy), the lawyer and historian Olivier Meuwly shows that certain ideas develop in the cantons before reaching federal level. This was the case, for example, with direct democracy, which originated in the cantons. From the mid-19th century onwards, the cantons, one after another, introduced various democratic tools to enable the people to participate in cantonal politics (legislative initiative, mandatory legislative referendum and optional financial referendum). In a sense, the cantons are political laboratories which enable an idea to develop and blossom into maturity. If something works well in the cantons, it may also be adopted at the higher level.

## Speed of action

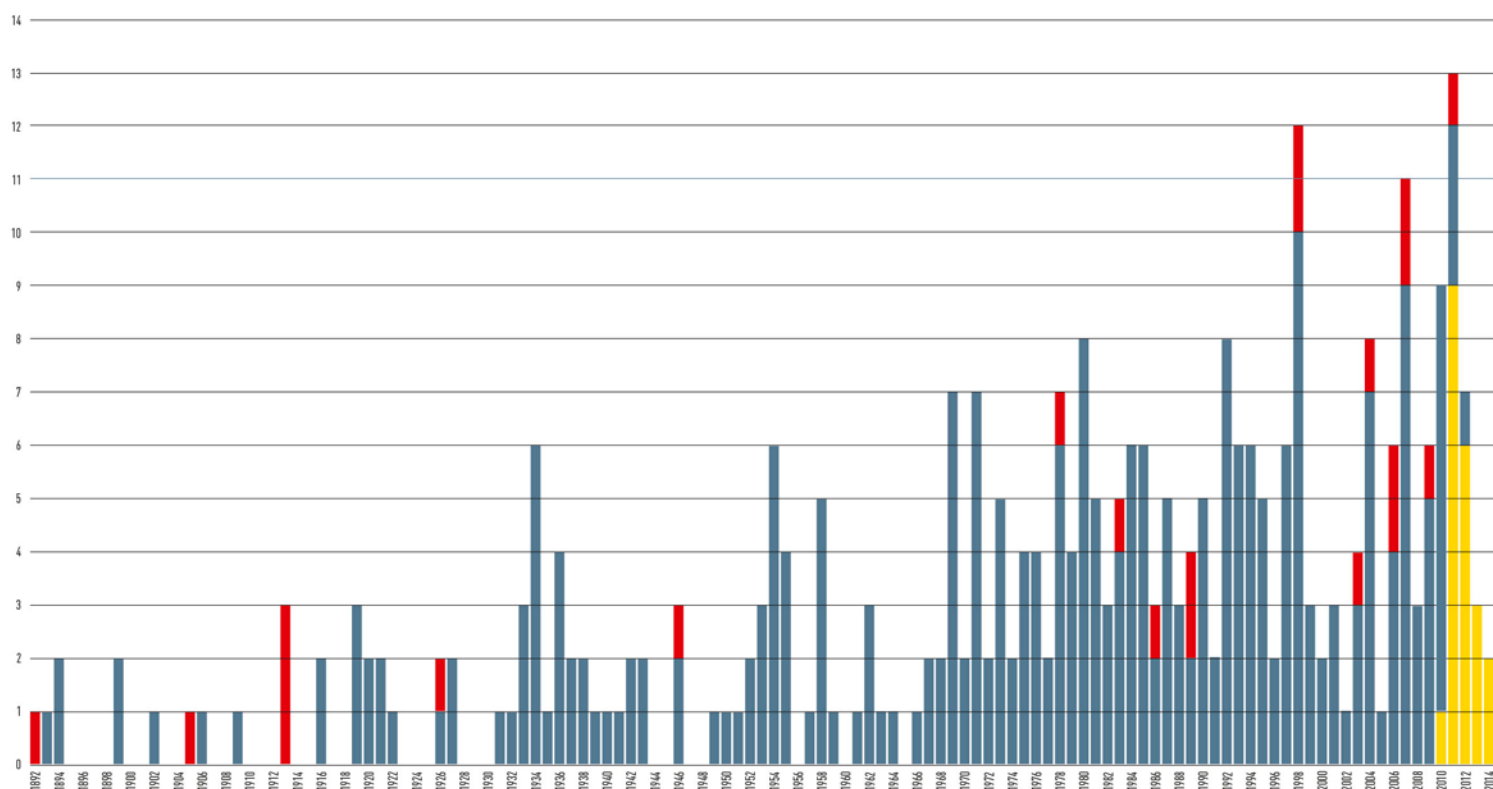
Initiatives enable direct intervention in the setting of the federal political agenda, without going through the representative parliamentary route. It often takes about ten years for a political idea to result in legislation via Parliament. In contrast, a proposal put forward through an initiative can sometimes produce a constitutional article in just three years. The initiative on mass immigration – adopted by referendum on 9 February 2014 – is a fine example as it only took two and a half years for a new constitutional article to come into force from its launch on 26 July 2011. The initiative can therefore be a much quicker means of imposing a decision, although its chances of success

## 319 initiatives were submitted between 1892 and 2014

■ Successful submission

■ Unsuccessful, invalid, withdrawn or rejected

■ Accepted at referendum



are very low considering the proportion of initiatives adopted by referendum (5% of initiatives between 1979 and 2014). This speed and the opportunity to bypass Parliament are factors which may explain the surge of interest in popular initiatives since the 1970s.

The federal popular initiative is very much alive today, even if the chances of winning popular support remain slim. What is clear is that the initiative is attracting a great deal of attention at the moment and it often gets people to turn out at the ballot box. This has implications, as every successful initiative creates a significant amount of administrative work and involves high costs, which are borne by the taxpayer.

PIERRE-MICHEL COTRONEO

THE AUTHOR IS AN ACADEMIC INTERN AT THE CONSULAR DIRECTORATE OF THE FDFA AND A MASTER'S STUDENT AT THE SWISS GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (IDHEAP). THIS ARTICLE IS AN EXTRACT FROM HIS MASTER'S THESIS.

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#### STATISTICAL SOURCES

Data compiled by the author using Federal Chancellery database

[http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/pore/vi/vis\\_2\\_2\\_5\\_9.html](http://www.admin.ch/ch/f/pore/vi/vis_2_2_5_9.html)

#### LEGAL BASES

Articles 136, 138, 139, 139b and 140 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation, SR 101

Articles 68 to 76 of the Federal Act of 17 December 1976 on Political Rights, SR 161.1

## Publications

### “The Swiss Confederation a brief guide 2015”

Current information on Swiss politics as well as on Switzerland's administration and judicial system. It is one of the federal administration's most widely circulated publications. How is Parliament made up? How long does it take for a law to enter into force? How many people are employed by the federal administration? What does the Federal Supreme Court decide upon? The answers to such questions are found in “The Swiss Confederation a brief guide 2015” brochure which is published annually. The 80-page publication is aimed at anyone interested in the Swiss political system. It is used by many secondary and vocational schools for the teaching of political studies.

The Federal Chancellery works closely with Parliamentary Services, the departments and the Federal Supreme Court on the production of the texts. Information graphics illustrate the textual content and photos show the federal administration's employees performing their various roles. For the subject of the cover page photo, the Federal Chancellery did not choose the Federal Palace this year but instead the magnificent Tschingelsee lake in the Kiental valley in the Bernese Oberland – one of 283 wetland areas in Switzerland protected by federal government.

“The Swiss Confederation a brief guide 2015” is published in a print run of 292,000 copies in the four national languages as well as in English. The brochure can be ordered free of charge from the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics at [www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch](http://www.bundespublikationen.admin.ch).



#### HELPLINE FDFA

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

#### Travel advice

[www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise](http://www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise)  
Helpline FDFA: +41 (0)800 24-7-365  
[www.twitter.com/travel\\_edadfae](https://www.twitter.com/travel_edadfae)

#### itineris

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



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[www.eda.admin.ch](http://www.eda.admin.ch) > Services and publications > Publications > All publications > Search term "polar research".

## Important notice

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

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

## Federal referenda

Four proposals will be put to the vote on 14 June 2015:

- Federal decree of 12 December 2014 on the amendment to the constitutional provision on reproductive medicine and genetic engineering involving human beings
- Popular initiative of 20 January 2012 "Stipendieninitiative" (Grants initiative)
- Popular initiative of 15 February 2013 "Millionen-Erbschaften besteuern für unsere AHV (Erbrechtssteuerreform)" (Tax million-franc inheritances for our old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) – (inheritance tax reform)
- Amendment of 26 September 2014 to the Federal Act on Radio and Television.

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

You will find facts, instructions, useful information and additional links concerning the federal elections on 18 October 2015 at [www.ch.ch/en/elections2015/](http://www.ch.ch/en/elections2015/) – a joint website provided by the Federal Chancellery, Parliamentary Services, the Federal Statistical Office and [ch.ch](http://ch.ch).

## Popular initiatives

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

- "Zur Förderung der Velo-, Fuss- und Wanderwege (Velo-Initiative)" – (Promoting cycling, foot and hiking paths (cycling initiative)) – (03.09.2016)
- "Schweizer Recht statt fremde Richter (Selbstbestimmungsinitiative)" – (Swiss law instead of foreign judges (self-determination initiative)) (10.09.2016)

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found at [www.bk.admin.ch](http://www.bk.admin.ch) > 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](http://www.eda.admin.ch), mail: [helpline@eda.admin.ch](mailto:helpline@eda.admin.ch)

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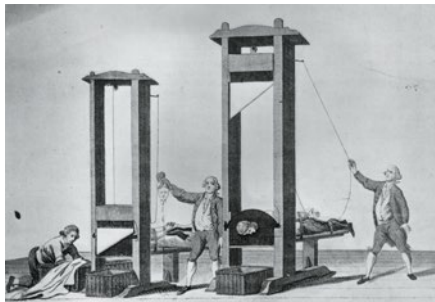
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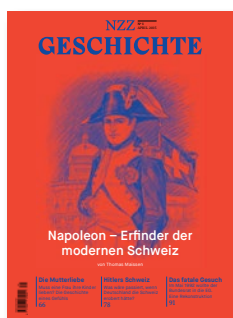
## About us and our past

Can we learn from history? How important is knowledge about our history, past, forefathers and heroes? These questions are being discussed intensively in Switzerland at the moment. “We are living in times with a thirst for history. The past jumps out at us from all corners.” These words are found in the introduction of the latest publication from the NZZ publishing house – it is entitled “NZZ Geschichte” (NZZ History), and the name says it all. The main topic in the first edition, which was published in mid-April, is “Napoleon, the founder of modern Switzerland”. The very readable article on history written by Thomas Maissen is complemented by two features on Swiss women closely involved in Napoleon’s life – Germaine de Staël and the colonel’s wife Regula Engel. “The salubrious bloodbath” is the title of a discussion on



Marignano between the conservative, right-wing editor-in-chief of the “Basler Zeitung”, Markus Somm, and historian André Hollenstein. In the item “5 minutes for historical insight”, readers find out all about the “machine for humane execution”, the guillotine. The magazine is well designed and written for general readers with an interest in history rather than for historians.

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■ “NZZ Geschichte”, Verlag NZZ, Zurich; 122 pages; published quarterly; single issue CHF 18, annual subscription CHF 58, abroad EUR 77.



## The path to political equality

She adopts a new perspective and a new approach and succeeds wonderfully. The historian Franziska Rogger tackles the history and commitment of Swiss women to political equality. The long, arduous path, the obstacles and the stalling tactics deployed by men are much lamented in this field. Franziska Rogger leaves this aside. In her book “Gebt den Schweizerinnen ihre Geschichte!” (Give Swiss women their history!), she presents the battle for women’s suffrage as a path made up of many small victories – a difficult and sometimes gruelling journey. She reveals how much imagination, fighting spirit, persuasive effort and solidarity across divisions of background and party political affil-

## The story of an exile in Geneva told in a cartoon strip

With “Wonderland”, Italian-Swiss illustrator Tom Tirabosco brings us a tender but powerful cartoon this spring. This autobiographical account depicts Tirabosco’s life moving from Rome to Geneva. The eternal city sees the destinies of Jacqueline, a Swiss tourist, and Antonio, a hotel worker passionate about bel canto, entwine. Tom was born in 1966 and his brother Michel two years later. But he arrived in the world without hands and with a crippled leg. They had to move to Switzerland to meet his special needs. A third child completed the family.

“Wonderland” recounts Tom’s hopes and fears in black and white. The boy, who grew up in a working class environment in the Geneva outskirts, finds himself stuck between a quick-tempered and macho but loving father



iation were involved in the long struggle. In the second part of her book, Rogger focuses in-depth on the life of Marthe Gosteli, the now 98-year-old founder of the archive on the history of the Swiss women’s movement. From long interviews with probably Switzerland’s most significant feminist, a kind of Gosteli family history emerges where the father was involved in politics but the women also had a great deal to say. The book reads well because Franziska Rogger is a good storyteller and because she deliberately avoids the jargon and style of historians.

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■ Franziska Rogger, “Gebt den Schweizerinnen ihre Geschichte!”, Verlag NZZ libro, Zurich, 2015; 396 pages; CHF 48  
www.nzz-libro.ch



and a brother who is suffering but has a burning desire to live. How was he to find his place in this environment, with a mother who also had a rebellious streak?

Illustration is the path Tom took to escape, inspired by his love of small animals and oceans. Indeed the pollution of the world plunges the illustrator into despair. There is nevertheless no shortage of humour in this comic strip.

This work by Tirabosco can also be read as the story of the children of generation X. SH  
www.atrabile.org

■ Tom Tirabosco “Wonderland”; éditions Atrabile, Geneva; 136 pages; CHF 25.50. EUR 22.



## New rules for popular initiatives

The think-tank Avenir Suisse is calling for stricter rules to be applied to federal popular initiatives in future. Popular initiatives are increasingly frequently being used as a means of political campaigning contrary to their intended purpose. Avenir Suisse proposes increasing the number of signatures required to 211,000, which equates to 4 % of the electorate. The annulment criteria would also be applied more strictly in the preliminary examination.

## More guests than expected

Switzerland's hotel industry has posted good figures despite all the forecasts. In February 2015, there were 3.1 million overnight stays overall, according to the Federal Statistical Office, which represents a 6 % increase (+176,000 overnight stays) compared to February 2014. Swiss guests accounted for just under half, which is an 8.4 % rise compared to the previous year. There was a 3.8 % climb in foreign guests.

## New committee to save the bilateral agreements

“Vorteil Schweiz” (Advantage Switzerland) is the name of a new committee campaigning against the “EU-NO” association of former Federal Councillor Christoph Blocher and the attack by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) on the bilateral agreements and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The founding members include the SP Council of States member Pascale Bruderer, the National Councillors Ruedi Noser (FDP), Hans Grunder (BDP), Filippo Lombardi (CVP) and Raphaël Comte (FDP) as well as the business leaders Jobst Wagner and Hansjörg Wyss. The two latter figures are apparently willing to contribute two million Swiss francs for start-up funding. Media reports indicate that they will provide a further five million if a referendum on the bilateral agreements takes place.

## Correction

The editorial in the April issue of “Swiss Review” said that the Socialist Party's election manifesto contained “no mention” of Switzerland's relationship with the EU. The SP does not agree with this description. In actual fact, while none of the 10 projects of the election manifesto mentions Europe, the word “Europe” appears five times in the publication's foreword.

## Hans Erni

The painter, illustrator and sculptor Hans Erni died on 21 March, a month after his 106<sup>th</sup> birthday. Erni began painting in the 1920s and became famous with a mural for the 1939 national exhibition which was five metres high and a hundred metres long. Erni designed many posters which reflected his commitment to a more just world. He campaigned for the introduction of old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) and women's suffrage as well as against nuclear weapons.



“We cannot allow people to perish.”

Federal Councillor Simonetta Sommaruga on the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean

“Those swimming in money impertinently hold onto a life belt.”

Ernst R. Hauschka (1926 – 2012), German lyricist and aphorist

“Switzerland is gradually being destroyed.”

Toni Brunner, President of the Swiss People's Party (SVP), on the supposed centre-left alliance in Parliament

“Switzerland has already disappeared. The Switzerland you and I grew up in that is. But it emerges anew every day. More diverse. More world-encompassing. More surprising. Play a part and delight in it!”

Franz Hohler, Swiss author and cabaret artist

“The Radical Free Democratic Party (FDP) used to table solutions and then immediately put forward a dissertation to justify them. Those days are gone.”

Philippe Müller, FDP President, on his party's new style and self-perception

“Status is like honour. Both only exist in the eyes of others.”

Katja Gentinetta, Swiss political philosopher

“Levity is a convivial way of gaining experience.”

Art van Rheyn (1939 – 2005), German poet and aphorist

“Democracy is a device that ensures we shall be governed no better than we deserve.”

George Bernard Shaw (1856 – 1950), Irish dramatist and politician



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