

SWISS REVIEW

The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
April 2015



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What can the Swiss Abroad
achieve in Parliament?

Electoral information online –
which websites are helpful?

A 27th 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 27th canton of the Swiss Confederation? Do Swiss living abroad need to be represented in the parliament?

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No interest in the people

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The election campaign in Switzerland is now underway and you cannot help but rub your eyes in astonishment. This is because the parties are primarily concerned with themselves and with apportioning blame and defaming imaginary enemies. What they have revealed so far has nothing to do with the issues that concern the people and hardly inspires confidence amongst the electorate. First example: in the 10-point election manifesto of the Social Democrats, adopted by the party in mid-February, there was talk of “pay parity”, “minimum quotas for social housing” and “traffic-calmed areas in every urban commune”, but no mention of the SP’s position on Switzerland’s relationship with the international community, and the EU in particular. This is an issue that currently concerns the Swiss more than virtually any other. Second example: the president of the Free Democrat-Liberals, Philipp Müller, has been addressing his Swiss compatriots in full-page advertisements in the Sunday press. Here he has outlined at length what he believes is wrong with the SP’s proposals. However, there is no mention of the ideas of the FDP-Liberals. “We are Swiss dynamos. Our common success is determined by the courage we show,” one can read online in the FDP’s strategy on the future. OK, then. Third example: SVP President Toni Brunner intends, as he also announced in the Sunday press, to re-establish a “conservative majority” in the Federal Palace. The reality is that the conservatives already have a majority today both in Parliament and in government. There is not and nor will there be a powerful left-wing alliance or a centre-left coalition: 70 % of Swiss people lean towards the right of the political spectrum. The SVP is conducting its election campaign on a spurious basis.

The resolution of issues, compromise proposals and the search for consensus, which have long been the hallmarks of Swiss politics, clearly count for little in this election campaign. It is about who makes the most noise, shows least restraint in attacking their opponents and simplifies issues in the coarsest terms. Demagogy rules. What matters to the electorate is purely incidental.

In this issue we feature an article which outlines where good information on the elections and the candidates can be found online. In addition, Jürg Müller looks at who can best represent the Swiss Abroad in politics and Parliament in our focus article. The only two Swiss Abroad ever to have sat on the National Council also share their thoughts.

BARBARA ENGEL, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Cover photo: Visitors to Art Basel in Miami Beach in 2014 in front of a painting by the Chinese-American artist David Diao.
Photo: © Art Basel

A story from Germany

I would like to highlight one detail in relation to the fascinating article on John Knittel. Knittel interwove the case files of the murder of a tyrannical sawmill owner into his novel "Via Mala". The sawmill was located in the modern-day municipality of Kirchensittenbach near Nuremberg. John Knittel shifted the novel's plot to the gruesome Via Mala for greater effect. However, the most recent film version was shot in the canton of Berne. By coincidence, the Swiss Society in Nuremberg has held its Swiss National Day celebrations in Kirchensittenbach for over 40 years. This is how we found out about this story.

VRENI FENSKE-GMÜR, CHAIRPERSON OF THE SWISS SOCIETY IN NUREMBERG

The brain has to be fed

Since I started reading the "Swiss Review", I have been better informed than when I was still living in Switzerland. I wish to thank and congratulate you on your high standards. The article on our national languages in December 2014 proved thought-provoking both locally and globally. I would like to add two points. Neuropsychologists and "neuro experts" tell us that the brain has to be fed even before birth and, above all, that babies' brains need to be fed with our and other languages. We should therefore begin as early as possible and take advantage of our privileged position of having four national languages by offering them at school together with English from the outset. The latter is necessary to give our children the best opportu-

nities on the international stage. These days, when Swiss professionals meet in the various parts of the country, they use English to communicate. Fighting against the times is unfortunately sometimes destined to end in failure.

PIERRE SAUBERMANN, DOCTOR, HUNINGUE, FRANCE

Please spare us

It is simply cynical to write such an article about Verena Stefan's book "Die Befragung der Zeit" (The Test of Time). I was particularly taken aback by this part: "This leaves the reader with an even stronger impression of a narrow-minded society which practises double moral standards. In the words of Doctor Brunner: "Abortion remains the most reliable means of contraception, as those in authority well know. After all, they use it often enough for their wives and mistresses." How can anyone refer to abortion as "the most reliable means of contraception"?! Abortion is murder – all of the academically superior debates are irrelevant because a human life is created in the first seconds of cell division. Please spare us such biased feminist nonsense in future. Thank you.

RENÉ LÜTOLD (DIPL. ING.), CHIANGMAI AND BERNE

Five-star bunkers

I was deeply shocked by the transformation of alpine military installations into theme parks for the privileged of this world. Using them for another purpose is all well and good but once again bowing down to the wealthy is deplorable. Who can afford an overnight stay or an

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Information at www.glueckskette.ch
or www.swiss-solidarity.org.

SWISS
SOLIDARITY

XXL vault in these deluxe bunkers and how much have these revamps cost? The clichéd image of wealthy Swiss will be further entrenched in the minds of our friends abroad. One line from your article would make a good subject for philosophical debate: “The old fortifications are therefore no longer being used for the protection of the population and the state but instead for safeguarding worldly goods.” Cause for reflection, isn’t it?

ROLANDE MICHOD, PLUDUAL, FRANCE

The “NZZ” is the mouthpiece of the FDP

“The liberal outlook and differentiated criticism of the “NZZ”! Wow, Ms Engel – who whispered that in your ear? The “NZZ” is THE mouthpiece of the FDP and the FDP is part of the coup of 12 December 2007 (Ed. the de-selection of Federal Councilor Christoph Blocher) which has unfortunately been overlooked thus far. The “NZZ” does not publish differentiated analyses but instead viewpoints which are unequivocally centre-left (with a sprinkling of liberal economics). This suits the financial and business elite! In a quagmire of incompetence and ideological drivel, it is possible to manoeuvre under the radar and create facts, namely Switzerland’s position as an economic zone of the EU.

MARKUS IMMER, PHILIPPINES

Remarkable

I have been reading “Swiss Review” for many years and am very appreciative of the interesting articles and well considered coverage provided about Switzerland. I found the article by Georg Kohler about Parliament, polarisation, the political class and the voice of the people in the latest issue quite remarkable. It illustrates in a matter-of-fact and comprehensible way how important the consensus-oriented approach of the political parties is to the proper functioning of direct democracy and to what a great extent polarising initiatives and polemicising against a political class threaten precisely this form of democracy. I would like to see such an article distributed to all households in Switzerland, especially during election year 2015.

HANS RUDOLF LEU, MUNICH

Outstanding analysis

Georg Kohler’s analysis of the development of our political system is outstanding. When, in relation to election year, he talks about our minor planet, which as an autonomous rock often vehemently conflicts with its global orientation, this debate should be further intensified after the unpegging of the Swiss franc against the euro. Having lived in Germany for three years and followed the unspeakable debates about PEGIDA, LEGIDA and similar protest movements, I believe that the political parties should focus on the most important issues concerning the future of the nation at the forthcoming election. Prudent re-orientation cannot result from mutual provocation. Each party, especially the SVP, must recognise that we have more to lose than gain as a society in a mood of rancour.

WILHELM TSCHOL, GERMANY

A story of true love



The film will be shown in many European countries and the USA over the next few months. The DVD will go on sale from 10 March 2015 in the original language, dubbed in High German or with English/French/Italian subtitles.

“Der Kreis” was a magazine, “Der Kreis” was a gay organisation and “Der Kreis” is now a film. A film that depicts the love affair between two men in Zurich and the gay subculture which established itself in the city during the 1950s and 1960s. The way in which minorities and marginalised groups were treated has been a recurring theme in Swiss film over recent decades. The tackling of this issue began with “The Boat Is Full” by Markus Imhof in 1980, a film about refugee policy during the Second World War. “Kinder der Landstrasse” by Urs Egger (1992) about the disgraceful treatment of travellers by the authorities also made a lasting impression.

The film “Der Kreis” was a good 15 years in the making. It was initially intended as a documentary and was then to become a feature-length movie. Nothing came of either

project. Director Stefan Haupt has now opted for the genre of docu-fiction. It has to be said from the outset that he has brilliantly avoided the pitfalls of this genre – sentimentality and melodrama. His film recounts the love affair between the French teacher Ernst Ostertag and the drag artist Röbi Rapp which has now lasted almost 60 years. In the film the couple are portrayed by the young actors Matthias Hungerbühler and Sven Schelker. They turn in extremely convincing performances, but it is the documentary sections, the accounts by Ostertag and Rapp, which give the film its depth.

The two elderly gentlemen relate what it meant to be gay at that time, only able to express their love in secret and living in perpetual fear for their own middle-class existence. Their experiences of repression and bigotry mean that they still fight in support of gay issues today.

During the 1960s, the gay scene was underground and fighting for recognition. It did so in a society that responded with fear, hostility and often aggression. The film reveals that resentment and discord also existed within the gay sub-culture.

Stefan Haupt succeeds in conveying all these elements without overdramatising or lecturing. The film obviously addresses historical contexts and socio-political developments. However, it is essentially a film about a couple, the story of two people, who continue to love one another into old age against all the odds. Stefan Haupt proves on several occasions that he is a master at dealing with powerful feelings – he manages to portray highly emotional scenes without a hint of awkwardness.

BARBARA ENGEL

Final destination – the South Pacific

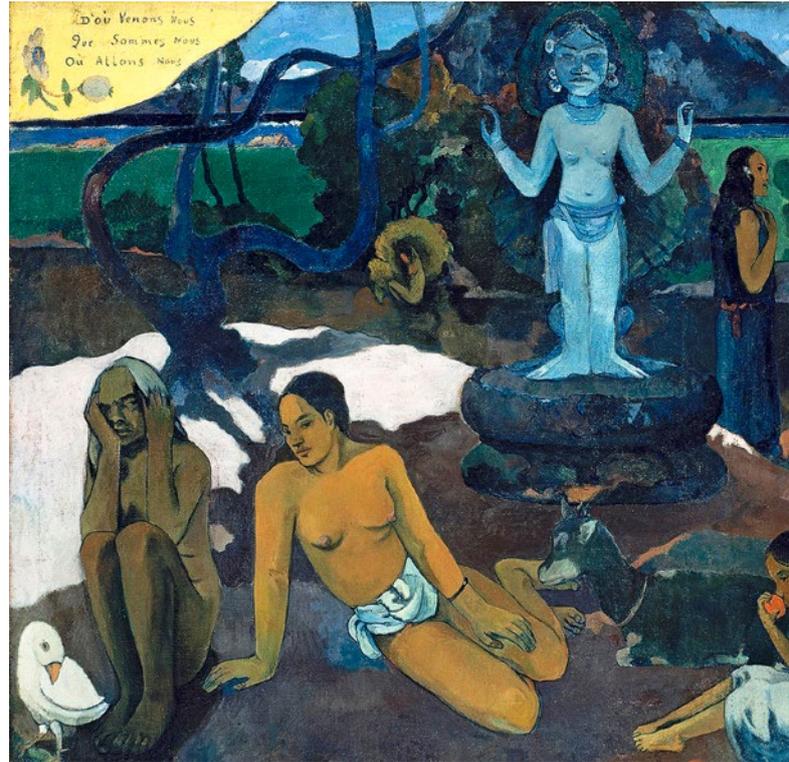
He dreamed of paradise on Earth and achieved worldwide fame with his paintings from Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands. Paul Gauguin, born in 1848, painted his ideal of an untainted exotic world where nature and culture, mysticism and eroticism, and dreams and reality harmoniously come together. He did not find paradise. In 1903, he died impoverished, ill and lonely on the Marquesas Island of Hiva Oa. The Beyeler Foundation in Basel is displaying the largest Gauguin exhibition for decades until the end of July. His most famous works from all over the world can be seen in Basel. For example, from Boston there is “Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?” and from the Pushkin Museum in Moscow the fruit harvest painting “Rupé Rupé” as well as the world’s most expensive painting “Nafea faaipoipo”, which was sold at the beginning of February from Rudolf Stehelin’s Basel collection to an unknown collector.

BARBARA ENGEL

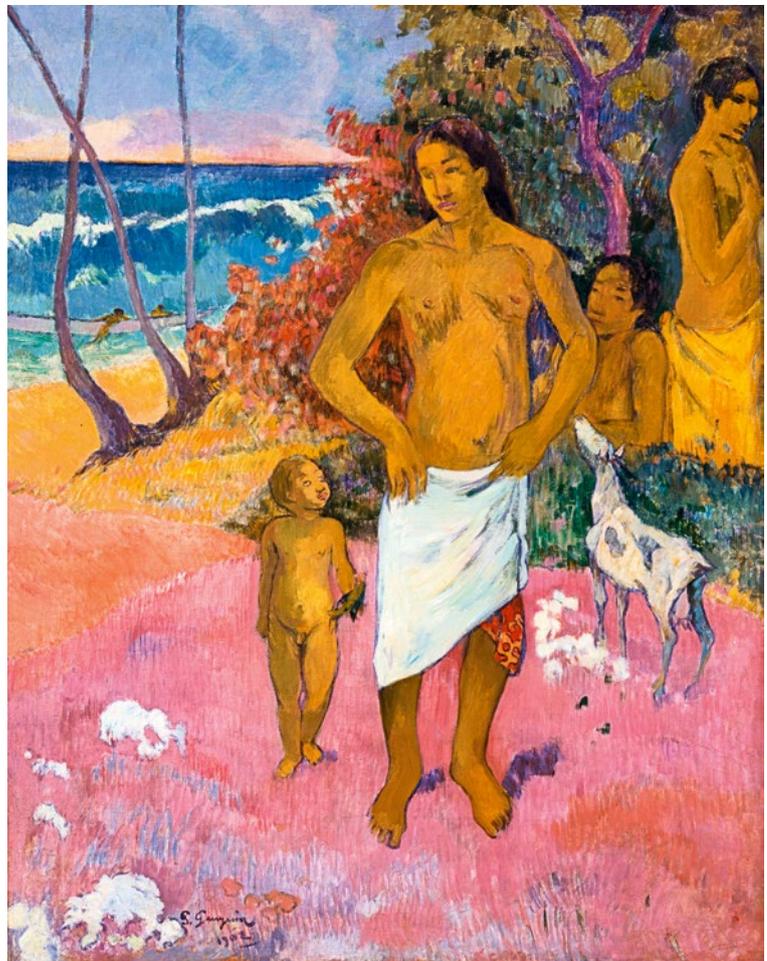
Exhibition from 8 February until 28 July 2015, daily from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m., Thursdays until 8 p.m. Information and ticket orders www.fondationbeyeler.ch



Self-portrait with palette, 1893/94, private collection



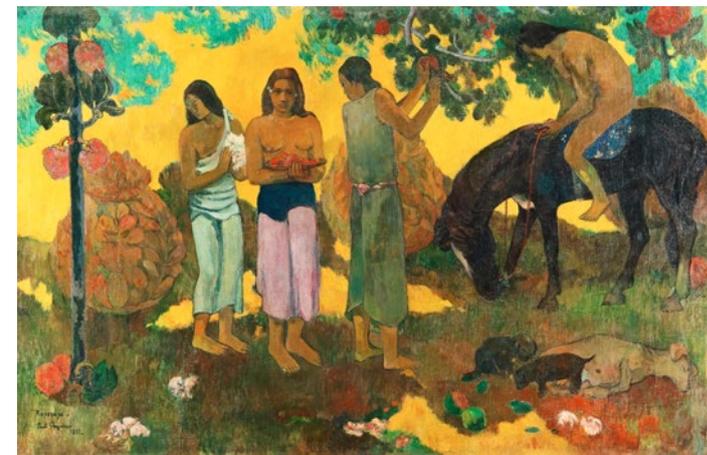
Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going? 1897/98, Museum of Fine Arts



Bathers, 1902, private collection



Arts Boston



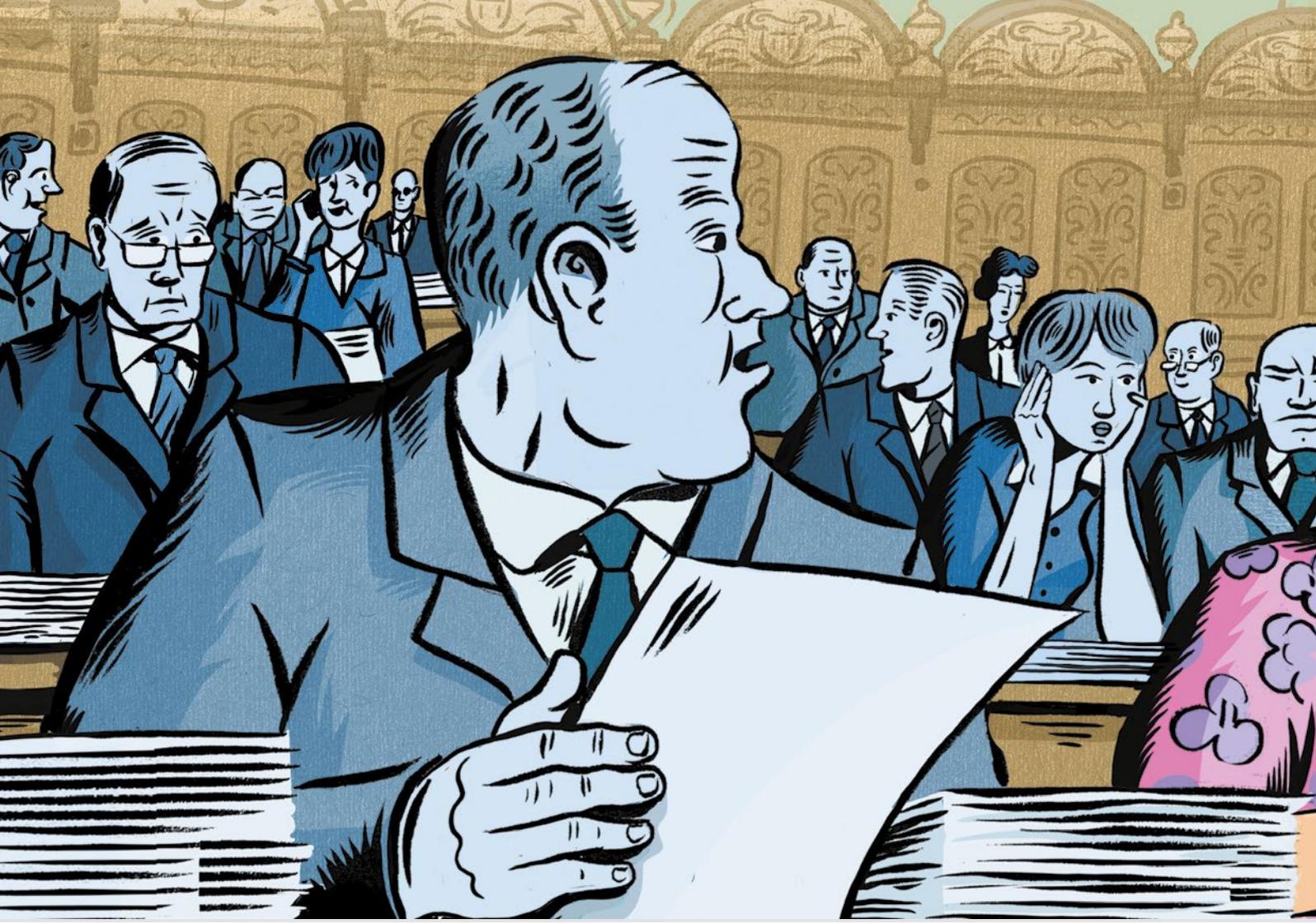
Rupé Rupé, 1899, Pushkin Museum, Moscow



Aha oe fei? What! Are You Jealous?, 1892, Pushkin Museum Moscow



Nafea faaipoipo? When Will You Marry?, 1892



From Rio to the committee meeting in Berne?

More and more Swiss people are living abroad. They are being seriously courted by the political parties. This raises the question of whether the Swiss Abroad should become the 27th canton.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

A married couple, the husband a Green and his wife a Social Democrat, have ensured a first in the Swiss Parliament on two occasions: Ruedi and Stephanie Baumann were the first married couple and also the first Swiss Abroad in the National Council – and they are the only ones to date. A true Swiss Abroad has never yet sat in the Federal Assembly. After all, the Baumanns were elected when they were still living in Switzerland. He sat in the National Council from 1991 to 2003, and she held her seat from 1994 to 2003; they did not move to the south of France until 2001. They took over a new business there after

handing over their organic farm to a son.

The presence of the Swiss Abroad in Parliament therefore only lasted around two years. This may seem surprising as the political obstacles are continually becoming smaller and smaller. Legally there are no restrictions in any case. The Swiss Abroad have the right to vote and the right of election. They just have to register with a Swiss representation abroad and decide where they wish to vote – in their commune of origin or former commune of residence. The Swiss Abroad have enjoyed the right to be elected at federal level since the foundation of the federal state. Various Swiss Abroad have

been elected to the Federal Council – most recently Friedrich Traugott Wahlen in 1959.

Much-courted Swiss Abroad

The political parties are increasingly focusing on wooing Swiss emigrants. This is due to the fact that the number of Swiss citizens abroad is continuing to grow sharply. Over 740,000 Swiss nationals now live out of the country, which equates to one in ten. Proportionally, that is more emigrants than any other country in Europe. The number of political candidates is also continually rising. There were three in 1995, just one in 1999, then 15 in 2003, 44 in 2007, and at the



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last federal elections in 2011 there were 81 candidates residing abroad on the electoral lists. Some parties have even created separate international lists whereas others have incorporated the Swiss Abroad into their cantonal lists. Around 22,000 Swiss Abroad were able to vote electronically for the first time in 2011 in some cantons as part of a pilot project.

“Physical presence requirement”

Significant efforts are being made to facilitate the political participation of the Swiss Abroad. However, various issues arise when it actually comes to performing a National Council mandate from abroad. This is because a “physical presence obligation” applies. And this is not just during the parliamentary sessions, but also at the committee meetings, as Mark Stucki, head of information

at Parliamentary Services, points out. In one specific instance, albeit not relating to a Swiss Abroad, the validity of using a video link for a committee meeting was once clarified. It was rejected on legal grounds, explains Stucki.

This mandatory attendance can present problems. The Baumanns, for example, firstly had to drive around a hundred kilometres from their home in provincial France to Toulouse and then take the night train to Geneva and Berne. Ruedi Baumann says that the delivery of documents did not pose a problem. This should become increasingly straightforward in the internet age. Travel expenses are also a cost factor and one for the state in fact. All National Council members have their travel costs to Berne covered regardless of where they live.



“That would even apply if a Council member lived in Rio de Janeiro,” reveals Mark Stucki. The “most reasonable connection” to the Swiss border is stipulated and in Switzerland all members of Parliament would possess a GA travelcard in any event.

Insufficient contact

Stephanie Baumann, who relocated to France shortly before the closure of the legislative period at the end of 2003, highlights another obstacle: she was able to organise herself for sessions and committee meetings, “but all other exchanges, which in my view are essential to conducting serious parliamentary work, could only be conducted in writing, if at all”. Contact with a wide variety of people, preliminary discussions with party representatives and hearings of the

spokespersons of interest groups concerned, etc. are vitally important. Stephanie Baumann never saw herself as a representative of the Swiss Abroad. “Who was I supposed to represent as a Swiss citizen abroad? A banker in Bangkok? A pensioner living on old-age and survivors’ insurance (AHV) on the Costa del Sol?” She always regarded herself as a representative of her electorate in the canton of Berne, “and in order to do a credible job, I needed to be firmly established in my party section and to have contact with neighbours in the place where I lived and in the region”.

Parliament debates special constituency

Efforts are regularly made to strengthen the position of the Swiss Abroad in Parliament. In recent times, the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP), above all, has supported this by submitting motions. In 2007, Mario Fehr, the Zurich SP National Councillor, called for “direct representation of the Swiss Abroad in the federal Parliament” through a motion. The proposal ultimately came to nothing. The attempt made by Carlo Sommaruga, the SP National Councillor from Geneva, only narrowly failed in 2009. Through a parliamentary initiative, he called for the creation of some form of guaranteed seats for the Swiss Abroad in the National Council and Council of States. The National Council approved his proposal – against the advice of the committee – in 2008 but the Council of States opposed it. The bill was removed from the legislative record and disappeared from the agenda.

A constitutional amendment would be required for direct representation of the Swiss Abroad on



both councils: one or two seats would have to be set aside for the Swiss Abroad in the Council of States and a separate constituency with a certain number of guaranteed seats would be necessary for the National Council elections. Opponents argued that this would effectively mean the Swiss Abroad being treated in the same way as the citizens of a canton. However, a canton is “a state entity consisting of a cohesive area”, remarked committee spokesperson Ruth Humbel of the Christian Democratic People’s Party (CVP) during the parliamentary debate. It could not “be compared with a group of persons distributed across the entire world whose common characteristic was that of not residing in their homeland. Depending on where they choose to live, the Swiss Abroad face completely different living conditions which is not conducive to the establishment of a constituency”. In the Council of States, Hansheiri Inderkum (CVP) described such a constituency as “extremely problematic from the perspective of constitutional law and national politics”.

The advocates of the initiative put forward by Carlo Sommaruga emphasised that “even though the Swiss Abroad live in different places around the world, they share the specific experiences of everyday life away from home”. Introducing more perspectives shaped externally would benefit the work of Parliament. Liliane Maury Pasquier, the Geneva SP Council of States member, pointed to the growing professional mobility of the Swiss people. Parliament could only benefit from this cultural and intellectual wealth. Filippo Lombardi (CVP), her Council of States colleague from Ticino, who also supported the issue, drew attention to the fact that the election of a Swiss Abroad was practically

ruled out under the current regulations.

Three EU countries recognise constituencies abroad

Stephanie Baumann is also sceptical about the representation of the Swiss Abroad in Parliament: “I cannot see any sense in the call for the creation of a fixed quota of National Council seats for the Swiss Abroad,” she remarks. And her husband, Ruedi Baumann, adds: “An election campaign between the Swiss Abroad would be an absolute farce. The only people who would stand a chance of election would be figures already well-known beforehand or those with substantial financial resources.”

This view is clearly not shared by Parliament. In September 2014, the National Council submitted a postulate to the Federal Council requesting “the compilation of a report on the most common and discussed models in Europe concerning the structuring of political rights and political representation of citizens abroad”. It will be some time yet before the report is completed. What is already clear at this stage is that Italy, France and Portugal recognise constituencies abroad and therefore ensure direct representation of their citizens abroad with guaranteed seats in the national parliament. Of the 577 members of the French National Assembly, 11 representatives were elected in special constituencies abroad for the first time during the 2012 election. Italians residing outside the country have been able to elect their own parliamentary representatives in special constituencies since 2006. Of 945 seats in total in the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, 18 are set aside for Italians abroad. Three Italians living in Switzerland are also members of parliament in Rome.



JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

Who? How? Where? When? Why?

Information online will be of particular importance to the Swiss Abroad at the forthcoming election. An overview of the most important and informative websites.

RETO WISSMANN

Who is a serious politician? Which candidates hold views in line with my own? Which party represents my beliefs in Parliament? Who has adopted which political position over recent years? What should I pay

attention to when completing the ballot paper? These are just a few of the questions that voters have to consider when they at some point fill in their ballot paper to determine who will make up Switzerland's future government. For the Swiss Abroad, who cannot

follow the election campaign close-up, it is particularly difficult to obtain information. The websites presented here will certainly be useful.

www.smartvote.ch

Which is the right candidate for me?

Do you want to find out which National Council and Council of States candidates hold similar views to your own on old-age pension, the right to vote for foreigners, tax competition or the free movement of persons? The electronic voting aid Smartvote compares your political values with those of the candidates and produces an individual voting recommendation. You simply have to complete a multiple-choice questionnaire with the option of 75 (deluxe) or 32 (rapid) questions and you will soon discover who concurs with your political views and to precisely what extent.

But that's not all Smartvote has to offer, as a comprehensive profile of each candidate can also be viewed. This contains details on education, career, hobbies and vested interests. The so-called Smartspider, which graphically depicts the views of the candidates on pairs of opposites, such as "open foreign policy" and "restrictive immigration policy", is also an interesting feature. Your own profile then appears over that of the candidate in the Spider. The whole initiative is run very seriously by an independent network of political scientists but definitely also has a fun side. And it sometimes produces astonishing results. However, for the 2015 elections all of this is only available from the beginning of August.

Smartvote has existed since 2003 and is provided by the not-for-profit association Politools. An interdisciplinary network of academics, which is supported by the well-known political scientists Andreas Ladner and Michael Hermann amongst others, is behind the initiative. Over recent years, the website has become one of the most visited political sites on the internet. Ever more cantonal and local elections are also being covered by Smartvote. Above all, it is the voting aid's partnership with various media organisations that has made it so successful. Leading newspapers use the Smartspiders for their candidate profiles or link their websites to Smartvote. The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) also has a direct link to Smartvote.

Smartvote is also heavily financed by media partnerships. However, the candidates make a contribution too. This has sparked criticism on several occasions. In the city of Berne, for example, the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP) expressed concern that the site's inde-

pendence was jeopardised and suggested that federal government should make a financial contribution.

Another issue with Smartvote is that not all candidates ever take part. Anyone who does not answer the questions or does not complete their profile is not taken into account at all in the voting recommendation. The significance of the profiles should not be overestimated either. What the candidates tick and how they ultimately vote in the Federal Palace is sometimes not the same. However, according to Politools President Daniel Schwarz, random testing indicates that the Smartvote profiles concurred with the actual voting behaviour of the politicians in over 80% of cases.

Address: www.smartvote.ch; *Languages:* German, French, Italian and English; *Scope:* 1.2 million voting recommendations were produced in 2011; *Operator:* not-for-profit organisation "Politools – Political Research Network"; *Characteristics:* compares political views of users with candidates and produces individual voting recommendations, 2015 election online from early August

www.ch.ch

Federal government's virtual information counter

The website www.ch.ch has set itself ambitious targets: The website is aiming to become a kind of electronic "blueprint" for contact between citizens and the authorities. Federal government and the cantons cooperated on this initiative back in 2006. Their e-government strategy pays particular attention to the Swiss Abroad. The website now attracts almost six million visitors a year and has become one of federal government's most important information channels.

For the forthcoming federal elections, the Federal Chancellery has clearly set out all official information and made it available in five languages at www.ch.ch/en/elections2015. Based on the latest Windows operating system, it is presented using the modern tile design. The administration has also sought to ensure public accessibility in terms of content and has based the structure on possible user questions and produced clear and comprehensible texts. Some of the content is also available on Facebook, Twit-



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ter and YouTube, and Parliament is explained to the hard of hearing in a video using sign language.

Information on the electoral procedure, candidature requirements, deadlines to be met or applicable legal provisions can quickly be found on the website. The political parties and the party system are also outlined in an impartial way. A voting glossary and answers to frequently asked questions make the Swiss voting system more accessible to visitors less well acquainted with politics. A special “tile” is dedicated to the Swiss Abroad wishing to stand for election or vote. The Federal Chancellery has pledged to constantly extend and update the content and to provide information on the voting documents, the competent authorities, on registration as an eligible Swiss voter abroad, on the right to a postal vote and e-voting.

The supplementary content provided by the Federal Chancellery is also interesting and useful. It constantly compiles the latest press releases of federal government and the cantons on the elections or corresponding reports released by the Swiss News Agency (SDA). There is also an historical review to mark the anniversary of the National Council elections. This explains, for example, why the larger chamber is being elected for the 50th time this year despite the fact that only 167 years have passed since the foundation of the modern federal state. The reason is relatively straightforward albeit little known today. The legislative period has been four years since 1931, before which it only lasted three years and at one time it was just two years.

On election day itself and over the subsequent weeks, the results will be published at www.ch.ch/en/elections2015 on an ongoing basis and enhanced with analyses and statistics thanks to cooperation with the Federal Statistical Office and the Political Rights section.

Address: www.ch.ch/en/elections2015; **Languages:** German, French, Italian, Romansh and English; **Scope:** no joint site existed at the time of the last elections at federal level;

Operator: Federal Chancellery; **Characteristics:** clearly presented information from federal government on the 2015 elections

Easyvote

By young people for young people

Voting at referenda and elections is not that straightforward, particularly for young people new to politics. Easyvote, a project organised by the umbrella organisation of the Swiss Youth Parliaments, aims to increase political participation amongst 18 to 25-year-olds. It provides impartial assistance with voting at national and cantonal referenda and elections. This is based on the official information of federal government but is presented in a simpler and more easily comprehensible way. The entire project is run on a voluntary basis by 120 young people aged 15 to 30 from throughout Switzerland.

Easyvote is planning an extensive information campaign for the 2015 national elections. The main objective is to overcome the notion that the process is excessively demanding. Through various initiatives, it is seeking to eliminate young people’s dread of the compli-

cated voting system. The entire procedure is to be simplified to the extent that it can be clearly set out on a business card and distributed to the target audience. In cooperation with Smartvote, short profiles of candidates and the (youth) parties are to be supplemented with topics relevant to young people. In a similar way to Smartvote, Easyvote users can receive a voting recommendation, and the questions that have to be answered are also produced in a way that is aimed at young people. Furthermore, practically the entire content can, of course, also be shared, commented upon and evaluated via social media.

Address: www.easyvote.ch; **Languages:** German, French and Italian; **Scope:** 30,000 users at the 2011 elections, 270 communes and institutions have subscribed to the voting aid;

Operator: umbrella organisation of the Swiss Youth Parliaments; **Characteristics:** easily understandable information on elections and referenda, online from mid-August for 2015 elections

I want to vote

Listening instead of reading

Anyone who has difficulty reading or simply prefers audio is well served by the website www.ich-will-waehlen.ch. Well-known TV presenters, such as Susanne Kunz (German), Flavio Dal Molin (French) and Pietro Bernaschina (Italian), present the information on the voting system. Site users do not have to watch long videos but can instead click directly on a topic to immediately obtain the required information. It explains how to vote, why we vote and how Parliament works. The special characteristics of the individual cantons with regard to the voting system are also explored. However, it does not contain information on the voting procedure for the Swiss Abroad.

Address: www.ich-will-waehlen.ch; **Languages:** German, French and Italian; **Scope:** 40,000 people visited the site in 2011; **Operator:** Swiss Federation for Adult Learning (SVEB);

Characteristics: information on the 2015 elections explained by presenters, online from April

List of links:

www.parteienkompass.ch A collaborative initiative between hep-Verlag, Smartvote and the Pädagogische Hochschule Bern.

It provides party profiles, political science learning modules and the positioning of visitors’ own political views in the Swiss party political landscape. Only in German.

www.civicampus.ch An interactive political science site available in the four national languages produced through cooperation between Parliamentary Services and the Fuchs publishing house. You can also review what you have learned immediately using questionnaires.

www.wahlen.ch Information site in German on the voting process by the private communications agency bfk Mediensysteme. At the last two federal elections it attracted several million visitors thanks to media partnerships. It produces personal video interviews for candidates.

www.vimentis.ch The politically neutral trilingual information site about Swiss politics is essentially run by students from the University of St. Gallen on a voluntary basis. The annual survey on current political issues attracts great attention. However, it is almost exclusively conservative politicians who are represented in the blogs.

The elections, money and (media) democracy

GEORG KOHLER

Anyone who contemplates the notion of “politics” must consider whether this entails fundamental questions, specific strategies or the activities involved in the daily business of politics. Political science in the English-speaking world has specific terms for these three areas. It uses *polity* to denote the first, *policy* for the second and *politics* when dealing with the third category.

The relationship between money (= power) and democratic voting behaviour is of interest from all three perspectives.

- Should the monetary flows between benefactors and political parties be made transparent? – This is an issue relating to the fundamental principles, or *polity*.

- If you wish to consider the way in which a position is promoted then this becomes a matter of *policy* analysis.

- Or is the question of how (private) financial backers and parliamentarians cooperate of interest in light of controversial regulatory activities? This moves into the domain of *politics*.

The observation of murky power battles in the labyrinth of political and personal entanglements features heavily in the movie world. It is, of course, assumed that such machinations only ever occur in English, French or Italian. I cannot recall a recent production in dialect about “bought politicians”.

Rumours certainly circulate here in Switzerland too about certain decisions or u-turns that are perhaps explained by “mercurial constellations”, to use high-flown language. However, without proof such allegations are suicidal.

Let us move on then to the field of *polity* and legislation. It is, according to a communiqué issued by the Federal Council last November, a Swiss trait *not* to have a legal system requiring transparency over the funding of political parties. This would be incompatible with the “particular characteristics of the Swiss system”. Generally speaking, “the public perceive political life and the funding of the parties” as largely “a private commitment rather than a state matter”.

The statement was in response to a reproach from the Council of Europe’s *Group of States against Corruption* (GRECO), which had identified the lax relationship be-



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tween money and political power in Switzerland.

You do not have to be ill-disposed towards it to find the Federal Council’s answer unconvincing. Firstly, even in Switzerland’s case it is evident that superior financial resources make a difference. The weaker the ties to the traditional party milieu and the more fluid the views of people responding to well-orchestrated mood campaigns have become, the more important is an attention economy run on a national scale. But this does not come cheap, it requires money. Money which, in Switzerland like elsewhere, some people have a lot more of than others.

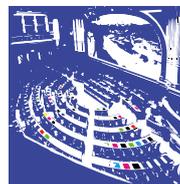
Secondly, the battle to sway the opinion of a politically mobilisable public has become a perpetual one in Switzerland too. Successfully influencing it requires a well-oiled, permanent and professionally run campaign apparatus. So, the issue raised by the

Council of Europe over ensuring transparency seems far from superfluous.

Opinion management is aimed at approval and compliance. A *policy* on this which does not focus more heavily on emotions than rationality will no longer secure majority support in today’s sensationalist media environment. The mood is more important than arguments and reflection. Anyone unable to convey their arguments in a simplistic and emotionally charged way will never be perceived clearly enough to secure victory in modern-day society.

It would not be quite so bad if the form of narrative with the greatest impact was not that of differentiating between friend and enemy. Conceiving politics in this way means squeezing it into a paradigm of direct opposites and thus transforming it into a state that destroys the long-held Swiss virtues of seeking compromise and a willingness to integrate.

It is to be hoped that the relationship between money able to determine policy and the new Swiss media democracy, which the Federal Council regards as a secondary concern, does not undermine precisely what we and it are very proud of – “the particular characteristics of the Swiss system”.



ELECTIONS 2015

The big clear-out before the elections

The electorate will be voting on four completely different issues on 14 June 2015: inheritance tax, artificial insemination, radio and TV licence fees and grants.

A direct democracy clear-out is on the cards in the run-up to the federal elections this autumn. The last referendum of the year at federal level will probably take place as early as 14 June. Referendums will not be held on the other usual dates in September and November (except in an emergency) as the political establishment does not want its hands too full in the run-up to the parliamentary elections on 18 October. It will therefore be a packed June. Four proposals on a wide range of issues will be put to voters in one go. Two popular initiatives with very different emotional resonances are up for debate: one calls for a national inheritance tax, the other would harmonise grants. Also on the agenda is the ethically fraught issue of pre-implantation diagnostics. And a shake-up of the broadcasting licensing system is being sought through a partial revision of the Radio and TV Act.

Million-franc inheritances to contribute to the social insurance fund

Recent years have increasingly seen popular initiatives where social justice and redistribution play a centre role. These include the “fat cat” initiative, the minimum wage and the 1:12 initiative, and the initiative to abolish flat-rate taxation. The “Tax million-franc inheritances for our old-age and survivors’ insurance (AHV) - (inheritance tax reform)” initiative is in the same vein. The proposal from left-leaning/Green parties and the Evangelical People’s Party would put inheritance and gift tax on a federal footing. Two thirds of the income generated from the new tax would flow to the AHV, with the other third going to the cantons. However, the cantons would lose the power to raise this tax themselves. Almost all cantons have an inheritance tax, but direct descendants are exempt almost everywhere. This would no longer apply under the new rules; only spouses would be exempted from the tax. Estates would be taxed at 20 %, with CHF 2 million being tax-free.

The proponents say there is no fairer tax than inheritance tax as estates are assets the heir has not created. SP president Christian Levrat also points out that wealth is becoming increasingly concentrated. One percent of the population in Switzerland now owns 59 % of the assets. Opponents counter with the argument that the initiative erodes the cantons’ financial and tax sovereignty and harms the economy as it renders succession planning in companies either difficult or impossible. Furthermore, income would be taxed three times over by income tax, wealth tax and inheritance tax. Andrea Caroni, an FDP National Council member from Appenzell, calls it a “fiscal class war”. But his SP Council of States colleague Susanne Leutenegger Oberholzer talks of the “trend towards the feudalisation” of our society.

Radio and TV: everyone must pay

Nowadays, anyone wanting to listen to radio or watch TV can do so without a traditional radio or TV set. Broadcasts can be received on a PC, smartphone or tablet. As a result of this technological change the current system will be shaken up through a partial revision of the Radio and TV Act. Replacing the current reception licence for set owners, all households will have to pay a general levy. Companies with a turnover of CHF 500,000 or more will also have to pay up.

This will cut red tape and reduce fees. It will also mean an end to licence dodging and costly checks. As the levy will be spread across more households and companies, the current fee of CHF 462 per household will fall to around CHF 400. A major chunk of the reception fees of around CHF 1.3 billion per year will go to the Swiss radio and TV broadcasting corporation (SRG). But the reform could also benefit private stations, which should get extra: 4–6 % of the total.

In Parliament the bill triggered a broad debate on the media. One of the main critics of the SRG and public reception fees is Zurich SVP National Council member Nathalie Rickli. On her homepage she writes: “We are therefore dealing with an arbitrary tax. You will be taxed even if you don’t have a set.” She goes on: “The internet and multimedia age has given us diversity in the media like never before. There are hundreds of TV and radio stations, internet pages and social media on offer. This should have been the time to question the need for a public offering in the media. There are so many private providers that it is no longer necessary for the SRG to operate 18 different radio stations, seven TV channels as well as a host of websites.”

Rickli therefore supported the Swiss Trade Association when it decided to call for the referendum. For the association’s director Hans-Ulrich Bigler the reform is a “compulsory levy” that will cost the economy an extra CHF 200 million.

Heavy defeats at the ballot box

An ethically fraught proposal

Interior minister Alain Berset has been candid in saying the debate surrounding the popular initiative on pre-implantation diagnostics (PID) will “not be easy”. His concern is that Parliament has significantly expanded the bill that the Federal Council originally presented. In essence, couples who are genetically predisposed to having children at risk of a severe hereditary disease will be able to use PID. In practice this means that, when undergoing artificial insemination, they can have the embryos screened for this disease to ensure only embryos unaffected by the disorder can be used for reproduction. However, it will still be prohibited to screen embryos for conditions that spontaneously arise, such as Down’s syndrome.

Parliament wants to go much further now and allow chromosome screening for all couples undergoing artificial insemination. The original bill would have allowed a few dozen cases per year. If the parliamentary version becomes law, however, that figure would be several thousands. Opposition has thus increased significantly. The bill must in any case clear two hurdles. On 14 June, the electorate will vote on a constitutional amendment that would in principle allow embryo testing. This enjoyed broad support in Parliament. Only later on will a vote be held on the highly controversial law codifying the exact application. If voters give the green light to a constitutional amendment on 14 June, the period for submitting a referendum will begin. A referendum is very likely: the Evangelical People’s Party (EVP) has indicated its intention to call one.

Harmonisation of grants

Anyone needing a grant for attending a higher technical college, university of applied sciences, technical university or another university should have the same opportunities. Currently that depends on the canton, a state of affairs the Swiss association of students (VSS) claims is “unfair”. So it is promoting an initiative to harmonise the awarding of grants for tertiary education and therefore shift legal powers from cantonal to federal level. Grants must also guarantee a minimum standard of living during a recognised initial tertiary education. The VSS believes having clear rules on grants will help alleviate the skills shortage.

The Federal Council and Parliament have rejected the initiative, but support its focus. To ease some of the pressure, the Education Grant Act has been fully revised through an indirect counterproposal. This draft has already been passed by Parliament, but has not been put to the vote. The change in the law will not affect the existing powers of the federal government and cantons, but the federal government will support the cantons in harmonising the grants system. Specifically, cantons will only receive a federal contribution if they sign up to the grants agreement. As requested by the VSS, the agreement sets nationwide principles and minimum standards.

Two parties failed miserably with proposals on key issues at the referendum held on 8 March – the Swiss Green Liberal Party (GLP) with its “Energy tax instead of VAT” initiative and the Christian Democratic People’s Party with its “Strengthen families! Tax-free child and educational allowances” initiative. Both proposals were intended to boost their parties’ election campaigns but ultimately flopped.

The GLP idea of abolishing VAT in favour of a tax on non-renewable energies was overwhelmingly opposed with 92 percent against. This is an historic defeat: only once, in 1929, has a popular initiative won less support. The outcome shows that combining the issue of energy with the tax system was ill-fated. The VAT system is firmly established in the minds of the Swiss public. The crushing defeat of the GLP’s very first popular initiative represents a major setback for the recently established party which is accustomed to success. It remains to be seen whether the previously broad support enjoyed by the Federal Council’s steering tax relating to the turnaround in energy policy will now come under pressure owing to this referendum result.

The CVP also has to come to terms with a bitter defeat. Its initiative too was resoundingly rejected with 75.4 % of “No” votes. Financial considerations, above all, may have played a major role. The adoption of the initiative would have resulted in tax deficits of around a billion Swiss francs for federal government, the cantons and the communes.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

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Her mind was still ablaze while she dreamt

Cécile Ines Loos lived in England, perhaps also in Poland, but her most astonishing trip abroad only took place in her imagination.

CHARLES LINSMAYER

“I am sending you my manuscript of ‘Matka Boska’ that perhaps contains my views on religion, lifestyle, love and wealth, etc.” The letter sent by the secretary Cécile Ines Loos to the President of the Basel Chamber of Commerce in 1927 along with the novel indirectly alluded to how much hardship had preceded the book which would make her a famous author two years later. Born on 4 February 1883 as the child of a German organist and a mother from the upper echelons of Basel society, she was placed after the premature death of her mother with a foster family in Burgdorf, which handed her over to a pietistic orphanage in Berne. Coercive pedagogical methods were practised there which she would denounce in 1938 in her novel “Der Tod und das Püppchen”. Trained as a kindergarten teacher, she first became a Swiss Abroad in 1906 as the governess for a Crown Court judge in England. Her fascinating experiences there would be interwoven into her second novel “Die Rätsel der Turandot” in 1931.

In 1909 all trace of her was lost. “I departed from the midst of so-called good fortune,” she later revealed. “Matka Boska” suggests that she must have endured distressing circumstances in Poland until she was officially registered again in Milan in 1911 as the mother of her illegitimate son Leonardo. After a stay in Berne, where a pastor tried to steer her back towards a path of virtuousness and assaulted her, she disappeared again into unknown realms for years before resurfacing in Basel in 1921.

From chambermaid to author

She made ends meet as a chambermaid and a waitress, rose to the position of secretary and caused a furore with the publication of “Matka Boska”. “I wrote and wrote like a mad thing to work my way out of my experiences,” was her own account of her literary début. After “Matka Boska” and “Turandot”, her luck failed again. What she went on to write wrested her from a difficult destiny as a single mother on the verge of hunger and desperation. When her most suc-

cessful works, “Der Tod und das Püppchen” and “Hinter dem Mond”, were published in 1938 and 1942, her gentle, imaginative prose met with little public response. Completely impoverished and reliant upon the support of the benevolent wives of professors, she died in Basel’s public hospital on 21 January 1959. She had only gone abroad again on one other occasion, in 1952, when she used her savings for a cruise to Palestine.

Imagined Brazil

She nevertheless imagined rather than experienced her most wonderfully and convincingly described trip abroad. This was in her novel “Hinter dem Mond” in which she depicted the wife of a German pastor called Susanna who travels to Brazil where she has an unhappy marriage but gradually gets used to the foreign country over the course of 25 years. Susanna only manages to endure the hardships of the country and her husband’s behaviour because she keeps the grazing animals of the Jura and her childhood friend Petitmoi in her mind’s eye “behind the moon”. Max Frisch alone believed that Cécile Ines Loos had never seen but only imagined Brazil when he said of her in 1942: “Her mind is still ablaze while she dreams.”

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH



“I personally found education not just unfamiliar but also unappealing. Unfortunately, one always has to do what one least enjoys. The instinct for self-preservation did take hold of me one day, but this is more or less how it manifested itself: I went across the Earth and put a flower in the hand of everyone I met. It was a flower on a golden stem and signified joy. This had nothing to do with education. Education was simply a defensive position adopted by the strong against the weak.” (From “Liebhabertheater”, in “Verzauberte Welt”, a reader, abridged edition 1985, out of print)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: None of Cécile Ines Loos’ books are currently available but a new edition of “Matka Boska” will be published in autumn 2015 as volume 33 of “Reprinted by Huber”.

Art Basel – queen of art fairs

One record comes after the other at Art Basel. With a feel for the spirit of the times, the world's leading art show originated from a bar-room conversation in orderly Basel.

GERHARD MACK

While the December sunshine beat down outside, numerous exhibition stands glittered with gold inside the Convention Center in Miami Beach. The material is enjoying a boom in contemporary art. It allows artists to express their need for exclusivity and glamour, to amuse themselves over the trappings of the market and to occasionally also recall a tradition. The Meile gallery from Lucerne exhibited a pile of small boats made from gold paper by the young Chinese artist Hu Qingyan. The hand-folded shapes were regarded as currency during the Ming dynasty, whereas today they are floated on rivers as a greeting to ancestors. However, gold is also a more suitable means than virtually anything else for expressing the exclusive standard that Art Basel embodies in the global art market with its three locations in Basel, Miami Beach and Hong Kong. It reigns supreme amongst the modern art shows up to the present day.

A meeting place for artists and experts

Many gallery owners want to display their collections at Art Basel. Artists implore that their work be exhibited there. Collectors know that people who buy here are rarely wide of the mark. The artworks not only provide pleasure, they also have an enduring value. Numerous museums send their acquisition committees. Directors, curators, art advisers and other experts use the show as a meeting venue. In one day, the general public can see a greater and more diverse range of art than almost anywhere



else.

Its importance was highlighted in impressive fashion in December 2014 in Miami Beach. All the exhibitors from the previous year reapplied for the 13th Art Basel. Well respected galleries, for which the beach-side metropolis long represented too much of an excess of bikinis and tequila to focus on serious art and to achieve high prices, have now forced their way into the show. Young dealers from emerging regions have fought for an exhibition slot. 267 exhibitors from 31 countries and five continents were ultimately fortunate enough to attend. Some 73,000 visitors viewed their collections over five days. That is a record in a city that has long only made headlines for real estate, beach life and immigration.

The founders of Art Basel could hardly have dreamt of such success in 1969. However, even then they were driven by the forces of an art market becoming increasingly international. Legend has it that in 1969 a small circle of friends in the art world sat in a bar room and discussed how Basel could be opened up for contemporary art. The gallery owner Trudl Bruckner suggested establishing an art show and obtained support from her colleagues Ernst Beyeler and Balz Hilt. Beyeler had already gained global recognition for selling the legendary art collection

**Art Basel 2014:
92,000 art lovers
visited the
exhibition**

of the Pittsburgh steel magnate George David Thompson. At a single stroke, Beyeler became one of the leading art dealers of the 20th century. With his international contacts, a new show could succeed. The management of the then “Schweizer Mustermesse” gave the go-ahead.

Rapid growth

The timing was opportune. The immediate post-war period was over. A new middle class had disposable income. Pop Art made art easier to understand and became a totem of a contemporary outlook on life. The first art market was held in Cologne in 1967, and other cities in Germany considered similar plans. The founders of Art Basel received offers to participate there but instead focussed on independence and quality. Art Basel was to become better and more inter-

**The little golden
boats by the Chinese
artist Hu Qingyan**



national than the German competition and would steer clear of associational politics and its cliques.

This concept of a cosmopolitan forum for the best possible art of the time won over gallery owners and art enthusiasts, ensuring Art Basel was a success from the outset. In 1970, 90 gallery owners and 30 publishers from 10 countries attended, and over 16,000 visitors viewed their exhibitions. There was a relaxed atmosphere. Pigeons flew through the old exhibition halls giving a fright to gallery owners concerned about their works of art. On the forecourt, Jean Tinguely's machines sprayed water over visitors. The art show was a huge event.

It had already reached its current size by 1973. 281 dealers exhibited to 30,000 visitors. Art Basel occupied both floors of the historic "Rundhof-halle", which still gives it a special atmosphere today. Its appeal endured, crises shook the art trade but barely impacted upon the Basel art show. In 2014, a record number of 92,000 visitors attended who were able to enjoy the work of over 4,000 artists.

Ever more new collections

The high quality of the art, the rigorous selection of exhibitors and the constant adaptation of the show have ensured the success of Art Basel. An international advisory committee made up of gallery owners was first set up in 1974 for the selection of applicants and most recently chose just under 290 participants from over a thousand candidates. The technical fit-out of the stands and the layout of the exhibition have been adapted to meet growing expectations. For sizeable fees, Art Basel offers its customers, the dealers, an outstanding service and its visitors constantly different forms of presentation. Shows focussing on particular countries were held in the beginning and took place from 1973. These were followed by "Neue Tendenzen" (New Trends) in 1974 and "Perspective" in 1979, which provided space for the very latest developments. Sections for print and photography emerged as well as ones entitled "Young Galleries" and "Statements". These provided small stands at reasonable rates for individual artists and immedi-

ately became focal points for international collectors and curators.

As artists increasingly sought to escape the restraints of galleries and museums, and created work in super-sized formats, Sam Keller, the newly appointed director of art, responded immediately in 2000. He created Art Unlimited in the 10,000 m² hall designed by Theo Hotz. It has long been an inextricable part of the exhibition. Under the label "Art Feature", the need for historical positioning in light of the rapidly changing trends in the global art market was taken into account. Dialogue between contemporary art and art history was promoted.

Those who not only want to view art but also require additional information can enjoy an extensive fringe programme comprising presentations, panel events and debates. The presence of many art experts is used, and the public is made aware that Art Basel is not just an exchange for increasingly expensive art but also a cultural event. An external indication of the show's expansion recently was the new hall designed by the Herzog & de Meuron architectural

Impressions from the exhibitions





The cultural district of West Kowloon in Hong Kong

studio. In the contemporary art market, Art Basel is something akin to an ocean liner on a sea which has long since been teeming with art fairs.

Expansion into America and Asia

The ability to recognise contemporary trends is one of the strengths of Art Basel's management teams to date. This also applies to globalisation, for example. When the sub-continent of Latin America began to shake off the shackles of dictatorships and mafia organisations and as a new generation of artists and a new class of wealthy collectors emerged, Art Basel, under the leadership of Sam Keller, founded its first subsidiary show in Miami Beach in 2002. It immediately established itself as the leading hub in the art trade for both North and South America. Florida's southern tip was the ideal location. Not only do lots of Cuban exiles live there, but Latin Americans also feel at home, and the wealthy from North America's east coast enjoy visiting for a few days of sunshine and cultural stimulation while the frost is biting back at home.

When the market's attention shifted to Asia and a new group of collectors emerged there with their own museums, Annette Schönholzer and Marc Spiegler, who succeeded Sam Keller, recommended initially taking over the majority share and then total ownership of Art Hong Kong. This exhibition had established itself as the first port of call for the Asia-Pacific region under Marc Renfrew. Art Basel contributed its technical expertise and network of contacts and put

Marc Renfrew under contract. The specialist in the Asian art market made a major contribution to ensuring that the transition ran smoothly and that the show appealed to lots of collectors. Auctions are traditionally favoured in the region whereas art shows are a new phenomenon.

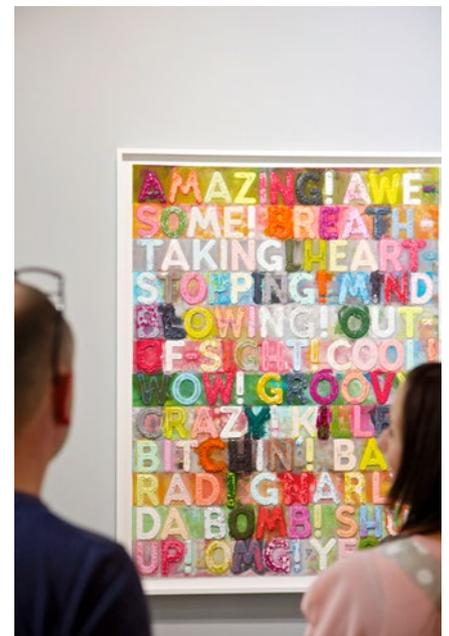
Both cities, Hong Kong and Miami, use the art fair to enhance their image in the face of global competition. During the 1990s, Miami was known as a den of iniquity and money laundering centre for South American drugs cartels, and the cityscape was a sorry sight. The Art Deco district has today been restored. Star architects, such as Herzog & de Meuron or Frank O. Gehry, are carrying out projects here, and apartment towers with sea views for the super rich are shooting up all over the place. Private collectors display their art in their own museums. Hong Kong is striving to become the major hub for culture in the Asia-Pacific region. On 40 hectares of raised land on the southern tip of Kowloon – opposite the famous skyline – a vast cultural project was initiated comprising theatres, concert halls and a

gigantic museum for visual culture. Its centrepiece is to be the M+ Museum for which Herzog & de Meuron is currently producing the design. The Swiss collector Uli Sigg bequeathed his unique collection of contemporary Chinese art to the planned museum in 2012.

The city of Hong Kong is a gigantic free port, the services are top quality and the legal position guarantees a largely liberal and stable situation until the end of the transitional period in 2048. What would happen to Art Basel, which has firmly established itself here, if these circumstances changed? "You know what, art is a moveable commodity which can be relocated rapidly," remarks one of the Swiss gallery owners who exhibits his collection in Hong Kong. Just like the little boats that the Chinese artist Hu Qingyan created from folded gold paper. Art Basel is prepared for all eventualities.

www.artbasel.com

Art and visitors at Art Basel



GERHARD MACK IS CULTURE EDITOR WITH THE "NZZ AM SONNTAG"

Switzerland – a paradise for paragliding

There are 16,000 paragliders in Switzerland, which makes it the leading nation in the world in terms of participation in the sport. The beauty and diversity of the locations, numerous schools, the large number of ski lifts and the extensive public transport network all represent major advantages.



STÉPHANE HERZOG

This sport allows you to take flight in a paraglider – known simply as a “wing” by those who practise the sport – wherever you wish, “provided the weather conditions are favourable and the local farmer agrees to let you use his field”, explains Christian Jöhr. He is 63, has over 1000 flights under his belt and lives in Geneva. The sport, which was invented during the 1980s by mountain dwellers wishing to reduce difficult and hazardous descents to a minimum, now has 16,000 licence holders in Switzerland. “Switzerland is a paradise for paragliders and various factors contribute to this,” says Christian Poppart, head of the Swiss Hang gliding and Paragliding Association (SHPA). There is a good network of ski lifts, and, on the ground, the train or the post bus make it easy to reach the take-off point,” explains professional

pilot Olivier Biedermann. Having fallen in love with paragliding and the canton of Valais, where he relocated in 1998, this native of Basel offers flights to tourists in Crans-Montana with his small company Flyin’high, which he co-owns with Alexandre Lamon, his Valais-born partner.

The Alps and the Jura

The country’s topology is another advantage, says Christian Jöhr, whose favourite area is the Val d’Illiez, in Lower Valais, “where it’s almost always possible to fly except when it’s raining!” In the alpine valleys, the paragliders are protected from winds, such as the northern bise or the Westerlies. However, if conditions are poor in the mountains and wind speed does not exceed 40 kmph, the ridges of the Jura can be used for flying. Otherwise, you

Paragliders in the Bernese Oberland

could take off from the Salève, the most Swiss of the French mountains to the south of Geneva, which is also a peak used for paragliding.

Flyin’high sells around a hundred flights in Crans-Montana in any given year. It charges 150 Swiss francs for a 15-minute flight with a drop in altitude of 1000 metres, or 250 francs for a descent to the valley floor. The business is a sideline. “The major obstacle is the weather. The föehn, for example, with its gusty conditions, prevents flying,” remarks Olivier Biedermann, who works part-time (50%) for the local authority to leave himself time to enjoy his passion. “Paragliding is a niche sport which only appeals to a small number of tourists visiting Switzerland,” observes Véronique Känel, the spokesperson for Switzerland Tourism. This organisation only promotes paragliding in summer and its website (MySwitzer-

Speed and wingsuit flying: the joy of speed and adrenalin

Paragliding was born out of parachuting as the first flights during the 1980s took place using standard parachutes which were then developed into paragliders whose glide ratio – which is the relationship between the distance covered and the altitude of the take-off point – has increased almost tenfold.

Speed flying, the latest development in paragliding, is halfway between skiing and paragliding, and uses a smaller wing size. These jumps allow you to ski up to the edge of crevasses and precipices and to cross them in the air at high speed and with a proximity to the ground which amplifies the kinetic effect. The SHPA estimates that between 200 and 300 people take part in this sport and states there were two fatalities in 2014 in this pursuit, which involves “higher risk” than paragliding. Speed flying is banned on the ski slopes. However, some resorts, such as Saint-Moritz (canton Grisons), has set aside an area, “which can be used to practise the sport in safety”, says Christian Poppart.

Even more extreme is wingsuit flying. Flyers have further reduced the size of the wing, which now resembles a bat's wings and is an integral part of the flight suit. In this extreme sport, which is somewhat of a compromise between free fall and paragliding, participants fly over peaks at more than 100 kmph before opening a parachute. The discipline is a cousin of base jumping (parachute jumping from the ground), for which the Swiss hub is Lauterbrunnen (canton Berne). Switzerland Tourism notes that these high-risk sports are not featured in its promotional campaigns.

A guide to flying with wings

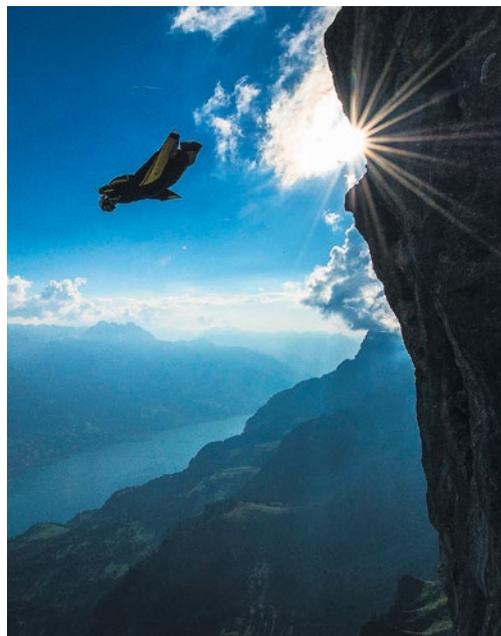
Would you like to go flying in Switzerland? It couldn't be easier, as the country is full of flying schools, clubs and commercial pilots. A trial day with a 10-metre flight costs 120 Swiss francs, according to the SHPA. Paragliding requires a licence, which generally takes one year to obtain in order to allow people to experience flying in various types of weather conditions, according to the association. Training costs around 1800 Swiss francs and full equipment approximately 5000 francs. Flying without a licence is illegal. According to Christian Jöhr, training in Switzerland is strenuous.



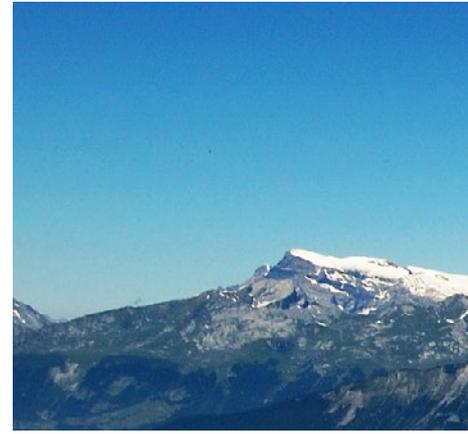
Paraglider at Alpstein



Speed flying is only permitted in a few areas



Base jumping with Lake Walen in the background



land.com > Interests > Adventure & Sports Summer) provides a link to the SHPA's website. Nevertheless, several thousand visitors – enthusiasts or tourists – come to fly in the Swiss Alps each year. Two spots top the bill, according to the SHPA – Verbier (Valais) and Fiesch, in Upper Valais, a location conducive for taking off on long flights and setting records, such as the historic voyage to Innsbruck. “Interlaken attracts the largest numbers for tourist flights. The town has around 60 pilots,” explains Christian Poppart. The head of the SHPA recalls that of the eight fatalities recorded in Swiss paragliding in 2014, half were foreigners. “The alpine weather system is more complex and severe than in flat countries such as Germany, and there is lower visibility. Visitors from these regions are often stressed by these conditions. However, paragliding is not a dangerous sport if the safety rules are observed. The risk is no greater than in high mountain regions,” says Christian Poppart reassuringly.

Flights as gifts

In Crans-Montana, Flyin'high's customers include tourists, young people fascinated by the sport and many people who have received a tandem paraglider flight as a gift. How do people react? “They are often a little apprehensive on take-off,” says Olivier Biedermann. “Customers sometimes have a racing heart or queasi-



ness, but we adapt the flight and it can always be cut short if necessary.” But once in the air, it is generally a sense of amazement that takes over. “You only have to take two or three steps and you’re flying. It’s magical and people sometimes find it a very moving experience,” according to the pilot.

Where does this love of flying come from? It’s an outdoor sport where you work with the air and sunshine, which causes thermals by warming up the sides of the valley,” adds the Valais-based paraglider. “I fly over places which are difficult to get to and where I’d never go, such as mountain peaks. Up in the air, you can see eagles and bearded vultures and watch the fauna of the Alps, such as ibexes and chamois. And apart from the use of ski lifts and the energy required to manufacture the equipment, it’s a sport that does not generate any pollution.” He recalls majestic flights, such as when he flew over the Dent Blanche, taking off from the summit of the Vercorin ski resort. Flying with the eagle close to the 4000 metre

peaks of the Couronne in Valais or above the Aletsch glacier – what could top that?

Christian Jöhr, who is a senior executive in the field of social welfare in Geneva, is enthusiastic about the physical sensations of flying. “It’s all a matter of gliding and ascending with the thermals.” Paragliding also requires risk management and self-evaluation. “You have to be cautious while not allowing yourself to be conquered by fear,” explains the Geneva-based pilot who admits having experienced one or two “tree landings” and a sprained ankle but who has also lost an acquaintance in the sport. His motto: “It’s better to regret staying on the ground and not flying than to regret being in the air!” Such situations can occur in changeable conditions when paragliders can find themselves carried up 1000 metres into the air in just a few minutes. They also have a rescue parachute which is activated in the event that the wing enters a chandelle and cannot be reopened.

A tandem paragliding flight from Vercorin crossing Lower Valais

With a 2% increase in new members each year, paragliding in the Alps and Jura continues to grow steadily in popularity to the delight of the SHPA. The current trend is seeing something of a return to the early days of paragliding based on “hike and fly”, made possible by lighter equipment. “The development of the equipment has been extraordinary over the past 20 years,” explains Christian Jöhr, “both in terms of the glide ratio of the wings (and therefore the distances that can be covered) and safety. You can now set off with a wing weighing five or six kilos compared to 20 kilos in the past.” Switzerland, a paradise for hiking, now offers ramblers the opportunity to transform their descents into flights. Feeling daring?

www.myswitzerland.ch > Interests > Adventure & Sports Summer

STÉPHANE HERZOG IS AN EDITOR WITH THE
“SWISS REVIEW”

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www.revue.ch

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OSA advice

Before emigrating I spent several years working in Switzerland and paid old-age and survivors' insurance/invalidity insurance (AHV/IV) contributions. How can I find out about my entitlement to an AHV pension?

You can request a pension calculation forecast based on the contributions you made from the Swiss Compensation Office in Geneva. In relation to these projections, the website of the Central Compensation Office (CCO) in Geneva states: "The presence of hypothetical elements in the calculation means that the amounts predicted are merely estimations. These amounts consequently are not legally binding."

An application form to download and complete can be found at www.zas.admin.ch under Services > Projected/provisional pension calculation

You can complete and print out this form and then sign and send it to the address given below. An official document containing your personal details (surname, first name, date of birth and spouse's name) has to be attached to the form – for example, a copy of your identity document, birth certificate, family record book or an extract from the civil register.

It is advisable for married couples to submit two individual pension calculation applications at the same time.

OSA LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Swiss Compensation Office
Av. Edmond-Vaucher 18
P.O. Box 3100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

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

Good opportunities for young Swiss Abroad

Switzerland's dual education system is often held up as a successful export. The USA, for example, is showing great interest in application-oriented vocational training with freedom to choose paths. Federal Councillor Johann Schneider-Ammann revealed this in January after a visit to Washington. Training in a company offering apprenticeships is also often an extremely attractive and worthwhile alternative to university courses for the Swiss Abroad, according to Ruth von Gunten, the head of the "educationsuisse - Education in Switzerland" advisory service.

How many enquiries concerning advice on education do you receive each year from young Swiss Abroad?

We receive around a thousand each year. The enquiries do not just come from young people but often also from parents or relatives in Switzerland. They tend to come from two different groups of people. There are those who have very general questions about education and training in Switzerland. They are usually young people who do not yet have any specific ideas about their choice of career and objectives. And then there are those, who make up around half, who have already chosen a course and now require support with the organisational side of things in Switzerland. These enquiries often concern admission conditions and the grant system.

What are the most common career aspirations of the young Swiss Abroad?

We have noticed that most still believe they need to study at university to obtain a good education. While



Ruth von Gunten, head of the advisory service for education and training in Switzerland

many Swiss Abroad are familiar with the Swiss system of vocational training, few are aware that the opportunity exists to sit a vocational university-entrance exam and to study at a university of applied sciences.

Are there specific requirements that are the same for all paths or careers?

The most important requirement for any path is a good knowledge of a national language. Anyone wishing to study in Lausanne, for example, has little chance without an in-depth knowledge of French. There are still only a very small number of courses conducted in English at universities in Switzerland. The same applies to vocational training. Linguistic knowledge is essential, otherwise a trainee will not cope at vocational college.

Can you provide any details of the cost of an education?

Fees for university courses are comparatively low in Switzerland. Living costs, however, tend to be high. Depending on the place of study, we estimate costs of between CHF 18,000 and CHF 28,000 a year. Slightly lower costs are incurred for parents during vocational training as the trainees re-

ceive a small wage from the first year of apprenticeship.

Do young Swiss Abroad remain in Switzerland or return to their country of origin after completing their education?

We do not have any exact information on that but we do know that many gain their first professional experience in Switzerland after an apprenticeship or course of study. Those who return to their second homeland with the “complete package” certainly have good opportunities available to them and are often also good intermediaries between different cultures. They also make a major contribution to economic development in many countries.

INTERVIEW: BARBARA ENGEL

This summer's offers for young people

The Youth Service of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) has again put together a wide range of attractive offers this year.

Whether for one of our summer camps, an individually tailored language course or one of our exciting seminars, a visit to Switzerland is sure to provide a memorable experience.

All our offers can be found on the websites www.swisscommunity.org > Youth or www.aso.ch > Offers > Youth offers. In the categories of leisure activities, education and politics, everyone is certain to find the ideal offer for them.

The 2015 offers

- Adventure travel from 14 to 24 July 2015
- The Swiss Challenge from 25 July to 7 August 2015
- Summer camps in Grindelwald from 11 to 24 July and from 25 July to 7 August 2015
- Language courses with variable dates
- Training in Switzerland and Springboard with variable dates
- “Operation 72 hours and Switzerland gets involved” from 7 to 13 September 2015
- Seminar at the Congress of the Swiss Abroad from 10 to 16 August 2015
- Youth Session 2015 with preparation from 24 to 30 August 2015

Information and registration at www.swisscommunity.org or www.aso.ch.

Summer camps for children aged 8 to 14

From the end of June to the end of August 2015, Swiss children abroad can have a fantastic time at two-week summer camps while also discovering Switzerland and its culture together with 30 to 50 other children from all over the world.

There are still individual places available at our holiday camps. The exact details and the registration form can be found at www.sjas.ch under Camps. Should you request it, we would also be pleased to send you our information brochure by post with an overview of the offers. The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad wishes to give all Swiss children abroad the opportunity to discover Switzerland in this way on at least one occasion. We can offer reduced rates in justified cases. The form required can be requested on the registration form. We would be pleased to provide you with further information.

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, 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



93rd Congress of the Swiss Abroad – 14 to 16 August 2015, International Conference Centre in Geneva (CICG)



This year's Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Geneva will focus on the theme of "Educating citizens: the guarantee of a vibrant democracy". The speakers will include Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, head of the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications.

At www.aso-kongress.ch you can find out more about the theme of the congress. Here you can also order your congress registration pack and book your hotel online.

Put the congress dates in your diary today. We look forward to meeting you!

Information on the right to participate in votes and elections

The Swiss Abroad can participate in elections and referenda in Switzerland provided they are registered on an electoral roll in Switzerland. Swiss citizens are not automatically enrolled when they regis-

Please send me the registration documents in spring 2015 for the 93rd Congress of the Swiss Abroad (14–16 August 2015) in Geneva.

My address is:

Surname/first name: _____

Address: _____

Country/postcode/city: _____

Email: _____

It is important that you write legibly and in block capitals.

The registration documents are available in two languages:

German French

(Please tick the language required.)

Send the completed form to:

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Communications & Marketing,
Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, SWITZERLAND

Fax: +41 (0)31 356 61 01 or send an email to communication@aso.ch

ter with a consulate or embassy abroad. They must explicitly request the right to vote. Swiss Abroad are usually registered on the electoral roll at the commune where they last resided in Switzerland. This enrolment must be renewed regularly – at least every four years – with the commune (not the representation abroad). This does not take place automatically. Some communes regularly ask their eligible voters abroad to do this, while others do not. The forms for enrolment and renewal can be found at: www.eda.admin.ch > Documentation > Publications > Swiss Abroad > Leaflets "Political rights"

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 – "Consultation" section

■ **Network.** The website SwissCommunity.org provides the opportunity to network with Swiss citizens all over the world. 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 > 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



Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)
Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne,
SWITZERLAND
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By no means “business as usual”: Switzerland’s 2014 OSCE Chairmanship

In 2014 Switzerland became the first ever participating State of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to chair the Vienna-based organisation for a second time, following its first chairmanship in 1996. It had prepared for the many challenges with which the chairmanship is usually confronted. But as Didier Burkhalter – the 2014 Chairperson-in-Office and Switzerland’s foreign minister, who also happened to be president of the Confederation that year – said at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel at the start of December, 2014 had by no means been “business as usual”. It became clear early on in the year that the Ukraine crisis would be the dominant theme of this Chairmanship and the chair would have to make every effort to preserve the strands of dialogue between all actors involved in the serious situation.

Switzerland focused on dialogue, insisting on the OSCE’s added value: it is the only regional security organisation in which the western countries and the Russian Federation sit at the same table on equal terms and talk eye to eye. It was possible in this way to make use of two instruments from the OSCE’s ‘toolbox’ to particular effect in the de-escalation of the crisis. First, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) was created on 21 March 2014 following a consensus decision in the Permanent Council by all 57 OSCE participating States. Since then, the mission has made a major contribution to the management of the crisis as the ‘eyes and ears of the international community’, providing accurate independent reports daily from ten regions in Ukraine including the disputed areas Luhansk and Donetsk (<http://www.osce.org/ukraine-smm>). Second, the OSCE Chairmanship is contributing to the efforts of the Trilateral Contact Group, in which its Special Representative, Ambassador Heidi Tagliavini, is working alongside high-level representatives from Ukraine and Russia. The group quickly established itself as the only operational body for discussing issues regarding a ceasefire, peace plans, the exchange of prisoners and humanitarian matters. In September 2014, the Contact Group succeeded in coming to an arrangement with representatives of separatist groups in what became known as the Minsk Protocol and Minsk Memorandum, which formed the basis and point of reference for a process aiming at a political solution to the crisis.

Although the work of its Chairmanship was very much determined by the conflict in and around Ukraine and the intensive efforts to maintain dialogue between all actors, Switzerland was also able to further its core priorities. It made progress with regard to reconciliation and closer regional cooperation in the Western Balkans and promoting dialogue and confidence-building in the South Caucasus, for example. Switzerland also supported efforts in what it considers to be central policy areas, including combating human trafficking and terrorism, protection of human rights defenders, the prevention of torture, the management of natural disasters, and combating antisemitism. The Swiss Chairmanship organised international conferences on these topics and worked to stimulate and shape discussions on the further development of measures. At the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Basel, despite political tensions due to the Ukraine crisis,

the Swiss Chairmanship managed to secure successful outcomes to negotiations in many of its priority areas (<http://www.osce.org/node/124148>).

Switzerland is continuing its work in the OSCE as an active member of the 2015 Troika, comprised of Switzerland as the outgoing chair, Serbia (2015) and Germany (2016). In this framework, Swiss President and OSCE Chairperson-in-office Didier Burkhalter launched a panel of 15 eminent persons at the Ministerial Council meeting in Basel in close cooperation with Serbia and Germany, to draw conclusions from the Ukraine crisis and support constructive and inclusive dialogue among the OSCE participating States on security across the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian regions. Switzerland will continue to actively support this process

(<http://www.osce.org/cio/133986>).

Visit the 2014 Swiss Chairmanship web dossier for more information: <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/home/aktuell/dossiers/osze-vorsitz-2014.html>



Table of the Chairmanship in the Ministerial Council



“Family Photo”

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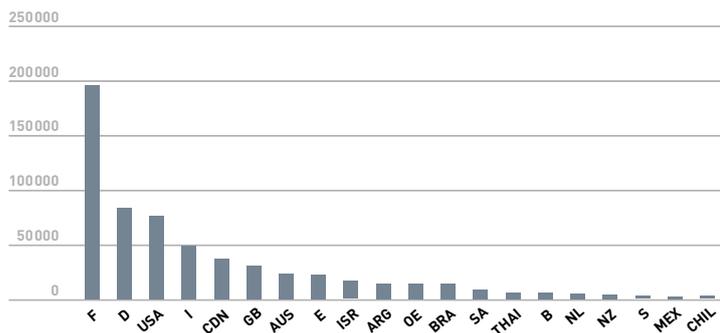
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Statistics on the Swiss Abroad

More and more Swiss are living abroad. In 2014, the number of Swiss Abroad increased by 14,726 compared to the previous year to 746,885, which equates to a rise of around 2 %. This is according to the latest statistics on the Swiss Abroad published by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). The statistics include all Swiss citizens registered with an embassy or consulate general abroad. They live in 200 countries and territories around the world.

The countries with the largest numbers of Swiss Abroad:



The greatest effective increases last year were recorded in those countries which already have the largest Swiss communities abroad: France with 3,112 more persons, Germany with 2,045 more and the USA with a rise of 1,176. The subsequent positions in the ranking order are occupied by Israel (plus 1,045), the UK (plus 1,028), Australia (plus 577) and Thailand (plus 568).

Six out of ten Swiss Abroad lived in the European Union in 2014, and three quarters of them in directly neighbouring countries. In France this amounted to 194,474 citizens, in Germany 84,671, in Italy 51,353 and in Austria 15,542.

The biggest communities of Swiss Abroad outside Europe are found in the USA with 78,696 persons holding the red passport, in Canada with 39,618, in Australia with 24,584 and in Israel with 17,958. At the bottom of the list of statistics are São Tomé and Príncipe, Kiribati and Turkmenistan, where Switzerland is represented with just one single person in each case.

Of the 583,150 Swiss Abroad of full legal age, 142,651 were registered on a Swiss electoral roll at the time of the referendum held on 30 November 2014. That is 24.5 % and signifies an increase of around 1.5 % compared to the National Council elections in 2011.

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 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. “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 electronically (via email or as an iPad/Android app) or in printed format.

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 (Erb-schaftssteuerreform)” (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 pamphlet, committees, party statements, electronic voting, etc.) can be found at www.ch.ch/en/votes.

Other referendum dates in 2015: 18 October (federal elections), 29 November.

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

- “Raus aus der Sackgasse! Verzicht auf die Wiedereinführung von Zuwanderungskontingenten” (Out of the cul-de-sac – avoid reintroduction of immigration quotas) (02.06.2016)

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

The 2015 Federal Council photograph

The traditional photograph of the complete Federal Council caused a degree of astonishment this year as the government was not photographed standing as usual but instead sitting grouped around a table.

(from left to right): Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, Federal Councillor Johann N. Schneider-Ammann (Vice-President), Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer, President of the Swiss Confederation Simonetta Sommaruga, Federal Councillor Alain Berset and Federal Chancellor Corina Casanova



Press comments on the 2015 Federal Council photograph:

Basler Zeitung, Basel: “Da Vinci style” – the national government has clearly decided not to take a stand on issues in future but instead to sit them out.

Tages-Anzeiger, Zurich: The interpretations ranged from the religious (a copy of Leonar-

do da Vinci’s “The Last Supper”) to the banal (regulars’ table in the bar) and the offensive (mafia family).

NZZ, Zurich: The Federal Council should first of all sit down together at the start of the year.

Die Südostschweiz, Chur: The Federal Chancellery describes the photo as “concordance in practice”. The question now is how many of

them will be left at the end of the 2015 election year and whether a traitor will emerge like at the Last Supper.

Tribune de Genève, Geneva: It does not get any more egalitarian than that. This is the clear message to Parliament which will vote on a law in favour of female quotas in corporate management in 2015.

HELPLINE FDFA

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

Travel advice

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Helpline FDFA: +41 (0)800 24-7-365
www.twitter.com/travel_edadfae

itineris

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



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Overcoming anxieties with sober-mindedness

Immigration is currently a highly emotive issue. The debate is dominated by fears rather than facts and stoked by dramatic images of refugees in the Mediterranean Sea and illegal immigrants in the southern USA. In his book "Exodus", the British development economist Paul Collier tackles the issue from various perspectives. He firstly outlines the story of his grandfather Karl Hellenschmidt, who left Germany to escape poverty and moved to Bradford in the UK. This is a clever introduction because it is touching on a human level and illustrates that immigration is not a new problem. The book covers many aspects, including integration as well as

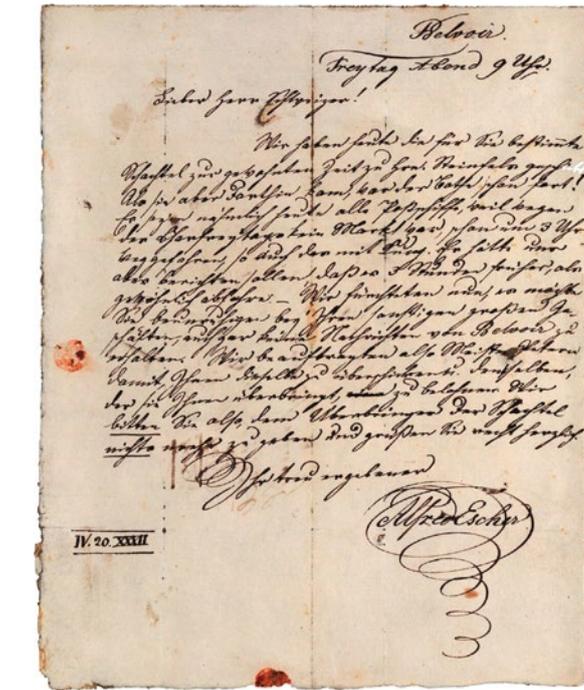


the deficiencies and gaps created in poor countries as a result of emigration, known as the brain drain. Collier is no ideologist but an academic able to observe and analyse problems objectively. His analysis suggests that mass migration is a temporary phenomenon and will end once prosperity is better distributed. The book, which came out in English in 2013 but is now also available in translation, is an absolute gem.

■ Paul Collier: "Exodus"; Siedler-Verlag, Munich 2014. 320 pages; CHF 32.90, EUR 23.



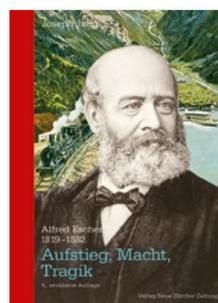
■ Paul Collier: "Exodus. Immigration and Multiculturalism in the 21st Century" Allen Lane 2013; EUR 19.



Alfred Escher – digital

Hardly anyone has shaped the development of modern Switzerland as much as Alfred Escher, the business leader and politician from Zurich (1819-1882). He created synergies between politics, the railway network, the financial sector and the education system, and helped the emergent federal state to achieve a significant upturn. An outstanding editorial project concerning Escher is set to be completed mid-way through the year: All of his 5,000 or so letters are being digitised, transcribed and made available online. Lots of manuscripts and libraries are being digitised today but not always to this high quality standard. The digital edition of the Escher letters provides easy access to the documents via various paths. This is not just of great value to research but also of benefit to the general public with an interest in the subject. The navigation is clearly laid out, and contexts and historical comments can be displayed. The Alfred Escher Foundation is behind the project, and the historian Prof. Dr. Joseph Jung, who was chief historian at Credit Suisse for many years and Escher's biographer, is the publisher and research director.

■ www.briefedition.alfred-escher.ch



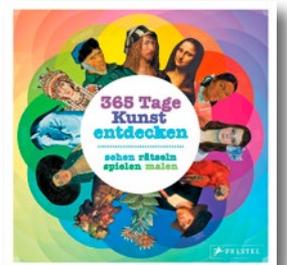
Art every day for young and old

There is an art book that contains an exercise, story or puzzle for every day of the year. Who can find the proverbs in Pieter Brueghel? How many colours are there in a rainbow? Who was The Blue Rider? And who was August Macke? Did he paint in a representational or abstract style? And what is abstract art exactly? Is still life really still? These are just a few of the many questions asked. Readers will discover famous works of art on their journey through the year, including by Gauguin, Sisley, Rousseau, Klimt, Turner, Picasso, Kahlo, Botticelli and many others. The book entitled "365 Tage Kunst entdecken – sehen, rätseln, spielen, malen" has been produced for children (aged six



and over) but is also a fascinating and informative read for many older people.

■ Doris Kutschbach, Christiane Weidemann: "365 Tage Kunst entdecken"; Verlag Prestel Junior, Munich; 376 pages; CHF 28.50, EUR 20.



A third from immigrant backgrounds

Of the 6.8 million people living in Switzerland aged 15 and over, 2.4 million come from an immigrant background. This is indicated by an analysis carried out by the Federal Statistical Office in 2013. Four fifths of people from an immigrant background were born abroad, while one fifth were born in Switzerland but have parents born abroad. Well over a third (35 %) hold a Swiss passport. The population from an immigrant background is younger than the long-established Swiss population and is therefore slowing down the ageing of the permanent resident population.

More asylum applications

23,765 people made an asylum application in Switzerland in 2014. That is 2,300 or 11 % more than in 2013. In Europe, the number of asylum applications recorded rose by 35 % from around 444,000 to roughly 600,000. Switzerland's share of the number of asylum applications made in Europe as a whole fell from 4.8 % to 4 %. This development is influenced by the various crisis and conflict situations around the Mediterranean Sea and in Africa, as indicated by the State Secretariat for Migration. This is leading to high numbers of migrants arriving in Italy irregularly by sea. Eritrean citizens constituted the largest group of asylum seekers in Switzerland in 2014, followed by those from Syria and Sri Lanka.

Film about nostalgic natives of Central Switzerland

The Lucerne filmmaker Romana Lanfranconi is making a documentary entitled "Sehnsucht Innerschweiz" (Longing for Central Switzerland). For this project she is looking for people living outside Switzerland but in whose lives Central Switzerland still plays an important part. Lanfranconi is interested in the family-related and personal stories of homesick Swiss or those who have returned. More on this film project about people from Central Switzerland feeling a sense of nostalgia for their homeland can be found at www.morbushelveticus.com

Correction

In the article "A second lease of life for Swiss alpine fortresses" in the February 2015 issue of "Swiss Review", two images were incorrectly attributed to the company Swiss Data Safe. The images show the bunker and storage facilities of the company Mount10 in Baar, the largest Swiss company in this field. <https://www.mount10.ch>

David Larible

The Italian clown David Larible, who featured in the cover photo of "Swiss Review" in December, made a guest appearance at Amsterdam's Carré circus theatre over the holiday period. The Swiss representation there sent him a copy of "Swiss Review", and the clown was so thrilled by the cover photo that he took a photo of "Larible with Larible" and sent it to us.



"Safeguarding the bilateral agreements is the key element of a pact with the SVP."

Christoph Darbellay, President of the CVP, on a possible alliance with the SVP if a second SVP Federal Councillor is elected in December.

"Woe, that too late repents."

William Shakespeare (1564 to 1616), English playwright and poet in "King Lear".

"The bilateral agreements must be secured."

FDP National Councillor Ruedi Noser, also on an alliance with the SVP if a second SVP Federal Councillor is elected in December.

"Egalitarianism to such an extent inevitably spoils the broth."

FDP President Philipp Müller, on the same day but not on an alliance with the SVP, instead in an open letter to the members of the SP.

"Those who are liberal believe they and the world are capable of doing good (...), whereas conservatism is based on diffidence and narrow-mindedness."

Gottfried Keller (1819 to 1890), Swiss author and politician in "Die Leute von Seldwyla".

"Mediocre minds usually condemn everything that extends beyond their horizons."

François de La Rochefoucauld (1613 to 1680), French military officer, diplomat and author.

"We are quick to talk of shocks or crises. Unjustly so. This is not a time of crisis but one of uncertainty."

Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter at the World Economic Forum.



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