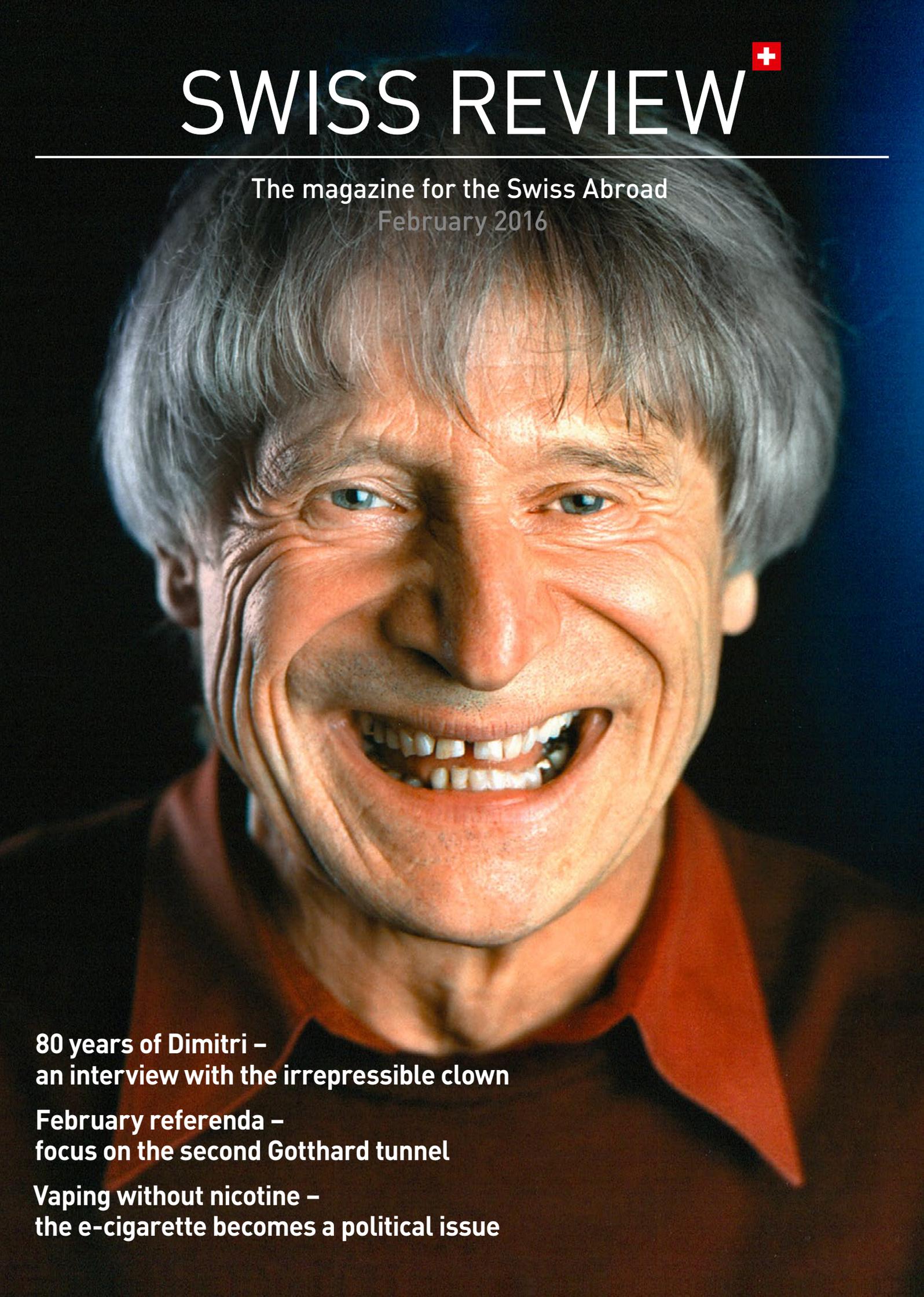


SWISS REVIEW

The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
February 2016



**80 years of Dimitri –
an interview with the irrepressible clown**

**February referenda –
focus on the second Gotthard tunnel**

**Vaping without nicotine –
the e-cigarette becomes a political issue**

In 2016, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad celebrates 100 years of service to the Fifth Switzerland.

*E-Voting, bank relations, consular representation;
which combat is the most important to you?*

Join in the discussions on SwissCommunity.org!



SwissCommunity.org
connects Swiss people across the world

- > You can also take part in the discussions at SwissCommunity.org
- > Register now for free and connect with the world

SwissCommunity.org is a network set up by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)

SwissCommunity-Partner:



io.swisscom.ch



Schweiz Tourismus.



Terre des hommes
Helping children worldwide. tdh.ch

Swiss Travel System.



- 4 Mailbag
- 5 Books
“Eins im Andern” by Monique Schwitter
- 6 Images
Everyday inventions
- 8 Focus
Switzerland and the refugee crisis
- 12 Politics
Federal Council elections
Referenda on 28 February
How the Swiss Abroad voted
- News from around the world
- 17 Culture
80 years of Dimitri
- 20 Society
Nicotine-free e-cigarettes
- 22 Sport
Fabian Cancellara set to enter final season
- 24 Literature series
The globetrotter Alexandra Lavizzari
- 25 OSA news
- 28 Notes from Parliament
- 30 Personal profile / Little gems
- 31 Echo

Dear readers



I hope you have had a good start to the new year. 2016 is a year of anniversaries for us. We will celebrate 25 years of the Area for the Swiss Abroad in Brunnen this April, then 100 years of the OSA in the summer. Over the course of those 100 years, hundreds of thousands of people have emigrated from Switzerland out of necessity or curiosity, or for professional, family or other reasons. The OSA is there for them as they live out their life stories. Its mission is to support Swiss people living abroad in a variety of ways. It too is constantly changing.

“Swiss Review” has had a new editor-in-chief since the beginning of November. For the past five years, Barbara Engel and her editorial team have delivered high-quality, popular content to this, our main information channel, with passion and professionalism. I would like to express my sincere thanks for this, along with best wishes for the future.

On behalf of the OSA, I would also like to wish Barbara’s successor, Marko Lehtinen, every success in his new role, and I hope he receives plenty of positive feedback from you, the readers. You can read more about Marko Lehtinen on page 30.

In a positive development, contrary to the announcement in the last edition of the Review, this magazine will once again be published in six print editions in 2016. The FDFA’s consular directorate, our magazine’s commissioner and sponsor, accepted our request for a voluntary reorganisation. Our commitment to generate a significant saving by the end of 2016, however, remains unchanged. For this reason, we ask all subscribers who do not have a compelling reason otherwise to switch to the electronic version of the Review as soon as possible. We also ask for your understanding as we contemplate the possibility of charging a voluntary financial contribution.

2016 remains full of challenges, with improvements to social insurance, e-voting and banking policy still ongoing. In addition, we want to give greater attention to young Swiss people abroad, support Swiss societies and make the Council of the Swiss Abroad accessible to all Swiss Abroad who are registered on the electoral roll.

I would like to thank all readers of “Swiss Review” for their interest and their loyalty, and wish all Swiss Abroad peace, health and every success in achieving their personal ambitions.

REMO GYSIN, PRESIDENT OF THE OSA



Cover photo:
Dimitri celebrated his
80th birthday in September.
Photo: Gaëtan Bally

International Health Insurance

- Based on Swiss standards
- Lifelong private medical treatment
- Worldwide free choice of doctor and clinic

Furthermore:

- International disability insurance
- International pension fund

Individual solutions for:

- Swiss citizens abroad
- Expatriates of all nationalities
- Short term assignees / Local hire



Contact us!

Tel: +41 (0)43 399 89 89

www.asn.ch

ASN, Advisory Services Network AG
Bederstrasse 51
CH-8027 Zürich
info@asn.ch



A new relationship with the wolf

We need to follow the Italian example of a new relationship between man and animals, especially the wolf. We need a new kind of pastoralism, with protective measures, shelters, and new ways of organising herds in order to do away with fears inherited from our ancestors and with the destruction of predators that are needed to maintain ecological balance and biodiversity. This is a great challenge, and it will take years to do what has to be done. Switzerland can do likewise, but what it really must not do is follow the French in their destructive and insane killing of everything that lives.

ELENA LACROIX JAEGGY, FRANCE

No restrictions on wild animals!

Switzerland is giving back to the animals what it has taken away over the last few centuries. It is understandable that farmers are unhappy about the losses caused by predators. Consequently, it is also right for the community to compensate for these losses. However, it is not coherent to immediately call for limits on predator populations when cars kill many times more wild animals, without calls for car travel to also be curbed. However, the discussion with wildlife biologist Reinhard Schnidrig showed that the Federal Office for the Environment has a very sensible leader on board. I would be interested to hear from him how many farm animals are killed by predators and how many wild animals are killed on the roads each year.

KLAUS NATTERER, GERMANY

Protection takes top priority

I read the comments about the wild animals with great interest as we too, here in Australia, have red hot debates about our assemblage of Australian carnivores. These of course have changed through time as a result of evolution, extinction and species introductions. Ecosystems are still in a state of flux as they adjust to the relatively recent arrival of foxes and cats, suppression of dingoes and many anthropogenic influences. Many of Australia's carnivores have suffered dramatic range declines, and many are threatened with extinction. Their intrinsic value alone makes them a priority for conservation. However, the persistence of other species, and of ecological processes, may also depend on predator conservation. The impacts of humans and introduced species are still playing out on the Australian landscape, and many carnivores are



SWISSCARE

Online International Health Insurance

www.swisscare.com

+41 26 309 20 40

MIET-PW, MIET-Camper, MIET-4x4

Ilgauto ag, 8500 Frauenfeld

200 Autos, 40 Modelle, ab Fr. 500.-/MT inkl. 2000Km



Tel. 0041 52 7203060 / www.ilgauto.ch

threatened with extinction. The shape of things to come will depend largely on the wildlife management practices of today. To maintain or restore the functioning ecosystems, wildlife managers must consider the ecological importance of predators.

JLEEB303, AUSTRALIA

Abolition of dual citizenship?

I read with great alarm in the last issue of Swiss Review that the idea of abolishing dual citizenship for Swiss people living abroad is being pursued in SVP circles. I worked for a heavily export-dependent major Swiss company in several host countries for a number of decades, and I became a citizen of one of these countries. My home country derived genuine economic benefits from my indirect representation of Swiss interests abroad. Because of my secondary residence in Switzerland, I also pay taxes, including direct federal tax. I find myself asking what Messrs Reimann, Brunner et al. find so repellent that they want to do away with dual citizenship for Swiss people living in other countries. What have these gentlemen tangibly done to promote Swiss exports or to generate inbound tourism, which is increasingly important for Switzerland? And I also find myself asking what I and my Swiss colleagues resident abroad have done to these parochial politicians to make them want to deny us our dual citizenship. In my view that would be a clumsy and unnecessary step towards further shutting off Switzerland from the rest of the world.

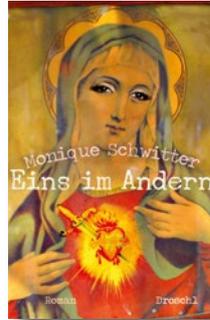
MARCEL F. KOHLER, USA

Under general suspicion

I read with amazement the article in the November issue in which some parliamentarians were seriously calling for the abolition of dual citizenship. At the same time, this suggestion is linked to a general suspicion about where dual citizens' loyalties lie in relation to Switzerland as an employer. I am shocked by this line of thought and wonder whether, by logical extension, the Swiss Guard in the Vatican should also be abolished? What about the loyalties of these Swiss men when they have an Argentinian as their boss? I urge all parliamentarians calling for the abolition of dual citizenship to take a long hard look at the wider world before attempting such a move in Switzerland. I regard this proposal as verging on obscene, and once again it reveals the double standards practised by some senior Swiss figures.

THOMAS ORT, GERMANY

A woman and her lovers



MONIQUE SCHWITTER:
"EINS IM ANDERN";
LITERATURVERLAG
DROSCHL, 2015;
232 PAGES; CHF 27.90;
AROUND 19 EUROS

"How many love affairs does one have? Oh, grandmother, what does love mean? How can it come and go?" The first person narrator ponders such questions in the novel "Eins im Andern" in which she recounts her relationships with men. There are twelve, like the number of apostles in the Bible. She starts off with her first love whose name she googles only to discover that he committed suicide. This triggers a significant chain of events for the narrator who is married and lives with her husband and two small children in Hamburg. She faces up to her past but also has to deal with her marital crisis. Will she overcome the crisis after escaping to her old home in Switzerland and manage to come to terms with the death of her brother at a young age? Will she find answers to her questions?

The author Monique Schwitter reveals much about herself here. The novel is based on autobiographical experiences but is enriched with fictional male characters and tales. The author is very inventive and plays with surreal elements, such as imaginary Morse code sounds and a flying penguin. There are many literary influences – which Schwitter, as a trained author and director, is able to draw upon to the full. The narrative levels switch between past and present and overlap one another. However, the scenes are only loosely in order and are not very interwoven. The novel depicts the life of a modern woman in her early forties and her search for the meaning of love and her coming to terms with loss. The first and final chapters are very convincing but the others seem very contrived and barely rounded. The narrative language often slips into banality.

Monique Schwitter, born in Zurich in 1972, today lives and works in Hamburg as a freelance writer. She was awarded the Swiss Book Prize for "Eins im Andern" in November 2015. Each year a jury of experts presents the award to the best newly published piece of prose or essay by a Swiss author at the international literature festival in Basel. The prize was established in 2008 by Literatur Basel and the Swiss association of booksellers and publishers. The prize-winning author has had short stories, a play and several novels published. The collection "Goldfischgedächtnis" (Mémoire de poisson rouge) has also been translated into French.

RUTH VON GUNTEN



The traditional potato peeler was developed in Zurich in 1947 by Alfred Neweczeral.



The Swiss businessman Hans Thomi was the first to put mustard into aluminium tubes in 1934 for a better shelf life.



Having originally focussed on instant soups, Julius Maggi from Frauenfeld invented liquid seasoning in 1886.



In 1910 the Swiss engineer Robert Victor Neher patented the "rolling-out of silver foil which makes a crackling sound".



Instant coffee in powder form is a Swiss invention. Nestlé launched the first coffee in a tin in 1938.



The Swiss engineer Hans Hilfiker invented the famous railway station clock, powered by electricity and synchronised every minute via the telephone line, in 1944.



“Die Rakete” (The Rocket) – the classic Swiss ice lolly – was created after the first moon landing in 1969 and around eight million are still sold each year.

From potato peelers to rockets

Whether the mustard tube, aluminium foil, Nescafé or Voltaren – countless everyday Swiss inventions and brands have conquered the world. Some of them are now on display at the new Swiss Brand Museum in Berne. The small premises near the bear park in a former toll house, which is UNESCO-protected, opened last April. LEH

The permanent exhibition at the Swiss Brand Museum in Berne displays 22 Swiss inventions. www.swissbrandmuseum.com



Humanitarian Switzerland faced with influx of refugees

Over 35,000 people sought asylum in Switzerland last year. The continuing flow of refugees is inevitably producing both sympathy and hostility and a conflict between Switzerland's humanitarian tradition and its uncertainty.

MARC LETTAU

Europe's refugee crisis has produced some disturbing, indeed unbearable images over recent months. Images of European railway stations where thousands of people seeking help have been left stranded. Images of Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian refugee washed up dead on the shores of Bodrum. What has been going on at the same time in Switzerland seems anachronistic. Campaigners carried quickly scribbled placards proclaiming "refugees welcome" at the border

railway station in Buchs in early September. They waited in vain. The announced influx of Syrian refugees circumvented Switzerland, affording it the new experience of not always being the land of dreams.

The issue of refugees nevertheless had a major influence on the autumn elections. In the build-up, the SVP highlighted many people's sense of insecurity and, given the many asylum seekers from Eritrea, voiced its criticism of the "asylum chaos" prevailing

in Switzerland and the lax approach to dealing with "illegitimate" refugees. The continuing debate about refugees and immigration policy issues overshadowed other areas of politics and had the effect that Switzerland shifted to the right on election day.

Around three asylum seekers to 1,000 residents

This did not change the run of things. The number of Syrian war refugees seeking asylum in Switzerland shot up in the last quarter. The State Secretariat for Migration continually corrected its forecast for 2015 upwards, in the end to over 35,000 asylum seekers. Is that many? In relation to the size of the country this means that around three asylum seekers are looking for protection for every 1,000 people living in Switzerland. While not a flood, it is a relatively high figure in comparison with other European countries. The figures are nevertheless much

lower than during the war in the disintegrating Yugoslavia when there were up to 53,000 asylum applications waiting to be handled in Switzerland.

The Minister of Justice Simonetta Sommaruga (SP) has given assurances that while “volatile” the situation is entirely manageable. Her view contrasts with complaints from some cantons that they could barely provide enough beds for asylum seekers. Some asylum seekers were even left without a roof over their heads. However, this is not down to a lack of accommodation but instead the situation in the cantons. They are being instructed by federal government to open accommodation for asylum seekers but can often only do so by going against the will of the people. The cantons are therefore stepping up pressure on federal government to provide accommodation, for instance in military bases.

Switzerland’s distinctively federalist structure is again hampering a rapid response to the emergency. And yet experts were warning over a year ago that there would be a dramatic surge in the number of Syrians fleeing. NGOs consequently called upon Switzerland to take in 100,000 refugees from Syria. The Federal Council finally decided to accept 5,000 refugees in particular need of protection.

To conclude that Switzerland is doing nothing to adapt its asylum system to the challenges would be totally wrong. Minister of Justice Sommaruga initiated a comprehensive reform of the Asylum Act in 2013, two years after the outbreak of the Syrian war. Her main objective is to significantly shorten the asylum process which can often take years at present. Most asylum applications should be dealt with in a maximum of 140 days in future. This should greatly reduce the long period of uncertainty which is stressful for refugees. To ensure fair decisions despite the accelerated process, there are also plans to improve the legal protection of asylum seekers.

Parliament supported this reform by a large majority. At the time of going to press it was uncertain what would become of it. The SVP is seeking to force a referendum in the hope that the Swiss people will jettison the reform. The SVP believes providing asylum seekers with legal aid is absurd as this creates “free lawyers for everyone”. It is fundamentally opposed to the reform and supports a counter-proposal which would effectively abolish the right to asylum.

The opposition from the right is leaving those on the other side shaking their heads in disbelief. Stefan Frey, the spokesperson for the Swiss Refugee Council, remarks: “Those opposed to the reform are advocating the status quo with many years of uncertainty for those concerned.” Those wishing to maintain long waiting periods have to continue accepting “huge social costs” for people who “cannot be integrated owing to their uncertain status”. Switzerland has adopted a defensive position towards people seeking protection for too long, according to Frey: “There is now a huge backlog of work with regard to integration. This will have a major influence on the debate in the near future.” Shorter procedures should also mean that lots of people would be ready for integration at a much earlier stage.

Opposed to “false incentives”

The forthcoming debate is already being eagerly fuelled. The Swiss Conference of Social Action Institutions is urgently calling for more action to tackle unemployment amongst the newcomers. Everyone should be offered a one-year, mandatory careers induction course 12 months after arrival at the latest. There is nevertheless vociferous opposition to this proposal. Reto Lindegger, the director of the Association of Swiss Communes, warns against creating “false incen-

tives”. The “right to education” could lead to even more people flooding into Switzerland.

Integration is never a unilateral process. Whether refugees settle over time also depends upon the attitudes of those already living in the country. There has been a noticeable development in Switzerland in this respect. According to Gianni d’Amato, a professor and immigration researcher at the University of Neuchâtel, there has been a significant decline in commitment from civil society to refugees over the past 20 years. He believes this is explained by “professionalisation”. State-organised integration has resulted in citizens no longer feeling the need to contribute themselves.

Awakening memories of the former Yugoslavia

The situation is clear in terms of figures. The over 35,000 asylum applications submitted last year represent a peak but not a record. The influx of refugees was much higher during the period from 1990 to 1999 when Yugoslavia fell apart amidst the turmoil of war and many people sought protection in Switzerland. During the most difficult years of the conflict, asylum applications in Switzerland reached 53,000 at times. Around 30,000 asylum seekers arrived in Switzerland from Serbia alone at the height of the war in 1999. However, the flow of refugees at that time can only be compared with the current influx to a certain extent. Many of the refugees from the former Yugoslavia were initially able to stay with “guest worker families” already residing in Switzerland. The geographical proximity of south-eastern Europe to Switzerland also had an impact on acceptance.

(MUL)

Stefan Frey from the Swiss Refugee Council takes issue with this. Cantonal provincialism can sometimes hamper tangible humanitarian efforts. The private accommodation of asylum seekers is handled completely differently in each canton. The “huge potential of host families” therefore remains untapped: There would be “hundreds of offers” from the cantons of Geneva, Vaud, Aargau and Berne alone, Frey says.

MARC LETTAU IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”

Asylum costs almost two billion Swiss francs. But does it pay dividends?

The Swiss Confederation's spending on asylum in 2015 passed 1.27 billion Swiss francs, with the cantons paying 600 million. Over the long term, however, refugees also contribute to the nation's demographic and economic capital.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

How much does asylum cost? Six billion Swiss francs, as the SVP claimed in an advert? Less if you refer to the State Secretariat for Migration's (SEM) budget, which posted expenditure exceeding 1.27 billion Swiss francs for 2015, of which 735 million goes to the cantons. They receive around 1,500 Swiss francs from Berne per asylum applicant. The remainder of the budget is used primarily to pay the 1,000 officials of the SEM, an entity that also deals with matters concerning foreign nationals.

The cost of the measures taken by the cantons and communes is estimated at over 600 million Swiss francs a year. In Geneva, which receives 5.7 % of asylum applications, spending in 2015 stood at 32.6 million francs; added to this is the 42.8 million in Confederation expenditure for social support, healthcare, housing and integration costs. Total expenses amount to 85.2 million Swiss francs, from which we can deduct the 9.8 million paid by the immigrants as a contribution to their housing costs. The Hospice général provides financial support and/or social assistance for 6,500 people. The charitable institution, which employs 240 staff in the immigrant support department alone, puts the financial cost per asylum applicant – including the salaries of staff and infrastructure – at 7,000 Swiss francs.

Canton Vaud has annual spending of 120 million Swiss francs

The Geneva authorities welcomed 940 more immigrants in October than in December 2014, representing an 18 % increase. "Families are already being accommodated in hotels to deal with the lack of places in the existing facilities," points out spokesperson Bernard Manguin. In 2006, the Swiss Confederation reduced the theoretical number of applications to 10,000. In canton Vaud, the asylum budget stands at 120 million Swiss francs. This figure does not include support for recognised refugees, explains Frédéric Rouyard,

30 % of provisionally admitted refugees who have been in Switzerland for less than seven years have a job.

spokesperson for the cantonal population service.

The Confederation anticipates an increase in running costs for registration centres in 2017 and 2018. These entities will provide faster asylum application processing. The funding will also be used to build administrative detention centres. This work means a 0.9 % increase in spending between now and 2018, by which time 1.3 billion will be earmarked for immigrants out of a total social security budget of 23 billion.

At the end of September 2015, SEM indicated that the total number of people in the asylum system in Switzerland stood at just over 100,000, of



whom 35,000 had provisional authorisation and just under 40,000 were recognised refugees. This overall figure represents around 5 % of all foreigners living in Switzerland and 1.1 % of the resident population.

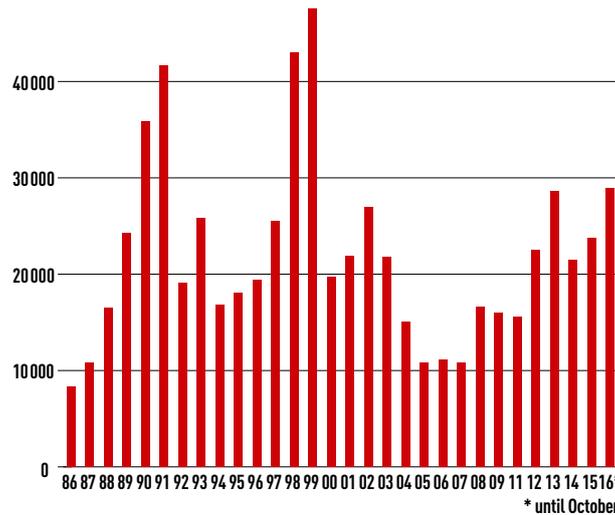
The arrival of refugees entails in the first instance costs for social aid, housing, education, medical care etc. However, “the asylum industry”, as the SVP calls it, provides thousands of jobs. In Geneva, 420 people are employed in this sector. A proportion of the 10,500 staff working in university hospitals, public education and various associations etc. should also be added to that figure.

Private companies also do well from it. That is certainly true of the ORS, which runs nine Swiss Confederation centres and 40 shelters. The company had a turnover of 65 million Swiss francs in 2014.

“Over the short term a loss-making business”

“I’ve never seen any studies on the contribution of refugees to the economy,” admits Denise Efiyani, the co-director of the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies. “But over the short term, expenditure will clearly exceed revenue because even after the first three months, during which time work is not permitted, few refugees succeed in finding a job. However, within the following five to ten years, many people are in employment and contributing to the tax and social welfare systems.”

Does Switzerland need these immigrants? “In contrast to Germany before the 2008 crisis, Switzerland has never had a problem attracting European workers,” explains Denise Efiyani. The researcher notes, however, that the Syrians are showing great willingness to integrate. “Those arriving have given up all hope at home. They are leaving for their children and are prepared to make sacrifices for



Asylum application statistics for the past 30 years in Switzerland indicate that the highest figure recorded was in 1999 during the Balkans conflict.

them. That is what convinced members of the German business community to say yes to the Syrians. The refugees will contribute demographic capital to Germany and the same goes for the young immigrants arriving in Switzerland, even if their contribution is marginal compared with European immigration.” When asked about the cost of asylum and potential contributions, the SVP National Councillor Yves Nidegger dubbed the projections of the Swiss Forum for Migration and Population Studies “vague”, estimating that 95 % of those arriving in Switzerland as refugees are not covered by asylum.

Working for a B permit and family reunion status

In October 2015, 30 % of those granted temporary admission – having arrived less than seven years ago – had a job. Also at the end of October, just 16.6 % of recognised refugees who had arrived in Switzerland less than five years ago were in employment. The figure rises to 40.9 % five years after the recognition of their status. “In the early years, the rate of employment amongst those admitted temporarily is higher than that of refugees,” points out Céline Kohlprath, SEM spokesperson. This may be explained by the fact that these people have not been directly persecuted. They also have a

strong interest in working to obtain family reunion status (after three years) and a B permit (after five years).”

Temporary and precarious jobs

In canton Vaud, which receives 8 % of asylum applications, 429 people with an F (provisional) permit were working at the end of October, representing 19.3 % of this group. “Some are not able to work for medical reasons. Recent refugees are not acquainted with the labour market, their qualifications are not necessarily recognised and people are still dealing with their war experience,” underlines the spokesperson for the population service in canton Vaud. This canton encourages access to employment by allowing F permit holders to start working as soon as they are offered a contract.

Frédéric Rouyard explains that refugees work in the construction, hotel, cleaning, nursing home, domestic care, hospital and asylum sectors. In Geneva, over 80 % of these jobs were permanent at the end of October.

A study highlights that the employment status of refugees is often unconventional and precarious. In the case of F permit holders, their asylum application has been rejected but sending them back is not possible, permissible or reasonable and is therefore subject to annual assessment. This situation hampers social and professional integration, according to this study.

A harmonious Federal Council election

The Swiss People's Party has effortlessly gained a sought-after second Federal Council seat for Guy Parmelin. Is this sign of stability also a sign of easing tensions in the political climate?

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Federal Palace Media Centre, late afternoon on 28 October 2015: Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf steps before the microphone and opens with a sentence that nobody wants to hear: "First of all, I would like to report on the second phase of the Federal Council's energy strategy." In the second part of the media conference, following this build-up of suspense, the finance minister eventually comes to the question on most people's minds following the federal elections on 18 October: will she stand again in the complete re-election of the Federal Council? The answer is no. After the losses endured by her Swiss Conservative Democratic Party (BDP) at the National Council elections on 18 October, Ms Widmer-Schlumpf is relinquishing her post.

National Council chamber, morning of 9 December 2015, agenda item: complete re-election of the Federal Council. Following the smooth re-election of the six existing members of the Federal Council, attention now focuses on the vote to replace Ms Widmer-Schlumpf. At around noon, an announcement is made by National Council President, Christa Markwalder: "With 138 votes, the Council elects Guy Parmelin." With the entry of the SVP Councillor from Vaud onto the Federal



Thanks to Guy Parmelin from canton Vaud the SVP has two representatives on the Federal Council again for the first time since 2007.

Council, the party has achieved its aim after eight years. The new "magic formula" now reads: two seats for the SVP, two for the FDP, two for the SP and one for the CVP. The last time two SVP representatives sat on the Federal Council was between 2004 and 2007, in the form of Samuel Schmid and Christoph Blocher. However, after Mr Blocher was voted out of office, the party was no longer represented in national government, as it expelled Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf, who had been elected as an SVP Federal Councillor, from its ranks. In protest, the BDP was founded, which both Ms Widmer-Schlumpf and Mr Schmid joined. Following Mr Schmid's retirement in 2008, Parliament elected Party President Ueli Maurer to the Federal Council. He was its only SVP member until the end of 2015.

Clever power play by the SVP

After the SVP's victory in the federal elections on 18 October 2015, there was little reason to deny the strongest party in the country a second Federal Council seat. For a while, the left toyed with the idea of establishing a candidate from the centre parties, or at least launching a surprise candidacy from

within the SVP's ranks. However, support for such manoeuvring proved to be limited. This was due not only to the poor performance of the centre at the elections, but to also a clever power play by the SVP: an exclusion clause, heavily criticised by all other parties, declared that Federal Council candidates that had not been officially nominated would automatically be expelled from the party. At the same time, the SVP presented a shortlist of three candidates, featuring representatives from all parts of the country. They were National Councillors Thomas Aeschi (Zug) and Guy Parmelin (Vaud), along with Norman Gobbi, a Cantonal Councillor for Ticino and member of the Lega dei Ticinesi, who had joined the SVP with an eye on the election. As early as the third round, Guy Parmelin had already established himself as favourite, while there was no sign of any surprise candidacies, despite the wild speculation in the run-up to the election.

With the election of a second SVP Federal Councillor, Parliament has placed the emphasis on stability. Although the Federal Council worked very well with Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf as a small-party representative, this also caused problems with regard to the concordance system. As a result, the SVP often regularly justified its policy of strong rhetoric and radical popular initiatives with its under-representation on the Federal Council. Whether the harmonious Federal Council election will lead to a relaxation of tensions in the political climate remains to be seen. The majority of political observers remain sceptical.

From wine-grower to Federal Councillor

Guy Parmelin (born in 1959, married) lives in Bursins (VD) on Lake Geneva. He is an agriculturalist and wine-grower, and was elected to the National Council in 2003. Prior to this, he was a municipal councillor, member of cantonal parliament and, from 2000 to 2004, president of the SVP in Vaud. While not one of the party's tone-setters during his time on the National Council, he is considered intelligent, cooperative, sociable and approachable, as well as a shrewd tactician. The Federal Council now has three members from French-speaking Switzerland, the others being Didier Burkhalter and Alain Berset. (JM)

JÜRIG MÜLLER IS AN EDITOR WITH THE "SWISS REVIEW"

Successful in business, cautious in politics – Johann Schneider-Ammann, President of the Swiss Confederation

Johann Schneider-Ammann's transformation from business leader to politician is still not complete after five years on the Federal Council. Perhaps that is why he is the right president for this year.

CHRISTOPH LENZ

The Federal Council faces an incredibly challenging year. A key referendum on Europe and the bilateral approach could be held at the end of 2016. In parallel, two extensive reform projects, one aimed at shoring up the old-age pension system and the other regarding Switzerland as a tax location, are going through Parliament. Both raise contentious issues over equitable distribution, and failure is unthinkable in each case. Then there is the fragile state of the economy.

The fact that Johann Schneider-Ammann has taken up the office of president at this very moment has not been greeted with overwhelming enthusiasm in all quarters. There is nevertheless good reason to suggest the minister of economic affairs is the right man at the right moment.

There are clearly much more accomplished communicators in the Federal Council. Appearances by Johann Schneider-Ammann are a godsend for Swiss satirists. Just as jokes were once told about Federal Councillor Kurt Furgler, fun is today poked at the communicative efforts and shortcomings of the FDP federal councillor. Paradoxically, authenticity is actually deemed an extremely important quality by the public. And yet it is those federal councillors who systematically refuse to put a slant on their appearances and messages by using spin doctors, consultants and communication professionals who are the subject of constant derision.

His manner, although derided by politicians and media professionals, goes down extremely well with the public. He is comfortable with road-building apprentices, successful corporate executives or Swiss IT high-fliers at Google's headquarters in Mountain View, California: Federal Councillor Schneider-Ammann has the ability to quickly engage anyone in lively conversation. Showing genuine, unpretentious interest, Johann Schneider-Ammann leaves a lasting impression on many people.

His reserved approach to the peculiarities of the political system may be explained by the fact that he is a newcomer to politics. In 1981, the electrical engineering graduate from the Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) joined the company owned by his wife's family in Langenthal. These were tough times for industry, but Schneider-Ammann rose quickly through the ranks and successfully steered the Ammann Group through the economically challenging 1980s and 1990s.

The latecomer's steep ascent

His political ambitions emerged at a late stage. In 1999, at the age of 47, he took over the presidency of Swissmem, the association

representing the Swiss mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and metal industries. He took the step to the National Council several months later.

When Hans-Rudolf Merz announced that he was standing down in 2010, Schneider-Ammann was the ideal candidate for the Free Democrats – a popular politician, a proven businessman and worthy association official, who – fortunately – had few ties with the much-maligned big banks and fat cats. On 22 September 2010, the Federal Assembly elected him and his cantonal colleague Simonetta Sommaruga to the Federal Council.

Although he has now settled in well at his Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), the transformation from feisty business leader to tactically aware politician is still not quite complete. That became evident in the row over the recording of working hours. Federal government, employers and trade

unions were at loggerheads for almost six years over how the obligation enshrined in employment law was to be applied. No solution was reached. Schneider-Ammann finally took decisive action. He asked all of the negotiating partners to leave the table apart from the two main parties. The issue was then quickly resolved.

Despite such an assertive tack he is often regarded as lacking vigour in the Federal Palace. Perhaps it is a case of crossed wires. His scepticism towards state intervention is well-known and he apparently often decides only after thorough evaluation not to act.

This was also the case after the "Swiss franc shock" in January 2015. There were cries for state intervention from all sides, including for a new minimum rate with the euro, for economic programmes and other measures. The minister of economic affairs listened patiently to all of the demands. He then decided to pursue that option that in light of the widespread alarmism would be difficult to defend. He did nothing.

How events unfolded now appears to have proven him right. The "Swiss franc shock" has turned out to be a minor tremor. Schneider-Ammann's cautious approach has not only saved the state a handsome sum of money but proved his tenacity and economic expertise. He will almost certainly require these two attributes during the 2016 presidential year.



CHRISTOPH LENZ IS A JOURNALIST IN BERNE. HE ACCOMPANIED FEDERAL COUNCILLOR JOHANN SCHNEIDER-AMMANN ON AN ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC MISSION TO THE USA IN JULY 2015

The ultimate Gotthard tunnel year

The world's longest railway tunnel will go into operation by the middle of the year. Just a few months before that, on 28 February, the Swiss people will vote on a new road tunnel. This makes the vote extremely topical.



JÜRIG MÜLLER

An event without parallel will mark the opening of the tunnel without parallel. From 1 June this year, trains will thunder through the Gotthard base tunnel on schedule and the opening of the world's longest railway tunnel will be celebrated with great fanfare. The event will not just be attended by the entire Federal Council, all 246 members of the National Council and Council of States as well as further dignitaries from the worlds of business

and culture. The guest list also includes heads of state and government from all neighbouring countries, the President of the European Council Donald Tusk, the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and the transport ministers of all the other EU states. The Swiss people will join in later in the celebrations that are expected to cost 12.5 million Swiss francs.

The cost is justified in so far as the large-scale project of the New Railway

Are those calling for a second road tunnel in the wrong? Opponents have called a referendum against the proposal.

Link through the Alps (NRLA) sends out a Europe-wide signal about the transportation of people and goods by rail. However, tunnel fever at the Gotthard is far from over. After the railway tunnel built in the 19th century, the road tunnel opened in 1980 and the new railway base tunnel, a fourth hole through the Gotthard is already in the pipeline – a second road tunnel costing 2.8 billion Swiss francs. Boring work is set to begin in 2020. The Federal Council and Parliament believe the second tunnel is necessary because the existing road tunnel will have to be completely renovated in around ten years' time. However, around 50 organisations and political parties are opposed to the project, including the SP, the Greens, the Green Liberals and the Swiss Evangelical People's Party. They have therefore called a referendum against the proposal.

There were good reasons for the Swiss people and cantons enshrining the Article on the Protection of the Alps in the federal constitution in 1994. This aims to protect the Alps against the negative impact of transit traffic on the road and prohibits an increase in the capacity of transit roads in the alpine region. In 2004, the Swiss people also rejected the counter-proposal to the Avanti initiative. Swiss voters have therefore already opposed a second Gotthard road tunnel twice, either directly or indirectly.

Dangerous road tunnel

The existing road tunnel will have to be closed during the renovation work. With a second road tunnel instead of temporary rail transportation of cars and HGVs, the road link to Ticino would be permanently secured and Europe's most important north-south road transit axis would not be impaired. To ensure that the protection of the Alps enshrined in the constitution is not jeopardised and traffic levels do not increase, only one lane per

Against speculating with food

Speculating with food is the "most abhorrent form of profit-making", according to the Young Socialists (Juso) who have submitted an initiative aimed at bringing an end to this practice. The popular initiative will be put to the vote on 28 February.

Banks drive up food prices by speculating and are "partly responsible for starvation in the world", according to the group behind the initiative. Because Switzerland as a "hub of commodities traders and financial players" is actively involved, the initiative calls for provisions to combat speculating with agricultural commodities and foods.

The conservative opponents of the initiative argue that factors other than speculation are responsible for price increases, namely growing market concentration, poor infrastructure in some places and protectionist measures. Banning speculation would not be expedient and would damage Switzerland as a location for business. In times of climate change and poor harvests, the speculation of hedge funds does actually have an adverse effect but these are global issues which Switzerland cannot resolve through this initiative, they say.

(JM)

direction would be used, even after the renovation of the existing tunnel. Advocates of the project also argue that two tunnels without contraflow would be much safer. The Gotthard road tunnel is today “one of the most dangerous tunnels in Europe”, according to the St. Gallen FDP Council of States member Karin Keller-Suter, a member of the pro-committee.

Susceptible to blackmail by the EU

Opponents contend the proposal offers false promises. They believe there will be an increase in capacity sooner or later and that two lanes will be used in both directions. It will be difficult to stand by this plan as soon as the first traffic jams appear, writes Jon Pult in the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung”. The co-chairman of the “No to the 2nd Gotthard tunnel” association also believes: “The structural doubling of the road capacity makes Switzerland susceptible to blackmail by the EU with regard to transit policy.” Switzerland would not be able to withstand the EU and the transport industry for long and would fully open the tunnels. The doubling of capacity could soon turn into twice as many transit HGVs. That would spell the end for the protection of the Alps and the shifting of the transport of goods to rail targeted by the NRLA. The soon to be commissioned Gotthard NRLA base tunnel is nevertheless Switzerland’s single most expensive infrastructure project.

The opposition does not therefore just consist of the left-of-centre groups that called the referendum. There is also a conservative No committee. The cantons of Basel-Stadt and Uri are also opposed to the project, as are some politicians from Ticino, including the mayors of Chiasso and Mendrisio, who fear even more traffic. However, there is also a left-wing committee in favour in Ticino. The battle lines therefore run through political parties to some extent.

Uncompromising deportation

The SVP is seeking to apply its deportation initiative to the letter through an implementing initiative. Opponents warn of far-reaching consequences.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

The Swiss People’s Party (SVP), deeply mistrusting “federal Berne” and suspecting the popular initiative “in favour of the deportation of foreign criminals” adopted in November 2010 would not be implemented to the letter, announced an implementing initiative just six months after the proposal’s approval. The bill will now be put to the vote on 28 February. The implementing law would be immediately enshrined in the constitution and would be directly applicable. This would restrict Parliament’s room for manoeuvre enormously and also infringe on the principle of the separation of powers, in the view of some experts.

The SVP is adopting an uncompromising position. This is despite the fact that Parliament, under pressure from the implementing initiative, has already passed a law that largely accommodates the wishes of those behind it. Criminal law has been significantly tightened in relation to the deportation of foreign criminals. It is practically

identical to the deportation initiative. The only caveat is that Parliament takes account of the principle of proportionality with a hardship clause. This means that a court could refrain from deporting foreign criminals in individual cases if this would result in major personal hardship for the person concerned. The SVP believes that the amendment to the law adopted by Parliament would cement existing “lax deportation practices”, as it indicates on the party’s homepage. The courts would always find a reason to refrain from deportation.

Opponents warn that the adoption of the implementing initiative would also have ramifications for Switzerland’s relationship with the EU because the popular initiative expressly stipulates the precedence of national law over international law. If an EU citizen were deported for a minor offence, for example, the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons with the EU would be violated. The adoption of the implementing initiative would therefore have implications extending far beyond criminal law. The initiative also departs from a previously generally recognised practice. Popular initiatives have until now hardly ever been implemented to the letter. Parliament has usually endeavoured to pass an implementing law that takes account of both the core requirements of those behind the initiative as well as other framework conditions – very much in line with the Swiss culture of compromise.

Opposed to the “marriage penalty”

“It is unfair that married couples and registered partnerships are disadvantaged compared to cohabiting couples in terms of taxes and social insurance. With equal income and assets, they pay more tax and receive lower old-age and survivors’ insurance pensions,” according to the CVP’s homepage. The party has therefore submitted a popular initiative entitled “Supporting marriage and families – against the marriage penalty”. It will face a vote at referendum on 28 February.

The initiative also states that marriage is a “legally governed relationship of cohabitation between husband and wife”. This definition would be entered in the constitution for the first time

and would exclude other forms of cohabitation from marriage.

In the view of the initiative’s opponents, it is difficult to determine whether married or cohabiting couples are disadvantaged or advantaged overall, taking account of the federal government and cantonal levels, the different stages in life and the whole tax and social insurance system. The Federal Supreme Court actually concluded at the end of 2013 that cohabiting couples were financially disadvantaged overall compared to married couples despite the applicable old-age and survivors’ insurance regulations.

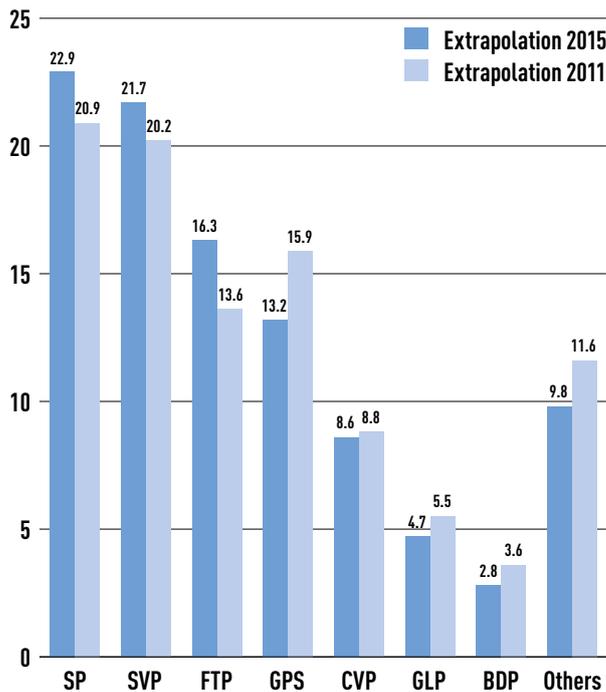
(JM)

How the Swiss Abroad voted

There was also a shift to the right beyond Swiss borders. This is based on a survey by the Centre for Democracy Studies in Aarau, conducted with the help of the “Swiss Review”.

THOMAS MILIC

Switzerland held its National Council elections on 18 October. At national, cantonal and local level all the election results are now known, with just those of the Swiss Abroad to come. However, the outcome of the election for the entire Swiss population abroad can be projected based on the results for the Swiss Abroad that have now been declared in 12 cantons. Not only is the election



Projections from last October indicate that the SVP won votes amongst the Swiss Abroad but the SP remains the strongest party.

result known, the reasons why the Swiss Abroad voted as they did are also available. The data is based on a survey by the Centre for Democracy Studies in Aarau conducted with the help of the “Swiss Review” among around 2,000 eligible Swiss voters residing abroad. Details of the survey, the projection method and weighting can be found at www.zda.ch.

Generally speaking, it can be concluded that the Swiss Abroad did

not vote all that differently to their compatriots at home. Swiss voting preferences also shifted to the right outside Switzerland. The clear winner at the elections was the FDP with estimated gains of around three percentage points. The SVP also made ground but not to the same extent as amongst the electorate in Switzerland. The centre parties suffered losses, but none more so than the Green Party whose share of the vote amongst Swiss voters abroad fell from around 16% to some 13%. They are now on a similar level to the FDP. The SP, which held its share of the vote in Switzerland, gained votes amongst the diaspora and now has just under 23% of the vote. It therefore remains the party with the most support from the Swiss Abroad despite the SVP's gains. However, the turnout fell. It stood at around 26% this year, about 4% lower than in 2011.

Immigration, asylum and Europe

The issue that concerned the Swiss Abroad most prior to the elections was immigration. One in three problems indicated concerned issues relating to immigration or foreigners. In addition, there was the refugee crisis which was not such a big concern for the Swiss Abroad as it was for those in Switzerland.

The issue over which the Swiss Abroad and those at home differed most was that of Europe. Switzerland's relationship with Europe is a matter of much greater importance to the Swiss Abroad than to voters in Switzerland. The extent to which

people are affected clearly plays a major role here. Swiss Abroad living in the EU Member States of Germany (36% of all references to the issue), Spain (29%) and France (24%) are much more concerned about relations between Switzerland and the EU than eligible Swiss voters in the USA (16%) and Thailand (13%).

The heterogeneous composition of the Swiss Abroad is also reflected in the varying degrees of importance attached to issues. It was noticeable that those who live abroad for business-related reasons often indicated that the most urgent issue facing Switzerland was the strong Swiss franc or the economic situation in general. Those citing personal reasons for leaving Switzerland put much more emphasis on culture and identity. A disproportionately high number of those studying abroad saw impending environmental problems as the most serious issue that Switzerland has to tackle.

Overall, the Swiss Abroad have a similar political outlook to their compatriots at home and perceive issues in a comparable way. This underlines the fact that the political debates and trends in Switzerland also reach the diaspora. This is probably primarily due to the internet which is the most frequently used source of information by the Swiss Abroad for finding out about Swiss politics.

THOMAS MILIC IS A SENIOR RESEARCHER AT THE CENTRE FOR DEMOCRACY STUDIES IN AARAU



“I leave out the somersaults these days”

He's pretty much Switzerland's most famous clown. And he seems to be unstoppable. At 80 years young, Dimitri still spends every evening on stage. We sat down to talk about his milestone birthday. From his home in Ticino, Dimitri tells us about his family dynamics, an encounter with Charlie Chaplin and what he thinks of modern “comedy”.

“Swiss Review”: Dimitri, you celebrated your 80th birthday last autumn. How are you feeling?

Dimitri: I'm feeling great, thank you.

You're still on stage, although you're getting on in years. You move, jump and dance. How do you manage it all?

On the one hand, I rehearse every day for up to two hours. I practise my acts, for example, juggling or doing handstands. I even do headstands regularly, which is actually quite good; it gets the blood flowing to the brain. So I stay fit. On the other hand, I still do about 150 performances per year. That's a lot and it keeps me in shape. But really, I'm just very lucky to still be healthy and to have the success that I have.

Does success keep you healthy?

To a certain extent, it does. Success is wonderful, but it also keeps me on my toes.

You're currently touring with your solo act “Highlights”. Are all the old numbers in it?

Most of them. Some are even fifty years old now. There are a few acrobatic numbers, like somersaults, that I leave out.

You don't just perform as a solo artist. You also have your family act “DimitriGenerations”, where you perform alongside your two daughters Nina and Masha, your grandson Samuel and one of Nina's stage partners. Are you able to put family dynamics aside at work?

I could, but it's nice when a certain family dynamic can be felt on stage. And when we rehearse, we're professional enough to overlook the fact that daughter is working with father. When it comes to that, we're absolute professionals.

How does this dynamic play out on stage?

We have a certain presence about us that comes through in everything we do. It's in our eyes, in the intimacy of our act. I think that if you put five actors on stage who have no re-

lation to each other and have them play a family, you can feel the difference.

That sounds almost too good to be true. Doesn't the father-daughter dynamic creep in during rehearsal, or maybe in moments where things aren't really going as planned?

No, really, we hardly ever run into problematic situations. We have a very harmonious relationship. We're very tolerant of each other. I'm sure the material we're dealing with also helps. While we are serious and disciplined about our work, we also laugh a lot together and enjoy ourselves. The humorous nature of our work keeps us in a good mood.

You're the patriarch of the family. Do you determine which numbers are in the act, or does everyone get a say?

Everyone contributes their ideas, so it's not just my act with everyone else simply performing in it. But there are certain situations where I make the decisions as the old, wise one. If we're stuck, or in disagreement about something, I usually have the last word and everyone listens to me, just as I would listen to someone who has much more experience than me.

A life in the spotlight

He's a clown, mime artist, acrobat and musician. The artistic career of Dimitri Jakob Müller, born 18 September 1935 in Winterthur began in 1959, when he first took to the stage with his own solo act. His big breakthrough came in 1970 when the trained potter made his first guest performance in the Circus Knie. At the same time, he opened his own theatre in Verscio, Ticino, and in 1975, he founded the "Accademia Teatro Dimitri" performing arts school. Since 2006, the father of five has also performed with his family act, first known as "La Famiglia Dimitri" and now "DimiTRlgenerations". "La Famiglia Dimitri" even made it to Broadway in New York. In 2014 Dimitri received the Swiss Lifetime Award for his life's work. When he's not touring with his family act or with his current solo act "Highlights", Dimitri enjoys spending time at his home in Borgnone, in the Swiss canton of Ticino. (LEH)

Were you a good father when your kids were little?

I certainly could have been a better father. I was still young and inexperienced myself. But at least I was a funny father. That's for sure. We had a lot of fun.

So you're a funny person?

I think so.

You've been touring with your solo act since 1959. Was there any specific highlight in your professional career?

No, I can't think of any specific highlights. My whole life has been a highlight. I have a special memory for each city I've performed in. Each and every stage is associated with a certain atmosphere or a specific anecdote. For example, at one of my recent shows, I noticed that two women in the front row were whispering the whole time. After the show, they came up to talk to me. It turned out that one woman was

blind and the other was telling her everything going on during the show. It's a wonderful feeling to know that someone who can't see still gets something out of my show. Or when a small child asks me for an autograph after the show and says "You were cool," that's a real highlight for me.

The fact that children respond to you and not just adults who have known your act since the 70s shows how timeless your sense of humour is. And children are always honest.

Absolutely, children always tell the truth. And yes, I think my art is timeless. It speaks to people of all ages.

And speaking of the 70s, while performing with the Circus Knie in the 70s, you had a memorable encounter with Charlie Chaplin. Tell us about that.

That was a very special experience for me. It would have been for any artist of my kind. For clowns and comedians, Charlie Chaplin is the best there is. He's basically our king. And I found him to be a wonderful person. He watched my performance, and then we chatted in one of Circus Knie's trailers. It was a nice encounter in a laid-back atmosphere, and it made me happy that he liked my performance. That was in 1970. When I performed at Circus Knie three years later, I ran into Chaplin again. But this time, he was already a quiet, old man. He hardly said a word. So in retrospect, I was very happy to have met him back when he he still had his presence of mind.

You say Chaplin was the best there is. Did he also have an important influence on you personally?

Of course, how could you not adore Chaplin? His silent films are brilliant. They are poetic, human, timeless and extremely funny.

But your great role model was the Swiss clown Grock.

That's right, he was my biggest idol. But there's another Swiss artist who is very important to me. His name is Gaston and he's a wonderful artist. He can be seen at Christmas time in the Circus Conelli in Zurich. He is a great artist, and continues to be one of the few to continue on with the tradition of timeless clowns. He really should be world famous, but he's too modest for that.

What makes a clown timeless?

A timeless clown is endearing, poetic and subtle, even naive and childlike. And he's never vulgar or pushy. Both Grock and Gaston embody these things.

Is the classic clown also sad and melancholy?

I think that's more of a cliché. Of course there are melancholy, sobbing clowns. But I see that as a different style than the endearing, childlike clown.

You think of yourself as funny. But are the Swiss funny?

Certainly, the Swiss have a lot of humour. Otherwise, there wouldn't be so many great Swiss comedians. And the audiences are also very good.

Is there is a typical type of Swiss humour?

I don't think so. There are subtle differences to German humour that come through in the language. Emil, one of my friends, recently told me some of his new acts didn't really go down well in Germany. That's mainly due to the subtleties of the language. But basically, the Swiss laugh about the same things as everyone else in Europe.

Humour in general has changed. Today, the younger generation of comedians casually and seemingly spontaneously reveal personal, intimate details of their lives. And they call it comedy. What do you make of it?

It's not my style. It's usually fast-paced, pushy and not very poetic.

Maybe this type of fast-paced humour is the poetry of our time?

Absolutely. It's true to life and is current and up to date. It certainly has its qualities, and I don't want to pass judgement on its artists. It's just not my style.

You're always on the go. You have a family, a private theatre and a performing arts college. You play ten instruments and like to paint. You're also interested in politics and are quite active. Would you say you're just energetic, or would you say you're restless?

I might be a restless person, but I like it that way. I thrive on a certain amount of stress. But I still take time every day to read the newspaper.

On paper?

Yes. I know nothing about computers.

Can you ever just sit back and do nothing?

There are in fact times when I do nothing, but they're short-lived. I don't need rest.

You love to paint. Yet when you're asked about it, you always say you're not a painter.

Right, I'm not a painter. I'm a painting clown. That's an important nuance. Although I paint a lot and even showcase my work. But when I see the works of great painters in museums, I'm not presumptuous enough to call myself a painter. There's no comparison.

You are one of the most important, if not the most famous clown in Switzerland. At the ripe old age of 80, what advice would you give young artists?

I tell every young artist that he or she should get a feel for their greatest talent, their own special gift, and that they



The young Dimitri at the start of his career in 1964 getting ready for a show

should develop it, whether that's music, acrobatics or the tightrope. It's better to do one thing really well than everything fairly well.

Do you have any dreams that you still want to make happen?

I have many dreams, desires and projects that I would like to make happen. But because of my age, I limit myself to the ideas that are still realistic. One of them is a feature film. The idea of having my own film has been dancing around in my mind for 20 years, and this year, I'm going to fulfil the dream and make the film.

Is that already a definite thing?

Yes, I have the director, the actors and a producer and the script is already finished. It will be a comical film without words, with me in the role of a station manager named Molinari. We'll begin shooting soon.

INTERVIEW BY MARKO LEHTINEN

In Switzerland, the electronic cigarette is nicotine-free

Swiss vapour smokers buy their e-cigarettes in Switzerland but have to purchase their nicotine-containing liquids in Europe. At the same time, cigarette manufacturers are working towards a breakthrough with a device that heats rather than burns tobacco.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

In a tobacco store in Geneva, the shopkeeper has placed a range of electronic cigarettes (Chinese, as are most) and liquid refills on the counter. The 10 ml containers are from the Swiss brand InSmoke. Do they contain nicotine, the substance that most e-cigarette users consume to replace the traditional cigarette? The owner of the corner shop thinks so, indicating that he has been selling nicotine products for months. However, the sale of nicotine in this form is banned. Upon checking, it turns out that his goods do not contain the substance after all.

This episode illustrates the bizarre situation that prevails in Switzerland with regard to electronic cigarettes. These rechargeable devices have been flourishing since 2013 but sales have been curbed by the ban on nicotine, which is nevertheless permitted in

14 % of adults have tried the e-cigarette

In 2014 and 2015, 14 % of the population aged 15 and over had tried vapour cigarettes compared to 6.7 % in 2013, according to the Addiction Monitoring in Switzerland report published on 12 October.

Europe. In a country that is home to the head offices and factories of the world's biggest cigarette manufacturers, such as Philip Morris and Japan Tobacco International, this step, which is the result of a Federal Council ordinance on foodstuffs, has en-

raged those promoting vapour cigarettes. "This ban is absurd," seethes Stefan Meile, the owner of InSmoke. His company, which is based in Thurgau, produces liquids for e-cigarettes and distributes them nationwide. He adds, "In terms of public health it's a disaster because the people using e-cigarettes are all former smokers who need nicotine to avoid a relapse."

A puzzling ban

"The ban on the sale of e-cigarettes containing nicotine is puzzling because traditional cigarettes, which are probably more harmful, are permitted," points out the BASS institute, which has been commissioned by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) to carry out a study in relation to the new law on tobacco products (LPTab) which will be debated this year. Why authorise the sale of cigarettes whose dangers have long been proven (the social and healthcare cost in Switzerland stands at 9.9 billion Swiss francs, according to a study cited by BASS)? And on the other hand ban the release of nicotine through a device whose usage is less dangerous, even if the effects of smoking vapour have not been measured over the long-term? The BASS institute estimates that the legalisation of nicotine-containing e-cigarettes would reduce the proportion of smokers in the population by 2.1%.

As a result, the Federal Council authorised the principle of nicotine in e-cigarettes in its dispatch on the



LPTab. In order to protect consumers, it has attached caveats to this decision, such as banning advertising and the sale of the product to minors. However, e-cigarettes should escape the taxes levied on tobacco.

A liquid vapour manufacturer launches an attack on the government

To survive, independent traders are setting up shops in neighbouring countries from where customers can order liquid nicotine. Some have decided to fight back, including the Thurgau-based manufacturer InSmoke. This company has been circumventing the ban since June 2015. The cantonal chemist visited its premises in October. The official did not close down the factory but requested advice from the Federal Food Safety and Veterinary Office (FSVO).

The FSVO issued its response in November: "Until the future law on tobacco enters into force, the marketing



E-cigarettes are legal in Switzerland but liquids containing nicotine are not. This could remain the case until 2020.

brand's arguments. Such a product "reduces the risk, with the ultimate goal of achieving an effect as close as possible to withdrawal [from cigarettes]", wrote the Neuchâtel Cantonal Council in correspondence with the FOPH. "In view of the rapid developments in substitute products, in particular heated tobacco, research may result in completely harmless products [...]. This development represents a major opportunity to reconcile the promotion of public health and the building of a sustainable future for tobacco," stated the Neuchâtel government.

Mistrust from the anti-smoking lobby

Anti-tobacco associations, which are suspicious of the electronic cigarette, are adopting an extremely cautious approach towards big tobacco. "The industry is aiming to create a specific category for this type of so-called reduced-risk product, hoping to become a public health partner. This sector, which targets young people in its advertising, cannot be trusted," retorts Michela Canevascini, head of the CIPRET-Vaud project.

In December, a column in the newspaper "Le Courrier" indicated that the iQOS packaging did not include a warning about the serious harm that tobacco can cause, settling instead for watered-down wording ("can be harmful to your health"). "The company assesses the legal situation itself when labelling its products [...]," explains Catherine Cossy, a FOPH spokesperson. It is not inconceivable that the cantonal chemists could make a complaint to the Swiss Confederation about the cigarette manufacturers' strategy.

and sale of these products in Switzerland will remain prohibited." Current legislation is not adequate to ensure full health protection and the marketing of these products therefore cannot be authorised, according to the FSVO. The ban remains in place. In the event of a referendum against the future law on tobacco, it could continue until 2020.

The counter-attack by Philip Morris with its heated tobacco

While a small proportion of Swiss smokers are switching to electronic cigarettes, the tobacco industry is flexing its muscles. Philip Morris has invested hundreds of millions in research to provide its customers with a less harmful cigarette (smoking kills 9,500 people a year in Switzerland). This is the aim of iQOS, a product launched on the Swiss market in August 2015. This electronic device, costing 80 Swiss francs, is based on the following principle: instead of burning

tobacco, which causes the release of the cigarette's most harmful substances, the iQOS device, which is a kind of sleeve, heats up Marlboro mini-cigarettes sold at the same price as a traditional packet (8 Swiss francs). "Our product is aimed at adult smokers looking for an alternative to cigarettes without ash and with fewer odours. The initial response of adult consumers has been positive," says Julian Pidoux, spokesperson for Philip Morris. The cigarettes are not described as "healthy" or "less dangerous". The brand's aim is nevertheless clear: to prove, on the basis of "independent" scientific testing, that this device significantly reduces the risks of cigarettes.

Neuchâtel favours this new product

The cantons where cigarette manufacturers are located, not least Neuchâtel, which is home to the Philip Morris Research Centre, are receptive to this

A new chapter in his life

Fabian Cancellara is facing his last season as a professional cyclist. His career has been successful but he has long accepted that it will remain unfinished.



BENJAMIN STEFFEN

Fabian Cancellara has a sense of symbolism. He enjoys being centre stage and likes playing to the crowd. On the way to an important victory he once held up his good-luck charm to the TV cameras, cycling to the line with the Swiss flag in his hand. But it is this image that stands out: Cancellara in a hotel room, his head on the pillow, his eyes closed as if asleep, and between his head and the pillow the yellow jersey worn by the leader of the Tour de France – Cancellara and the Tour, an expression of unity. They will meet for a final time in July as he is retiring at the end of the season.

It was a while ago when he imagined what retirement from professional cycling would be like. Cancellara decided around a year ago to call it a day at the end of 2016. He said he was looking forward to spending not just one weekend at home but instead several weekends in a row. His departure was a long way off at that point. But Cancellara needed this crutch of knowing when he would give up – otherwise he would have been too distracted by the constant questions from others but equally from himself about how long he intended to carry on cycling.

Fabian Cancellara on home turf – the Tour de Suisse prologue in Rotkreuz in June 2015

Simply staying at home

Above all, he needed a good reason for retirement and therefore reflected on where he had been recently – at training camps in Gran Canaria and Mallorca, with sponsors in Geneva and Barcelona, at a birthday party in St. Moritz and at a race in Qatar. He was constantly travelling. He had led this life for years and when he continually found himself saying how much he enjoyed simply staying at home, he asked himself why he didn't do just that, why had he constantly taken it upon himself for years to gear his body up for racing, this body which enjoyed indulging in good food so much.

Why was that? Because he did not know any different. Because his body was made for cycling and winning races. His path was an easy one as he was predestined for it from a young age when Cancellara received 200 Swiss francs for victories and sometimes put a hundred-franc note in his wallet to buy himself a sandwich for his break on Monday. His first racing bike had leather straps on the pedals and was a gift from his father. He had emigrated to Switzerland from southern Italy in 1965. He later worked as a ventilation mechanic while his mother, who was from eastern Switzerland, had a job at Migros. This was a working-class family who got up at 5 a.m. on Sundays to drive to some race or other in Switzerland. His mother, father and sister, weekend after weekend. Yes, Fabian Cancellara does not know any different. He came from this life and outgrew it.

In his generation Cancellara has become the highest earning Swiss person in an individual sport behind Roger Federer. He has enjoyed the

successful career that many predicted he would but via a different path. Cancellara was portrayed as a future winner of the Tour de France, the leading race in world cycling. He, of course, contributed to this portrayal. When he took part in his first Tour in 2004 and immediately pulled on the leader's jersey, he said: "I want to win the races I like one day – the Tour de Suisse, Paris–Roubaix and the Tour de France." People have long defined him based on these aspirations and indeed also how he would approach retirement years later. He faced the perpetual questions from others but equally from himself about how long he wanted to carry on with his Tour victory ambitions. However, after winning the Tour de Suisse in 2009 and the Paris–Roubaix, the legendary cobblestone classic, twice in 2006 and 2010, Cancellara faced a defining decision. It was the familiar pattern. He needed clarity for himself, his career as well as for his life and peace of mind, so he abandoned his dreams of winning the Tour. He would have needed to change too much for this project. A powerful cyclist, he would have had to lose weight to hold pace with the best in the mountains. He would have had to train at altitude more often and dedicate even more of his life to sport and less to his family. And when people asked him whether he thought it was possible to win the tour without doping he said "yes", but did not want to enter dangerous ground, "no, thank you". He preferred to celebrate other victories "than see my family, friends and myself faced with even more questions about doping". Cancellara had learned to avoid this contentious issue. He had faced repeated

doping accusations himself but without any evidence of wrongdoing.

Cancellara wore the leader's jersey on the Tour for 29 days in total, more than any other Swiss cyclist and more than Ferdy Kübler and Hugo Koblet, who won the race in the 1950s. And yet in deciding not to pursue the Tour victory, Cancellara accepted his career would be incomplete. It does not matter what Cancellara achieves in 2016, what he wins or misses out on. He can no longer achieve anything that he has not already achieved. It may be a matter of proving that he has not become prone to crashing in his later years as a sportsman because he has frequently fallen in recent years. He may be able to reinvigorate himself but no longer reinvent himself.

Symbolic Berne

He is preparing, for the last time, for the classics in spring which he has won several times – the Tour of Flanders and Paris–Roubaix. He will take part in the Tour de Suisse and start the Tour de France in the hope of reaching the last week when cycling's greatest event stops off in Berne. He will once again see it as a symbolic image – the Tour leading him home upon his departure from the sport. The Tour means a lot to him, as do Berne and Switzerland. He was never torn be-

Fabian Cancellara was born on 18 March 1981 in Wohlen bei Bern. He is one of the world's most successful cyclists and has achieved the most victories amongst present-day Swiss cyclists by some margin. Cancellara was world champion four times in the individual time trials and won bronze three times in the discipline at the World Championships. In 2008, he won the gold medal in the time trial and silver in the road race at the Beijing Olympics. The father of two has also won various one-day races and three tours, including the Tour de Suisse in 2009.



In the time trial he has won the world championships four times and Olympic gold once. The 35-year-old is now looking forward to more relaxing times.

tween feeling Swiss or Italian. There was no forced sense of identification with the land of his father who never even spoke Italian with his son. And despite travelling so much, he always knew that he belongs in Berne.

When far away in Rio de Janeiro at the Olympic Games, he will again wonder whether retirement is the right decision or whether he is still young and strong as he was in his prime. He is hoping to win Olympic gold in the time trial. Perhaps it is good that the decision to retire was taken some time ago. Otherwise an Olympic gold would have left him pondering again. Those close to him know very well that Cancellara also fears retirement as it will mean suddenly having lots of freedom but not having the same importance as when he was in a field of cyclists.

He is looking forward to weekends at home. But what has it been like at home lately with his wife and his two daughters away and Cancellara left alone with the cats? It has felt strange to him, he has felt lost. When his career ends, the elite sportsman will enter a new chapter in his life.

BENJAMIN STEFFEN IS THE SPORTS EDITOR OF THE "NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG" AND CO-AUTHOR OF THE BOOK "FABIAN CANCELLARAS WELT"

From Kathmandu to Somerset via Rome

At home anywhere in the world, Alexandra Lavizzari is pursuing her own path as an author.

CHARLES LINSMAYER

Alexandra Lavizzari, born on 11 August 1953 in Basel, is a Swiss Abroad par excellence. As though she was intentionally preparing for what lay ahead, she studied Ethnology and Islamic Studies before living, from 1980, in Kathmandu, Islamabad, Bangkok and finally Rome for ten years as the wife of a Swiss diplomat and mother of three children and then settling down in the discarded railway station of Bishops Lydeard in Somerset, UK, in 2008 with her second life partner, a British scholar of German.

Her time in the East is only alluded to in her early articles and sketches published in the NZZ and in her first literary work in 1992, “Warqa und Gulschah”, the only German translation to date of a work by the Persian poet Ayyuqi. Her writing otherwise opens up worlds that bear witness to personal encounters with poetry, culture and history and – more clearly in the longer works – a powerful imagination and incredible associative linguistic ability. In 2001 she produced a moving portrait novel of the Welsh artist Gwendolen Mary John (1876 to 1939) entitled “Gwen John – Rodins kleine Muse”, while in 2008 and 2009 she perceptively explored unusual literary relationships in “Annemarie Schwarzenbach und Carson McCullers” and “Glanz und Schatten. Die Freundschaft von Truman Capote und Harper Lee”.

Towards a crime novel

Alexandra Lavizzari relied on her own invention for the first time in “Ein Sommer”, a 1999 novella about a young girl who stabs her mother. Her 2007 book “Wenn ich wüsste wohin” was much more convincing. She drew on her own life experiences in a novel that depicts, in a very unspectacular way, the life crisis of a 50-year-old who suddenly feels butterflies in the stomach again. The story collection

“Flucht aus dem Irisgarten” marked a shift towards crime fiction in 2010. Chasms could suddenly open up taking events into the realms of the surreal. She produced fully fledged crime novels of a sophisticated literary nature in 2012 with “Mädchen IV mit Leguan” – the monologue of a young woman who gradually overcomes the psychological trauma caused by sexual abuse – and in 2013 with “Somerset” about a mother who desperately tries to save her daughter from disaster against the backdrop of a cider production cooperative which turns out to be a crime syndicate. This book owes its authenticity not least to a landscape whose beauty but also eeriness the author has been familiar with for many years.



“The ground has disappeared and I’m falling and falling until I cling onto the very first memory. It’s mainly the tattooing. It frightens me, and I want to continue falling deeper. Nobody catches me or suspects that I am now plunging with other people’s children into the waters where the ashes of the dead swim.”

(Taken from: “Kindern und Fischen nach”, in “Flucht aus dem Irisgarten”, Zytglogge-Verlag, 2010)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Alexandra Lavizzari’s books are available from Zytglogge, Basel and Edition Ebersbach, Berlin.

Exciting Renaissance painting

As though her desire to travel had been reawakened, at least in a literary sense, Alexandra Lavizzari’s most recent novel “Vesals Vermächtnis”, published in 2015, is set way back in the Renaissance period in Greece, Venice and a number of other locations between the Po Valley, the Gotthard and Basel. The title character, the famous Anatom Vesalius (1514 to 1564), dies right at the beginning of the novel but like a virus his meagre legacy infects a Venetian goldsmith with an enlightening passion which inspires him to explore the traces of the deceased after numerous dramatic adventures. Alexandra Lavizzari has never written a more vivid, exciting or atmospheric journey to one’s inner self than in this novel, and it would seem that she has finally found herself as an author and creator of characters after travelling and visiting many parts of the world.

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH

Summer camps for 8 to 14-year-olds

Are you aged between 8 and 14? Would you like to spend 14 days in Switzerland getting to know your homeland better? Then sign up for a holiday camp run by the Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad.

Programme

We organise summer holiday camps in the most beautiful regions of Switzerland during the months of July and August. Participants in our camps visit attractions, discover lakes, mountains, rivers and wonderful scenery on short hikes and sometimes visit cities. Some days are also spent at the camp base where we enjoy games, sporting activities and various workshops. Participants also have the opportunity to gain fascinating insights into Switzerland. We look at the Swiss languages, Swiss songs, Swiss recipes and typically Swiss games and sports.

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

Camp language

Those taking part in our programmes come from all over the world and therefore speak various languages. The leaders run the programmes in German, French and English. The language at each camp is not determined by the language spoken at the camp venue.

Prices

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

Travel/meeting point

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

Leaders

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

Registration

The exact details of the individual holiday camps and the registration form will be available from January 2016 at www.sjas.ch. We would also be pleased to post you our information brochure on request. The registration deadline is 15 March 2016.

Please contact our office for further information:

Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad (FYSA),
Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne,
SWITZERLAND
Tel. +41 (0)31 356 6116,
Fax +41 (0)31 356 61 01
email: info@sjas.ch
www.sjas.ch, Our forthcoming activities

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

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

The Area for the Swiss Abroad in Brunnen needs your contribution



In 1988/1989, the most beautiful area on Lake Lucerne was purchased thanks to a large collection campaign amongst the Swiss Abroad and with the help of federal government and local institutions. The 5,400 m² site opposite the

Rütli meadow is the only location from which most of Lake Lucerne can be seen. It was one of the main venues for the Swiss confederation's 700-year anniversary celebrations. On 1 August 1991, the Federal Council visited the area as a guest of the Swiss Abroad which erected a Botta tent especially for the occasion.

It's our area - the Area for the Swiss Abroad. Pay it a visit when you're in Switzerland with the family or as part of a society trip. Our new website www.auslandschweizerplatz.ch shows you the area and provides suggestions of activities available in the surrounding area.



Our area is also the starting and finishing point of the Swiss Path, a hike through “all cantons” of Switzerland. The Area for the Swiss Abroad and the Swiss Path are virtually all that remains of the 700-year anniversary celebrations.

Everything needs to be maintained including the Area for the Swiss Abroad. Rental income does not cover expenditure. In the past the shortfall has mainly been made up by contributions from the authorities and companies in the region.

After 25 years, the area is now in need of major renovation to ensure the grass is not damaged each time it is used intensively. This requires the fitting of additional grass pavers; the electrical installations must be upgraded. This will enhance the area’s attractiveness and greatly improve its rental potential. The total cost of this work is estimated at 220,000 Swiss francs. The authorities and companies in the region will again make a major contribution and various funding organisations have also been approached. However, as Swiss Abroad we should also dig deep into our pockets and make a contribution to our area. By making a donation, you will be supporting the voluntary work of the founders and help make the symbol of Swiss Abroad more attractive and enable greater use to be made of it.

We therefore ask you to send a contribution to the following bank account or charging your credit card using the form below (print version only):

Stiftung Auslandschweizerplatz, CH-6440 Brunnen,
Schwyzer Kantonalbank, Schwyz,
IBAN CH91 0077 7002 0398 2195 1

In a future edition of the Swiss Review we shall publish the list of the sponsors.

Kind regards

ALEX HAUENSTEIN,

CHAIRMAN OF THE FOUNDATION BOARD OF THE AREA FOR THE SWISS ABROAD IN BRUNNEN



Name and address _____

donation €/\$/£ _____

Visa Mastercard

No. _____

Expires month ____ year ____

Safety code (CVC, CVV 3 digit) _____

Family and first name of card holder _____

Signature of card holder _____

Cut out and post to Organization of the Swiss Abroad, accounts dept., Alpenstrasse 26,
CH-3006 Bern or by Email to kiskery@aso.ch

Advice on careers and study

An education or professional training in Switzerland is the goal of many and highly sought after. However, the views that young Swiss Abroad have of Switzerland, its education system and its employment market are not always in line with the reality of the situation. It is therefore a good idea to explore your own interests concerning your future career at an early stage and to check the details.

The website www.berufsberatung.ch is an excellent source of information. As Switzerland’s official information website for careers advice, it contains comprehensive information in German, French and Italian that can be accessed at any time. Areas of interest can be explored and narrowed down in tests. Various career paths are explained with information on requirements and applicable courses. You can search for apprenticeship places available under LENA. The site also provides advice on how to word apprenticeship applications. In addition it offers detailed information on all courses of study at universities, federal institutes of technology, universities of applied sciences and teacher training colleges as well as career opportunities after graduation. The study interest check (SIC) helps you to find out information and choose your course.

The Swiss careers service website provides young people abroad with a good opportunity to obtain key information without having to travel to Switzerland. You can, of course, also visit the cantonal careers information centres (BIZ) in Switzerland, which are known as information desks in some cantons. With their libraries and information desks, these advisory centres provide a wide range of information on all careers, courses of study and further training and education. Consultations are also available. Advance registration is usually required.

New: Consultations

In cooperation with the BIZ, Educationsuisse is providing personal consultations in the Bern-Mittelland region. These are carried out by qualified BIZ experts and can be conducted via Skype or at their premises in Berne. Individual questions can be answered in personal discussions with an advisor.



For further details and to register, email: info@educationsuisse.ch.

The website www.educationsuisse.ch provides information on the topic of “education in Switzerland”, especially for the Swiss Abroad.

RUTH VON GUNTEN, EDUCATIONSUISSE

OSA advice

I'm planning to return to Switzerland and to look for a job there. What advice and information can you give me?

As a Swiss citizen you can work in Switzerland without the need for a permit. If you wish to apply for jobs in Switzerland, you should be aware that submitting a CV is generally not enough. Swiss employers expect a full application. That includes a letter of application specific to the job, a CV with a photograph as well as references of employment and copies of qualifications.

The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) publishes brochures containing valuable advice on this topic on its website.

There are no official rules on the translation of documents, such as degree certificates or other qualifications. If a document might be important in determining whether or not you are offered a job, it may be worth enclosing a translation in one of the national languages.

The Consular Directorate (CD) of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) provides a special service for the Swiss Abroad for the job search itself where it forwards job applications to the cantonal employment offices for the attention of the regional job centres in your preferred regions. Here your application is made available to any interested employers.

A list of links to job sites and employment offices can be found on the website of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad.

As soon as you are registered in Switzerland and have your permanent residence here, your local employment office can also help you to look for jobs.

SECO: www.treffpunkt-arbeit.ch > Publikationen > Bewerbungen

Consular Directorate: www.eda.admin.ch > Living abroad > returning to Switzerland > Seeking employment in Switzerland

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad: www.aso.ch > Consultation > back to Switzerland > how to find a job

OSA LEGAL DEPARTMENT

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

IMPRINT:
"Swiss Review", the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 42st year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 14 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 400,000, including 165,000 electronic copies. Regional news appears four times a year. The ordering parties

are fully responsible for the content of advertisements and promotional inserts. This content does not necessarily represent the opinion of either the editorial office or the publisher.
EDITORS: Marko Lehtinen (LEH), Editor-in-Chief; Stéphane Herzog (SH); Marc Lettau (MUL); Jürg Müller (JM); Peter Zimmerli (PZ), responsible for

"news.admin.ch", Relations with the Swiss Abroad, FDFA, 3003 Berne, Switzerland
TRANSLATION: CLS Communication AG
LAYOUT: Joseph Haas, Zürich
PRINT: Vogt-Schild Druck AG, 4552 Derendingen
POSTAL ADDRESS: Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the

Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, Tel.: +41313566110, Fax: +41313566101, Postal account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9, Email: revue@aso.ch

COPY DEADLINE for this edition: 14.12.2015

All Swiss Abroad who are registered with a Swiss representation receive the magazine free of charge. Anyone else can subscribe to the magazine for an annual fee (Switzerland: CHF 30 / abroad: CHF 50). Subscribers are sent the magazine direct from Berne.
www.revue.ch

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



Youth Service offers

The Youth Service again has a wide range of offers for young Swiss Abroad this year.

Easter camp in Saas Grund (19/3 to 27/3/2016)

The snow-covered Swiss mountains are always an attraction and there is no shortage of them in Saas Fee! A week of winter sports in one of Switzerland's best-known and largest ski resorts awaits you. In addition to skiing and snowboard lessons, we also provide a highly diverse fringe programme. There are still some places left!

German courses in Zurich (11/7 to 22/7/2016 or 8/8 to 19/8/2016) / French course in Biel (11/7 to 22/7/2016)

The German or French lessons take place in the morning. We then organise a wide range of activities during the afternoon. This allows you to gain a closer insight into Switzerland and its people and culture. You can organise your free time independently with your host family or new friends.

The OSA is celebrating its 100th anniversary and we're joining in!

From 22/7/2016 (day of arrival with optional programme) to 7/8/2016, four spectacular anniversary camps are taking place, all of which have the same final destination – Berne. The groups will set off from four different national borders:

THE GREAT OUTDOORS: Do you love the countryside and feel at home outdoors? A two-week adventure in natural surroundings awaits you.

CULTURE, HISTORY AND POLITICS: Interested in finding out about your roots? Here you will learn about Swiss history and its traditions.

SIGHTSEEING CHALLENGE: Do you find New York too big and Bangkok too hectic? No problem, you'll love the Swiss cities and the related challenges.

SPORT AND LEISURE TIME: Are you familiar with the traditional summer camps and looking forward to another one? Then this is the right place for you.

At the end, all four camp groups will meet up on the Bundesplatz to enjoy the anniversary celebrations and really let themselves go.

Further Youth Service offers

DISCOVER SWITZERLAND: Organise your two-week stay in Switzerland as you wish and live with a welcoming host family.

SWITZERLAND AS AN EDUCATIONAL CENTRE: Spend two weeks finding out more about the education system in Switzerland visiting educational institutions and talking to students.

SPRINGBOARD: educationsuisse and the Youth Service will provide you with support in planning and starting a training programme in Switzerland. You will stay with a host family for a period of three to six months.

Further details: www.swisscommunity.org > Youth or at youth@aso.ch / Tel. +41 31 356 61 00

Behind the scenes of Swiss government – the Federal Chancellery

On 1 January 2016, the former Federal Chancellor Corina Casanova handed over the post to Walter Thurnherr, who was elected to the office on 9 December by the Federal Assembly. Reviewing the performance of the politician from Grisons provides an opportunity to discover or re-discover the wide-ranging and often little-known activities of Swiss government's staff office.

For eight years, Corina Casanova advised and supported members of the Federal Council in performing their duties, demonstrating great commitment and consideration. Hers was a painstaking task, deliberately performed out of the spotlight, primarily aimed at alleviating the huge workload of Swiss ministers, who are required to take over 2,500 governmental decisions each year.

Major reform

But the close to perfect discretion of the lawyer from Grisons does not mean Corina Casanova has not left her mark during her two terms in charge of the Federal Chancellery. Not least thanks to new powers granted to her by Parliament to support government action, she has been able to carry out major reforms concerning both the organisation of the sessions and the management of Federal Council affairs. At the same time, significant progress has also been made in the process of digitalising the services of the executive, the Federal Administration and the Federal Chancellery. In particular these include the electronic management of all Federal Council affairs, introduced in 2012, the establishment of the primacy of the electronic versions of official publications from 1 January 2016 and the continual support provided to the cantons with the gradual introduction of electronic voting which is so important to the Swiss Abroad. Under her leadership, the Federal Chancellery has established a presidential service aimed at providing advice and support for the activities of the President of the Swiss Confederation and giving this office a certain degree of continuity over the course of time.



Communication and multilingualism

Corina Casanova is even credited with modernising government communication by developing websites (admin.ch and ch.ch) and social media channels which enable more direct and less formal contact with the Swiss people.

Communication is nevertheless also based on reciprocal understanding and knowledge of the various national languages. Originally from Ilanz in canton Grisons, the former Chancellor speaks six languages and has always been eager to promote Switzerland's four languages. She decided to create a part-time position for a translator for Romansh, her mother tongue, at the Federal Chancellery. Important documents, such as federal voting instructions and the guide to the National Council elections, are published in the four national languages. An awareness of and proactive commitment to languages have earned her prizes for bilingualism and multilingualism from the Bilingualism Forum and an award from the regional society SRG SSR Svizra Rumantscha in 2013.

Duties of the Chancellery

The Federal Chancellery is a complex organisation whose duties are very wide-ranging but little known to the wider public. To fulfill these duties, the Federal Chancellor relies on the support of around 250 staff, most of whom are based in Berne.

As the staff office of the Swiss government, the Federal Chancellery is responsible for preparing sessions and communicating Federal Council decisions as well as planning and coordinating government activities. In contrast to other countries, the Federal Chancellor in Switzerland primarily performs administrative duties. Despite taking part in the sessions of the governing body and being able to

HELPLINE FDFA

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

Travel advice

www.eda.admin.ch/reisehinweise
 ☎ from Switzerland +41 800 24 7 365
 ☎ from abroad +41 58 465 33 33
www.twitter.com/travel_edadfae

itineris

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



Plan well.
Travel well.

App available for free for iOS and Android

put forward proposals on items being addressed, the Chancellor is not entitled to vote. In addition to its governmental duties and decisions, the Federal Chancellery provides the public with information through a series of publications ranging from compilations of federal legislation and the Official Gazette to various brochures illustrating the organisation of the state and how it works. One of these – “The Swiss Confederation – a Brief Guide” – has one of the highest circulations of the Federal Administration’s publications (just under 300,000 copies a year).

Guarantor of political rights and languages

In virtually no other country is the democratic participation of the people as extensive as in the Swiss Confederation. With elections, votes, initiatives and referenda, Swiss citizens are regularly called to the ballot box to express their views on the nation’s future. The Chancellery performs a key role in this respect. It is responsible for informing the Swiss people about federal issues being put to the vote, publishing ballot results and organising the National Council elections. The custodian not just of political rights but also of languages, it is the Federal Chancellery’s task to ensure that laws, ordinances and international treaties are drawn up in a simple and comprehensible way in the three official languages as well as in Romansh and English from time to time.



The new Federal Chancellor – a foreign policy expert

Walter Thurnherr became Federal Chancellor at the beginning of the year. As a diplomat and former head of the Service for the Swiss Abroad, he has a close insight into foreign policy and connection to the Swiss Abroad. After graduating in theoretical physics, he embarked upon a career in the diplomatic service in 1989 working in Moscow, New York and Berne. Flavio Cotti, the former head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), appointed him as his personal assistant in 1997. Walter Thurnherr became deputy head of the FDFA’s Political Affairs Division VI in 1999 and was then appointed its head in 2000. From 2002 to 2015 he was Secretary General at three departments, most recently the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC).

The newly elected Federal Chancellor Walter Thurnherr faces a wide range of challenges. When handing over the baton, Corina Casanova indicated she was confident that she was leaving behind a robust institution capable of keeping pace with the times.

Federal referenda

The Federal Council determines the text of the proposals at least four months before the voting date.

Voting dates in 2016: 28 February, 5 June, 25 September and 27 November

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

Popular initiatives

The following new federal popular initiative had been launched at the time of going to press (deadline for the collection of signatures in brackets): Initiative “Ja zur Bewegungsmedizin” (Yes to medicine of movement) – (22/06/2017).

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

Important notice

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

You can read and/or print out the latest issue or back issues of “Swiss Review” 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 in printed format or electronically (via email or as an iPad/Android app).

FDFA Official Communications Officer:
Peter Zimmerli, Relations with the Swiss Abroad
Bundesgasse 32, 3003 Berne, Switzerland
Tel. +41 800 24 7 365 or +41 58 465 33 33
www.eda.admin.ch, mail: helpline@eda.admin.ch

www.swissworld.org

Your Gateway to Switzerland



Switzerland.



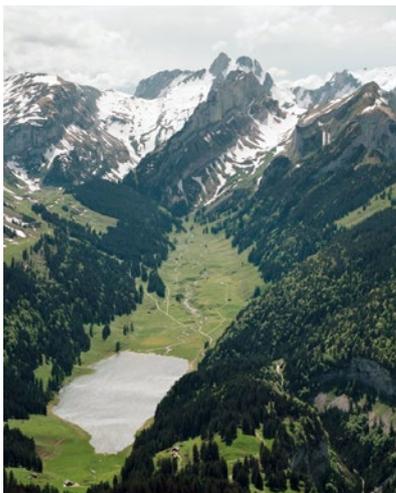
A game featuring works of art

Works of art should not just be admired on museum walls or perhaps in a book, you should also be able to enjoy art as part of a game. This is the conclusion drawn by the management at the Fondation Beyeler in Basel. Together with gaming specialists, they have developed a card game called “Speed Art”.

In playing the game the famous masterpieces from the Fondation’s collection can and indeed have to be looked at and analysed with less reverence. For example, players have to spot similarities in works by Van Gogh and Cézanne. Or they have to identify motifs and styles in individual pieces and relate them to other works as quickly as possible. The ability to look closely and powers of recognition are two key skills. The winner is not necessarily the player who knows and understands most about art. The game requires a keen eye and deft hand. It poses a real challenge for children aged eight and over as well as adults. BE

“Speed Art” is available from the Fondation Beyeler’s Art Shop both in the museum and online. Price: CHF 16.90
Instructions and documents available in German, French, Italian and English. www.shop.fondationbeyeler.ch

Call to the mountains



The German proverb “what you shout into the forest comes back to you”, which means “what goes around, comes around”, does not just apply figuratively. The echo, a natural phenomenon with which we are all familiar, sounds completely different depending on the location and what reflects the sound. A steep crag will send back a whoop very differently to a wide valley or a mountain lake.

Sound specialists from Basel are in the process of creating an audio archive of echoes for Switzerland. Through Echotopos Schweiz, climbers, mountain guides, hikers, nature lovers and farmers and both children and adults

alike can lend a voice to the “alpine sound region” and help to fill the archive.

The main element of the long-term project is an online echo archive. It is available to everyone online and as a smartphone app (iPhone and Android). You can log into the echo archive, record an echo location in Switzerland or search for ones that have already been recorded and listen to some of them in the audio archive.

The map of echo locations: www.echotopos.ch

Insight into the project: <http://new-space-mountain.ch/projekte/echo-topos-schweiz>

Marko Lehtinen is the new editor-in-chief

After five years as head of the “Swiss Review”, Barbara Engel is entering retirement. We would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her work and in particular for overseeing the new layout of the Review and the app, and wish her all the very best for the future.

At the same time, we would like to introduce you to the new editor-in-chief of the “Swiss Review”, Marko Lehtinen. Marko is 48 years old and lives in Schönenbuch, near Basel. He studied journalism and was previously managing director and editor-in-chief of the free newspaper “Baslerstab”. During his journalistic career he has also been employed by “Radio Basel 1” and worked as cultural editor of the



“Mittelland Zeitung” and the “Basler Zeitung”, primarily covering culture and working as a producer. Marko, who is a native of Basel with Finnish roots, has also written about music for various daily newspapers, such as the “Neue Luzerner Zeitung”, “Südostschweiz”, “Sonntagszeitung”, “Bieler Tagblatt”, “St. Galler Tagblatt” and the “Bund”.

Marko Lehtinen started in his new role on 1 November 2015, and this is his first edition of the “Swiss Review”. We look forward to a successful working relationship with him.

SARAH MASTANTUONI, ARIANE RUSTICHELLI
CO-DIRECTORS OF THE ORGANISATION
OF THE SWISS ABROAD

Facilitating naturalisation

The Federal Council aims to end the disadvantage foreign persons living in a registered partnership with Swiss citizens have when it comes to naturalisation compared with foreign spouses, as declared in an opinion adopted on 18 December. The Federal Council's comments came after five identical parliamentary initiatives on "The equality of registered partnerships and marriage in the naturalisation process" had been submitted.

Reinforcements for counter-terrorism

In mid-December, the Federal Council resolved to create 86 new jobs in counter-terrorism. The additional headcount will be spread across the Federal Intelligence Service, the Federal Office of Police, the State Secretariat for Migration, the Swiss Border Guard and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). Developments in recent months have led to an increase in existing and new responsibilities on the part of those federal authorities dealing with counter-terrorism, writes the Federal Council.

Special treatment for farmers

Subsidies for farmers will be excluded from the federal government's cost-saving programmes for 2016, after the Farmers' Lobby once again raised its concerns in Parliament. At the 2016 budget debate, the National Council and Council of States agreed to award CHF 92.8 million more to farmers than had been budgeted by the Federal Council. Expenditure on direct payments will total CHF 2.8 billion, while spending on export subsidies for processed agricultural products will be CHF 94.6 million.

Correction

In the November 2015 issue of "Swiss Review", we quoted Paul Bertololy ("A people is entirely responsible for who holds power") and referred to him as a German doctor and author. Paul Bertololy was in fact French, not German. Although he was born in Germany, he spent most of his life in Alsace. This was communicated to us by his nephew, who himself has a Swiss wife and has been a Swiss citizen and reader of "Swiss Review" for many years.

Daniela Ryf

The women's Ironman world champion, Daniela Ryf, will go down in the history of the sport, after the 28-year-old from Solothurn ended the 2015 triathlon season undefeated and claimed the million-dollar Triple Crown. After impressive wins at the half Ironman triathlons in Dubai and Zell am See, she then repeated the feat over the same distance in Bahrain at the beginning of December. The founder of the Triple Crown is Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa. The Bahraini prince is also president of the Bahrain Olympic Committee and a successful triathlete himself.
www.danielaryf.ch



"Life is like a role at the theatre – what matters is how well you perform not for how long."

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR EVELINE WIDMER-SCHLUMPF
ADAPTED A QUOTE FROM THE ROMAN PHILOSOPHER SENECA
IN HER FAREWELL ADDRESS AT THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY

"Everything went reasonably well, I'm pleased."

GUY PARMELIN, AFTER HIS ELECTION TO THE FEDERAL COUNCIL

"He who can barely climb a tree but thinks he can fly is mistaken."

WILHELM BUSCH (1832 TO 1908), GERMAN POET AND ILLUSTRATOR

"Our nation faces great challenges."

ADRIAN AMSTUTZ, SVP SPOKESPERSON,
AT THE FEDERAL COUNCIL ELECTION ON 8 DECEMBER

"The devil knew not what he did when he made man politic."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564 TO 1616), ENGLISH WRITER

"Our nation faces great challenges."

IGNAZIO CASSIS, FDP SPOKESPERSON, AT THE FEDERAL COUNCIL ELECTION

"The Swiss are an antediluvian people, they are constantly waiting for the flood."

FRIEDRICH DÜRRENMATT (1921 TO 1990), SWISS WRITER

"Our nation faces great challenges."

TIANA ANGELINA MOSER, GLP SPOKESPERSON,
AT THE FEDERAL COUNCIL ELECTION

"Everything has already been said, but not yet by everyone."

KARL VALENTIN (1882 TO 1948), GERMAN
COMEDIAN



Switzerland.
by train, bus and boat.

Winter dreams.



Experience 1,280 km of winter landscapes on the Grand Train Tour of Switzerland.
You can see all the highlights of the tour at [SwissTravelSystem.com/grandtraintour](https://www.swiss-travel-system.com/grandtraintour)