

SWISS REVIEW

The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
June 2016

**100 years of Dada in Zurich:
the Cabaret Voltaire mavericks**

**Delayed withdrawal:
what future for Swiss nuclear power?**

**Humanitarian tradition under pressure:
federal government cuts development aid**

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Cover photo: Dada author Hugo Ball in Cubist costume
in 1916 at Cabaret Voltaire (photo: Keystone)

Withdrawal in stages



The situation is delicate. In the wake of Fukushima five years ago, Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard announced Switzerland's withdrawal from nuclear energy, and the whole world reported on this courageous step. Is Switzerland a pioneer in the field of alternative energy? The strategy for 2050, which Parliament will decide upon in the summer, certainly aims to achieve this objective.

However, the situation has changed in the meantime. The Fukushima effect has long since fizzled out, including in Switzerland. While the halt on constructing new nuclear power stations in Switzerland is effectively finalised, existing ones are not being decommissioned provided they are "safe". Nor is there now to be a time restriction on Switzerland's five nuclear power plants.

Much would point to a partial climb-down from nuclear abandonment if it were not for the latest development. While Parliament has rejected a time restriction, the operators themselves have started extricating themselves from nuclear power. They officially confirmed for the first time what had long been suspected behind the scenes – Swiss nuclear power is not economically viable. Mühleberg will be the first Swiss nuclear power station to be decommissioned in 2019 – and indeed voluntarily for financial reasons.

This issue's focus article examines the current state of affairs. What will happen to Beznau I, the world's oldest nuclear power station? Who should be financially liable for unprofitable nuclear power stations? How long does the demolition of a nuclear power plant actually take?

The path to a Switzerland free of nuclear power will undoubtedly be a long and arduous one despite the courageous start made five years ago.

MARKO LEHTINEN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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A year after the “franc shock” The impact of the strong currency



I am amongst those who lost their jobs because of the franc shock. But instead of registering as unemployed, I emigrated and am now working abroad.

PHILIPP REDERLECHNER, IZMIR, TURKEY

Switzerland is just a small cog in the global economy. The abandonment of the fixed exchange rate to the euro obviously shocked the world of finance but there are many other factors influencing the current challenging global economic situation, such as the fall in the price of raw materials and the decline in exports from China, etc. I have been affected by the strong Swiss franc in two ways. On the one hand, the value of my shares fell significantly during the recession but, on the other, the strong franc is providing me with a higher pension in Thai baht where I live.

ERNST RÜTIMANN, THAILAND

The continued euro weakness, possibly soon to be made even worse by Brexit or another political or economic shock, could lead to the Swiss franc remaining at this rate or higher for a number of years. The labour force's flexibility (working longer hours for the same pay or short-time working) means that many jobs have been kept, but I worry that a long-term strong franc will have a permanent impact on industry in Switzerland – especially at a time when global demand is slowing.

CHRISTOPHE WINKLER, ENGLAND

The referendum on 5 June Free lawyers for asylum seekers?

I welcome a speedier decision-making as to who may stay and who may not. I live in Australia and would be cautious about the idea of free legal representation for refugees. Here we have had that for years, with the result that some refugees have spent months, some even years in detention centres, always hoping that a “no” decision would be overturned. This has caused a lot of angst, mental illness and self-harming, fed by lawyers dangling the carrot of a wonderful life in Australia – although Australia suffers from increased unemployment, like most other countries. In the end, everyone is frustrated: the refugees who wait in vain for years, and the Australians, because they are tarnished by the media as heartless, despite welcoming thousands of refugees every year. The only happy ones are the lawyers who get paid handsomely out of the citizens' taxes. Personally, I would advocate a speedier procedure, including free legal representation for one appeal only and not an endless backwards and forwards.

DIANE HOBIGER, AUSTRALIA

Of course we should be open to taking in refugees. But from where? As we know from Germany, many of those arriving in great hordes are not willing to adapt. Many are not refugees but instead seeking a better future in the West.

I believe Switzerland should work with organisations such as Open Doors that are familiar with the situation of people in Syria, for example. They also know who the genuine refugees are.

DORIS ESCURRIOLA, VALENCIA, SPAIN

We are comfortable and contented members of an affluent society living in political and economic security and are afraid that something will be taken away from us, which is in fact not the case. Unfortunately, the humanity factor and the need for compassion are sometimes completely disregarded. Refugees are condemned as economic migrants across the board, denying the fact that these people are fleeing from circumstances partially caused by our own prosperity. The right to asylum is a human right which everyone is obliged to uphold. The provision of free legal aid for people who cannot afford it should go without saying in a constitutional state. If only those with enough money get justice, that is no longer a constitutional state.

KLEMENS GRAF, GERMANY

The final resting place – Swiss-made! Offbeat funerals in Switzerland



I like the idea of a person being turned into a diamond after death. I would prefer to end up a diamond than be eaten by worms in a dark coffin. Diamonds are very beautiful and may provide

my descendants with pleasure. Instead of “ashes to ashes and dust to dust”, it would be “ashes to carbon and graphite to diamond”. That sounds a bit more modern, doesn't it?

KARINA FENNER, ALICE SPRINGS, AUSTRALIA

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Withdrawal from nuclear energy – an unresolved issue

The Federal Council announced the withdrawal from nuclear energy five years ago, but the rate of progress is slow. The decommissioning date has only been set for one of Switzerland's five nuclear power stations – the Mühleberg plant near Berne is to be taken out of operation on 20 December 2019.

SIMON THÖNEN

The Swiss government made a quick decision after the reactor disaster in the Japanese city of Fukushima in spring 2011. Almost in chorus with Berlin's decision to abandon nuclear power, Doris Leuthard, the Swiss energy minister from the CVP, who was once a strong advocate of nuclear energy, announced the nation's change of direction. But while in Germany the oldest nuclear power stations were immediately decommissioned and a deadline was set for the others, the Federal Council's proposal to Parliament only involved prohibiting the construction of new nuclear power plants. The existing ones would remain connected to the grid and would do so, as Leuthard pointed out, "for as long as they were safe". The Federal Council's Energy Strategy 2050 proposal seeks to enable this gradual withdrawal from nuclear power.

The Greens are continuing with their popular initiative: "Old reactors remain connected to the grid in Switzerland. As nuclear power stations age, the risk of accident increases." (Bastien Girod, Greens National Councillor)

A shift from nuclear power towards hydropower, solar energy, wind energy and energy efficiency – Parliament is likely to clear up the final unresolved issues of the bill during the summer session. However, neither the conservative parties nor the left or Greens are really satisfied with the compro-

mise-oriented solution fashioned by the CVP and BDP. The SVP and FDP do not want a ban on new nuclear power stations. "In the current climate, building a new nuclear power station in Switzerland is unrealistic," concedes SVP President Albert Rösti. But this may change in future. His hopes are pinned on progress making the technology safer. Rösti is relying here on the "fourth-generation nuclear power stations of the future, where accidents triggering radioactive contamination of extensive areas would be ruled out". FDP National Councillor Peter Schilliger would also only consider new nuclear power plants "if they are made safer and more financially attractive again". However, he believes banning them now is the wrong option. "That is not very open-minded," he says.

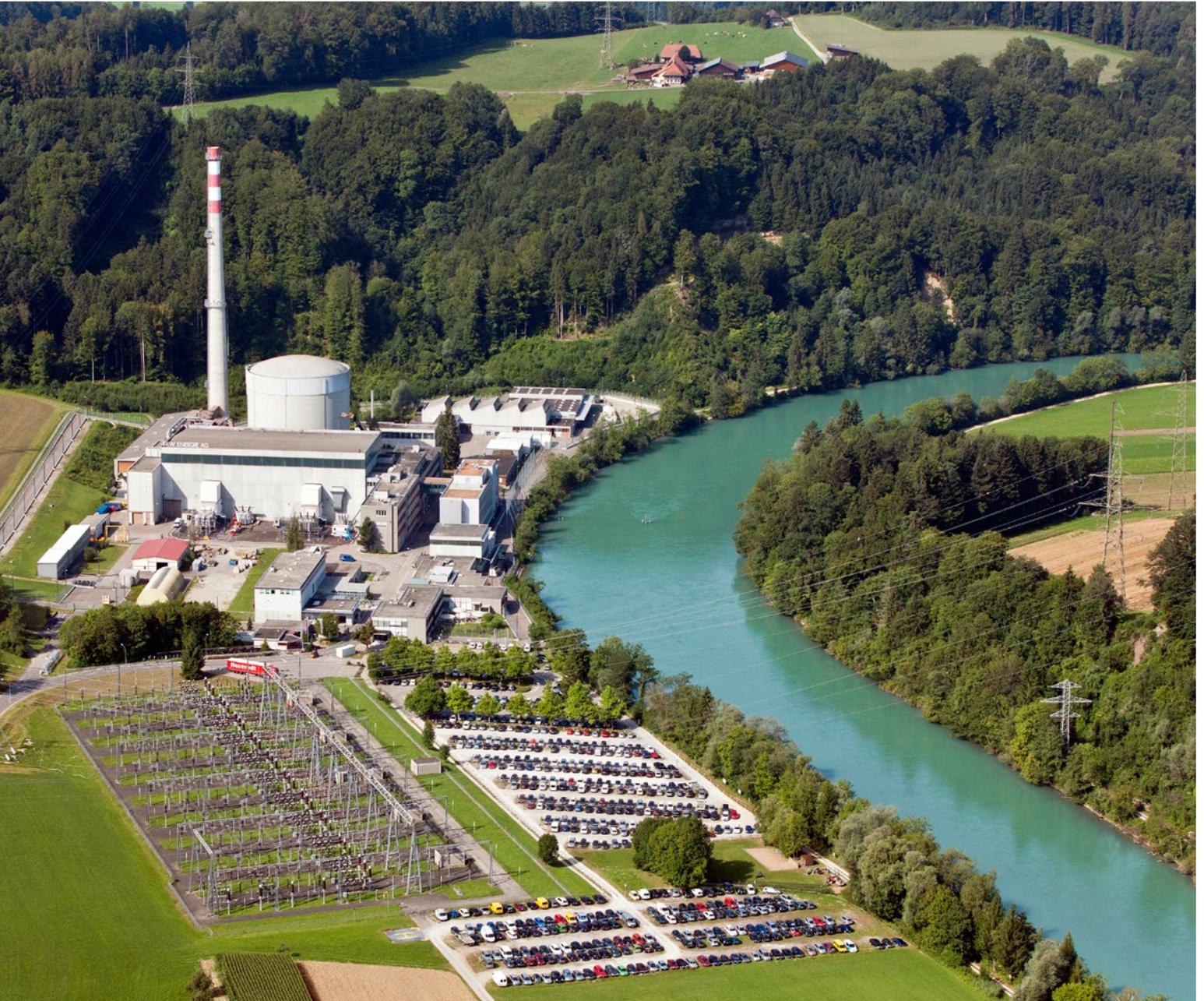
Referendum in the autumn

Together with the small conservative parties, the SVP and FDP have held a narrow majority in the National Council since the last elections. If they vote unanimously against the Energy Strategy 2050 in the final vote on 17 June, they could scupper the gradual abandonment of nuclear energy, though that is unlikely to happen. Energy politicians from all camps expect individual SVP and FDP National Councillors to break rank and help push the energy transition through. Though a referendum could be called against the Parliament's decision, forcing a popular ballot, the chances of defeating the compromise-oriented



bill on the official withdrawal from nuclear energy at the ballot box appear slim.

The Swiss will vote on nuclear abandonment this autumn in any event, as the Greens are continuing with their popular initiative launched after Fukushima. They are also disappointed by the official energy strategy, as the disenchanted Greens National Councillor Bastien Girod underlines: "Old reactors remain connected to the grid in Switzerland. As nuclear power stations age, the risk of accident increases." The Greens' initiative calls for fixed lifespans based on the German model – in specific terms, this would mean decommissioning after



45 years. The three oldest nuclear power stations, Beznau I and II and Mühleberg, would therefore have to be taken out of operation by 2017, Gösigen by 2024 and Leibstadt in 2029 as the last nuclear power station.

No fixed lifespans

CVP National Councillor Stefan Müller-Altermatt, one of the architects of the official withdrawal from nuclear energy, believes it is too early to decommission the nuclear plants in line with the Greens' popular initiative. "This would mean having to import nuclear power from France or coal-fired power from Germany. I

don't think that is what people want." He is unable to answer the question as to when the last nuclear power station would be switched off under the official withdrawal strategy, owing to a lack of fixed deadlines. "At some point in the 2030s or 2040s," he says. The Swiss Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate (ENSI) should decide for how long the nuclear power plants are deemed safe and therefore remain connected to the grid.

The supervisory authority plays the key role in the official nuclear withdrawal. When this issue went to print, the decision on whether Beznau I could return to operation had not yet been taken. It is the oldest nuclear

The Mühleberg nuclear power plant is not being shut down for safety reasons but for financial reasons.

Photos: Keystone

plant in the world having been in service for 47 years. It has been shut down since summer 2015 at the instruction of ENSI, owing to the discovery of "irregularities" in the steel of the reactor pressure valve. The irregularities have been under investigation since. ENSI is set to decide in the summer whether the plant is still safe enough to continue operating. Environmental organisations are accusing ENSI of yielding too much to the nuclear power plant operators. A stir was caused by the warning from ENSI Director Hans Wanner this spring that ENSI "faces increasing pressure from the pro-nuclear-power camp" because the demands for greater safety would put

the operators in a difficult position financially.

It was also economic considerations that made power group BKW decide to close its nuclear power station in Mühleberg near Berne on 20 December 2019. The extensive safety retrofitting demanded by ENSI was no longer viable in light of current electricity prices. BKW is the first operator to specifically withdraw from the sector on its own initiative (see text on page 9).

Secret lobbyist scenario

With the first closure, a new problematic issue is coming to the fore – the fact that the nuclear power plants are expensive, contaminated sites. In a secret strategy paper drawn up for the power group Alpiq and published by



Beznau I is the oldest nuclear power station in the world having been in service for 47 years.

Photos: Keystone

the “Basler Zeitung”, a lobbyist outlined a scenario of how Alpiq could get rid of its holding in the AKW Gösgen and Leibstadt nuclear power stations – and the costs of operation, demolition and disposal. According to the paper, the objective was “to bundle the nuclear power stations in a rescue company and transfer them to state ownership”. This was in fact only a first draft by a commissioned lobbyist. Competitors Axpo and BKW immediately rejected the plan, but Alpiq did not distance itself.

The secret plan sheds light on the industry’s problems. Electricity production is now barely or no longer viable because too many power plants are connected to the grid throughout Europe. Continuing to operate nuclear power stations is therefore becoming financially unattractive. This is also stirring up the political debate. It is firstly giving a boost to the Greens’ popular initiative. One of the main counterarguments previously used was that the operators could demand compensation if the nuclear plants had to be shut down based on a political decision. “The operators would now be pushing their luck by going to court to claim compensation for loss of business,” remarks Girod. At the very least, any compensation is likely to be kept “within reasonable limits”. “The initiative is the cheapest way of exiting nuclear energy – and would certainly be less expensive than striking a political deal with the operators,” explains Girod.

“Held hostage from the outset”

The approach envisaged for Alpiq in the strategy paper would effectively involve large-scale political negotiations on the conditions under which the nuclear power operators could transfer their plants to federal government and thus avoid their obligations of demolition and disposal. In contrast to Girod of the Greens, SP National Councillor Eric Nussbaumer is essentially open to such a deal. He expects that the government would have to assume part of the costs for the legacy of nuclear power in any case. It would therefore be better for it to negotiate the terms at an early stage and at the same time determine the lifespan of the nuclear power stations. “Nuclear technology has held society hostage from the outset,” he says. “If it had not been clear from the start that society and not the operators would ultimately have to pay for nuclear waste

and the consequences of an accident, nobody would have built nuclear power stations in the first place.”

FDP National Councillor Schilliger takes a completely different view. The fact that Alpiq is attempting to shift bad investment onto federal government is a sign of a “bizarre management mentality”. If Alpiq actually went bankrupt, a new investor could take over the power stations cheaply or for nothing. “It should then also be possible to operate the nuclear power plants profitably.” The government should at most ensure that the provisions for decommissioning and disposal of waste are not included in the bankruptcy assets, he says. SVP President Röstli rejects a state rescue company for the nuclear power stations.

But others in the SVP hold different views. Leading SVP figure Christoph Blocher recently thought aloud about subsidies for nuclear power plants. That brings back memories. Blocher was one of the conservative politicians who in 1988 put paid to the Kaiseraugst nuclear power plant project, which was extremely fiercely contested in Switzerland. Although the scheme had no chance of succeeding at the time, following the Chernobyl disaster, the group of politicians led by Blocher managed to obtain considerable compensation from federal government for the official abandonment of the nuclear power station. “Kaiseraugst was a blunder that must not be repeated,” according to CVP National Councillor Müller-Altermatt. However, he also confirms that it is virtually unavoidable that the public will ultimately pick up the bill for the legacy of nuclear energy. “We’ll either pay through electricity prices or in tax,” he says.

SIMON THÖNEN IS AN EDITOR WITH “DER BUND” AND A FREELANCE JOURNALIST

Mühleberg will be the first nuclear power station to be dismantled

The operating company BKW unveiled its decommissioning plan this spring. The Mühleberg nuclear power plant near Berne will be taken out of operation in three and a half years' time on 20 December 2019. This is an unprecedented event as it is the first time in Switzerland that a nuclear power station will be demolished. Until now only research reactors have been dismantled.

The power company BKW intends to draw upon experience in Germany for the first decommissioning of a nuclear power plant in Switzerland. The nuclear power stations of the former German Democratic Republic were shut down shortly after reunification by Switzerland's northern neighbour. A second wave of nuclear plant decommissioning took place after Fukushima. Germany had to learn the hard way when undertaking such projects. In the case of the

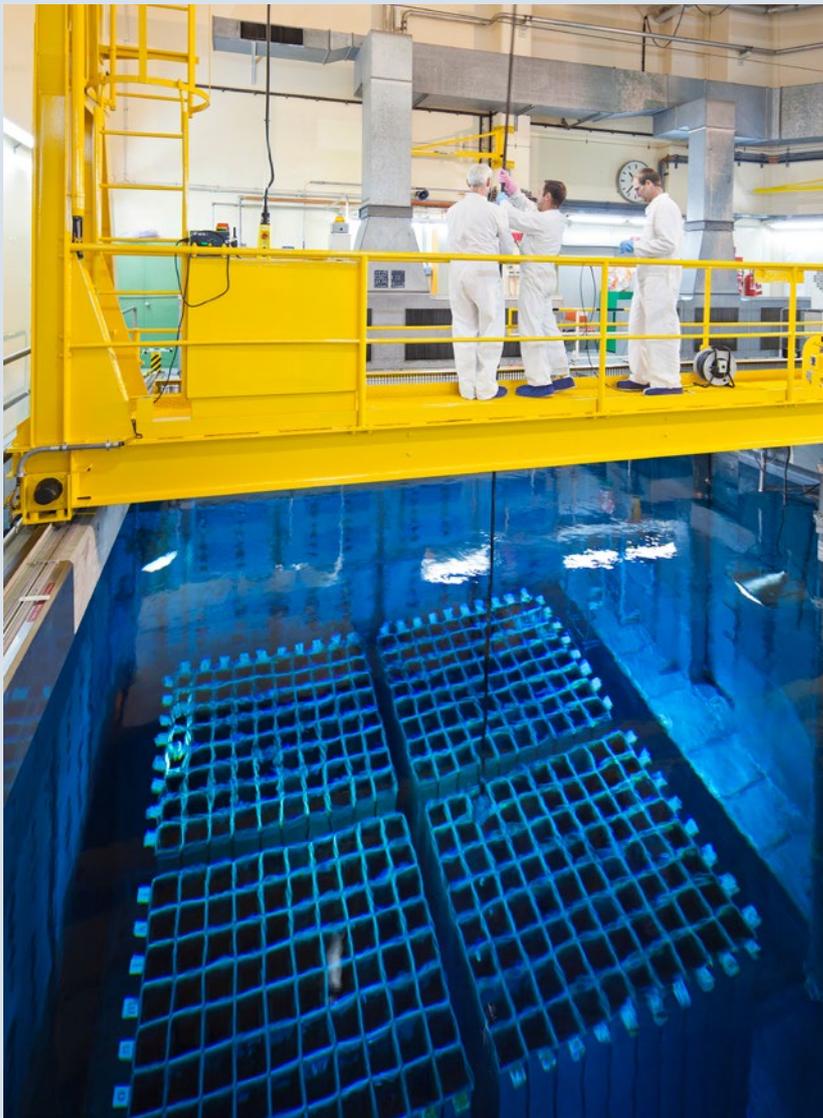
six East German reactors in Greifswald, demolition work has already taken two decades, with no end in sight. BKW hopes to do a better job at Mühleberg. Firstly, a rigid timeframe should keep costs down, which represents a huge challenge. Such facilities remain nuclear plants even after decommissioning. The fuel rods must die down for five years in the water of the fuel pool before they can be transported away in special containers, known as CASTORS. To

start demolition as quickly as possible after decommissioning, BKW will install a separate cooling system for the fuel rod pool once the plant has been taken out of operation.

The fuel rods will be taken to the interim storage site in Würenlingen, Aargau, in 2024. A nuclear accident in Mühleberg will then no longer be possible. However, the plant will still contain lots of contaminated concrete and steel. This will be broken up and also transported to the interim storage facility. Some will be purified until it is free of radiation to the extent that it can be reused. The plant will be dismantled from the inside outwards. The most complex part – the removal of contaminated material – will be carried out first.

The Mühleberg plant should be free of nuclear materials by 2031. The dismantling also involves the regular demolition of buildings, which is set to be completed by 2034. There should then be no trace of the former nuclear power station in Mühleberg. Whether the site on the Aare will be returned to green meadowland, though, has not yet been decided. It could remain an industrial area.

Even if everything runs to plan, the demolition of the Mühleberg nuclear power station will take 15 years – three times longer than its construction. BKW estimates costs of 800 million Swiss francs. A further 1.3 billion francs has been earmarked for the disposal of nuclear waste. The nuclear waste should be disposed of in the final repository from around 2040, where it will remain for thousands of years. Where the final repository will be located remains to be decided conclusively in Switzerland. ST



Swiss development aid under pressure

As a nation Switzerland plays an active role in development aid. But it now faces a radical change of direction. Parliament is set to cut development aid funding this summer. It is just a question of by how much.

MARC LETTAU

The Swiss cross is a symbol internationally of the great solidarity of a small nation with a world characterised by tremendous divides. Whether in Benin or Bangladesh, Mozambique or Mekong, Niger or Nepal, Switzerland is currently directly involved in activities in 20 poverty-struck regions. It is improving healthcare systems there, helping to set up water supply and supporting the provision of education because it is often only education that enables an escape from the spiral of poverty. Its commitments also shape Switzerland's self-identity.

Enormous cost-cutting pressure

Development aid is nevertheless under pressure. Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter (FDP) gave a spirited assurance at the start of the year that Switzerland intended without fail to continue its "long-standing humanitarian tradition" and to combat poverty, hunger and inequality. Such a

commitment was needed not least because development is a better alternative to migration, he said. However, the Federal Council currently feels obliged to give priority to the state of the federal government's coffers over world poverty. The aim is to cut around a billion Swiss francs a year from the Swiss government's budget for the period 2017–2019. International cooperation is one of the areas where the axe will fall particularly heavily.

A long way off the UN's guidelines

Although words like "expansion" and "strengthening" currently predominate in the government's position statements on international cooperation, the government recently proposed cutting Switzerland's public development aid to around 0.48% of gross national product (GNP). It will thus fall below its own target of 0.50% and move further away from the UN guidelines under which wealthy industrial nations should provide aid of

at least 0.70% of their GNP as global development goals cannot be achieved otherwise.

National Council right-wingers want far greater cuts

Since the Federal Council's announcement about reducing the cost of solidarity with the southern hemisphere in future, the saving drive has clearly been stepped up. The National Council's Finance Committee called for costs to be slashed at the end of March, meaning that Switzerland's public development aid would fall by around 20%. Parliament is likely to set the course for the future during the forthcoming summer session.

A 20% reduction is significantly more than what the Federal Council is proposing. However, it is much less than what those on the right in Parliament, whose position was strengthened at the last election, have in mind. The line of argument put forward by the Zug National Councillor Thomas Aeschi (SVP) is: "We simply can no longer afford to spend so much money on development aid. We would otherwise have to make more swingeing cut-backs in other areas, which we're not willing to do." Aeschi is a heavyweight in the debate. The Zug MP, who was put forward as a Federal Council candidate by the SVP in 2015, is one of his party's leading financial experts. The SVP wants to cut aid money by 40%. That would see Switzerland's public development aid plummet to 0.3% of GNP. This would be tantamount to the "complete dismantling" of Swiss development aid, remarks Thomas Greminger,

Traditional development aid is most under pressure

Switzerland's international aid covers five areas. The largest is cooperation and financial aid for developing countries. From 2013 to 2016, CHF 6.9 billion was available for this area, of which CHF 4.1 billion was earmarked for Switzerland's traditional, bilateral aid in developing countries. If Parliament reduces development aid, it is primarily this bilateral aid that will come under pressure. The second-largest pillar of Switzerland's international aid is humanitarian aid. This emergency aid in humanitarian disasters is largely uncontroversial. Switzerland has in the past often deployed its (short-term) emergency aid and its (long-term) development aid in the same crisis regions where they complement one another. Switzerland also counts spending on economic and trade policy measures, support initiatives in Eastern European states and peace-building measures as public development cooperation.

MUL

Deputy Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

However, the ongoing debate over development aid does not follow clear left-right party lines. Conservative foreign policy expert Doris Fiala (FDP) believes it would be unprincipled to save on development aid in the middle of a refugee crisis where everyone is calling for greater aid on the ground. Those who, like her, have seen the misery with their own eyes look at this sensitive issue from a “slightly different” perspective. Fiala’s position is that, despite pressure for cuts, Parliament should not measure future development aid by finance policy criteria alone.

Aid agencies launch “wake-up call”

Aid agencies are calling it an outright “attack on development aid”. Alliance Sud, the umbrella organisation of the

Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter voiced passionate support for the fight against hunger and poverty at the start of the year.

Photo: Keystone

major Swiss aid agencies, recently launched an urgent “wake-up call” in the form of a nationwide petition aiming to show just how much backing there is in civil society for Switzerland’s development aid. Broad sections of civil society are opposed to cutting aid in view of the global situation and instead favour increasing it to the level proposed by the UN, according to Alliance Sud’s CEO Mark Herkenrath. “The idea of one of the richest nations wanting to make savings at the expense of the poorest is unbearable for many people,” he says.

Herkenrath also points to what has long been a bone of contention for the aid agencies. Switzerland’s development aid is effectively already much lower than it appears to be on paper. The reason for the criticism is that Switzerland also includes the high costs incurred domestically for

asylum in development aid expenditure. Herkenrath believes this is a “complete absurdity”, creating a disastrous situation: “This means that Switzerland is itself the greatest recipient of what it takes credit for internationally as public development aid.” As the costs for the asylum system are likely to remain high, the pressure on traditional development aid will continue to rise, he says.

In the event that Parliament adopts the proposal of the National Council’s Finance Committee, development aid expert Herkenrath forecasts that Switzerland will have to withdraw from around a third of its current, long-term development projects.

MARC LETTAU IS AN EDITOR WITH THE “SWISS REVIEW”



Islamic State is also recruiting in Switzerland

The Swiss authorities have recorded around 70 people leaving to join the jihad, a proportionally lower figure than elsewhere in Europe. Miryam Eser Davolio believes social networks could be used to prevent people from joining up.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Since 2001, the Swiss intelligence services have identified 73 people who have left the country to join the jihad, 58 of whom have reached Syria and Iraq, the base of Islamic State. Who are these Swiss citizens and residents? What can be done to prevent such a break with their home country? And how should those who return be dealt with? The following interview is with Miryam Eser Davolio, a doctor of educational sciences, who led a multidisciplinary study in 2015 on the process of jihadist radicalisation in Switzerland. She is a professor in the School of Social Work at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences.



Miryam Eser Davolio

families. Radicalised young people sometimes accuse their parents of not being good Muslims. The parents are powerless to respond to such arguments.

What are the motivations of the Swiss jihadists?

They vary but are often more ideological or political than religious. Religious factors are overestimated.

Those being recruited have a dichotomous view of the world: on the one hand there is the Muslim world and on the other there is the West, whose values, which are deemed to be decadent, have to be fought. The jihadists see themselves as the victims of a system where hidden forces – the US, the Jews, the Europeans, etc. – are seeking to destroy all Muslims.

“Swiss Review”: Who are these Swiss people leaving to risk their lives for Islamic State?

Miryam Eser Davolio: Their profiles are extremely diverse. It is therefore impossible to generalise.

Are they very young?

In contrast to what is happening elsewhere in Europe, here they are aged between 25 and 35. They are not as young and include fewer females than elsewhere, even though there was a case of a 15-year-old girl leaving for Syria with her 16-year-old brother.

Is it true to say that most of those leaving are Muslims?

Yes, that's right. Four-fifths of those going are Muslims. The rest are converts. That figure is disproportionately high in relation to the few Muslim converts in Switzerland. Another point is that those seeking to leave have often grown up in secularised



It is not widely known that Swiss people are also fighting with IS.

Photo: Keystone

Would Islamic State be seen as a kind of ideal?

Yes, in the sense that it represents a more just and coherent state. The fight against Bashar al-Assad is also being idealised.

Some analysts believe the attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 – where young Europeans were killed by other young Europeans – marked a decline in support for Islamic State. What is your view? Has there been an impact in Switzerland?

I completely agree. Whereas there were still voices legitimising the “Charlie Hebdo” attacks in January 2015, the recent acts of terrorism have seen an increase in cooperation between Muslims and the authorities. Muslims in Switzerland, young people included, are now showing greater willingness to report suspicious activities. They are paying greater attention to signs of radicalisation in people. I received a call recently from people telling me that their boss was sending money to IS via charitable foundations. We put them in touch with the police.

That Switzerland is a recruiting ground for terrorism comes as a shock, doesn't it?

Yes, it does. Even though the phenomenon is not as noticeable here as elsewhere, it is still more common than it should be. I nevertheless believe it is hard to recruit jihadists in Switzerland. The integration of minorities is better here than elsewhere in Europe. Civil society has links enabling cooperation between its various bodies. Dialogue with most mosques is commonplace in the cantons – to ensure their security apart from anything else. Work is being carried out with young people in schools on tolerance, respect and so on. The prevention of violence is working thanks to cooperation between social workers and the police. That is vitally important. I was as-

tonished that Abdeslam Salah, who took part in the Paris attacks in November 2015, could spend three months living in his neighbourhood of Moleenbek in Brussels. People recognised him but nobody did anything. That would have been impossible in Switzerland in my view.

What should be done about people returning to Switzerland after spending time with Islamic State?

There are always legal proceedings but I believe we also have to work on people's attitudes and beliefs and focus on trauma. Those returning may have distanced themselves from their activities in Syria or Iraq but in an ambivalent way. We've visited the prisons. They carry out risk management and provide treatment. That

“An attack on Swiss soil cannot be ruled out”

Frédéric Esposito, director of the University Observatory on Security in Geneva, believes Switzerland is not immune to the growing fascination with the Islamic State. While Switzerland has never been a terrorist attack, it no longer enjoys a special status. “Islamic State no longer differentiates between Switzerland and France because Switzerland has provided its good offices in the Syrian crisis,” according to the Geneva-based academic. An attack on Swiss soil cannot therefore be ruled out, but how great is the threat? “Geneva for example has a four-level terrorism alert scale. A national system is needed to be able to answer this question, but that would require joint decisions by the cantons,” he says. “Background to jihadist radicalisation in Switzerland” Zurich University of Applied Sciences, September 2015.

is a good thing. Do specific programmes need to be developed? That is something currently being discussed.

What means can be deployed to discourage or prevent people from going?

The internet often plays a role in people leaving. There is also contact with religious “mentors” who are not

necessarily encountered in mosques but in bars, apartments, gyms or wherever young people spend time. The online battle is complex because it's impossible to control all sources of propaganda. One option is to present the other side of the argument, as the French government did with an anti-jihad advert. On the one hand, we need to focus on language as a means of communication. And on the other, non-governmental institutions deemed more “credible” have to be involved. This is why an appeal has been made by 120 Muslim clerics opposing jihad.

What arguments can be made to someone being radicalised?

One approach is to tackle issues relating to values, politics and conflicts. It might be an early sign if someone has a simplistic view of the world, dividing it into believers and unbelievers, for example. If they believe the use of violence against enemies is legitimate then radicalisation is taking place. Such cases require a lot of work. Experts, parents, a brother or an uncle have to be involved. It is a matter of showing potential jihadists that others accept them without agreeing with them. How can indoctrination be stopped? By making the person think. If someone believes all wars are anti-Muslim, they should be shown that this is not true by pointing to NATO's intervention in Kosovo, for example.

A cabaret against the war

There has probably never been a more playful or more aggressive artistic movement than Dadaism. In response to bankrupt Europe and the First World War, artists gathered in Zurich to establish a cabaret club and from there conquer the world. The Dada movement is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year.

GERHARD MACK

Drums produce an ear-splitting noise. The poems read out in-between can barely be understood. A Russian balalaika orchestra then enters the stage. On the walls hang graphic art by Picasso and posters of futurists. Music by Debussy and Brahms is played on the piano. Dances are stomped on the stage. The audience caterwauls. The students, revellers and dandies call for beer and women's legs. When the mood threatens to change suddenly, a deathly pale young singer takes to the stage and starts to perform chansons and ballads. Her fragility captivates everyone and momentarily produces quiet.

When Cabaret Voltaire opened its doors on 5 February 1916, it presented itself to the public as a platform for anything and everything. Hugo Ball wanted a "coexistence of possibilities, people and outlooks", and to that end wrote: "Everyone who wants to contribute something is welcome." His partner Emmy Hennings sent an appeal for help to a friend in Munich: "If you know any young people who are coming to Zurich, or are already here, who would like to get involved in the cabaret, then please let me know." The pair had arrived in Switzerland in summer 1915, had made ends meet playing the piano for eight hours a day and with tawdry dance performances at undistinguished cabarets, and finally wanted to do something that matched their artistic ambitions.

A hall with 50 seats stood empty on Spiegelgasse in Zurich's Niederdorf district. It belonged to the Meierei wine bar and had a short time

before housed a cabaret called the Pantagruel. Further immigrants soon joined Hugo Ball and Emmy Hennings. The medical student Richard Huelsenbeck came from Berlin, the Romanian Tristan Tzara had been sent to Zurich to study by his father and Hans Arp got to know Sophie Taeuber at the Galerie Tanner, a modern art venue. Then there were Marcel Janco and the Swiss musician Hans Heusser. Walter Serner was already there. They formed the core group around whom additional guests continually flitted. Picabia, who played an important role in spreading the word about the new movement on his extensive travels, sometimes dropped by.

Discords and simultaneous poetry

They offered a colourful programme every evening except for Fridays. They read texts by authors as diverse as Voltaire and Wedekind. The music ranged from medieval church music to atonal discords. Tzara, Janco and Huelsenbeck performed simultaneous poetry which nobody could understand. There were negro dances and negro music. Janco stopped by one day with masks which the actors used to change their movements. In early summer Hugo Ball took to the stage in a Cubist bishop's outfit made of cardboard and performed one of his sound poems: "Gadji beri bimbaglandridi lauli lonnicadori". When Rudolf von Laban opened a dance school in Zurich, his girls made expressive dance one of the key features of evenings at Cabaret Voltaire.

The directness of the physical expression, the overstatement and the

search for simplicity and originality were reflected in the picture collages of the artists as well as in Ball's sound poems and the dances of Mary Wigman, Suzanne Perrottet and Sophie Taeuber. This was about breaking up conventional forms and the search for a new grammar. Describing Taeuber's dance to the "Song of the Flying Fish and Seahorses", Ball wrote: "It was a dance full of flashes and edges, full of dazzling light and penetrating intensity. The lines of her body broke up. Each gesture decomposed into a hundred precise, angular and sharp movements."

The First World War was raging in Europe. While students and foreigners tapped their thighs at Cabaret Voltaire, a million soldiers were slaughtered in the first half of 1916 in the warfare of attrition at Verdun and on the Somme. The euphoria with which some writers and artists had greeted the outbreak of war had long since faded away. Bourgeois culture could not prevent the horror. Its values were bankrupt. Nihilism was all that remained. Hugo Ball was well versed in Nietzsche. He took the diagnosis seriously but rejected the pathos. The artists of Cabaret Voltaire saw the old world collapse and worked with its rubble. Through irony, paradox and play on content and forms they could be committed but avoid destruction.

The cabaret stage provided appropriate forms for this. "Educational and artistic ideas as a variety programme – that is our form of Candide against the times," wrote Ball. The Dadaists were non-political, behaved anarchically and consequently became the most trenchant

opposition of their era. Dada discovered the desire for chaos and scandal and developed its own world of forms from this. Its protagonists split language into sound poetry, typeset into a mélange of typographies, images into collages and photo montages, and dance into delicate forms.

A sign of foolish naivety

The term Dada first emerged when Cabaret Voltaire was about to close its doors again. After five months, the performers were exhausted and Ball and Hennings moved back to Ticino. Despite this the term Dada became established. Many myths circulated about its emergence. The most plausible is Hugo Ball's explanation, which he entered in his diary: "In Romanian, Dada means Yes, Yes, in French it signifies hobby horse. For Germans, it is a sign of foolish naivety and an avaricious bond with the pram." Several weeks later he made the word public in the "Cabaret Voltaire" anthology. It implied radical negation without having to propose something new. The Dadaists had not exactly invented the word. There was a "lily milk soap" in Zurich sold under the name of Dada by the company Bergmann. That fitted with the fascination that advertising and the media held for the Dadaists.

The blossoming of Dada in Zurich soon came to an end after the war. The soirées, exhibitions and tea parties actually continued until 1920. Public enthusiasm even peaked with the eighth soirée at the Kaufleuten in 1919. Thousands of visitors filled the coffers like never before. But the movement sought other locations. Berlin became a hub for a few years with biting satires against post-war militarism. In Paris, André Breton was interested in Dada until he realised it would not allow him to de-



The Dadaists discovered the desire for chaos and scandal and developed their own world of forms from this. (Image: Self-portrait by Raoul Hausmann, collage 1923.)

Photo: Keystone

velop principles for his surrealism. Dada became an international movement which Tristan Tzara was keen to present at the end in his "Dadaglobe" almanac. Philippe Soupault once again clearly outlined what Dada was in his submission: His collage "Dada soulève tout" depicts a port crane lifting up the world. The words "Give Us the Runway and We will Lift the World" appear below it. A tract was published under the title a year later which railed against any

form of dogmatism and all artistic attitudes of modernity. "Oui = Non" was the only possible position for Dada.

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

“The Dadaistic approach is alive and well”

The first Dadaists are being celebrated throughout Switzerland this year. But is Dadaism still alive today? An interview with Adrian Notz, Director of Cabaret Voltaire.

MARKO LEHTINEN

“Swiss Review”: Mr Notz, you are currently commemorating the Dadaists of 1916 at Cabaret Voltaire. But you also want to use the high level of attention generated to attract modern Dadaism to your venue for performances, readings and concerts. Does it actually still exist?

Adrian Notz: Dada no longer exists as an artistic movement. Strictly speaking, it only existed from 1916 to 1923. It then became part of other artistic movements, such as Surrealism, and resonated in later movements, such as Situationism, Fluxus, Punk and the Beat Generation. Performance art can also be traced back to Dada. Lots of things which are taken for granted in contemporary art today are based on Dadaism. From this perspective, it lives on not just as an approach to art but also beyond that.

There are no more Dadaists but there are successors?

Exactly. As a curator, it is very exciting to work with contemporary artists who do not call themselves Dadaists but do draw their inspiration from Dada.

Provocation was an important part of Dadaism. Can art still be provocative today?

If art’s primary objective is provocation then it is doomed to fail. The Dadaists did not primarily set out to be provocative but rather sought to create something new. That was provocative for people at that time who were unable to pigeonhole it. Oppor-

tunities absolutely do exist today for being provocative through art. You only have to think of Pussy Riot and their dance at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Russia or the theatre performance in Paris by the Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn.

Was the “exorcism” of politician Roger Köppel at the Neumarkt Theater Dada? It certainly sparked outrage.

It was an artistic performance that was solely intended to be provocative, thus exhausting its meaning and substance.

Are there still artists who insist they are Dadaists?

There are certainly people – but they don’t tend to be artists – who call themselves Dadaists. But there is a common misconception. Not everyone who is a bit obscure, slapstick, eccentric and Dadaesque is a Dadaist. Lots of people use the typical clichés – the absurd, grotesque and provocative – but don’t go beyond the superficial level. Dada, by contrast, was about a vision in the search for a complete work of art that would liberate people from chaos.

Dadaism is currently receiving a great deal of attention in its anniversary year. But what will happen afterwards? Will it disappear back into the depths of the museum?

In its anniversary year Dadaism is indeed being widely celebrated through exhibitions at major museums. I nevertheless firmly believe that Dada will live on as an approach that is even more necessary today

than a century ago. Dada opposed economic fatalism and general scientificisation where people are “snared and chained” and our roles and characters are allocated to us. That is still current. Today there is a trend towards self-optimisation training courses – we talk but don’t say anything. We have largely forgotten how to think and live independently and to show resilience. We have lost our backbone. With Dada we can adopt a different attitude again!



Cabaret Voltaire was the birthplace of Dada in 1916.

Photo: Keystone



Mobility preferable to emigration

Over 760,000 Swiss citizens currently live abroad. Here we focus on one of them, Annemarie Tromp, a doctor. She is a member of the Council of the Swiss Abroad and lives in Hamburg.

MONIKA UWER-ZÜRCHER

“Out of sight, out of mind – we Swiss living abroad do not receive enough recognition in Switzerland.” This is the firm belief of Annemarie Tromp, a native of Berne who has been living in Hamburg for over seven years. She also feels that the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad’s profile in Switzerland is not high enough. The 34-year-old trainee anaesthetist is one of the youngest members of the Council of the Swiss Abroad. She hopes the OSA’s 100th anniversary celebrations will

her medical degree. It was pure chance. She had actually been keen to discover a completely different culture – perhaps on a different continent. But her brother was a Hamburg fan and suggested that she did her placement there, not without an element of self-interest.

The port city captivated the spirited young woman. After completing her degree in Switzerland, one thing was clear to her: she wanted to live in Hamburg. The search for accommodation proved a real challenge. She got in touch

Tromp says. She has now become so firmly established on Hamburg’s Helvetia scene that she was elected the society’s president in 2015.

Difficulty in returning owing to old-age and survivors’ insurance (AHV)

“The abolition of voluntary old-age and survivors’ insurance for the Swiss Abroad leaves a very bitter taste for us mobile Swiss,” she says with reference to the burning issues. Swiss architects and engineers have built houses and bridges throughout the world. Scientists have conducted research at foreign universities. After spending 12 to 15 years abroad they have realised to their horror that returning to Switzerland will be difficult owing to a shortfall in contribution years. This also represents a major loss to Switzerland itself, Tromp believes. She thinks our country is cutting itself off from the potential of its fellow citizens abroad.

When she tells friends in Berne that she is a member of the Council of the Swiss Abroad, the reaction is – what’s that then? She finds it remarkable that she only found out about the existence of the OSA herself in 2012 in Hamburg despite always believing she was well informed about politics as the daughter of a Bernese politician.

Annemarie Tromp is completely undecided as to whether she will ever return to Switzerland with her family. She enjoys the luxury of youth. She visits Berne with her family every two months. “I need to see the mountains from time to time,” she explains. And, of course, she speaks “Bärndütsch” – the Bernese dialect – with her two young daughters.



**“My emigration was quite unremarkable by comparison.”
Annemarie Tromp
in Hamburg**

now lead to better recognition for the Swiss Abroad.

“Many people have not yet realised that emigration has changed fundamentally over recent years,” she remarks. “We are not emigrants in the usual sense of the word like those up to the middle of the last century.” Annemarie Tromp prefers the term “mobile Switzerland” to emigration. “We go back quite often.”

Tromp did a three-month placement in the city on the Elbe as part of

with Vreni Stebner, who was president of the Helvetia Swiss society in Hamburg at the time. “She was unable to help but invited me to the society’s regular get-together,” she says. There, her more senior compatriots told her interesting stories about how they had emigrated. “My emigration was quite unremarkable by comparison. I had to get through a pile of red tape but my degree qualifications were recognised without any qualms thanks to the bilateral agreements between Switzerland and the EU,”

MONIKA UWER-ZÜRCHER IS THE REGIONAL EDITOR OF “SWISS REVIEW” IN GERMANY

“The Swiss Abroad were presented as model patriots”

Rudolf Wyder was Director of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad from 1987 to 2013. He has now written a book on “100 years of the OSA”.

MARKO LEHTINEN

“Swiss Review”: Mr Wyder, you are in the final stages of your book on “100 years of the OSA”. The book is set for publication at the beginning of August. During your research, did you come across facts that despite being Director for many years you were not aware of?

Rudolf Wyder: Most definitely. Even though I was Director of the OSA for a long period, there were many gaps in its history which I wanted to fill in, out of personal interest as much as anything. There were periods never dealt with historically. What was the organisation’s role at the beginning – during the First World War? And also, more importantly, during the Second World War? These questions had never been answered before.

Where did you find the information for the book?

I started with the OSA’s annual reports from 1919. The Federal Council’s reports and dispatches and parliamentary records were also important. The OSA also has an extensive archive at the Swiss Federal Archives.

How did the OSA come to be founded by the New Helvetic Society (NHS) 100 years ago?

Patriotism was the main reason behind the establishment of the OSA. Intellectuals who feared that Switzerland could fall apart founded the New Helvetic Society in 1914. They watched with concern how German-speaking Switzerland and French-speaking Switzerland sided with the nations of their respective

languages during the war. That could have meant the end for Switzerland. The founders of the New Helvetic Society opposed this trend through patriotism embracing all of Switzerland which also sought to include the Swiss Abroad. The first New Helvetic Society groups were established abroad in 1916, the Committee of the Swiss Abroad was set up in 1917 and a secretariat for the Swiss Abroad was founded two years later. A functioning organisation has existed ever since then.

What tasks did the OSA actually perform?

Its priorities were establishing ties between the Swiss Abroad and Switzerland and providing information about the nation’s position as a neutral state. The OSA then gradually also addressed the particular issues of the Swiss Abroad. From 1919, for example, it supported the calls of the NHS group

Rudolf Wyder:
“The OSA has made a significant contribution towards ensuring we have a solid foundation for policy on the Swiss Abroad today.”

Photo: OSA



in Athens for the opening of an embassy in Greece.

The OSA initially idealised the Swiss Abroad. They were portrayed as heroic figures. Why?

The Swiss Abroad were meant to be role models for the Swiss as intrepid pioneers and, above all, patriots. You see, they came from French-speaking and German-speaking Switzerland as well as from Ticino. But abroad they primarily saw themselves as simply Swiss. They were presented as model patriots as part of the effort to prevent the nation from falling apart.

Where did the Swiss Abroad typically head to in 1916?

Switzerland experienced a large wave of emigration from the late 19th century – even if we exclude the First World War from 1914 to 1918. The destination countries were largely the same as they are today. A large number of migrants moved to a country within Europe. However, they were not even recorded in the statistics in the beginning as these only included those boarding ships for the USA or Australia.

A fascinating perception of home and abroad ...

Indeed, the authorities did not initially take account of the large Swiss communities in France and Germany. They were only included in the statistics on the Swiss Abroad from 1926 onwards.

Are there significant differences between emigrants then and now?

A major difference is that the early emigrants generally left and never came back. Just imagine, a letter from Australia took four weeks to arrive in Switzerland back then. There was no internet for information or communication and travel was much more difficult. Very few people therefore returned. The nature of the Swiss

diaspora is completely different today. It has moved much closer to Switzerland. The world has become a smaller place with distance effectively reduced to time difference. Many more Swiss are therefore returning to their native land.



Have the tasks of the OSA changed over the course of time?

The tools and types of activity have obviously altered but the three key duties have remained the same – providing services for the Swiss Abroad, communication and representing the interests of the Swiss Abroad in Switzerland. This last has become much more significant over the past 20 years.

Have there been times when the role of the OSA has been questioned?

Doubt has never actually been cast on its right to exist. There have been times when the OSA has had to tighten its belt so much that questions have been raised as to whether it could continue to perform its duties. There have sometimes also been

internal challenges where individual groups of Swiss Abroad have criticised the organisation's work. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s a group vehemently argued that the OSA needed to be structured differently, effectively becoming a state body and

published by the OSA, serves to fulfil this duty. How do you see the role of the "Review" in terms of shaping political opinion today?

"Swiss Review" remains vitally important. It is the only medium that reaches all Swiss registered abroad making them aware of their rights and duties – in particular, how they can participate politically. This remains crucial in the internet age. Any information can, of course, be obtained online but you firstly have to know what you are looking for. In contrast, "Swiss Review" is delivered to readers. Federal government has a clearly defined duty of provision in this regard.

What do you see as the major challenges facing the OSA in the near future?

The OSA has made a significant contribution towards ensuring we have a solid foundation for policy on the Swiss Abroad today in the broadest sense. The Swiss Abroad Act has existed since last year, and there are also various sectoral laws governing key aspects. Their further development is nevertheless an ongoing task. In my view, the main challenge facing the organisation is working with the authorities to find a strategy for the increasing mobility of the Swiss. Mobility must be made easier. The OSA must also face up to developments in communication. The third major challenge to my mind is that there is still not enough recognition of the potential of the Swiss Abroad in terms of innovation and networks in Switzerland. Switzerland must reflect upon how better use can be made of the tremendous asset that its diaspora abroad represents.

100 years ago only emigrants living outside Europe were registered as Swiss Abroad. (Image: The Chalet Suisse in Leopoldville, now called Kinshasa, in 1933)

Photo: Swiss Federal Archives

directly electing the Council of the Swiss Abroad.

What is the relationship like between the OSA and the 750 or so Swiss societies worldwide?

It is largely informal. There is only a regular exchange with certain highly active societies, and obviously with the large umbrella organisations in Europe. An important point is that the members of the Committee of the Swiss Abroad have been elected by the Swiss societies since 1959.

The Swiss Abroad have been able to take part in elections and referenda by postal vote since 1992. Federal government's duty to provide information for the Swiss Abroad on voting proposals has since been enshrined in law. "Swiss Review",

A match against the other homeland

The European Championship encounter on 11 June against Albania means the Swiss national team are not just facing any other opponent. Many of the Swiss players have their roots in Kosovo.

ETIENNE WUILLEMIN

It is a beautiful morning. Berne awakes. The sun lights up the Federal Palace. A few steps further hangs the flag of Kosovo. Mustafe Dzemaili opens the door, invites me into his office and starts to talk. Dzemaili has been the Kosovan ambassador to Switzerland for around a year. He is buzzing with excitement about 11 June, a special occasion for him. It is the day of the European Championship match between Switzerland and Albania. “The match between brothers,” remarks Dzemaili smiling. But it is not quite that simple. Switzerland versus Albania is more than a match. There has probably never been a match like it. Switzerland A against Switzerland B, say some. Albania against Albania, say others. Or Kosovo plus against Kosovo plus. They are all right.

Nobody incorporates the spirit of this match better than the brothers Granit and Taulant Xhaka. Never before have two brothers with the same mother and father faced one another at the European Championship. It is both a joyful occasion and a great challenge. Last autumn, when Switzerland, with Granit Xhaka, as well as Albania, with Taulant Xhaka, qualified for the European Championship, their father Ragip Xhaka said on the telephone: “I’m the proudest father in the world. One son is playing for Switzerland and another for Albania. This is the perfect reflection of our story.” He now says: “It’s lucky I’ve got two hands. One to clap for Granit and Switzerland, and the other for Taulant and Albania. Maybe it will be a draw.”

Granit and Taulant Xhaka have mixed feelings when talking about the forthcoming dual. They make com-

ments like: “It’s hard to play against your own family.” But then, as the conversation progresses, they say: “It’s a game. A special one maybe. But I’m looking forward to it. And I won’t hold back against my brother. At the end of the day, we want to win.” “We”, Switzerland. And “we”, Albania.

The “traitors” as role models

Lots of the Swiss national team have Kosovan roots, including the three key players – Xhaka, Xherdan Shaqiri and Valon Behrami. In their homeland, they are dubbed “traitors” who are not fighting for Albania’s cause. Ambassador Dzemaili is dismissive of such insults. “It’s a game. They are players and are pitting themselves against an opponent. That’s all there is to it. Nobody should misuse football to attribute political intentions or messages to any-

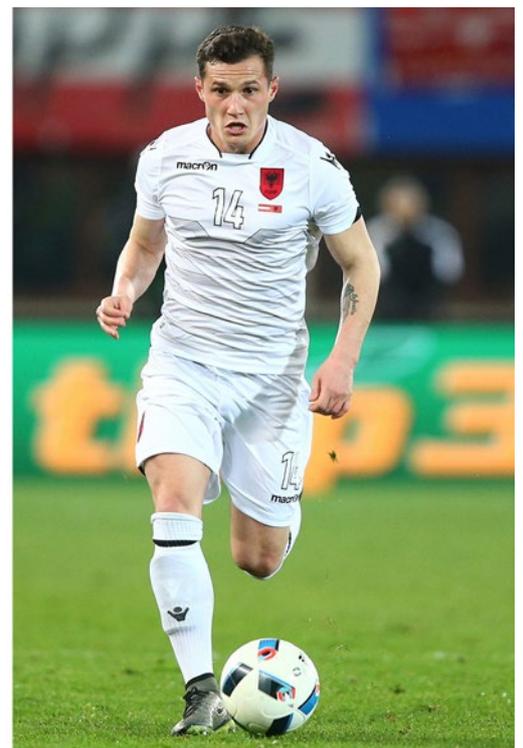
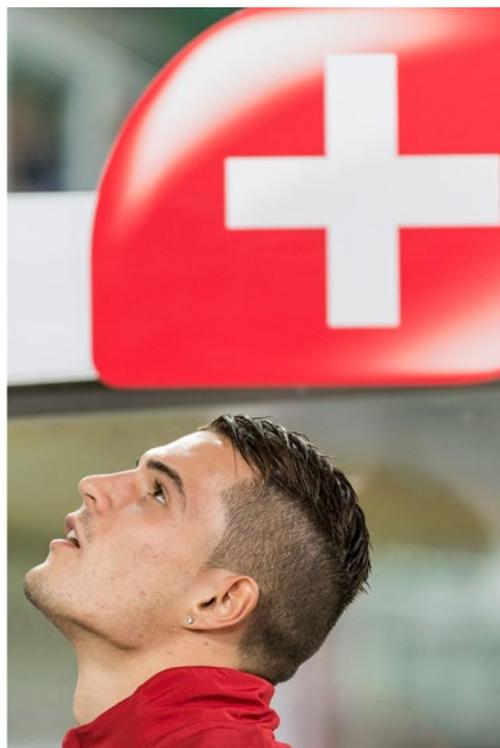
one.” The Swiss players with Kosovan roots did not reject Albania but rather chose to play for Switzerland – “the country that welcomed them and gave them so much in life,” he says.

When talking to Dzemaili you sometimes get the impression that he is ashamed of what Behrami, Shaqiri and Xhaka have been subjected to. He stresses that, “footballers are a prime example of successful integration. They live in a culture of community. They have shown the way, and this approach has long become established in other areas too, whether politics, science or medicine.”

The views from home are just one side of it for Shaqiri, Behrami and Xhaka. They also face a constant struggle for acceptance in Switzerland. People constantly raise the question of whether their identification with Switzerland is strong enough. The debate

The Xhaka brothers will meet at football’s European Championship. Granit (left) plays for Switzerland while Taulant (right) represents Albania.

Photos: Keystone



The new man from Valais in FIFA's top job

Gianni Infantino, the new FIFA President from Valais, is already coming under pressure. What can we expect from him?

ignites when the players observe the national anthem in silence or sometimes celebrate a goal at their clubs with the double-headed eagle gesture.

Behrami's candidness

Valon Behrami is the most senior Swiss international with Kosovan roots. He has taken the younger players under his wing. He is the first to answer such questions and does so with remarkable candidness. Behrami says: "I sometimes envy the players who were born here. Only they can feel what happens when the anthem is played. I miss out on that. But I always give my all for Switzerland."

One thing is beyond contention: The talent of the second-generation immigrants, combined with their strong will and great self-assurance, has enabled Swiss football to make progress. "We would never be enjoying our current success without them," remarks Ottmar Hitzfeld, the former coach of the national team.

Switzerland celebrated its only ever World Cup title in football in 2009. While it was "only" at under-17 level, it nevertheless marked the start of a new era. This golden generation, characterised by players with more than one homeland, holds great promise for Swiss football. Granit Xhaka was also a member of the World Cup winning team. He now says: "With a bit of luck and a good performance, we could become European champions." Switzerland still has to get used to such a mindset.

Gianni Infantino still has to prove how serious he is about reforming FIFA.

Photo: Keystone



His hardest battle took place 46 years ago. As a baby Gianni Infantino suffered from severe jaundice. His life was at risk, and he was in a race against time as only two people in the whole of Europe had the same blood group as Infantino. Only a complete blood transfusion could save him. The procedure was successful. Gianni Infantino is now President of FIFA. The native of Valais with an Italian background, father to four daughters, has acceded to football's throne after being elected at the extraordinary meeting in Zurich at the end of February. His task is to steer FIFA – an association embroiled in scandal – out of the storm into calmer waters.

What can we expect from him? Will his first fine-sounding pronouncements make any difference? They are so familiar that some are already calling Infantino a clone of the former President Joseph Blatter. "I have this weird feeling that Gianni Infantino will pull off his mask to reveal Sepp Blatter," says English foot-

ball legend Gary Lineker. Infantino must now prove he is serious about reform. He wants to strengthen human rights and the position of women in relation to football. He wishes to create greater transparency. He intends to restrict the power of the President – and, above all, the Executive Committee, which has proved to be susceptible to corruption. He also plans to set an age limit on its members. Infantino has already announced that the number of nations taking part in the World Cup will be increased from 32 to 40.

On the election of Infantino, Basel-based corruption expert Mark Pieth said: "Better a 'weather vane' than a misanthrope." Pieth spent several years working at FIFA as a reformer. He proposed these reforms to a large extent and saw how Infantino, then General Secretary of UEFA, opposed all of the changes that he is now advocating. This explains his use of the term "weather vane". Infantino has to prove that he has moved away from his earlier position. The reforms were approved by an overwhelming majority at the extraordinary meeting. The salary of Infantino's predecessor Blatter is now also known – but only for 2015. He received 3.65 million Swiss francs. It was at least twice that in previous years.

Infantino's performance cannot really be judged yet. Those who thought he could quietly set about giving FIFA a new, improved image were mistaken. It took just over a month for Infantino to come under fire. Documents from the Panama Papers have shown that he played a significant role in dubious marketing contracts.

ETIENNE WUILLEMIN

She triumphed over Napoleon Bonaparte

Germaine de Staël from Geneva travelled in Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom, and her salon was the intellectual hub of Paris.

CHARLES LINSMAYER

“Two European nations were of bad repute – the Italians and the Germans. I have undertaken to give them back their honest image and intellectual standing.” Germaine de Staël wrote these proud words in 1809. She had already delivered on the first half of her promise in 1807 with her sensationally successful novel “Corinne, or Italy”. The product of an amorous trip to Italy by the side of August Wilhelm Schlegel, the first part of the book gives readers an insight into Italy’s culture, history and people out of romantic exuberance, while the second part takes the love affair between the captivating Corinne, who is travelling through Italy, and an English lord to its melancholic conclusion.

“De l’Allemagne”, the book intended to rectify the French nation’s perception of Germany and ring in French Romanticism, is also based on a journey that took Germaine de Staël and Benjamin Constant to Berlin and Weimar and into the sphere of influence of Goethe and Schiller in 1803 and 1804. However, before this book could be published in Paris in 1810, the police acted upon instruction from Napoleon. They destroyed manuscripts and printing plates and forced the author to retreat to her country estate in Coppet, Geneva. From there she made an audacious escape to London where “De l’Allemagne” was published in 1813.

Europe’s liberal conscience

Germaine de Staël, the ‘grande dame’ of the French revolution – born on 22 April 1766 in Paris, the daughter of Jacques Necker, a financial genius from Geneva worth millions – was anything but a harmless writer. Thanks to her relationships, brilliant mind and boundless assertiveness, when even the greatest men yielded to Napoleon she became his most influential adversary and in contrast to the powerful dictator embodied, not least through her successful books, Europe’s liberal conscience. “De l’Allemagne”, this homage to poetic Germany, was in reality a virtuoso concealed protest against cultural repression in France. “Corinne” sent Napoleon into a rage simply because the novel, despite being written in 1805, the year of his Italian royal coronation, did not mention the general or his victories.

Yet the unlikely happened as intellect and charm triumphed over violence. When Germaine de Staël passed away on 14 July 1817 at the age of 50 after a life full of emotion, passion and sensuous experience, her Parisian salon had long since reopened in all its old splendour while Napoleon had been banished to St. Helena forever. There, he once confessed to his confidant Las Cases that his deceased rival and her Corinne preyed on his mind: “I can see her, hear her and feel her. I want to run away from it and I throw the book down. I will nevertheless persevere as I do think it is an interesting work.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY: “De l’Allemagne” is available in extract form in German in Spiegel-Verlag’s Gutenberg project. “Corinna oder Italien”, translated into German by Dorothea Schlegel, is available from Tredition-Verlag, Hamburg.



“By torchlight Corinne and Lord Nelvil stood in front of a sculpture by Canova – the “genius of grief” leaning on a lion, the symbol of strength. Lord Nelvil moved away to avoid drawing attention to himself. He gently whispered to his girlfriend: “Corinne, I was condemned to eternal grief until I found you. You have changed the shape of my life. My heart that was doomed to suffering now sometimes feels hope and is perpetually filled with the sweetest bewilderment.” (Taken from “Corinna oder Italien”, translated into German by Dorothea Schlegel, Verlag Unger, Berlin 1807, available from Tredition-Verlag, Hamburg)

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZÜRICH

Three steps to a successful education

Starting an education – whether an apprenticeship or a university degree course – always involves great change and presents challenges. Young Swiss Abroad coming to Switzerland for their education should also be well prepared for this eventuality. Here are three key questions and steps for ensuring your education is a successful and enjoyable experience.

Which educational path should I choose?

Many sources of information exist but much often still remains unclear. Expectations are not met, causing disappointment. The advice of teachers, parents and friends is, of course, valuable. Specific information can be found on the websites of the educational institutions or “Berufsberatung” (careers advice) at www.berufsberatung.ch. www.educationsuisse.ch provides professional advice on career opportunities and study, specifically for young Swiss people abroad, via Skype or at its premises in Berne.

How will my education be financed?

Parents are generally responsible for funding their children’s education in Switzerland. However, applications can be made for cantonal grants in the case of low-income households. Responsibility lies with the home canton as far as young Swiss Abroad are concerned. Every canton has its own legislation and provisions. It is therefore important to find out about grant entitlements and deadlines, etc. at an early stage. It is also worth finding out whether sup-

port for education in Switzerland is provided in the country where the parents live. Universities and private foundations also sometimes provide grants.

Where will I live in Switzerland?

There are many options including student halls of residence, shared accommodation with other students, or staying with relatives or host families. The Springboard project – organised jointly by [educationsuisse](http://www.educationsuisse.ch) and the OSA’s Youth Service – enables young Swiss Abroad aged over 18 to live with host families for between three and six months at the start of their education in Switzerland.

As soon as these three key questions have been addressed, nothing should stand in the way of starting the first year of an apprenticeship or the first semester at a university of applied sciences or a traditional university.

For further information or if you have questions concerning education in Switzerland, please contact the [educationsuisse](http://www.educationsuisse.ch) team: info@educationsuisse.ch.

RUTH VON GUNTEN, EDUCATIONSUISSE



www.educationsuisse.ch / www.berufsberatung.ch

Camp for Swiss children abroad with disabilities

The Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad would like to offer Swiss children abroad with disabilities (physical or mental) the opportunity to discover Switzerland, their native country. Our aim with this camp will be to focus on the children’s individual capabilities and interests. We also attach great importance to ensuring parental concerns are taken into account.



Before organising such a camp, we would like to assess the demand for it amongst the Swiss Abroad. We therefore ask that parents, grandparents, relatives and friends contact us by email or telephone by September 2016.

We would greatly appreciate your feedback so that together we can ensure children with disabilities enjoy an unforgettable visit to Switzerland.

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



OSA advice

What is the procedure for obtaining recognition from the OSA for a Swiss society abroad?

The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) is a private foundation. It aims to encourage ties between the Swiss Abroad themselves as well as with Switzerland, to represent their interests in Switzerland and to provide them with a wide range of services (information, legal advice, offers for young people, etc.).

The OSA is supported by its recognised Swiss societies abroad. To obtain recognition from the OSA, a Swiss society must meet all the following requirements:

- The purpose of the society is to encourage ties between the Swiss Abroad themselves as well as with their homeland.
- Over 50 % of the active members are Swiss citizens.
- The majority of the board members are Swiss citizens.
- The steering committee is led by a Swiss citizen.
- At least seven Swiss citizens must belong to the society.
- The society convenes a members' meeting at least once a year and has an executive board that is re-elected periodically.
- The society is affiliated to the umbrella organisation responsible for its country if one exists (France, Germany, Italy, UK, Spain-Portugal, Austria-Liechtenstein-Slovenia, Netherlands, Canada, Argentina).
- The society expressly undertakes to notify the OSA if any one of the requirements is no longer met.

The societies recognised by the OSA can take part in the election of delegates to the Council of the Swiss Abroad (CSA). The CSA is made up of representatives of the Swiss communities abroad as well as members from Switzerland (for example, federal MPs representing the institutions associated with the Swiss Abroad). It meets twice a year to discuss matters affecting the Swiss Abroad. The Council of the Swiss Abroad is called the "Parliament of the Fifth Switzerland" in the media. The Swiss societies recognised by the OSA therefore make a direct contribution to policy on the Swiss Abroad.

Societies which do not meet all the requirements set out above may be recognised as associate societies. They cannot take part in the election of their country's delegates to the CSA but otherwise have the same rights and obligations as the societies fully recognised by the OSA.

Recognition by the OSA means that the societies become part of the global network of societies and institutions of the Swiss Abroad. They automatically receive communications and newsletters from the OSA and are listed on the www.swisscommunity.org website, the social platform of the Swiss Abroad. They also lend the OSA – and therefore the Swiss Abroad, too – more weight in representing the interests of the Swiss Abroad.

Societies interested in obtaining OSA recognition can complete the application form. This can be found on the OSA's website: www.aso.ch > About ourselves > Swiss Societies abroad > Recognition of a Swiss society by OSA.

OSA LEGAL DEPARTMENT

Youth Service offers

Anniversary camp marking 100 years of the OSA (22.7 to 7.8.2016)

Are you interested in Swiss history, politics and culture? Then this is the right camp for you! There are still a few places available for the "culture, history and politics" anniversary camp. The journey of discovery will last for two weeks, from 22 July to 7 August, and take you from Estavayer-le-Lac over the Jura to Berne. En route, you'll discover more about the cultural diversity of your second homeland. Sign up now!

Language courses in German (8.8 to 19.8.2016) and French (22.7 to 7.8.2016)

Would you like to learn a national language? Three to four language lessons take place in the mornings, while a varied fringe programme is organised for the afternoons. If you would prefer to focus solely on language learning, you can take an intensive course (eight hours a day). You will live with a host family during your stay.

- French course in Biel (22.7 to 7.8.2016)
- German course in Zurich (8.8 to 19.8.2016)

Discover Switzerland (available throughout the year)

Would you like to travel around Switzerland on your own? Our "Discover Switzerland" offer presents a great opportunity to do so. You will stay with a Swiss host family for one to two weeks. We would be pleased to put together a diverse programme of day trips in line with your requirements. The Swiss Transfer Pass will allow you to move freely around Switzerland.

Information and registration: www.swisscommunity.org or www.aso.ch. Or send an email to: youth@aso.ch.

Concerns over insurance for the Swiss Abroad

The Council of the Swiss Abroad met in Brunnen on Lake Lucerne on 16 April. The main issues discussed at the meeting were voluntary old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) and health insurance for the Swiss Abroad. The 25th anniversary of the Area for the Swiss Abroad was also celebrated in Brunnen.

MARKO LEHTINEN

There were 67 members of the Council of the Swiss Abroad eligible to vote present at the Hotel Waldstätterhof in Brunnen when Remo Gysin, the new President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, opened the meeting.

The delegates elected Isabelle Moret, a National Councillor from the canton of Vaud, to the Council and the OSA's Executive Board. Davide Wüthrich was also elected to the Council of the Swiss Abroad. He is President of the Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad and lives in Italy. Two new members were also elected to the "Swiss Review" editorial committee, Claudia Iseli and Gaëlle Courtenens.

The following societies were granted recognition by the Council of the Swiss Abroad: Asociación Suiza de Beneficencia de Madrid, Swiss Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Schweizerklub Südschweden and Comunidad Suizo Boliviana.

Contribution shortfalls upon returning

In addition to the statutory part of the meeting, the delegates addressed the issue of social insurance for the Swiss Abroad. This is the problem area of old-age and survivors' insurance (AHV) – anyone who leaves Switzerland withdraws from mandatory in-



urance. People not insured abroad face contribution shortfalls when they return to Switzerland. However, voluntary admittance to social insurance schemes is not always possible. The main problem concerning health insurance schemes is that anyone residing abroad is not covered by mandatory insurance under the Swiss health insurance schemes. So what next? Questions concerning these issues were answered by Jürg Brechbühl from the Federal Social Insurance Office, Patrick Schmied of the Central Compensation Office and Oliver Peters of the Federal Office of Public

President of the Swiss Confederation Schneider-Ammann visited the OSA in Brunnen.

Photo: Ariane Roulet

Health. The Swiss banks were again a talking point in the discussion forum. The Swiss Abroad have difficulty in opening bank accounts and obtaining credit cards in their native country. They also often pay higher charges.

It was not only the meeting of the Council of the Swiss Abroad that took place in Brunnen as the 25th anniversary of the Area for the Swiss Abroad was also celebrated. The Area for the Swiss Abroad Foundation celebrated the anniversary in the presence of the President of the Swiss Confederation Johann Schneider-Ammann. A poster exhibition also took place on the site.

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www.revue.ch

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



A year of major milestones in Swiss transport policy

2016 is a decisive year for transport policy in Switzerland. Key milestones for current and future transport infrastructure projects will be set during the course of the year.

On 28 February, the Swiss people decided on the renovation of the 17-kilometre-long Gotthard road tunnel. By approving the second tube, voters opted for a safe, rapid and sustainable road link on the north-south axis which takes account of the key issues of alpine conservation.

The next milestone will be achieved over the coming days with the opening of the Gotthard tunnel – the world's longest railway tunnel. This project is part of the New Railway Link through the Alps (NRLA). It significantly reduces journey times for passengers and goods on the railways and is a cornerstone of the transport policy seeking to shift freight transit to the railways from border to border. Further key elements are the Ceneri Base Tunnel and the four-metre corridor for freight transport through the Alps where the railway infrastructure on all approach routes to the Gotthard Base Tunnel will be brought into line with current standards and greater capacity will be created for combined transportation (HGVs on railway carriages). These construction projects will improve the general situation for the economy and the well-being of future generations.

But all this does not come free of charge. If Switzerland wishes to continue to look after its transport infrastructure, it will require a solid financial basis. Simply shifting funds from one government portfolio to another as envisaged by the popular initiative entitled "For fair financing of transport" (the so-called "milch cow initiative") is not an expedient approach. Launched by auto-schweiz and recommended for rejection by the Federal Council this goes to the vote on 5 June. The initiative calls for all federal government revenues generated from road transport to be used solely in this area.

A master plan is required for funding transport infrastructure. The Federal Council is aware of this and has taken the first steps towards addressing the issue. The bill to fund and expand the railway infrastructure entered into force on 1 January 2016. The Swiss people had approved the corresponding constitutional amendment in February 2014. Under this, the operation, maintenance and future expansion of the railway infrastructure is to be funded from a single pot, the Railway Infrastructure Fund.

The Federal Council is now seeking to implement on the roads what has already been achieved on the railways. The increasing mobility of people and goods is putting strain on the current national road network, making further expansion necessary. In order to secure the long-term funding of the national highways and urban transport, the Federal Council has decided to create a permanent fund at constitutional level – the National Highways and Urban Transport Fund. Existing and new revenues will be fed into this fund. The issue is currently being debated in Parliament. The Council of States approved the fund in mid-March as the first chamber. The constitutional amendment will eventually be decided upon at referendum.

However, expansion projects alone will not be sufficient to cope with the rapid growth in traffic in Switzerland. It is vital that we make even more efficient and intensive use of the existing roads. What will help above all, is an effective transport management strategy involving different instruments. Intelligent mobility will also open up new opportunities which should not be underestimated. Our vehicles are already communicating independently with their environment, using driver assistance systems. Some models already possess the technical equipment to self-drive. Postauto AG will trial an automated bus for passenger transportation on a particular route in Sion for the first time this year – a further milestone in this eventful year of 2016. The Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) and, in particular, the Federal Roads Office (FEDRO) are actively involved in these developments in the interests of realising safe, sustainable, environmentally friendly and affordable mobility.

JÜRIG RÖTHLISBERGER,
DIRECTOR OF THE FEDERAL ROADS OFFICE (FEDRO)

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Publications

Swiss Foreign Policy Strategy 2016 – 2019



The Foreign Policy Strategy sets out the Federal Council's priorities and areas of special interest in foreign policy for 2016 – 2019. Its strategic objectives include consolidating and regulating relations with the EU and the EU and EFTA countries, working more closely with global partners, expanding mediation activities in the field of peace and security, and pursuing the commitment to sustainable development and prosperity.

The strategy is also available in German, French and Italian.

For the internet version (pdf) and to order printed copies:
www.fdfa.admin.ch/publication

Dispatch on Switzerland's International Cooperation



The short version of the dispatch indicates the areas where the Federal Council has set its priorities in international cooperation for the period 2017 – 2020 – for a world without poverty, living in peace, and for sustainable development. The areas concerned are humanitarian aid, development cooperation, economic and trade policy measures in the context of development cooperation, transition cooperation in Eastern Europe, and the promotion of peace, human rights and security.

The short version is also available in German, French and Italian. For the internet version (pdf) and to order printed copies:
www.fdfa.admin.ch/publication

Federal referenda

Voting proposals are determined by the Federal Council at least four months before the voting date.

The following three proposals will be put to the vote on 25th September 2016:

- Popular initiative of 6th September 2012 "For a sustainable and resource efficient economy (green economy)"
- Popular initiative of 17th December 2013 "OASplus: for a strong OASI)*"
- Federal Act of 25th September 2015 governing the intelligence services

*old-age and survivors insurance

Further voting date: 27th November 2016

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

Popular initiatives

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

- "Yes to the ban to cover your face" (15.9.2017)
- "For more transparency in the financing of political life (Transparency Initiative)" (26.10.2017)
- Stop to the excess of Via sicura (For a fair and reasonable sanctioning system)" (03.11.2017)

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

Important notice

Please notify your Swiss representation of your e-mail 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", newsletter from your representation, etc.). The latest issue of "Swiss Review" and previous issues can be read and/or printed out at any time at www.revue.ch. "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 e-mail or as an iPad/Android app).

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Ticking art from a bygone era

The first Swiss watches were once made in Geneva. They were ornate, colourful and exquisite. Some of these treasures from the 17th to 19th centuries can now be seen in Basel. The Basel Historical Museum is displaying exhibits from its own collection.

LEH



A “skeletonised” pocket watch from the 1820s designed by Bordier of Geneva. (Photos: HMB / Natascha Jansen)



A pocket watch made of silver jointly created by Michel Spleiss from Schaffhausen and Domine Dassier from Geneva around 1700.



Circa 1790 watches were also mounted on rings, as this timepiece by an unknown watchmaker proves.



This colourful timepiece made of enameled gold was made jointly by three watchmakers circa 1745.



This watch made of enameled gold in the form of a smelling bottle was produced around 1665 by Auguste Bretonneau.



From 1800: An extraordinary watch in the shape of a lyre from Pignet & Capt.



Watch with a noble lady: This piece with protective casing and gold piqué on leather was created around 1690 by Isaac Perrot.

Alone through the world



PETER STAMM:
"Weit über das Land",
S. Fischer Verlag, 2015.
222 pages, CHF 28.90,
around EUR 20.

"Thomas and Astrid had put the children to bed and were sitting on the wooden bench in front of their house with a glass of wine..." Everything appears to be absolutely normal in this family living in German-speaking Switzerland who have just returned from a holiday by the sea. But Thomas suddenly stands up, walks through the garden gate and simply disappears. When Astrid realises the next day that her husband is probably not coming back, she is left with no choice but to carry on and continue looking after their two children.

In his latest novel "Weit über das Land", Peter Stamm writes about leaving and being left. These two perspectives – conveyed by

the two main characters, Thomas and Astrid – are skilfully interwoven. The crisp and pithy sentences typical of Stamm characterise the plot lines, which are enhanced by hypothetical possibilities through the imaginary worlds of the two characters. Thomas continues to wander onwards without questioning the reason for his departure. Astrid remains in the village in their shared home and soon has to abandon the search for her husband. He is restless and in continual motion, yet he remains trapped within the landscape and his isolation. The area he passes through is described very matter-of-factly, and sweeping landscapes emerge where nature becomes a metaphor for freedom. Astrid focuses on day-to-day life and her growing children, remaining in the same place.

We all sometimes feel the urge to escape and question our own lives. This novel does not provide answers nor does it pose moral questions or judge human behaviour. It sheds light on the relationship (of love) between man and woman – the further the two move apart in terms of geographical distance, the greater their inner bond becomes. Tension builds that is only dissipated after many years. We will leave the how to the reader to discover.

Peter Stamm, born in 1963, studied English, psychology and psychopathology for several semesters after a commercial apprenticeship. After long periods spent in Paris, New York, Berlin and London, he today lives in Winterthur. Since 1990 he has written several radio plays, theatre plays, short stories and novels as a freelance author. His first novel "Agnes" (1998) was translated into many different languages. He is one of Switzerland's most significant contemporary authors.

RUTH VON GUNTEN

Chilled-out dance on planet jazz



SIMON SPIESS TRIO:
"Stardance",
Unit Records

Simon Spiess began his musical journey in Olten where the 'zero kilometre stone' is found at the station and there are only transit routes. The native of Aarburg is one of the brightest talents amongst the emerging Swiss performers. As a youngster he listened to a record featuring Roland Philipp, a saxophonist from Olten. He was soon having lessons from him and Fritz Renold from Aarau. He later studied at the Basel jazz school. This is how Simon Spiess became the musician he is today – firmly rooted in the jazz tradition but also receptive to electro, indie rock and other styles of music.

His trio's latest album is entitled "Stardance" and is unadulterated jazz. It delights with its simplicity and relaxed musicality. Clear themes, melodic lines and a laid-back sound are the saxophonist's traits. Singing motifs are sometimes heard over the groove while at times the beat drops and the timbre of a ballad is whispered in the room. Jazz cascades are blended with oriental embellishments on tracks like "Basic Needs".

After several albums, Simon Spiess reformed his trio last year, bringing in experienced bassist Bänz Oester and the drummer Jonas Ruther. Having returned from extended stays abroad in New York, Berlin, Paris and Mannheim, the saxophonist is re-establishing himself on the domestic jazz scene. He has made an impressive statement with "Stardance". The trio provide variation with some upbeat yet laid-back tracks.

Spiess can also sometimes really let rip, supported by a rousing rhythm section. Listeners are then captivated again by the airy sound that comes into its own in the atmospheric tracks. The pieces are openly arranged, providing the three instrumentalists with significant room for manoeuvre. But nothing is overworked or forced out.

As on the previous trio albums, Simon Spiess invited a musical guest to feature on one track – the rapper Nya from French-speaking Switzerland. In contrast to the collaboration with Erik Truffaz, for example, where Nya's flow of words was put to beats and electro sounds, a reduced jazz rhythm provides the backbone here. Musically this draws on the Kerouac jazz beat generation but is very contemporary lyrically and in terms of technical articulation. This is a coherent combination that would be well suited to an entire album.

PIRMIN BOSSART

Double taxation agreement with Italy

The National Council and Council of States resoundingly approved the amendment to the double taxation agreement with Italy in the spring session. As a result of this resolution Switzerland will provide Italy with tax information upon request.

More deaths, fewer births

In 2015 the highest number of deaths was recorded since 1918 when Spanish flu spread rampantly. Compared to the previous year, the number of deaths in 2015 rose by 3,300 from a total of 63,900 to 67,200. The number of deaths was particularly high amongst elderly people (6% increase). This is explained by the flu outbreaks at the start of the year and the heat wave in July, according to the Federal Statistical Office. The number of live births in 2015 amounted to 84,800, which is 400 or 0.5% fewer than in 2014. As every year, more boys (43,800) than girls (41,000) were born in Switzerland in 2015.

Social welfare rate the same as 10 years ago

Analysis conducted by the Federal Statistical Office indicates that the proportion of social welfare recipients stood at 3.2% in 2014, which is identical to the 2005 level. The statistics also reveal that the risk of becoming a social welfare recipient is particularly high amongst children, foreign nationals, divorcees and those without post-school qualifications. The absolute number of people on welfare benefits climbed from around 238,000 to 262,000 between 2005 and 2014 but owing to population growth over the same period the social welfare rate is no higher than it was 10 years ago.

Yes to climate protection agreement

The Federal Council has approved the Paris climate protection agreement adopted by the UN last December. Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard travelled to New York to sign the agreement on 22 April. Switzerland is to halve its emissions by 2030 compared to 1990. The existing climate policy instruments – CO₂ levy on fuels, emissions trading system for large companies – will be continued and enhanced in some areas in order to achieve the targets.

Angela and Hassan

They had the public and police in Switzerland holding their breath – Hassan Kiko, a 27-year-old incarcerated at Limmattal prison for alleged rape, and Angela Magdici, a 32-year-old prison of-



ficer at the same institution. They disappeared together into the night on 9 February. They made for Italy in a BMW and there all trace of them was lost. But they felt the need to explain themselves and got in touch via video. He professed his innocence, and she declared that Kiko was the love of her life. The Bonny and Clyde tale ended a few days later. The police tracked them down in Romano di Lombardia and arrested them.

“There are too many refugees, say the people.
There are too few people, say the refugees.”

ERNST FESTL, AUSTRIAN AUTHOR

“Unfortunately, we can anticipate that refugees will be an ongoing problem for decades to come.”

BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE USA

“The past five years have been a nightmare for many Syrian children. Today we must bring this nightmare to an end.”

FEDERAL COUNCILLOR DIDIER BURKHALTER

“Can foreign scenes our fatherland replace?”

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE (1749 TO 1832), GERMAN POET

“Exiles feed on hope. It's daily bread to them.”

AESCHYLUS (525 TO 456 B.C.), GREEK POET

“The big dragon will eat up all the nasty people one day!”

SIX-YEAR-OLD REFUGEE IN LAMPEDUSA

“Refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity.”

POPE FRANCIS

“The individual must distinguish between what is humanly impossible and what is humanly possible.”

FRIEDRICH DÜRRENMATT (1921 TO 1990), SWISS AUTHOR

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