

SWISS REVIEW



The magazine for the Swiss Abroad
January 2019

Juliën runs: How a Genevan is aiming for the top of his sport in Kenya

Ahead of the national elections: A look at the current political landscape in Switzerland

Snow farming: How ski resorts are using yesterday's snow in a bid to defy climate change

One newsletter to ensure better exchange of information



The Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) sends its «OSA Info» newsletter in German and French six times a year. It reports on the OSA's activities and developments in Switzerland concerning the Fifth Switzerland.



*Subscribe to our newsletter
and stay informed wherever you are:
www.aso.ch/en/information/newsletter*



SwissCommunity-Partner:

A brief storm, but thunder rumbles on

- 5 Mailbag
- 6 Focus
The Swiss political landscape ahead of the elections
- 10 Sport
Julien Wanders races to the top
- 12 Science
Ski resorts plan to use yesterday's snow to defy climate change
- 14 Report
Swiss technology extracts CO₂ from the atmosphere
- 16 Literature series
Why does Gottfried Keller's "Green Henry" end so tragically?
- News from around the world
- 17 Society
The people of Valais and their alternative to the franc
- 19 Politics
A first in Federal Council elections
- 23 OSA news
ASO advocates e-voting
- 26 news.admin.ch
- 28 Images
The meal plan of the future
- 30 Books / Sounds
- 31 Top pick / News



Peaceful, neutral and committed to its humanitarian tradition – that's how many people see Switzerland. Many also see the country as well able to defend itself – as evidenced by its own army, and the domestic defence industry. Weapons produced by Swiss manufacturers are also used by foreign armies and police forces, however: Switzerland is an arms exporter. It is thus forever attempting to balance moral principle with business sense. That is why exports to belligerent nations are essentially taboo.

In the summer of 2018, the Federal Council challenged this taboo. It announced that, depending on the circumstances, it would also allow arms exports to countries engaged in civil war. The logic was that only an arms industry that could produce – and export – in sufficient volumes could keep pace with technology.

It was a bad idea, which met with a loud outcry and led to substantial political fallout. In just two days, incensed citizens had gathered more than 100,000 signatures for a popular initiative to stop arms exports to countries engaged in civil war. The lightning response was coordinated by a broad alliance consisting primarily of civil society organisations. Switzerland had never seen a new grouping play so quickly to its political strengths. It clearly demonstrated the current acceleration in the pace of direct democracy.

The Federal Council has since shelved its plans, but that doesn't mean they are off the agenda entirely. Hardly a week goes by without new reports of Swiss exports to belligerent nations: weapons to Saudi Arabia, party to the civil war in Yemen; munitions to Russia, flying sorties in Syria; and bombs and missiles to Turkey – the list goes on. Even without the planned further easing of regulations, exports to warring nations are rising at an alarming rate. In 2014, they accounted for 7.4 per cent of all armaments exports. By 2017, they were as high as 31.2 per cent, according to the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" newspaper's meticulous calculations.

The autumn storm has blown in an issue that Switzerland will find almost impossible to avoid in the current election year. It also demonstrated that, in Switzerland as elsewhere, new and agile civil society players are challenging the political status quo. That is perhaps good in this particular case, but what happens if, in the future, much less coordinated pressure groups attempt to push through their extreme goals by following the same pattern? It is a worrying prospect. Then again, perhaps our future Parliament will act shrewdly enough that interventions like that of the 'Alliance against Arms Exports' will no longer be necessary. The Vote Preview in this edition of the "Swiss Review" offers an initial introduction to the topic.

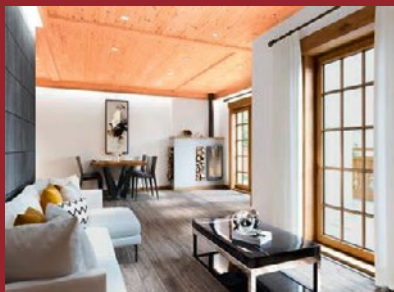
MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cover image: Genevan sportsman Julien Wanders runs towards the horizon in the Kenyan morning light. Photo: Guillaume Megevand

Devenez propriétaire en Suisse d'un magnifique appartement neuf situé dans une région idyllique offrant confort et sécurité.

Vente en résidence secondaire autorisée.

CHÂTEAU-D'OEX – GSTAAD VALLEY



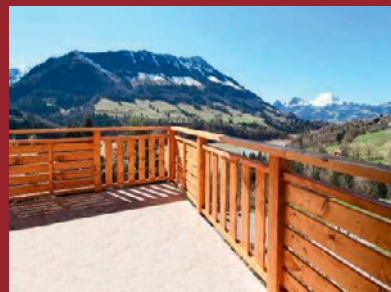
Domaine Bellevue

- 3,5 à 6,5 pièces
- A 500 m du centre
- Quartier calme
- Terrasse ou balcon
- Finitions à choix



Hameau de Vert Pré

- 3,5 à 5,5 pièces
- Excellent ensoleillement
- Vue imprenable
- Balcon sud
- Finitions à choix



CRESUZ EN GRUYERE

Le Vieux Chalet

- 2,5 à 4,5 pièces
- A 10 min de Bulle
- Vue panoramique
- Large balcon
- Finitions à choix



Place du Village 2, CH-1660 Château-d'Oex
+41 (0)26 924 53 55, info@cfimmobilier.ch
www.cfimmobilier.ch



Rue St-Denis 40, CH-1630 Bulle
+41 (0)26 921 05 05, cf@cfimmobilier.ch
www.cfimmobilier.ch

International Health Insurance

Comprehensive, worldwide cover and free choice of doctor and hospital



Tel. +41 44 266 61 11
info@sip.ch

Competence. Experience. Independent Advice.

www.sip.ch



Rejoignez le réseau des Valaisans à travers le monde

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

Ilgauto ag, 8500 Frauenfeld
200 Autos, 40 Modelle, ab Fr. 500.-/MT inkl. 2000Km



Tel. 0041 52 7203060 / www.ilgauto.ch

Education in Switzerland ?

We would be pleased to advise you!

info@educationsuisse.ch Phone +41 31 356 61 04

www.educationsuisse.ch

International Health and Accident Insurance

- **NEW: Transfer without medical underwriting** (possible with an existing complementary Swiss insurance)
- Worldwide free choice of doctor and clinic
- Lifelong private medical treatment
- Over 100 comprehensive insurance plans to choose from

Individual insurance solutions for students, **Swiss citizens abroad**, cross border commuters, assignees



Contact us !

T +41 43 399 89 89

www.asn.ch

ASN, Advisory Services Network AG
Bederstrasse 51, P.O. Box 1585
CH-8027 Zurich, Switzerland
info@asn.ch



Vacant churches: Rent, sell, demolish?



I'm an American; both my parents were Swiss, my father was an architect. I hope the decision of which churches to save and which to demolish is made mostly on aesthetics; if they're of artistic interest because of their design, they should be saved and renovated for other purposes. Beyond that, I don't mind saying I find it delightful that there are decreasing numbers of

religious people in Switzerland, and I wish that were the case everywhere, especially here in the US.

CHRISTOPHER EGLI, DEVON, PENNSYLVANIA, USA

There's an acute housing shortage in Geneva. Why not turn them into emergency or community accommodation for the destitute and homeless?

JOELLE OSMAN, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Please do not demolish any churches, even though fewer people go to church these days. We must consider that we might be heading for harder times – and suddenly the churches might become more popular again. I visited Switzerland several times and was always fascinated by the beautiful churches, especially in the many villages, but also in larger towns. It would be a pity if they would disappear.

NIKLAUS DURRER, PERTH, AUSTRALIA

To save them from closing down, quite a few churches have made efforts to widen their appeal. One example is the Swiss Church in London which dates from the 18th century. Following a dwindling congregation and rising costs, it was decided to expand its use, for example, allowing access for the holding of cultural events such as music recitals, talks and exhibitions, whilst still remaining a Protestant place of worship where Sunday services, christenings and marriage ceremonies take place. After a major refurbishment project in 2011, the church is now a vibrant multifunctional centre, welcoming people of different religions and backgrounds including the homeless that live in the neighbourhood.

SUSANNE SINGH, AMERSHAM, ENGLAND

The printed book lives on

Thank you for the information about printed books in Switzerland. Here in Australia it is similar. While large companies have pushed the little book stores out of business in the past, we see innovative action by the new younger generation. The local libraries offer special readings, invite authors and have special events for adults or children. Often the schools do things together with libraries. Book enthusiasts open book stores where I can sit down, read books, have a coffee and enjoy the company of fellow book readers. I tried the electronic book. I lost interest soon. Also, I think the electronic books are overpriced. I prefer the feel of the printed book. I can easily go back to reread a passage, I can pass the book on in the family or give it to charity. My dad in Switzerland was a great book



collector and the books found their way to Australia. This collection is part of my youth and an electronic book collection could never have the same meaning to me.

GEORGE FARMER, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

Switzerland-EU: What exactly are they talking about?

Switzerland-EU: What exactly are they talking about?

Thank you for the excellent article. It is indeed important to know that the idea of the framework agreement comes from Switzerland. The framework agreement would solve many problems without reducing the sovereignty of the people, since it is always possible to call a referendum. Furthermore, I don't see a problem with an arbitration tribunal based on equal representation. On the contrary, it would create legal certainty. It is also clear and understandable that the EU will not tolerate Switzerland's 'cherry picking' forever. Let us hope for the sake of everyone concerned that a sensible solution will be found, since it is ultimately a question of Switzerland's economic prosperity and its status as a business location.

RETO DERUNGS, HIGUEY, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Swiss Quality Language Summer Camps for 8-17 year olds

Learn English, French, German or Italian in multilingual Switzerland
With top destinations also in Germany, France & England

We provide excellence in language teaching with an enriching extracurricular programme of exciting activities to provide students an experience of a lifetime!



Call us on +41 (0) 21 621 88 88

www.alpadia.com

The great race is on again

The last elections, which took place four years ago, led to a shift to the right in Switzerland. What was the impact of the change in political power? A look at the Swiss political landscape at the beginning of the 2019 election year.

SUSANNE WENGER

The election analyst of “Swiss Review” had a sense of foreboding: “We must prepare for difficult times and great turbulence,” he wrote after the 2015 federal elections. The consensus, that is, the well-established Swiss system of power sharing, had been called into question.

What happened? The national conservative Swiss People’s Party (SVP) set a new record of nearly 30 percent. Never since the introduction of proportional representation in 1919 has a party received such a high share of the vote. There was also an overall shift to the right: the SVP and the similarly conservative FDP liberals secured a narrow majority in the National Council together with small right-wing parties. Also a novelty in Switzerland.

Almost four years later, a few months before the next elections in autumn, it can be said that there was indeed turbulence, but Switzerland was far from experiencing the worst of it. Compared to the election of Trump, Brexit and the consequences of election victories by right-wing pop-



ulists in countries like Germany and Italy, Switzerland proved to be a haven of stability – even though the debates remained polarised and there was little progress made in important matters such as the clarification of relations with the European Union (EU) for a long time.

Shift to the right did not cause upheaval

Shortly after the 2015 elections, parliament elected Guy Parmelin, a second SVP representative, to the national government. The four largest parties (2 SVP, 2 SP, 2 FDP, 1 CVP) were thus fairly represented in the Federal Council again, temporarily putting an end to the quarrels of recent years over the Federal Council seats. And the shift to the right during the National Council elections did not cause as much upheaval in the political landscape as had been expected in certain areas. The conservative block gained more votes in parliament than before and set the course for financial and social policy. Thus parliament



National Councillors and Council of States members run round the Federal Palace in the traditional annual parliamentarians race. Now the race is to the Federal Palace. Photo: Keystone

protected bank secrecy domestically and permitted low-level surveillance by detectives of those receiving social security.

However, in the energy transition Switzerland tended to remain on a centre-left course: the exit from nuclear energy is a done deal. In addition, the disagreement between the SVP and the FDP prevented a close alliance between the conservative parties. Their positions on the European issue are far apart. The SVP would be prepared to end the free movement of persons with the EU, something the liberals reject because of the negative consequences it could have for the economy. At times the Council of States also stopped the National Council, which had moved to the right, for example when it decided on extensive austerity measures with regard to needs-based minimum benefits for the elderly and disabled. In the Council of States, the moderate conservative FDP and the Christian Democratic People's Party (CVP) have traditionally led the way; currently the CVP and the Swiss Social Democratic Party (SP) form a majority.

High flyer SVP slowed down

The SVP in particular, which had become accustomed to success, was forced to deal with setbacks. For years, the party had its finger on the pulse of the times with its initiatives against immigration and the European Union. Then in 2016, something unexpected occurred: voters and the Council of States clearly rejected the so-called implementing initiative. The SVP's initiative was aimed at further tightening the rules regarding the deportation of criminal foreigners, which had already been approved by voters. A broad alliance of politics, business, science, culture and civil society now felt that boundaries were being crossed and called for the separation of powers and for fundamental rights to be maintained.

"The vote was a turning point," says political scientist Michael Hermann (see interview). The electorate restrained "some of the SVP's power grab". The 2015 election winner encountered headwinds. At elections, the party found itself more isolated than before. It lost seats in parliament at the cantonal elections. And had the elections taken place last autumn, it would have lost ground at the national level, according to the Swiss Radio and Television election barometer, but would still remain by far the strongest force. Unlike the SVP, the FDP, the SP and the Swiss Green Party (the Greens) can expect an increase in votes, according to the barometer.

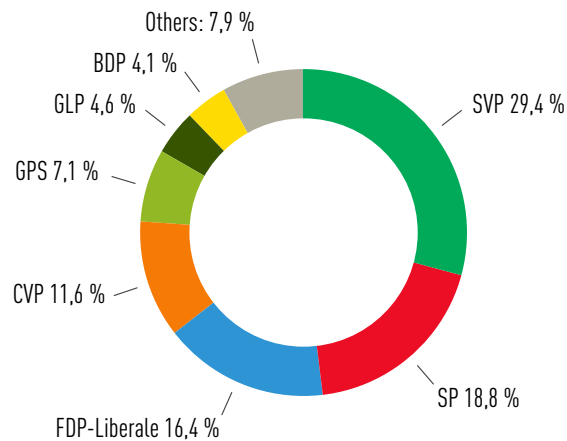
Greens thrive, SP stable

Politics in Switzerland is not only shaped by political parties, but also by issues. Four years ago this benefited the SVP,

National Council and Council of States elections 2019

On 20 October 2019, parliamentary elections will be held in Switzerland. The electorate in Switzerland and the Swiss Abroad who are entitled to vote will re-elect the two chambers of parliament for the next four years: the National Council with 200 seats and the Council of States with 46 seats. The National Council, the large chamber, represents the voters. The Council of States, the small chamber, represents the cantons.

In the 2015 elections, the parties achieved the following number of votes:



as its core issues of refugees and immigration were at the top of the electorate's list of concerns. Nowadays, other issues concern people the most: the annual increase in health insurance premiums, and the retirement provision. The hot and dry Swiss summer of 2018 also propelled the environment back into the electoral arena. The parties are reacting accordingly. The SP and CVP hope to score points in the election year with popular initiatives on health care costs, and the FDP too presented a reform programme. The Greens speak of "climate elections" and see a confirmation of their central issue.

The SP, the second largest political force in Switzerland, is experiencing a slight upswing. While the Social Democrats in neighbouring countries have experienced some historic defeats, for example in the German state of Bavaria, the Swiss SP has gained parliamentary seats in the cantons. It is able to portray itself as a counterforce to the shift to the right, especially since the 2017 election of Ignazio Cassis, the rather liberal-conservative FDP Federal Councillor, which also shifted the national government to the right.

The performance curve of the Greens shows a strong upward trend. They gained additional seats in cantonal parliaments and, according to the election barometer, could even gain the most votes in autumn. Some are already flirt-

ing with the idea of the Greens having a seat in the Federal Council – at the expense of the CVP.

Dull centre, fitter liberals

The CVP, the oldest force of the political centre, remains in poor form. The party has been losing voters at the national level for some time now. For the past three years, under a new leadership, it has been trying to emphasise its Christian-conservative roots and lead a debate on values in dealing with Islam. This has not yet ended the downward trend, as suggested by the election barometer and the loss of seats in cantonal parliaments. On top of this, there is competition in the centre, where the Conservative Democratic Party (BDP) and the Green Liberal Party (GLP) compete for votes. However, in cantonal governments and the Council of States, the CVP remains a sizeable party.

The FDP is starting the election year in promising form. The trend reversal that began in 2015 has continued: since then, no party has won more parliamentary seats in cantonal elections than the liberals. The election barometer also indicates that the FDP is gaining ground. According to surveys, the electorate believes it can help resolve important issues such as relations with the EU. The FDP seems to have succeeded in freeing itself from its image of economic cronyism. For this reason, the party leadership is not happy with executive politicians in French-speaking Switzerland who are suspected of having been paid for favours (see page 31).

New saplings

In addition to the rooted parties, new cultures are also growing in the Swiss political landscape: spontaneous, agile, digital. Operation Libero has attacked the SVP on all fronts before certain votes. It consists of young women and men who consider themselves liberal and would like Switzerland to be open towards the world. In some cases, sluggish political processes are being accelerated. When the Federal Council wanted to loosen the criteria for arms exports to countries torn by civil wars, so many outraged citizens pledged their support for a popular initiative online within two days that the government withdrew its decision. And the first Twitter referendum was held: three private individuals launched a collection of signatures against social detectives via the social network. The legislative reform was quickly put before the people. Referendum strength without party infrastructure and the backing of a well-funded organisation had not previously existed in Switzerland.

“Direct democracy reduces tension”

In nine months, elections will be held in Switzerland. Political scientist Michael Hermann divides, what holds the system together and the state of Swiss democracy.



Michael Hermann from Berne is one of Switzerland's most prominent political observers. The social geographer and political scientist heads the Sotomo Research Centre in Zurich.
Photo: R. Ruis

Swiss Review: Mr. Hermann, over the last three years the British have voted to leave the EU and right-wing populists in Europe and overseas have won elections. At the same time, the national conservative SVP in Switzerland was reined in. How do you explain this?

Michael Hermann: What can now be observed in various countries took place much earlier in Switzerland. The rise of the SVP began in the 1990s. The relationship to Europe, migration, globalisation, the consequences of economic and social change: these issues, which occupy many people, were reflected more quickly and directly in politics because of Switzerland's direct democracy. Popular initiatives were launched, heated and emotional debates took place. Divides were created. Swiss referendums caused a stir throughout Europe.

The ban on minarets, the vote against "mass immigration", the deportation of delinquent foreigners, the rejection of simplified citizenship for Secondos...

Exactly. Foreign journalists called me looking for explanations. A British newspaper had the headline: "Switzerland: Europe's Heart of Darkness." The SVP's advertising methods, which tested boundaries, also attracted attention. Then came the big election success of the SVP in 2015, the shift to the right, and yet the situation has calmed down since then. In a typical Swiss reflex, the electorate restrained the SVP from making a power grab. Today, Switzerland is once again showing more moderation, and the population has repeatedly spoken out against extending direct democracy at the expense of the rule of law. The issues that have now emerged in Europe and the USA have already been dealt with to some extent and integrated into the system.

The Swiss system seeks a balance, but is the country still capable of reform? Important reforms, for example regarding the retirement provision, failed at the ballot box.

Direct democracy quickly absorbs people's concerns, reduces tension and resolves conflicts. It has many advantages; the ability to reform is not necessarily one of them. But that has always been the case. By European standards it took ages for the old-age and survivors' insurance (OASI) and women's suffrage to be introduced. What has actually become more difficult today is the forming of alliances that can survive the constant election campaigns. The polar parties SVP and SP, in particular, prefer to take a strong position along party lines rather than compromise. Yet the political differences are often not huge. Retirement provision was not about neoliberalism or socialism, but about an increase or decrease of pensions by 70 francs.

What does the current weakness of political parties in the centre mean for Switzerland?

Because we do not have a system of government and opposition, elections are not about bringing a particular political force to power. The voters can only slightly steer the supertanker in the desired direction: a little more to the left or right, a little more progressive or conservative, a little more green. Parties in the centre that, like the CVP, have no clear direction tend to have a harder time. Their strengths lie elsewhere: in building bridges, in forging compromises. But if the centre becomes narrower and narrower, this can weaken the glue that holds the system together.

Why are the social democrats in Switzerland able to maintain their voter share when this is collapsing in many places in Europe?

In contrast to other social democracies in Europe, the Swiss SP clearly positioned itself on the left after the turn of the century and remained there. This gave it a clear profile. It took up ecological and social issues much earlier and won over new voters, making it less dependent on traditional workers. In addition, the SP never had to bear full government responsibility in the Swiss system. Although it is in the Federal Council, it can also act as the opposition.

"Direct democracy quickly absorbs people's concerns, reduces tension and resolves conflicts"

In countries where right-wing populists are growing stronger, concerns about democracy are being expressed. There are attacks on the press, against the "establishment", agitation and online disinformation. Switzerland, on the other hand, is it still the model for democracy?

Switzerland is a stable country, we are doing well economically. The system prevents authoritarian figures or certain parties from becoming too big. But Swiss democracy also has its problems. The consensus system is eroding, and numerous lobbyists sit in parliament. There is a lack of transparency in party financing, there is no upper limit. And the media system is crumbling at a rapid pace because newspapers' business models do not work. Yet the finely ramified media landscape has always been an important part of federal Switzerland with its various regions.

Julien Wanders: an African running style for a world record performance

After his European record-breaking 10 kilometre run in Durban at the end of 2018, Julien Wanders entered the ranks of the world's top long-distance runners. Originally from Geneva, the young athlete now lives and trains in Kenya, a country famed for its runners. A portrait of an exceptionally modest sportsman.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Born into a middle-class family in Geneva, Julien Wanders discovered a passion for competition early on in life. "I always wanted to be good, whether it was at tennis, football or athletics," he explains over the phone from the small Kenyan town of Iten, where he has been training for four years. During his adolescence, as his sporting performance improved, Wanders decided to dedicate himself to running, a discipline he considered to be 'easy'. "What struck me about him was that at just 15 years old, he had such a clear and ambitious outlook. He wanted to go to the top of his sport and you could tell he was serious about it," recalls his coach, Marco Jäger. After eight years of working together, Jäger considers Wanders to be practically part of his family.

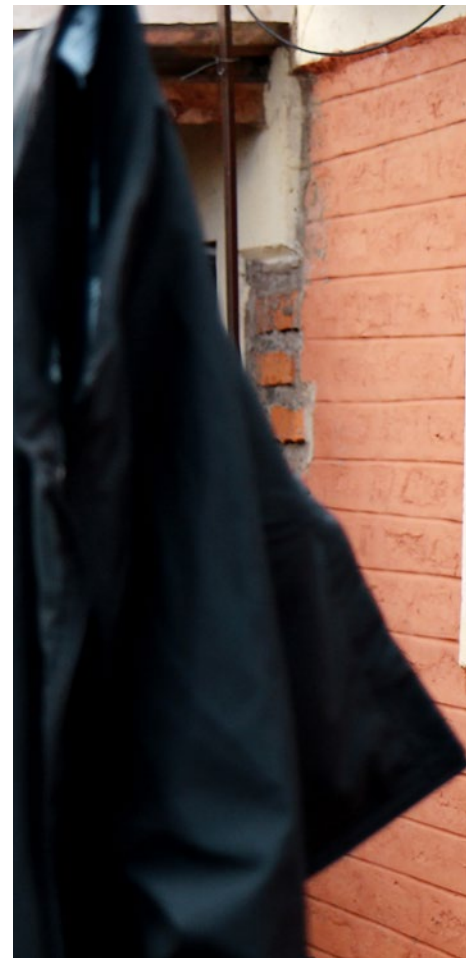
Julien Wanders first stepped into the media limelight on 14 October 2018 when he broke the European 10km road record previously set in 1984. With a time of 27.32 minutes, the 22-year-old Swiss athlete finished second in the race behind Uganda's world 10,000 m silver medallist, Joshua Cheptegei, whose running was a source of inspiration. "I could try to beat him in a few years," says the Genevan long-distance runner. But for

Wanders, experience is crucial; he knows that "there is no point in getting ahead of yourself".

The choice of simple surroundings

Records aside, Julien Wanders has attracted attention with his original and ascetic approach to running. It has brought him to Iten at 2,400 m above sea level, the African mecca for runners and an ideal location where he can train with and against the runners from East Africa who monopolise world records. The move to Kenya has also allowed Wanders to live in simple surroundings, and thereby focus on his work. "We come to enjoy the basic things in life here. For example, I really appreciate it when I have electricity and water! It encourages me to train because you only really learn to fight when you are in a difficult situation. Some Kenyans who have become millionaires through their success in competitions still decide to come back to the village to reconnect with this simple way of life because a luxurious lifestyle just does not work for a runner."

The town of Iten attracts hundreds of runners from both Africa and the West. Although Marco Jäger ad-



mits to a certain concern for the less beneficial aspects of this sporting haven, such as the quality of care in the event of injury and the country's political instability, he still sees it as the perfect environment for running. "The runners are always at a high altitude. The climate is comfortable, with temperatures ranging between 15 and 25 degrees and a rainy season, but never any snow. Julien is always surrounded by a group of professional Kenyan runners for whom running equates to economic survival," explains the Swiss trainer. Jäger follows Wanders' progress through telephone conversations and videos that the athlete sends to him, with which he can analyse his stride.

Running to survive

Julien Wanders has created a little cocoon for himself in Iten. It is simple but conducive to performance. He shares his life with his Kenyan girlfriend and runs with other athletes, some of whom have become friends.



But the Geneva-born athlete has never forgotten his roots. “We aren’t from the same world. I know that I have more than them and they never let me forget it. But I live like them and I try to help them in the course of my training programme.” For example, the Swiss runner regularly invites his Kenyan contemporaries to Europe so that they can earn money from participating in competitions like the Escalade race in Geneva. Wanders has participated in this race since he was 5 years old and finished first in 2017 and in 2018.

The African attitude towards racing is also different from that of western athletes. “The runners don’t set themselves mental time limits. They don’t use heart rate monitors and they manage to run further as a result. Their way of running is more instinctive; they listen to their bodies rather than using gadgets. We have access to everything in Europe and this often makes us overthink things.” The Genevan athlete does not believe that Africans are naturally superior runners:

“If you go in thinking that then you’ve already lost, because you can’t argue with genetics. In long-distance running, it’s the training that counts and you can go far even if you are not genetically designed for that specific activity. Personally, I believe that the body can adapt.”

A sportsman who recovers well and progresses

Marco Jäger is thus able to set challenging exercises to match his young recruit’s ambition. “To become a champion, you need to combine talent with the ability to work hard. A coach will push an athlete and the quality of that athlete’s response is measured by their capacity to implement this.” Jäger was happy to note that Julien Wanders is continually progressing and recovers quickly. Everything else is strongly linked to a sportsman’s mental fortitude. “Julien is driven by passion and enjoyment, which are two essential ingredients for competition. He doesn’t set

himself any limits and he pushes as far as he can.” The Swiss runner is indeed ambitious as he is hoping to win medals in the World Athletics Championships in Qatar in 2019 and in the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020. But, as Marco Jäger reminds us, competitive sport is a continuous journey, not just a trail scattered with one or two highlights: “An Olympic champion? Why not! But it’s limiting as this type of medal relies on one performance in one individual race on one individual day,” comments the coach, who retired from competition at the age of 21. As for Wanders, the young runner practices meditation: “When I run, I try to stay in the present,” he explains. “I might think of the finish line, but never of the distance left to run.”

Early to bed, early to rise

The high plateau in Kenya sees Julien Wanders follow a repetitive daily routine with consistently early nights. Rising at 5.30 am and turning in at 8.30 pm, this teetotal runner never breaks his rhythm to head out to parties in the evening. Marco Jäger plans out each week of training, alternating running sessions with strengthening exercises, exercises for flexibility and rest days, where Wanders will go cycling for example.

The Swiss sportsman is monitored by a multidisciplinary team. In Geneva, he receives advice from a specialist in biomechanical therapy, a doctor, a mental coach and a nutritionist, whilst in Kenya he is surrounded by a team of masseurs and a physiotherapist. Wanders’ recent success has also attracted attention from several sponsors and the Geneva-born runner now enjoys the support of multiple Swiss companies and an international manager.

Julien Wanders in an interview with sports journalist Jürg Wirz: www.ogy.de/wanders

Julien Wanders in front of his modest home in Kenya’s Iten.
Photo: Jürg Wirz (Fit-for-life)

Snows of yesteryear

On the Swiss Plateau and in the alpine foothills, snow is becoming scarcer. Due to global warming, it is now found only at higher elevations. Snow is increasingly becoming a precious commodity.

THEODORA PETER

Snow-farming is the new buzz word in winter sports resorts. Among the pioneers is Davos, where for ten years now snow reserves from the previous winter have been preserved under a thick layer of sawdust over summer. A four-kilometre-long cross-country

scape that was still green. On the Tschentalp overlooking Adelboden, piste vehicles packed 24,000 cubic metres of natural snow into an eight-metre high depot after the close of the winter season. Over summer, the elongated snow mound was covered with insulation panels and a

Swiss francs is a regional club that wants to offer local ski racing talents an alternative to training on over-used and distant glacial skiing areas.

To date in Switzerland, there are snow-farming projects in some ten ski destinations. That is the number estimated by the Institute for Snow



ski trail can already be groomed in autumn – regardless of the weather. To produce artificial snow, on the other hand, requires low temperatures and sufficient time.

Thanks to snow-farming, a ski piste was rolled out for the first time last October in an autumnal land-

nonwoven material. Admittedly, during the heat of summer 30 percent of the volume melted away. Still, the snow that remained was enough to groom a 500-metre-long, 40-metre-wide and around 80-centimetre-deep piste six months later. Behind the pilot project costing 250,000

Skiing in late autumn on the Tschentalp – on snow from yesteryear: the piste is made of snow from the previous winter that was preserved over the summer.

Photo: Keystone

and Avalanche Research (SLF). In addition to Davos and Adelboden, the preserving of snow over summer is common particularly in high-lying glacial skiing areas, such as Saas Fee, Gemsstock, Piz Corvatsch and Diavolezza. However, an SLF survey of around 100 ski resorts in the Ger-

man-speaking region of the Alps and in Scandinavia shows growing interest: close to half of those surveyed have a positive opinion of snow preservation. Admittedly, this does not replace snowmaking over a large area, but instead compensates for short periods of snowmaking in the pre-winter season – when it is too warm for snowmaking machines to operate.

Level at which snow falls is rising dramatically

Owing to global warming, average temperatures continue to rise even in winter – according to the latest CH2018 climate scenarios (see text box) by around 2–3.5 degrees Celsius in the case of Switzerland. Accordingly, scientists expect that by 2060 the snow line in winter will rise from today's 850 metres to 1,500 metres above sea level. Without climate protection measures, the zero degree line in winter could even climb by the end of the 21st century to an elevation of 1,900 metres – that is, up to the height of the Tschentenalp.

In areas lying below 800 metres, winters with little snow are no longer the exception: since 1970 the number

of snow days at this sea level has halved. The lack of snow is increasingly expanding to higher elevations: around half the snowpack below 1,000 metres might disappear by mid-century – most likely even by more than 80 percent by the end of the century. There, too, precipitation will fall in the form of rain, which could lead to flooding. Warmer air absorbs more water. If global warming is not checked, heavy precipitation events in winter could be around 10 percent more intense – according to forecasts, even by around 20 percent by the end of the century.

Glaciers lack “food”

According to climate scenarios, most alpine locations have to reckon on less snowfall, particularly in spring. The low amounts of snow are fatal for the glaciers, which are increasingly deprived of their “food”. Furthermore, the lack of a protective snowpack is accelerating the melting of the ice mass. Since 1850 alpine glaciers have lost around 60 percent of their volume. In the last ten years alone, one-fifth of the glacial mass has been lost. In many places the past winter 2017–18 was indeed the snowiest in 20 years. In the warm and dry months of April and May, however, the thick snowpack quickly melted away. Added to that, the summer of 2018 was extremely dry (see “Review” 6/2018). Ever since measurements began to be taken 81 years ago, there has never been so little fresh snow in summer on the Weissfluhjoch at 2,540 metres as there was in the past year.

Artificial snow needs lots of water

The drought also has an impact on water management in ski resorts. The production of artificial snow re-

quires lots of water. In Davos, for example, around one-fifth of the municipality's entire water consumption is used annually in snowmaking. And the snowmaking machines are running exactly when the water level of rivers and streams is low. In recent years piste operators have consequently built more and more reservoirs for water reserves. However, only two out of every three ski resorts that make artificial snow have such a reservoir. Without local water reserves, snowmaking during a drought will become more difficult: if the water is taken from flowing waters, a certain amount of residual water has to remain. Given the increasing dryness, that would lead to a conflict of interests.

SLF Master's student Pascale Josi surveyed 120 Swiss ski resorts about their use of water. Her conclusion was that in every fourth ski resort there was a “potential for conflict” between water management and technical snowmaking. The researcher also asked ski resort operators from where they draw the water they use for producing artificial snow: 34 percent get their water from rivers and streams, 30 percent from the drinking water supply, 21 percent from springs and 15 percent from natural lakes.

Especially following dry spells such as in recent years, water could become scarce, noted the researcher – particularly in inner-alpine valleys with little precipitation. Nationwide, though, the production of artificial snow is not immediately threatened: the Alps, as always, are regarded as “Europe's water reservoir”.

A look at Swiss weather in the near future

The CH2018 Climate Scenarios published in November show how climate change will affect Switzerland in the decades to come. This is the third report following those in 2007 and 2011 that climatologists from MeteoSchweiz, ETH Zurich and the University of Bern have produced on behalf of the Federal Council. Quantitative data is available for the first time, for example, about the expected amounts of precipitation associated with heavy rainfall. The report is online, linked to a web atlas and extensive databases for each region.

<https://www.nccs.admin.ch/nccs/en/home/climate-change-and-impacts/swiss-climate-change-scenarios.html>

THEODORA PETER IS A FREELANCE JOURNALIST IN BERN (SPRACHKRAFT.CH)

The CO₂ vacuum cleaner pioneers from Zurich-Oerlikon

A Swiss company wants to vacuum the No. 1 climate killer from the air and turn it into limestone deep in the earth

JÜRIG MÜLLER

In the Middle Ages alchemists tried to make gold out of base metals. Today engineers from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich (ETH) are trying to make something valuable out of something damaging. The difference is that back then it didn't work, and today it does. For instance with carbon dioxide (CO₂) that, being a greenhouse gas, is a major cause of global warming. CO₂ can be filtered from the air – and recycled for carbonated beverages. Or it can be completely taken out of circulation and safely disposed in suitable rock formations deep in the Earth's interior.

An ETH start-up takes off

The Swiss cleantech firm Climeworks in Zurich-Oerlikon is performing pioneering work worldwide in this field. The company was founded in 2009 as a start-up of the ETH Zurich by mechanical engineers Christoph Gebald and Jan Wurzbacher and has quickly grown: the number of employees increased from 45 to 60 full-time positions between December 2017 and August 2018 alone. The company's goals are not particularly modest. Using high-tech methods, Climeworks hopes to make a significant contribution to the reduction of climate-damaging carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. "The goal is very ambitious," Louise Charles, media officer at Climeworks, told "Swiss Review", "but motivation within the company is very high. We can do it." Development is progressing rapidly and "the efficiency of the technology is swiftly increasing". Climeworks outpaces two similar companies in Canada and the USA, Louise Charles said, particularly when it comes to commercial use.



Climeworks pioneers Christoph Gebald and Jan Wurzbacher with their "CO₂ vacuum cleaner".

Photo: Julia Dunlop

Climeworks is working together with various investors and a number of consortium partners from research and industry, is supported by the Swiss Federal Office of Energy and is also involved in EU research programmes, such as Horizon 2020. There is growing trust among investors, as the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" reported in August 2018: in a fourth round of financing the company procured an additional 30 million Swiss francs.

Simple in principle

The technical principle is simple. CO₂ chemically binds to a filter. What remains is air without CO₂. Using heat, the CO₂ can again be separated from the filter and used for other purposes. Climeworks is the leader in so-called Direct Air Capture (DAC) technology. Using this technology CO₂ is directly captured from the surrounding atmosphere and filtered. The world's first commercial project of this type has been in operation since 2017 in Hinwil, Zurich. There, 18 ventilators suck the air through a sophisticated filter system, thus removing 900 tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum. The pilot plant is operated with the waste heat energy of local refuse incinerators, and the carbon dioxide extracted from the air is then sold as a gaseous fertiliser to a neighbouring vegetable grower.

The sucked-up CO₂ can then be recycled for various purposes. It could serve as a base chemical for industrial products, such as plastics or even fuel, which could also reduce dependency on fossil fuel. But if CO₂ is to be removed from the atmosphere once and for all, then it should not be brought back into circulation, but disposed of permanently. Here, too, the company Climeworks is performing pioneering work.

Limestone from carbon dioxide

At the climate conference in Bonn in November 2017, Climeworks presented a new type of process in which CO₂ is extracted from the atmosphere and mineralised underground. In Iceland Climeworks together with the EU research project CarbFix is operating a special "air vacuum cleaner". On this North Atlantic island, CO₂ is filtered from the air, mixed with water and then pumped into under-



ground basaltic rock caverns. Following a chemical reaction, the carbonic acid then precipitates as a carbonate, forming limestone, so to speak – a safe disposal virtually for eternity. Thanks to hot springs, there is also sufficient clean energy in Iceland to suck up the air from the atmosphere.

“As soon as the test phase of our pilot project in Iceland is finished, we hope to remove larger amounts of CO₂ from the atmosphere and sell it to individuals, organisations and companies,” said Climeworks Director Christoph Gebald. If, for example, companies carried out five percent of their CO₂ compensation measures using this method, “that would allow us to further industrialise this urgently needed CO₂ removal technology”.

Massive dimensions

The dimensions, however, are massive, as a few figures show. Climeworks has made it its goal to filter one percent of global emissions from the air by 2025 – that corresponds annually to around 300 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. To achieve this, some 250,000 plants like the one in Hinwil would be necessary. Yet, in a climate report published in autumn 2018, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) anticipates that 100 to 1,000 gigatonnes of CO₂ would need to be extracted from the atmosphere – depending on how quickly greenhouse gas emissions drop. Swiss climatologist Thomas Stocker

stated at the opening of the plant in Hinwil that all IPCC scenarios reckoned on the active removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere in the second half of the 21st century. “1,000 gigatonnes, however, is unlikely to be achieved,” ETH Zurich climatologist Andreas Fischlin told various media. According to an estimate of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, the potential of direct CO₂ filtering is around 500 million to a maximum 10 gigatonnes per annum.

Greenpeace has some reservations

The research and development work of the company Climeworks has been generally welcomed by the environmental organisation Greenpeace. Georg Klingler, climate expert at Greenpeace Switzerland, also stressed to “Swiss Review” that such technologies will unfortunately be needed to a certain extent in future. But Klingler warned against harbouring illusions and mentioned a danger: those who back such solutions too strongly give politicians excuses to further delay the necessary drastic reduction in greenhouse gases. Greenpeace is also calling for technical measures in climate policy, but understands this to mean – in addition to avoidance of greenhouse gases – extensive afforestation in particular. This would also allow a substantial amount of carbon dioxide to be removed from the atmosphere. In addition, it would be a win for biodiversity.

The Climeworks pilot plant in Iceland: the heat required to operate it comes from the Hellisheidi geothermal power plant. Photo: Arni Saeberg

Why Gottfried Keller's "Der grüne Heinrich" ended tragically in 1855

The great Swiss storyteller wrote his most famous works in Berlin and by the end of "Der grüne Heinrich" was hopelessly in love with a young horseback rider.

CHARLES LINSMAYER

The first version of Keller's "Der grüne Heinrich" (Green Henry) ended with Heinrich Lee, having returned to Zurich from Berlin, perishing in futile longing for his beloved Dortchen Schönfund – and as a dead man, still holding in his hands that oracle about the fickleness of hope that was given to him by the perfidious lady. Keller had "scribbled through tears" the final pages of his novel on Palm Sunday 1855 in Berlin: that disappointment in love, from which he lets the character in his novel die, was just as painful in reality.

Berlin as "correctional institution"

In 1850 Keller arrived in the Prussian capital in the hope of being able to establish himself as a playwright, and felt so miserable under the conditions of the conservative reaction that began following the Revolution of 1848, that the city controlled by the all-powerful police seemed to him like a "correctional institution" along the lines of a "Pennsylvanian prison". Nevertheless, and even though his theatrical ambitions had failed, he stayed in the city for five years, writing there not only the most beautiful of his Seldwyla stories – "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorf" (A Village Romeo and Juliet), "Die drei gerechten Kammacher", "Spiegel das Kätzchen" – but, after many years of ground-work and under considerable pressure from the publisher Vieweg, also the 850-page novel "Der grüne Heinrich", which ensured him a place in the ranks of world literature.

Fighting for love

The model for Dortchen Schönfund was the tall, elegant 22-year-old Betty Tendering, whom the "short, broad-shouldered, stocky, hard as iron, taciturn bearded man with the beautiful serious and fiery dark eyes" (as described by painter Ludwig Pietsch) had met in the home of the publisher Franz Duncker. In an echo of the story of the hero of his novel, Heinrich Lee, and Dortchen Schönfund, Keller himself did not dare to openly declare his love to the young woman who used to ride on horseback through the Tiergarten, whip in hand. He vented his dis-

appointment and frustration, though, on his way home at night, picking fights with uninvolved passers-by, which once landed him with a black eye and another time with a fine. All the same, it seems as though Betty Tendering was so interested in her shy and awkward admirer that during a trip through Switzerland, she made a stop in the Hottinger Gemeindegasse to have a close look at the mother of the peculiar writer.

At the end of November 1855, Gottfried Keller returned to Zurich where in the meantime he had acquired some prestige as a writer, although the first version of "Der grüne Heinrich" published in 1855 sold only 150 copies – a second, more elaborate, but also more innocuous version came out in 1880. From 1861 to 1876, he was the First Official Secretary of the Canton of Zurich, and as the author of a rich prose work and much acclaimed poems ("Abendlied", "Winternacht") died a bachelor on 15 July 1890. He was soon regarded alongside Jeremias Gotthelf as a generally revered Swiss national poet. Betty Tendering, however, married the owner of a brewery and died in 1902 at the age of 71. It is said that prior to her death, she burned the letters that Gottfried Keller had written to her.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: "Der grüne Heinrich" (first version) is available in bookshops in various editions – as a paperback, a hardcover and as an eBook.



"I tell you, the greatest affliction and most wondrous arrangement that can happen to a person is to be imperious, destitute and in love at the same time, namely with an elegant personage. But for heaven's sake, keep these things to yourself."

(Gottfried Keller to Hermann Hettner on 2 November 1855)

CHARLES LINSMAYER IS A LITERARY SCHOLAR AND JOURNALIST IN ZURICH

The legitimate bank note named after a famous counterfeiter

It must give traffic offenders in Sion, the cantonal capital of Valais, a kick – instead of settling their fines with the police in Swiss francs, they can opt to pay in farinets, the local currency named after Switzerland's most famous counterfeiter.



The Valais complementary currency is available in note denominations of 1, 2, 5, 10, 13, 20, 50 and 100 farinets.

Photo: Keystone

MARC LETTAU

Perhaps the time has come to revise our image of the relationship between the Swiss people and their money. There's no denying that their faith in the solid Swiss franc is unwavering, but in Valais, for example, the farinet has also been in circulation alongside the Swiss franc for over a year now. The Valais capital of Sion honoured this complementary currency last autumn, specifically deciding that farinets could also now be used to pay for public services. Farinets are now even accepted in dealings with the police. Calculating the exchange rate between the two currencies couldn't be easier as one farinet is worth exactly one Swiss franc.

To truly appreciate the irony of this official decision, you really need

to understand where the name of this local currency comes from – it is named after Joseph-Samuel Farinet (1845–1880), scourge of the authorities, smuggler and forger. A man once wanted by Switzerland's authorities and police, Farinet is the country's most famous counterfeiter and a legend in Valais. Farinet was certainly no model of law, order or respect for official proceedings. So how is it, then, that banknotes – accepted by the authorities – now bear the portrait of Farinet of all people?

David Crettenand is one of the pioneers of the Valais currency. For him, its name has a strong local resonance. "Everyone knows Farinet," he explains. He says that the name also symbolises the debate about "what a true currency actually is". It

is certainly true that, following the forger's violent death, his forged coins remained in circulation as neither the federal government nor the canton of Valais felt capable of removing the huge numbers of coins from the market. As Crettenand explains, "The forged money became genuine money, purely because people considered it as such and trusted its value."

The Valais complementary currency was not, however, launched with the aim of glorifying the long-dead forger further still. On the contrary. As Crettenand explains, the intention was to strengthen the local economy and community. The local currency is meant to encourage Valais businesses to establish a network of local suppliers, whilst also reaching out more to local consumers. "Without the complementary currency and the new network, the chances of local trade surviving are slimmer," says Crettenand. That's why he believes that the farinet is an optimistic answer to the question of what a sustainable economy and society could look like in an era of globalisation – the small, additional flow of money is a boost for all who have a stake in it. To get your hands on the farinet, you need to travel to Valais. And if you want to spend it, this is the only place you can do so.

There's no doubt that the aura surrounding the legendary forger gives this legitimate currency a certain emotional appeal and ironic charm. This is why farinet notes also need to be protected against forgers

The name giver of the currency: The coin forger and smuggler Joseph-Samuel Farinet (1845–1880).



with an array of security features to prevent a second wave of Farinetesque forgery from spreading throughout the canton.

The farinet is a marginal currency in comparison to the volume of money in Switzerland. Nevertheless, it is typical for Switzerland, where many alternative means of payment are in circulation, some of which are extremely popular. For example, the Swiss Travel Fund Reka puts around 600 million of its own money into circulation every year by way of its Reka checks – and this trend is on the rise. The largest parallel currency is the Wirtschaftsring (WIR) with 45,000 companies involved and a turnover of 1.3 billion – but this trend is falling. The Farinets (Valais), Lémans (Geneva), Bonobos (Bern), NetzBons (Basel), EulachTaler (Winterthur) and Drachen (Fri-

bourg) are comparatively exotic and in some cases have also been shortlived. That explains why the national monetary authorities are not exactly over the moon about all the alternative currencies. The principal supervisory authority, the Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FINMA), also monitors the alternative money market. However, financial experts consider the risk posed by such micro-currencies – in terms of money laundering, for example – to be very low. Suppliers of alternative currencies are also largely exempt from the obligations imposed by the Anti-Money Laundering Act if they keep sales below the specified thresholds.

Incidentally, the trend towards alternative currencies is not just limited to Switzerland. Ever since the financial crisis, a growing number of

parallel and complementary currencies have appeared worldwide.

The king of the 20 centime coin

Smuggler and forger Joseph-Samuel Farinet (1845–1880) was a legend in the lower Valais region even during his lifetime. Farinet forged 20-centime coins on a large scale. In that rural environment, people put greater trust in these coins than in the paper money of the then crisis-ridden Cantonal Bank. Farinet was therefore able to pursue his “craft” unchecked for years. Owing to the fact that there were times that one third of all coins in circulation in Valais were counterfeit “farinets”, the Federal Council finally demanded the counterfeiter’s arrest. Hunted down by gendarmes, he died in unexplained circumstances in Saillon in 1880. This added to the myth surrounding him. Farinet has long been the subject of artistic works. Charlez Ferdinand Ramuz set him a literary monument with “Farinet ou la fausse monnaie” (1932) and Max Haufler a cinematic one with “Farinet – Die sanfte und die wilde Freiheit” (1936). Author Willi Wottreng produced a fact-based work on Farinet in 2008, which was adapted for the stage by Markus Keller with “Farinet der Falschmünzer”. (MUL)

“SWISS REVIEW” – THE APP IS JUST THREE CLICKS AWAY!

Get “Swiss Review” free as an app!

It’s really easy:

1. Open the store on your smartphone or tablet.
2. Enter the search term “Swiss Review”.
3. Tap on install – all done!



SWISS
REVIEW

Exceptional – yet normal

In December 2018, two women were simultaneously elected to the Federal Council for the first time – and for the first time, a woman heads the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport. Yet these elections do not constitute a decisive turning point.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

The Federal Council elections were exceptional – and yet they were also characterised by normality and consolidation. The elections were exceptional in that, for the first time in history, two women were simultaneously elected to the national government. What is more, this occurred after just one round of voting. The election was marked by normality and consolidation in the sense that no intrigues took place and no surprise candidates were proposed. In addition, nobody challenged the entitlement to seats of the Christian Democrats (CVP) and The Liberals (FDP). In times of unstable government majorities throughout Europe, Switzerland has set an example of calm normality and stability.

However, this does not mean that the Federal Council elections of 5 December 2018 did not stir up any dust during the run-up. Following the resignations of Johann Schneider-Ammann (FDP) and Doris Leuthard (CVP) in September (see “Swiss Review” of

November 2018), the topic received a great deal of media attention. Karin Keller-Sutter from St. Gallen, member of the Council of States and former Cantonal Councillor, was the FDP’s undisputed top candidate right from the start. The CVP’s initial situation was less clear. It too faced calls for a female candidate from the outset, but male candidates were also put forward.

Two dual candidacies

Since it has been customary for some time to present a selection of at least two candidates to the Federal Assembly, even the Liberals with their undisputed top candidate saw themselves forced to put forward a dual candidacy. Hans Wicki, a member of the Council of States from Nidwalden, volunteered. He did not have the slightest chance, but at least was able to enhance his level of recognition. After internal negotiations, the CVP finally decided to present the National Councillor from Valais and former mayor of Brig-Glis, Viola Amherd, and the Cantonal Councillor of Uri, Heidi Z’Graggen as their candidates. For a time the public debate saw the two women running neck-and-neck.

Therefore it was a big surprise that Amherd won the first voting round with 148 votes, while Z’Graggen received just 60 votes. There were no major differences between the two candidates, but once again the old rule came into play whereby the Federal Assembly gives preference to individuals it knows from their work in parliament. No one expected any surprises when it came to Keller-Sutter; she was also elected in the first voting

round with 154 votes. Her competitor Wicki achieved 56 votes, a respectable result.

Threefold normality

The Federal Council elections demonstrate a consolidation of normality and stability in three ways. First of all, the right of women to adequate representation in the highest state authority has become universally accepted across party lines. Secondly, peace has returned since the Swiss People’s Party (SVP) has got its two seats in the Federal Council; spiteful debates about the “real” magic formula no longer play a role in Federal Council elections. And thirdly, the two newly elected Federal Councillors scarcely affect the political mechanics within the Council: the key political positions of the conservative-liberal Karin Keller-Sutter hardly differ from those of her predecessor Johann Schneider-Ammann. The same goes for Viola Amherd who, like the outgoing Federal Councillor Doris Leuthard, addresses social-liberal issues as a classic centrist politician. Amherd is considered to be economically liberal, while also socio-politically open, and is seen as belonging to the left wing of the CVP.

No landmark elections

5 December was definitely not a landmark election. In fact, this already took place in September 2017. On that occasion, the conservative-liberal FDP politician Ignazio Cassis replaced his resigning party colleague Didier Burkhalter. Burkhalter, who is an open-minded politician, was often able to balance the nominal right-wing major-

Celebrations in Valais after the election of Viola Amherd. It was not yet known that she would become Switzerland’s first female defence minister. Photo: Keystone





Karin Keller-Sutter

FDP politician Karin Keller-Sutter (*1963) from St. Gallen is a translator and conference interpreter. She completed her postgraduate studies and obtained teaching qualifications for vocational secondary schools. She began her political career in Wil, where she worked as a local councillor from 1992 to 2000. From 1996 to 2000 she was also a member of the Cantonal Council of St. Gallen and between 1997 and 2000 President of the FDP of the Canton of St. Gallen. In 2000, Karin Keller-Sutter was elected to the Cantonal Council and served as head of the Department of Security and Justice. As the President of the Conference of Cantonal Directors of Justice and Police, she entered the national limelight for the first time. She has been a member of the Council of States since 2011 and presided over it in 2017/18. (JM)

ity of the SVP and FDP in the Federal Council with the centre-left side, consisting of two members of the SP and CVP Federal Councillor Leuthard. The SVP regarded Burkhalter as unreliable and he also came under increasing pressure from his own party, which is why his resignation was a logical consequence.

The right-wing conservative orientation of the Federal Council thus remains intact. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that a surprising dynamic might develop within the gov-

erning body. Both newly elected politicians are considered to be willing to compromise, particularly Karin Keller-Sutter. At least she has no problems working with the other parties: she has established a well-functioning working relationship in the Council of States with the other Council of States member from St. Gallen, the left-leaning Social Democrat Paul Rechsteiner.

Distribution of departments not very harmonious

The distribution of departments did not go as smoothly as the elections. Two rounds of discussions among the seven members of the Federal Council were required, followed by a vote in the newly formed national government. This procedure suggests a rather contentious debate. Viola Amherd (CVP) is the first woman to head the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), while Karin Keller-Sutter (FDP) will be in charge of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP). Guy Parmelin (SVP), the former head of the DDPS, will join the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER), while Simonetta Sommaruga (SP), the former federal minister of justice, will take over the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC).

With Federal Councillor Alain Berset, the SP is able to keep the weighty Federal Department of Home Affairs and simultaneously take over the diverse infrastructure department DETEC. The EAER, which the SVP will inherit, is the department that plays a key role in European policy, among other things. Together with Ignazio Cassis (FDP), who will remain in charge of foreign affairs, Minister for Economic Affairs Guy Parmelin will play a key role in shaping Switzerland's position in Europe



Viola Amherd

The CVP politician Viola Amherd (*1962) from Valais is a lawyer. Until her election to the Federal Council, she was an independent lawyer and notary in Brig. From 1996 to 2006, she was a part-time judge in the Federal Personnel Appeals Commission. She began her political career in 1993 in the city government of Brig-Glis. From 2001 to 2012, she was Mayor of the city in the upper part of the canton of Valais. In 2005 she joined the National Council to replace Jean-Michel Cina. She was a member of the National Council's Transport and Telecommunications Committee and the Legal Affairs Committee. She was also a member of the National Council office and Vice-President of the CVP parliamentary group in the Federal Assembly. She was part of the leadership of the upper Valais section of the CVP. (JM)

and the world. Ueli Maurer (SVP) will also stay in charge of the Federal Department of Finance. The CVP, which only has one seat in the Federal Council, will have to cope with losing some of its importance following the departure of Doris Leuthard, the current head of the DETEC, since the Department of Defence is not considered one of the key departments. At least the CVP is able to retain an important function in the highest state authority with Federal Chancellor Walter Thurnherr.



A breath of fresh air for direct democracy

On 25 November, the Swiss electorate torpedoed the SVP's Self-determination Initiative and the Horned Cow Initiative, but gave their backing to "social welfare detectives". Civil society groups set the tone on all three issues.

JÜRIG MÜLLER

Swiss international relations, agriculture, insurance – it was a voting Sunday with a typically Swiss blend of topics. The Self-determination Initiative (SDI), a proposal by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) for Swiss law to take absolute precedence over international law, dominated the agenda. A vote in favour of the SDI would have altered the way in which Switzerland treats international agreements whenever there is a conflict between Swiss constitutional law and international law. National law would have automatically taken precedence. Opponents said that this would have been like a straitjacket, preventing scope for flexible solutions and compromises. In their view, it would have jeopardised international treaties and undermined stability and legal certainty.

In the end, the initiative was overwhelmingly defeated with 66.2% opposing it. Compared to domestic voters, the proportion of Swiss Abroad who rejected the proposal was even greater. The SVP could only mobilise their own electoral base. This is a remarkable outcome because it bucks the isolationist trend that is gaining momentum in many other countries. Burgeoning nationalism in places like the USA, the UK, Hungary, Poland and Italy has called overriding legislation and the role of international organisations into question and seen increased support for the idea of "going it alone".

A shattering defeat for the SVP

On this occasion, things turned out differently in Switzerland for a number of reasons. For most voters, the issue was probably too abstract and too disconnected from real everyday concerns. People also feared the economic and political isolation, as well as the legal uncertainty that might ensue for a small country like Switzerland in an already fragile international environment. Warnings from opponents that approval of the initiative would have ultimately resulted in Switzerland withdrawing from the European Convention on Human Rights are also likely to have played a major role. This and other imponderables appear to have spooked the electorate and paved the way for a pragmatic "no" vote.

It is a shattering defeat for the SVP, not least because it precedes an election year (see article on page 6). In the run-up to the ballot, SVP National Councillor Magdalena

Martullo-Blocher referred to what she called "probably the most important vote since the refusal to join the European Economic Area" in 1992. More or less declaring the proposal to be one of her party's key priorities, her remarks increased the stakes. However, opponents of the initiative raised their game. Civil society groups were already manoeuvring into position before petitioning for the SVP's popular initiative began in 2015. By coordinat-



Magdalena Martullo-Blocher declared the Self-determination Initiative to be one of the SVP's key priorities. But her party suffered an emphatic defeat.

Photo: Keystone

ing themselves at an early stage, Operation Libero and the civil society alliance Schutzfaktor M attracted the support of around 120 organisations and claimed the high ground for themselves. In the end, the SVP found themselves on their own because all the other political parties – and the umbrella organisation for the Swiss business sector, *economiesuisse* – opposed the initiative.

Probably realising how difficult the battle was going to be, the SVP dropped their familiar aggressive style and tried to appeal to the centre ground with a softly-softly campaign. The SVP logo was nowhere to be seen on most posters and advertisements. Friendly young Swiss smiled from billboards instead, along with the sanitised slogans "Yes to self-determination" and "Yes to direct democracy".

A minor sensation for the "horned cow rebel"

One of the SVP's key campaign messages was that they wanted to strengthen direct democracy. The Horned Cow Initiative, on the other hand, was an impressive example of just how healthy Swiss direct democracy already is. Although the proposal was rejected, with 45.3% of votes in favour, it fared much better than an initiative tabled by the country's biggest party – and thereby became a minor sensation.



Mountain farmer Armin Capaul – “father” of the unsuccessful Horned Cow Initiative. Capaul’s popular initiative might not have had the same ramifications as the other votes, but the media interest that it generated at home and abroad was tremendous. Photo: Keystone

Mountain farmer Armin Capaul only resorted to his popular initiative after getting nowhere in various interventions at administrative and political level. With a handful of helpers, he collected some 120,000 signatures more or less single-handedly. Capaul wanted to include a provision in the Constitution stipulating that the federal government subsidise farmers who keep cows or goats with horns. His argument was that the practice of disbudding is a cruel form of mutilation that violates an animal’s dignity. Subsidies were necessary in his view because farmers need more land to rear horned cows. The counterargument was that cattle with horns are dangerous, and that the motion could even do the animals more harm than good, given that many farmers would tether their horned livestock instead of housing them in free-stall barns. Only the left-leaning Greens supported Capaul’s campaign. Nevertheless, the herder and his cause received considerable media and international attention.

The referendum on “social welfare detectives” had no chance. Instead, 64.7% of voters clearly endorsed the statutory basis for carrying out covert surveillance on insurance claimants. Opponents believe the law goes too far. They fear that investigators working for social security agencies will be able to spy on potential fraudsters all the way into their bedrooms, thereby violating the fundamental right to privacy. The Federal Council, Parliament and

the parties on the centre-right and right argue that insurance fraud undermines public confidence in the social security system, and weakens social solidarity and the willingness to share the cost burden.

Fresh competition for political parties and associations

These three very different issues and the campaigns surrounding them have one thing in common – they are all indicative of a relatively recent phenomenon in Swiss democracy. Political parties and associations – Switzerland’s traditional referendum vehicles – are facing serious competition from various groups within civil society. The referendum against “social welfare detectives” originated from an unprecedented online movement organised by a quartet of activists, while the Horned Cow Initiative was the brainchild of one individual. Even the campaign against the SVP initiative was coordinated by a non-ideological alliance of extremely well-connected, influential civil society groups spanning the political divide and operating mainly outside the traditional party-political spectrum. The Federal Council, Parliament, political parties and associations had better prepare for fresh competition. Political processes might become more complicated and difficult to control as a result, but this is good news for direct democracy.

E-Voting is the way to uphold the voting right of the “Fifth Switzerland”

Many Swiss citizens living abroad are only able to participate in federal elections and votes with the help of e-voting. For this reason, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, in its petition submitted on 30 November 2018, demands that everyone in the “Fifth Switzerland” should be able to vote electronically by 2021.

The petition was well received around the globe: OSA was able to submit 11,492 signatures collected online from 150 countries to the Federal Chancellery on 30 November. This figure corresponds to almost seven percent of the 172,000 Swiss Abroad included in an electoral register (as of March 2018) and underlines the importance of the issue for the “Fifth Switzerland”. The core demand of the broadly supported petition addressed to Parliament and the

Federal Council is that in future – namely by 2021 – all Swiss voters living abroad should be able to vote electronically. For many people, e-voting is often the only voting method that allows them to take part in votes and elections within the voting period. This is because documents sent by post often arrive too late.

Through the petition, OSA is also opposing the growing criticism of e-voting. The Canton of Geneva has only just decided to abandon its

e-voting system by February 2020 at the latest (see page 31). From OSA’s point of view, this is regrettable because the security of the system was never in question. The decision taken in Geneva was solely based on financial considerations. It is therefore also regrettable that it was not possible to find a solution with the Federal Chancellery and other cantons. OSA believes that it is important that the federal government and the cantons also commit themselves to technological development in order to guarantee the security of the system - especially its individual and universal verifiability. (ASO)

The OSA Executive Board and directors in front of the Federal Palace in Berne on the day the petition was submitted, holding a huge USB stick representing the importance of e-voting.

Photo: Adrian Moser



Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA)
 Alpenstrasse 26
 CH-3006 Berne
 Tel. +41 31 356 61 00
 Fax +41 31 356 61 01
 info@aso.ch
 www.aso.ch
 www.revue.ch
 www.swisscommunity.org

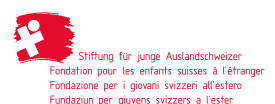


Our partners:

educationsuisse
 Tel. +41 31 356 61 04
 Fax +41 31 356 61 01
 info@educationsuisse.ch
 www.educationsuisse.ch



Foundation for Young Swiss Abroad
 Tel. +41 31 356 61 16
 Fax +41 31 356 61 01
 info@sjas.ch
 www.sjas.ch



Leslie's dream job in Switzerland

educationsuisse gives advice on all matters related to education in Switzerland. It is also involved in the placement of language assistants, as shown in the case of Leslie Schmid.

In Swiss upper secondary schools and vocational education and training schools, native speakers enrich language lessons and exemplify cultural aspects of their country of origin. These language assistants, usually young students from abroad, are placed by the national agency Movetia in collaboration with educationsuisse. Leslie Schmid, a Swiss Abroad from Canada, is one of them. She has been working since September 2018 as a language assistant at the Kantonsschule Zug upper secondary school and describes her experiences in an interview:

Leslie Schmid, what made you apply for the programme?

As a small child I already knew that I wanted to be a teacher someday. In Ottawa I studied German language and literature and got a teaching diploma for foreign languages. Since a large part of my relatives live in Switzerland, I decided to apply here for the position of English language assistant. Movetia helped me find my dream job – I love the work!

Were you able to settle in quickly at school and in Switzerland?

Yes, I settled in quickly at school and also get along well in

everyday life in Switzerland. The teachers and students have accepted me very well. I feel at home here. It certainly helped that my parents and brothers in Canada always spoke Swiss German.

Are there any specific differences between Canada and Switzerland?

There are differences, such as in the school system. What I particularly noticed is that the Swiss engage in less small talk than we do in Canada. It also seems more difficult for me to find friends outside of my working environment. Life here is more expensive; the medical insurance costs were a huge shock for me. In Canada health care is free! What also astonishes me every day is how many people here smoke.

Is it difficult living so far away from your family in Canada?

Sometimes yes and sometimes no. I used to miss all my Swiss relatives. Now I miss my parents and brothers, who stayed behind in Canada. I grew up on a dairy farm, so whenever I pass by a farm here, I'm really homesick. Thanks to the new technologies though, I can give my family a short call at any time.

Leslie Schmid uses her language skills to support teachers at the Kantonsschule Zug.



Applications for language assistants for the school year 2019/20 are being accepted until the end of March 2019.

For detailed information about the Language Assistance programme, kindly contact edith.funicello@movetia.ch or info@educationsuisse.ch,
educationsuisse, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Bern, Schweiz,
Telefon +41 (0)31 356 61 04, info@educationsuisse.ch,
www.educationsuisse.ch.

IMPRINT:
"Swiss Review", the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 45th year of publication and is published in German, French, English and Spanish in 14 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 418,000, including 223,000 electronic copies. Regional news appears four times a year. The ordering parties

are fully responsible for the content of advertisements and promotional inserts. This content does not necessarily represent the opinion of either the editorial office or the publisher.
EDITORS: Marc Lettau (MUL), Editor-in-Chief; Stéphane Herzog (SH); Jürg Müller (JM); Susanne Wenger (SWE); Simone Flubacher (SF),

responsible for "news.admin.ch", Relations with the Swiss Abroad, FDFA, 3003 Berne, Switzerland
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Sandra Krebs
TRANSLATION: Schnellübersetzer GmbH
LAYOUT: Joseph Haas, Zürich
PRINT: Vogt-Schild Druck AG, 4552 Derendingen
POSTAL ADDRESS: Publisher, editorial

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

COPY DEADLINE for this edition: 29 November 2018

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

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



OSA Youth Service

Sport and Adventure Camps

With other young Swiss Abroad from around the world participants in this camp experience a summer full of breath-taking excursions, hikes and sporting activities, while making many new friends from around the globe. Over a two-week period, youngsters enjoy a fun-filled atmosphere in their Swiss homeland. A comfortable camp house serves as the base camp, and together we explore the region and Swiss culture. This camp is geared towards young people who would like to engage in sporting activities.

Camp locations and dates: Schwende (AI) 13 to 26 July 2019
Sainte-Croix (VD) 27 July to 9 August 2019

Swiss Challenge

Over two weeks, participants become acquainted with Switzerland's diversity, explore the biggest Swiss cities together and experience what it means when four languages meet in one country. The Swiss Challenge is a mix of sightseeing, travelling, mountain hiking, sport and culture.

Camp location and dates: throughout Switzerland 13 to 26 July 2019

Outdoor Camp

The romance of a campfire, sleeping under the stars and a journey through the Swiss mountain landscape. In the Outdoor Camp, young Swiss Abroad experience an adventure in the magnificent Swiss mountains and learn to live in harmony with nature.

Camp dates: 27 July to 9 August 2019

Politics Camp

In this sporty camp, the group explores the alpine and political landscape of Switzerland and discusses together the history and major issues of Swiss politics. There are workshops, meetings with politicians, hikes, sightseeing, and overnight stays in hostels and on farms. The final weekend sees the group head motivated and inspired to the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Montreux.

Camp dates: 3 to 18 August 2019

Subsidy

The Youth Service has funds available to support participants with limited financial means: www.swisscommunity.org/de/jugend/beitragsreduktion

Contact

Organisation of the Swiss Abroad OSA, Youth Service, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Bern, Switzerland, Telephone +41 (0)356 61 24, Fax +41 (0)356 61 01, Email: youth@aso.ch
Details about the offers and the registration form can be found on our website: www.swisscommunity.org/de/jugend/jugendangebote

THE SWISS ABROAD ON INSTAGRAM



“It’s hard to listen to a Swiss complain”

Professional mountain biker Ariane Lüthi has lived in South Africa for eight years. As a woman, the 35-year-old says she has had to fight harder there than in Switzerland. She thinks that Swiss who have never travelled don't appreciate how much Switzerland has achieved when it comes to societal issues.

My job: I became a professional mountain biker through my ex-husband. I've been lucky to celebrate some good successes during my career. I will probably never be rich in terms of money, but I love my job. It has enriched my life with beautiful, intense memories which have made me a happier person at the end of the day.

My South Africa: Being a mountain biker, the dry and warm weather is a great advantage to clock up the miles without catching a cold. But the biggest difference to Switzerland is probably South Africa's cultural diversity, which is much greater than at home. There is a reason why South Africa is known as the rainbow nation.

My Switzerland: The Swiss are extremely well off. As poverty is pretty rare in Switzerland, people don't really value what they have. Once you have seen how people can be happy with very little, it's hard to listen to a Swiss complain. Looking at how wealthy Switzerland is, I think we should do more to alleviate the great suffering in the world.

My heart: When I left Switzerland and got married soon afterwards, I thought I'd probably stay in South Africa. Now that I'm divorced, I'm contemplating Swiss residency again. I miss my Swiss friends, my family, chatting away in Swiss German and the beautiful Alps, which I miss in the South.

The original interview was published on swissinfo.ch, the online service of the Swiss Broadcasting Company, which is available in ten languages. Do you live abroad too? Then tag your Instagram photos [#WeAreSwissAbroad](https://www.instagram.com/hashtag/weareswissabroad/).

Young Swiss Abroad: supporting, challenging and networking

Young Swiss Abroad form the foundation of the community of Swiss Abroad, particularly that of tomorrow. Their experience, their knowledge and their motivation are important and valuable. The Division of Relations with the Swiss Abroad of the Consular Directorate of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) commits itself to stronger networking. It wants to promote exchange within and between the generations and specifically highlight its information offer. Modern, networked and customer-oriented services are the focus. The examples presented here indicate some of the opportunities these networks offer.



In many places, the future of Swiss Clubs abroad is uncertain, even threatened. Increasingly showing an interest in the needs of the young generation is one way to counter this development. Today we are all required to join forces with young people to think creatively about what relations with and activities in Swiss Clubs abroad are desirable in the future. In doing so, let us be open to new and even unusual ideas.

JOHANNES MATYASSY, DIRECTOR
OF THE CONSULAR DIRECTORATE, FDFA



The Unione Giovani Svizzeri, Italy

The *Unione Giovani Svizzeri* is a valuable network in which experiences – whether in relation to education, work or politics – can be exchanged. The association organises events and participates in Young Swiss Citizen Celebrations. Many young members are also active in the Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad (YPSA). The YPSA, supported by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA) and in close cooperation with the Swiss Clubs, has set itself the objective to link up young Swiss Abroad worldwide and strengthen ties to the homeland. We now have more than 700 young members who are active in local clubs or groups.

Facebook: Unione Giovani Svizzeri
Facebook: Youth Parliament of the Swiss Abroad

Celebration of Young Swiss Abroad of the Grand Est, France

The main purpose of this celebration was to raise awareness of Switzerland among younger children of mostly dual nationality and to promote ties between Swiss families residing in the consular district.

This event also provided the opportunity for parents to inform themselves about their rights and duties directly through contact with the staff of the Consulate General. Moreover, the presence of representatives of Swiss Clubs helped build bridges between modern-day families and clubs that have trouble acquiring new members.

In less than 48 hours after the invitations had been sent to 759 children between the ages of 5 and 11, the maximum number of participants had been reached. The well-organized event led to friendly interactions and a good mood all around, which together with the beautiful weather contributed to the success of this celebration that just begs to be repeated.



Further information: www.youngswissabroad.ch – www.swissemigration.ch

HELPLINE FDFA

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

Travel advice

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

itineris

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



Plan well.
Travel well.

App available for free for iOS and
Android

Young Swiss Citizen Celebration in New York, USA

Plenty of information on rights, duties, democratic co-determination, training and studying awaited the 25 young Swiss Abroad who took part in the Young Swiss Citizen Celebration of the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York last autumn. During the celebration in the Big Apple, representatives of the consulate and of Swissnex talked about some of the interesting aspects of being citizens of Switzerland. How does one take part in a federal vote? How can Swiss universities be so affordable and yet world-class? How can one travel throughout Europe on a Swiss passport without a visa?

Such questions shaped the many stimulating discussions. Young Swiss Citizen Celebrations such as this one enable good networking amongst peers while strengthening ties to the Swiss homeland which is part of the young people's own identity. That is the general idea behind the Young Swiss Citizen Celebrations that have been taking place in New York for some years now.



Simone Flubacher:
Delegate for Relations
with the Swiss Abroad

networked

digital



Networking as the key to success, Singapore

Networking is and will remain an important success factor at work. In my capacity as the President of the Swiss Association of Singapore, I regularly experience how important it is to build a good and broad network. Especially when moving abroad, it is important to establish personal and professional contacts as quickly as possible. New members of the Swiss Association often ask me for help finding a job in Singapore. In my opinion, networking is almost always the key. Open positions are increasingly disseminated within our own network and are often filled before they are officially advertised. This clearly shows how important it is to have and maintain a good network.

customer-focused



Priska Ekerue:
Deputy Head



Stephan Winkler:
Research Associate



Sophie Dettwiler:
University intern

modern

Responsible for the FDFA official communications:
Simone Flubacher, Relations with the Swiss Abroad
Effingerstrasse 27, 3003 Berne, Switzerland
Tel. +41 800 24 7 365 or +41 58 465 33 33
www.eda.admin.ch, email: helpline@eda.admin.ch

By the deadline for this edition, no new federal popular initiatives had been launched. The list of pending popular initiatives can be found on the website of the Federal Chancellery, www.bk.admin.ch under "Politische Rechte / Volkssinitiativen / Hängige Volksinitiativen".

Paul Gong:
 "Human Hyena", 2014.
 Special cutlery tricks
 the senses and special
 enzymes make the
 stomach insensitive, so
 that even rotten food
 can be consumed.
 Photo: Andrew Kan



Carolin Schulze: "Hase aus
 Mehlwurmpaste", 2014.
 Mealworm paste formed into
 the appetising shape of a
 rabbit by a 3D printer, as an at-
 tempt to overcome the abhorrence
 towards new protein sources.

Chloé Rutherveld: "Edible Growth" 2014.
 An insect paste mixed with fungal spores
 and seeds is printed on a 3D printer and
 grows within five days into a nutritious
 savoury muffin.



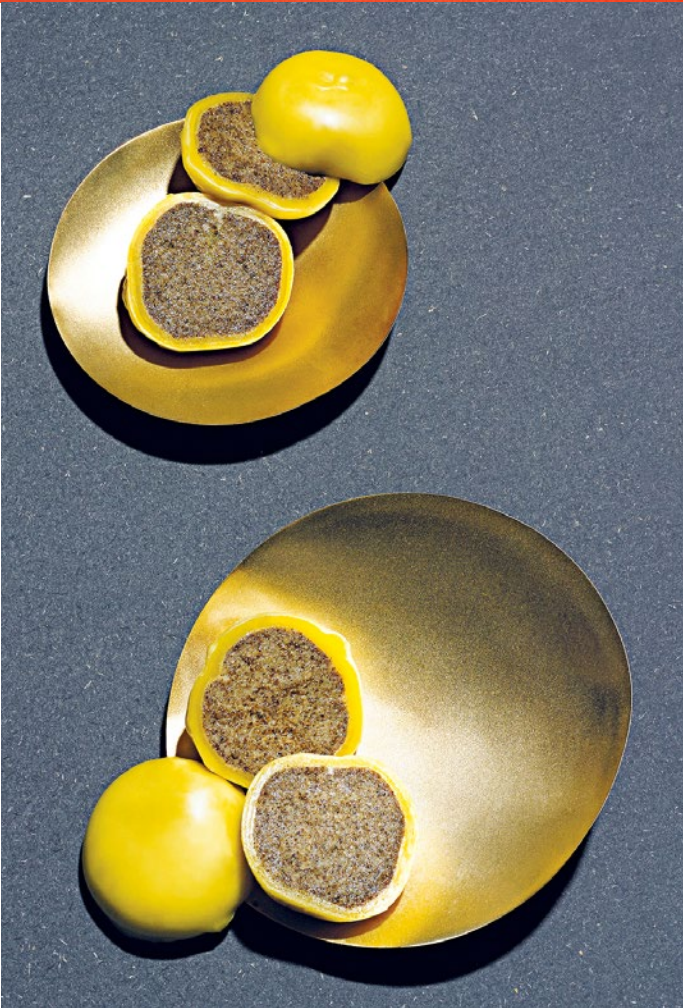
The meal plan of tomorrow

Dinner is served! But is what we see here delicious – or off-putting? The exhibition Food Revolution 5.0 addresses this conundrum and serves up questions about the future: what and how do we want to eat in the future? How will population growth and climate change affect our diet? One thing is clear: food is material that has been brought into shape, it is "designed", the result of a creative endeavour. In Winterthur this is being taken a step further. The meal plan of the future is presented – sometimes playfully, at other times with a critical undertone. The 50 or so design and research projects lead us into a world that will – perhaps – one day feed on in-vitro meat, vegetables from indoor farms, algae proteins and mealworms. (MUL)

"Food Revolution 5.0", Gewerbemuseum Winterthur, until 28 April 2019.
 The exhibition is accompanied by a full programme of events on the subject www.gewerbemuseum.ch



Johanna Schmeer:
 "Bioplastic Fantastic", 2014.
 The speculative idea:
 use enzymes to produce syn-
 thetic foods from bioplastics
 that contain all essential
 substances.



Maurizio Mantalti: "System Synthetics
 – Installation Overview", 2011.
 Conceptual approach: shred food
 packaging and transform it into etha-
 nol in a bioreactor.
 Photo: Jonas Marguet Shawn

Carolien Niebling:
 "Insect pâté", 2017.
 Can the aesthetic
 treatment of the unknown
 contribute to lessening
 disgust and creating new
 eating habits?
 Photo: Jonas Marguet Shawn

Deskaheh – an Iroquois on Lake Geneva



WILLI WOTTRENG:
"Ein Irokeser am Genfersee"
Bilgerverlag, Zurich
198 pages; CHF 30.00

"I believe, when looking back, that books about the Indians were key in my education. Later I learned that one says indigenous peoples, to be politically correct." Those are the words of the first-person narrator in the novel based on the true story of Iroquois Chief Deskaheh. Just by chance, she came across some photos and letters. Her research allowed her to discover the history of the indigenous people in the Grand River territory in Ontario, which had rejected the supremacy of Canada. Appointed by the Council of Elders, Chief Deskaheh travelled for that reason to Geneva in 1923. He was to advocate for the recognition and independence of his people before the Council of the

League of Nations. But he failed – due to the lack of interest of politicians and bureaucrats and the arrogance of the Western world. Although his speeches are huge public successes, the people persist in their prejudices against the "savage" wearing an Indian costume. After spending 18 months in Europe, Deskaheh has to return empty-handed – but does not manage to make it all the way back home. The Canadian government had forcibly removed the Council of Elders and conducted "democratic" elections. Deskaheh died of pneumonia in 1925 in exile on US territory. Soon the rumour was spread that he had been poisoned.

The author of the book, Willi Wottreng, has done meticulous research; facts and figures are historically documented. The author deftly switches between the angle of the first-person narrator and the story of Deskaheh. As a reader, one closely experiences how the former farmer grows into his role of speaker for his people, and one accompanies him during his stay in Geneva and on his lecture trip right across Switzerland. His frustration can be felt when he speaks untiringly with diplomats and tries in vain to advance to the high ranks of the League of Nations. Delicately, simply by suggestion, the author describes the relationship of the Iroquois with Hedwige of Geneva. The author skilfully brings the story full circle by having the storyteller travel to Grand River where she hands over the few documents to an indigenous school. A wonderful homage to Iroquois Chief Deskaheh, advocate for the independence of his people.

Willi Wottreng, born in 1948, studied history and was involved in the youth movement in 1968. He worked as a journalist for "Weltwoche" and "NZZ am Sonntag". The book author and journalist, who lives in Zurich, is a member of the board of the GMS Society for Minorities in Switzerland.

RUTH VON GUNTEN

A sonorous anniversary



TONHALLE
ORCHESTRA ZÜRICH:
Celebrating 150 Years,
14 CD, Sony 2018

It was once again centre stage – the good old CD. In the heart of immense Beijing, Ilona Schmiel, Artistic Director of the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, presented the excellent box set "Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, Celebrating 150 Years" to the director of the Beijing Music Festival. On tour, the 14 CDs went down just as well two days later in Shanghai where they were a present for the Swiss consul.

Naturally, the entire 150 years could not be reproduced, even if the era of the gramophone record began in the early 20th century. Thus, there are no recordings of Friedrich Hegar, the first principal conductor. But thanks to numerous radio recordings, the classics fan can be present in the Tonhalle concert hall from 1942, listening to how Volkmar Andreae conducts Anton Bruckner's 7th Symphony. He directed the orchestra for 43 years.

After Swiss Principal Conductor Erich Schmid, the Tonhalle went international in 1957 with Hans Rosbaud – and remained so with Rudolf Kempe, Gerd Albrecht, Christoph Eschenbach, Hiroshi Wakasugi, Claus Peter Flor, David Zinman and Lionel Bringuier.

Arriving in Zurich with the young Frenchman in 2014 was German artistic director Ilona Schmiel, who can really enthuse when talking about the institution of the orchestra. Yet, she also knows that she is not the captain of a hip new speedboat, but of a 150-year-old steamer. She is of the opinion that one cannot tell the age of an orchestra, but one can feel when high quality and tradition have been consistently handed down to succeeding generations: "the pride in one's performance, long-standing tradition and a unique sound".

Such an old orchestra is distinguished by an interplay of the highest artistic quality, the greatest possible flexibility in the repertoire, the mastery of a variety of styles, the strong influence of the respective principal conductor and being open to guest conductors.

It is fascinating to hear on the CDs the same orchestra with 20 different conductors, also with world-famous guests such as Bernard Haitink and Lorin Maazel. All these recordings can be heard for the first time on CD. From Haydn to Heinz Holliger, the chronological spectrum of the works ranges from 1771 to 1995. Zurich can also look forward to the future under the new Principal Conductor Paavo Järvi. Incidentally, the first CD recordings featuring works by Olivier Messiaen (!) are already planned.

CHRISTIAN BERZINS

Pierre Maudet



Having once dreamed of becoming a Federal Councillor, he now risks finding himself out of a job. It is said that the higher they come, the harder they fall – and this certainly suits the erstwhile strongman of the Geneva Cantonal Council, Pierre Maudet, who has been forced to cede most of his responsibilities in the wake of the Abu Dhabi affair. The scandal centres on a luxury trip in 2015 for the councillor, his family and his chief of staff paid for by the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Maudet had claimed that a friend had picked up the tab. What followed was a steady stream of lies, confessions, excuses and new insights into a nebulous system of political financing. Less than a year before the federal elections, meanwhile, The Liberals (FDP) find themselves under pressure due to rivalries between the party's liberal and radical wings. Pierre Maudet is hanging on, even though he is facing legal action over claims he accepted benefits following an inquiry launched in 2017. How could this master communicator and unflappable army captain, who was re-elected in a first-round ballot in 2018, commit such blunders? The leading theory borrows from Greek tragedy in the form of the concept of hubris, that arrogant sense of superiority among human beings that invariably attracts cruel punishment from the gods. STÉPHANE HERZOG

Geneva halts e-voting

The Canton of Geneva has announced that it will halt its e-voting project by February 2020 at the latest. This surprising announcement is a setback, as for 15 years the canton of Geneva has been considered a pioneer in the field of e-voting. The Geneva government says its decision has been taken for financial reasons rather than on safety grounds. Geneva's withdrawal has far-reaching consequences since other cantons also use the Geneva system. It is still unclear how these cantons will react to Geneva's pullout in the near future. However, it is clear that the cantons of Basel-Stadt, Berne, Fribourg, Lucerne and Geneva will continue to be allowed to carry out trials with electronic voting. The Federal Council has just renewed the initial licence for this. (MUL)

Federal Council presents framework agreement

At the beginning of December, the Federal Council published the eagerly awaited draft of the Framework Agreement with the European Union (EU). The agreement is intended to regulate in which areas and to what extent Swiss law will have to be adapted to EU law, which is constantly evolving. However, the publication of the draft treaty only provides limited clarification. The Federal Council itself neither approves nor rejects the draft. It is now starting a consultation procedure and will then examine whether it is necessary to seek further discussions with the EU. (MUL)

Basel's trade fair closes

The Muba Basel trade fair has come to an end after more than 100 years. It will take place for the last time from 8 to 17 February 2019. First held in 1916, it attracted more than a million visitors in its heyday. Its closure represents a general trend. The Zurich branch of Muba, Züspa, was held for the last time in 2018, as was the Comptoir Suisse in Lausanne. The two agricultural trade fairs Olma (St. Gallen) and BEA (Berne) are continuing. (MUL)

When avalanches shape culture

UNESCO has added the centuries-old knowledge of how to deal with the risk of avalanches to its "Intangible Cultural Heritage List". Switzerland submitted its candidacy together with Austria. In both alpine countries, avalanche protection has led to a new collective approach to hazards and new strategies, says UNESCO. This includes the training of search dogs, snow analyses, avalanche documentation, protective structures and the training of mountain guides. (MUL)



Switzerland.

UPGRADE YOUR WINTER

Zhna, Valais, © Silvano Zetter

Get an upgrade at [MySwitzerland.com/winter](https://www.myswitzerland.com/winter) and share your most beautiful experiences at [#INLOVEWITHSWITZERLAND](https://twitter.com/INLOVEWITHSWITZERLAND)



Swiss Travel System.

