

News in brief

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Ice hockey

With a 2:1 defeat in the quarter-final against Sweden, the Swiss national ice hockey team were eliminated from the World Championships in Vienna. The Swiss are now eighth on the world class rankings: the best placing since 2001! (12 May)

Oscar for professional athletes

Roger Federer received the 2005 Laureus Award in Estoril, Portugal, for which Michael Schumacher had also been nominated. The undisputed world No. 1 tennis player won three of the four grand slam tournaments (Australia, Wimbledon and the US



Open) in 2004. On 2 July he entered tennis history when he won Wimbledon for the third consecutive time, joining the likes of Björn Borg and Pete Sampras. (16 May)

Gender equality

The World Economic Forum published the findings of a survey on the gender gap in 59 countries. Switzerland ranks a mere 34th i.e. lower than China and Uruguay. This poor performance is attributed to the fact that the country lags behind in terms of wage equality and equal opportunities on the job market. (16 May)

Dog days

The hottest day in May since 1945: a record temperature of 33.5 °C is registered in Chur. Temperatures well above 30 °C were measured throughout Switzerland. (27 May)

Gastronomy

Switzerland has too many restaurants. To ensure the survival of 20,000 of these businesses, 10,000 of the 30,000 restaurants currently operating throughout the country have to close down. This was the main message conveyed by the Klaus Künzli, President of the GastroSuisse Association, at the 114th Assembly of Delegates in Lugano. (30 May)

Swiss success

Zurich airport: Minister of Economic Affairs Joseph Deiss welcomed successful participants returning from the World Vocational Skills Championships in Helsinki. The 36 young contestants won a total of 18 medals and ten diplomas. (2 June)

Healthcare

Minister of Culture and Internal Affairs Pascal Couchepin eliminates five complementary medicine methods from basic health insurance coverage. In future, health insurance companies will no longer be obliged to refund the costs of homeopathic treatment, phytotherapy, neural therapy, anthroposophical and Chinese medicine. Coverage for such alternative treatment is to be transferred to supplementary insurance. (3 June)

Federal referenda

Yes to the Schengen/Dublin agreements and yes to registered partnership for same-sex couples (law on partnership). But EU Foreign Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner warns

Switzerland that Schengen/Dublin "cannot enter into force" unless Switzerland votes in favour of free movement of persons in the September referendum. (5 June)

Pipilotti and Couchepin

Federal Councillor Pascal Couchepin visited the installation of video artist Pipilotti Rist at the Venice Biennale. He lay on a bed



in the church of San Stae and spent 30 minutes watching images of paradise projected on the ceiling. Afterwards he congratulated the Swiss artist effusively on her work. (11 June)

Tour de Suisse

Spaniard Aitor Gonzalez won the 69th Tour de Suisse. The best Swiss, Beat Zberg, came seventh. (19 June)



Railways grind to a halt

The Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) experienced its biggest ever breakdown. At 17.45 the entire network ground to a standstill. The fault was a power

outage caused by a short circuit in a high-voltage line in the Valais. More than 100,000 passengers were stranded from 18.00 to 20.00 in German-speaking Switzerland, and until as late as 22.00 in the French-speaking part. (22 June)

Floods

Violent storms during the night caused serious damage in Les Diablerets. The village was flooded after a river burst its banks 400 meters upstream. Hail and strong winds swept the country, causing material damage as well as one death. (24 June)



Beach volleyball

Swiss pair Sascha Heyer and Paul Laciga won the silver medal at the Beach Volleyball World Championships in Berlin. (26 June)

Seven on a scooter r

The Federal Council's annual outing took them this year to Saint-Imier, where residents were treated to an unusual sight: seven Federal Councillors on scooters. Dare-devil Micheline Calmy-Rey promptly fell and ended up with a band-aid on her nose. (30 June)

