

Mailbag

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Focus on apprenticeships – the Swiss system proving a successful export



I am a qualified bookbinder and emigrated to the USA in the 1960s, where I bound altar bibles for the Lutheran church. After a few job changes, my career took off. I became a quality control director and then operational manager of the world's first fully automated book manufacturing facility. I was then appointed to a position at a university thanks to this pioneering work. I later travelled the world as a lecturer giving presentations and providing consultation. I was thus able to pass on the specialist knowledge I had acquired in Switzerland, which was a privilege! Even after officially retiring from the university, I am still asked to write specialist articles, to give talks and to provide consultation. I know quite a few Swiss people who have enjoyed successful careers owing to their vocational training.

WERNER REBSAMEN, PROFESSOR EMERITUS RIT, USA

The apprentice system is indeed one of the competitive advantages Switzerland has. Ingrained in the value system of the Swiss people, established many years ago, challenged but defended with pride: it's a system that I personally envy the most about Switzerland, and that our country, South Korea, needs urgently.

EUN UK AHN, SOUTH KOREA

Practice and theory: the Swiss model is highly recommendable and I really hope to see this system exported to the UK, where university graduates often fail to find appropriate professional jobs.

MR. MURPHY, ENGLAND

Row over cross-border commuters – the controversy over priority for Swiss citizens in Ticino



“Prima i nostri” are doing the right thing in insisting that jobs should go to the Ticinese firstly and not border workers. Ticino is only a small canton and should not have to suffer the economic and congestion problems associated with the influx of (mainly) Italians, transforming poor Lugano into some kind of Italian enclave. Keep the national Swiss character of this area alive and well!

RICK JONES, ENGLAND

I am from Geneva and am familiar with the cross-border commuter “issue”. However, we have to cease blaming cross-border workers for employment problems and other issues and stop believing that restricting their numbers will provide a miracle solution. Switzerland needs well-qualified people, but also workers in the watch-making factories and shops, etc.

MARIE-DOMINIQUE FORSTER, SWITZERLAND

Referendum result – nuclear power stations can continue to operate



Buying electricity generated by nuclear power plants abroad that are probably less well monitored than in Switzerland in order to abruptly shut down our own plants does not seem very responsible. Chernobyl never generated electricity for Switzerland, but it certainly produced pollution.

BALISTA, SWITZERLAND

Area for the Swiss Abroad. One of the nation's most beautiful spots is in need of help



Alex Hauenstein, President of the Area for the Swiss Abroad Foundation in Brunnen, recently appealed to the Swiss Abroad for donations towards the final stage of restoration of one of Switzerland's most beautiful areas. The Area for

the Swiss Abroad is the final destination on the “Swiss Path” hiking trail and has tremendous symbolic character for the Swiss Abroad. Silvia Schoch, regional editor of Swiss Review and an OSA delegate, reminded all Swiss Abroad of the current collection campaign in her report. However, how are the Swiss residing abroad supposed to make a contribution after many of the Swiss banks closed their accounts? They have been hard hit by this unpatriotic decision by many Swiss financial institutions.

VIKTOR NELL, SPAIN