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Ueli Steck



He must have been going very fast, as usual, when calamity struck on 30 April. The extreme mountain climber Ueli Steck was training on Nuptse in Nepal for a record attempt on Mount Everest. The conditions were ideal, but for some inexplicable reason Steck plunged thousands of metres to his death. He was well aware of the mortal danger of what he did. Destiny has now caught up with him.

Originally from the Bernese Oberland, he was regarded as the world's best solo climber and was well known for his speed. Steck did not just climb, he sped, and actually ran where inclines permitted. Steck broke record after record, surmounting the North Face of the Eiger solo in two hours and 22 minutes – a milestone in mountaineering. He was just 40 years old when he lost his life.

His death caused great dismay throughout the nation but also sparked a debate over how far extreme climbers should go in their ambition to conquer the eight-thousanders of this world ever more quickly. Steck lived his dream and was at one with nature, some said. He dined with death and lost, was the view of others.

The debate has now abated, and the next extreme mountaineers are gearing up to follow in Ueli Steck's footsteps.

MARKO LEHTINEN

New status to facilitate integration

The latest figures indicate that around 39,000 foreigners are currently living in Switzerland as “temporarily admitted foreign nationals”. They mainly come from Eritrea, Syria and Afghanistan and have not been granted asylum but cannot be repatriated for various reasons. In these cases, “temporarily” effectively means permanently admitted. Some 82 % of those concerned live off welfare benefits and have difficulty integrating into the world of work. For this reason, this status is deemed inadequate by the National Council, which has resolved to replace it with two new forms of status. In future, people who will clearly remain in the country long-term are to be given “protected” status and helped to integrate. People whose stay is limited will be deemed “temporarily in need of protection”. This status does not target integration.

No tax privileges on land sale

The National Council has abandoned its plans for tax exemption on the sale of agricultural and forestry land. The proposal stood no chance of adoption at the early-June session of the Council of States. The background is a Federal



Supreme Court decision in 2011 restricting the tax-free sale of property based on rural land rights. The conservative parliamentary groups wanted to revoke this ruling by amending the law. Photo: Keystone

Federal government tackles terror propaganda online

The propaganda of terrorist organisations like IS cleverly targets young people online. Federal government has therefore decided to provide financial support for several pilot projects combating the radicalisation of 12 to 25-year-olds online. The projects will be run by non-profit organisations. The aim is to highlight positive alternatives to the extremist propaganda. The Federal Social Insurance Office (FSIO) is taking the lead on the initiative. It has called for media project proposals on the “Jugend und Medien” website – FSIO wishes to co-fund three or four projects.