

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 1 (1974)
Heft: 1

Rubrik: Official communications

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 17.04.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Official Communications

Federal initiative against Foreign Domination and the over-population of Switzerland

On 20th October 1974 the people and the cantons rejected the constitutional initiative by the National Action against Foreign Domination movement. Its aim was to fix 500,000 as the total number of foreigners authorized to live permanently in Switzerland; the number of seasonal workers would also be reduced to 150,000 and that of the «frontaliers» to 70,000.

On 21st December 1973, without putting forward a counter-proposal, the Federal Council had proposed to the Federal Assembly that this initiative to be rejected. In its report of 21.12.73 – which can be obtained free of charge in French, German or Italian from the Office central fédéral des imprimés et du matériel, EDMZ, CH-3003 Berne – the Federal Council analysed the consequences which acceptance of the initiative would entail; it stressed, in particular, that to reduce the foreign resident population to 12 per cent of the population of the cantons (except in Canton Geneva, where the figure would have been 25 per cent) by the end of 1977 would mean expelling 540,000 foreign-

ers, or 180,000 a year, from Switzerland.

The National Council and the Council of States followed the Government in its conclusions that the initiative should be rejected.

It should be noted that, in order to be accepted, a constitutional initiative requires a double majority, that of the people and that of the cantons.

At 69.8 per cent, the poll on 20th October 1974 was remarkably heavy.

The initiative was *rejected* by a large majority of citizens (1,689,870 «noes» to 878,739 «yeses») and by all the cantons.

Thus the results are more clear-cut than in the voting of 1970 on the constitutional initiative sponsored by Mr James Schwarzenbach; it should be remembered, however, that that laid down less draconian conditions and that women did not then have the opportunity to express an opinion (the effect of this last factor on the results is nevertheless difficult to determine).

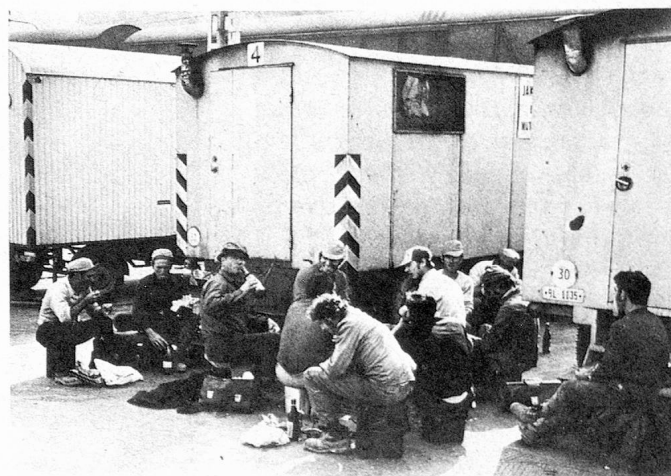
On the evening of the ballot Federal Councillor Furgler made

the following statement on behalf of the Federal Council:

«The Federal Council notes with satisfaction that the Swiss people, all the linguistic regions and all the cantons have flatly rejected the initiative against foreign domination and the overpopulation of Switzerland. The extraordinarily heavy poll makes it possible to say that, beyond question, an outright majority of our people supports the policy of the Federal Council.

The Federal Council regards the decision of the people and the cantons as a mandate to continue its policy: after successfully limiting the number of workers in receipt of a residence or establishment permit, it is going to stabilize the whole of the foreign population and then reduce its size.

The Federal Council thanks the people and the cantons for the confidence they have placed in it. It is particularly grateful to those who have kept the people informed on the Government's policy in this matter, and on the possible consequences of the initiative. Numerous citizens and groups, and also the press, radio and television, have shown clearly, by their intervention in this debate, the efficacy of dialogue in direct democracy.



The Government knows that many Swiss – even those who put a «no» in the ballot box – feel, like many citizens who voted «yes», an uneasiness which goes far beyond the problem posed by foreign workers. This uneasiness shows that personal well-being is not identified with material prosperity. However, it is not by a flood of initiatives that we shall succeed in resolving the problem of the quality of life, but by a policy which puts man and the common good at the centre of our preoccupations.

At the level of the policy to be pursued towards foreigners, this means that it is necessary to establish a fair balance between the Swiss population and the foreign population, while taking care to respect our humanitarian and international obligations. That is the aim of the current revision of the legislation relating to foreigners (the law on the residence and establishment of foreigners), which will regulate in a modern fashion the rights and duties of foreigners living in our country and their relations with the Swiss population.

Such a policy also demands that a fair balance shall be created between the economically strong regions and those whose development is less advanced.

These are only examples to show that the problems posed by the excessive foreign population can only be resolved in the framework of a general policy.

The Federal Council appeals to all citizens, asking them to forget that which has divided them and to assume actively these great tasks, in concert with the Government and Parliament.»

Mr Ernst Brugger, President of the Confederation, then expressed his satisfaction, too, in a statement to the press agencies. More particularly, Mr Brugger declared:

«The paralysing uncertainty, which

also constituted a heavy burden for us recently, has now been lifted. We can henceforth settle down with fresh enthusiasm to all the other tasks...»

Switzerland's aid to development

Switzerland, like sixteen other countries (Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and the United States), together with the European Economic Community, is a member of the **Development Assistance Committee (DAC)** of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). This Committee does not undertake directly any development cooperation operations. On the other hand, it does carry out, in particular, a thorough annual examination of each member country's policy on the subject of development and its contributions to developing countries. Below are some passages relating to aid taken from the **memorandum** submitted by Switzer-



He added that «...the almost 900,000 «yeses» show that this is a problem which we must continue to treat with great care and seriousness.»

land to DAC in 1974 for the purpose of the annual examination. The modifications made in the presentation of the original version are intended to make more understandable – without altering the sense – a text essentially meant for specialists. This memorandum can be obtained free of charge – in French or German – from the Coopération technique, Service de l'information, Département politique fédéral, CH-3003 Berne. In 1973 the volume of Switzerland's development aid was maintained, in absolute figures, at approximately the same level as in 1972 (1972: 64.8 million dollars; 1973: 65.2 million dollars)¹⁾ while in relative figures, in relation to the gross national product (GNP), the volume of aid decreased, falling from 0.22 per cent in 1972 to 0.16 per cent in 1973. When these two years are compared, an exceptional factor should be born in mind, namely, the payment of two loan instalments to IDA (International Development Association, a subsidiary of the World Bank granting loans on favourable terms), which accounts for a big increase in 1972. Bilateral aid increased in 1973 by about 10 per cent, while multilateral aid decreased because of the payment of only one loan instalment to IDA.

¹⁾ **Note:** In compliance with the directives agreed at OECD, the exchange rates used to convert Swiss francs into dollars are the average exchange rates for each year under consideration, namely:
for 1972: 1 dollar = SFr. 3.840
for 1973: 1 dollar = SFr. 3.167

The following table gives an overall picture of the various categories of **public expenditure** between 1971 and 1973.

- the knowledge of the Technical Cooperation Service.
- Essentially contributions for combined development projects (personnel, equipment, funds, scholarships etc.).

	1971	1972	1973
	(in millions of dollars)		
1. Development aid (1)			
A. Bilateral	19.4	30.6	33.5
1. Donations and contributions similar to donations	17.3	27.0	30.0
1.1 Donations	17.3	26.8	29.9
a) Development programmes and projects (2)	5.5	8.1	11.6
b) Technical cooperation (3)	2.7	3.6	4.3
c) Food aid	3.1	4.9	5.5
d) Humanitarian aid	5.3	9.1	7.4
e) Contributions from the cantons and the communes (1)	0.7	1.0	1.1
1.2 Loans repayable in money by the beneficiary countries	0.0	0.2	0.1
2. Development loans (net)	2.1	3.6	3.5
2.1 Government loans for periods exceeding five years (net) (4)	2.1	3.6	3.5
B. Multilateral	9.0	34.2	31.7
1. Donations	8.6	11.4	14.4
a) UNDP (United Nations Development Programme)	3.9	4.3	6.9
b) WFP (World Food Programme)	1.0	2.1	2.6
c) UNICEF, UNRWA, UNHCR etc.	3.2	4.8	4.0
d) Other organizations	0.5	0.2	0.9
2. Subscriptions to capital and other payments to multilateral organizations (5)	0.4	—	3.6
3. Concessional loans to multilateral organizations (6)	0.0	22.8	13.7
Total aid	28.4	64.8	65.2

Remarks

- The donations from the cantons, the communes and other organizations in the public sector have been classified under bilateral donations, A. 1.1, e). These are donations given for various purposes (development projects, technical cooperation, humanitarian aid). The information is the result of an inquiry carried out in 1968 by means of questionnaires. This sector's effort may possibly have been greater, because the only payments which are taken into account are those which have come to

- Contributions to technical cooperation in the narrow sense, that is to say, for technical assistants, individual experts and training scholarships.
- Credits to Turkey and joint credits to India and Pakistan, project credit to Kenya.
- Participation in the capital and in the Special Fund of the Asian Development Bank and participation in the African Development Fund.
- Credit to the International Development Association (IDA).

The draft federal law on cooperation in international development and humanitarian aid, which was the subject of the Federal Council's «Message» to the Federal Assembly of 19th March 1973, was examined by the Federal Chambers. However, a final decision has not yet been taken on it, Parliament having asked the Federal Council to review the draft law because of the energy crisis and its effects on our relations with the developing countries. The further report will be submitted to the Federal Chambers in 1975.

Centenary of the Federal Constitution

Subsequent to a recent announcement here that a commemorative coin was to be struck, the commission has been awarded, after a competition, to the sculptor Max Weber, of Geneva.

