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# Official Communications

## Federal Act concerning the political rights of the Swiss abroad

(of 19th December 1975)

*The Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation,*

by virtue of Article 45bis of the Federal Constitution, and after considering the Federal Council's «Message» of 3rd March 1975,

resolves:

### Article 1

#### *Principle*

The Swiss abroad can exercise political rights in Switzerland only.

### Article 2

#### *Definition*

All Swiss men and women who have no domicile in Switzerland and are registered with a Swiss diplomatic or consular mission abroad shall be considered as Swiss abroad within the meaning of the present Act.

### Article 3

#### *Scope*

<sup>1</sup> Every Swiss abroad who has reached the age of 20 years can take part in federal elections and other federal ballots and sign popular initiatives and requests for referendums.

<sup>2</sup> Eligibility shall be determined in accordance with Article 75 of the Federal Constitution.

### Article 4

#### *Exclusion*

The following shall be excluded from the right to vote in federal matters.

- a. Anyone who, under Swiss law, placed under guardianship because of mental illness or feeble-mindedness (Art. 369 of the Civil Code);
- b. Anyone who, for the same reasons, is placed under guardianship abroad in so far as this could also have been ordered under Swiss law.

### Article 5

#### *Voting commune*

<sup>1</sup> The Swiss abroad who wishes to exercise his political rights shall announce his intention, through the Swiss diplomatic or consular mission, to one of his communes of origin or former domicile.

<sup>2</sup> His name shall stay on the voting register

of the chosen commune for as long as he remains a Swiss abroad.

### Article 6

#### *Appeals*

The general provisions of federal judicial procedure shall be applicable to appeals against cantonal decisions of last instance or against those of the Federal Chancellery.

### Article 7

#### *Applicable law*

<sup>1</sup> Cantonal law shall be applicable with regard to political rights in cantonal and communal matters, particularly participation in the election of the Council of States.

<sup>2</sup> In so far as the present Act or the implementing regulations do not provide otherwise, the legislation relating to the political rights of the Swiss at home shall apply also to the Swiss abroad.

### Article 8

#### *Implementation*

<sup>1</sup> The Federal Council shall issue the implementing regulations.

<sup>2</sup> It shall determine those cases where registration is not required and where proof of a foreign domicile can be furnished in some other way.

<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding Article 1, it can regulate the exercise of political rights by civil servants and other employees of the Confederation serving abroad.

### Article 9

#### *Final provisions*

<sup>1</sup> The present Act is subject to the optional referendum.

<sup>2</sup> The Federal Council shall fix the date for its entry into force.

Thus resolved by the National Council  
Berne, 19th December 1975

The President: **Etter**  
The Secretary: **Hufschmid**

Thus resolved by the Council of States  
Berne, 19th December 1975

The President: **Wenk**  
The Secretary: **Sauvant**

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In its session of 25th August 1976 the Federal Council resolved to put the Act and regulations concerning the political rights of the Swiss abroad into force on 1st January 1977.

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## The new Swiss banknotes

by Dr Johann Ammann, Director of the Swiss National Bank

In 1970 the Swiss National Bank decided to replace the banknotes now circulating and begin preparations for a new series. What were the reasons for this? The current notes have been in circulation since 1956/57. In the meantime great progress has been made in printing techniques and graphics, and the format of most foreign banknotes is now appreciably smaller, so it has become necessary to adapt ours, too. Finally, the use of the improved printing techniques and of more elaborate designs makes forgery more difficult.

It will take quite a time to replace the approximately 170 million notes in circulation. The new ones will therefore be introduced by stages. The National Bank will begin by exchanging the 100-franc notes and three or four months later the 500-franc notes. The timetable for issuing the new series will be as follows:

October 1976	100 francs
during 1977	500 francs
during 1978	1,000 francs
during 1978	50 francs
during 1979	20 francs
during 1980	10 francs

The new 100-franc note will be described here. The other denominations are not yet ready; more particulars will be published as they appear.

Before going into detail about the 100-franc note I should like to outline briefly the Swiss banknote system in general and the origin of the new series.

Under the Constitution and the law the Swiss National Bank has sole responsibility for our country's banknotes. It has them printed, stores them, puts them into circulation, withdraws worn and dirty notes and ensures that when a new series is issued the old notes disappear as quickly as possible so that different types are not circulating simultaneously. As there are always people who delay exchanging their old notes for new ones, the National Bank is entitled to call in old types. Article 24 of the National Bank Act provides as follows:

- 1 With the approval of the Federal Council the National Bank can call in notes, types and series of notes.
- 2 The public cash offices are obliged to accept in payment recalled notes, at their nominal value, for six months from the date on which the recall is first announced.
- 3 The National Bank is obliged to exchange recalled notes at their nominal value

for twenty years from the date on which the recall is first announced.

4 The equivalent value of notes not presented for exchange before the expiry of this time-limit shall be paid into the Swiss Fund for Aid in cases of Uninsurable Damage caused by the Elements.

Thus, for example, the time-limit for exchanging the Pestalozzi-type 20-franc note expired this spring.

Before the National Bank opened in 1907 and the issuing of banknotes was centralized there, there were 36 issuing banks in Switzerland. As the National Bank had no notes of its own at that time, it simply put a stamp and the words «Swiss National Bank» on the various existing notes. Not until 1911 did the National Bank start

issuing its own notes, which replaced the temporary ones. They were in circulation until 1956/57, when the current notes were introduced. It may be of interest to trace the development of banknote circulation since the opening of the National Bank:

1907	288.2 million francs
1950	4.2 thousand million francs
1975	19.1 thousand million francs

A competition was held among 14 Swiss artists in the early 1970s to produce ideas for the design of the *new* banknotes. It was won by a married couple from Zurich, the graphic artists Ernst and Ursula Hiestand, who have been working in close collaboration with the printers and the National Bank. All denominations will in future be printed in Switzerland by the Orell Füssli Graphic

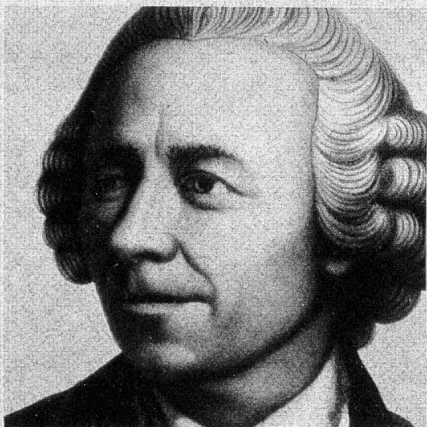
Arts Company, of Zurich, who formerly printed our 10- and 20-franc notes, while the higher values were produced in England by De La Rue.

A feature of the new banknote series – one could also speak of a banknote family – will be its homogeneity. As the basic theme the National Bank authorities have selected a number of Swiss personalities whose work, some of it done abroad, has helped to enhance our country's reputation. It was no easy task, especially as due regard had to be paid to the various regions and languages. But we think we have made the best choice possible.

The portraits of the following people will appear on the new notes:

10 francs

*Leonhard Euler*, born in Basle in 1707, died in St Petersburg in 1783, mathematician and physicist



20 francs

*Horace-Benedict de Saussure*, born in Conche, Canton Geneva, in 1740, died in Geneva in 1799, geologist, geophysicist and meteorologist



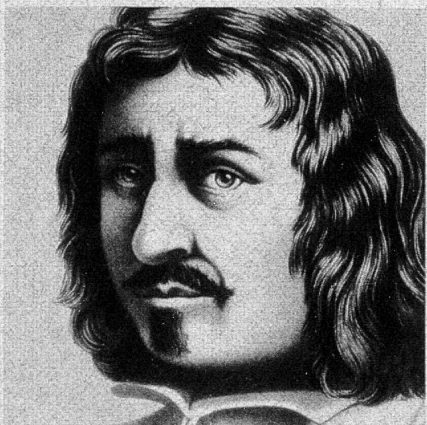
50 francs

*Conrad Gessner*, born in Zurich in 1516, died in Zurich in 1568, polymath, naturalist and doctor



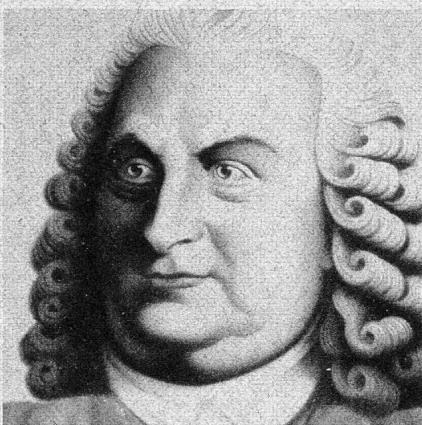
100 francs

*Francesco Borromini*, born in Bissone, Canton Ticino, in 1599, died in Rome in 1667, architect



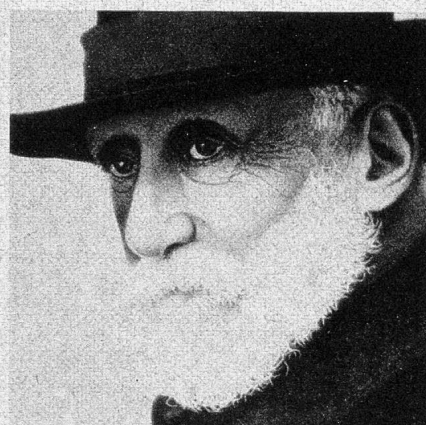
500 francs

*Albrecht von Haller*, born in Berne in 1708, died in Berne in 1777, anatomist, physiologist, naturalist and poet



1000 francs

*Auguste Forel*, born near Morges in 1848, died in Yverne in 1931, neurologist, psychiatrist and entomologist



All the motifs on each note are closely related to the man portrayed on the front. The new notes will have the following features in common:

The format (100-franc note: 170x78 mm.) will be about one-third smaller than that of the current notes. The more oblong shape is more practical: it should be unnecessary to fold it twice, so that the life of the note will be prolonged.

All notes will contain a metallic thread for security purposes.

For the first time the paper on which Swiss banknotes are printed will have a watermark. This will depict the person who appears in the printed portrait, but facing the opposite way.

The name of the Bank and the value will appear in German and Romansh on one side of the note and in French and Italian on the other. The Romansh (Surmiran idiom) is an innovation.

The notes will be embossed with a code for the blind.

I should like to make the following comments on the new 100-franc note:

three great Ticinese architects (the others being Fontana and Maderno) to achieve fame in Rome in the 16th and 17th centuries. Today he would be ranked among our Swiss abroad. His marked spatial sense, characterized by the alternate use of concave and convex forms, made him a master of baroque. Among his main works are, in particular, the Church of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, the façade of St Agnese and the Church of San Ivo alla Sapienza.

The portrait of Borromini is reproduced in gravure printing, in blue. On the left, also in gravure printing, is the groundplan of San Ivo's, in violet, green and blue.

The predominant colour on the new note is dark blue.

The main theme on the back is the cupola of the Church of San Ivo, which is incorporated into the Palazzo della Sapienza. It took from 1642 to 1660 to build this church, regarded as Borromini's masterpiece.

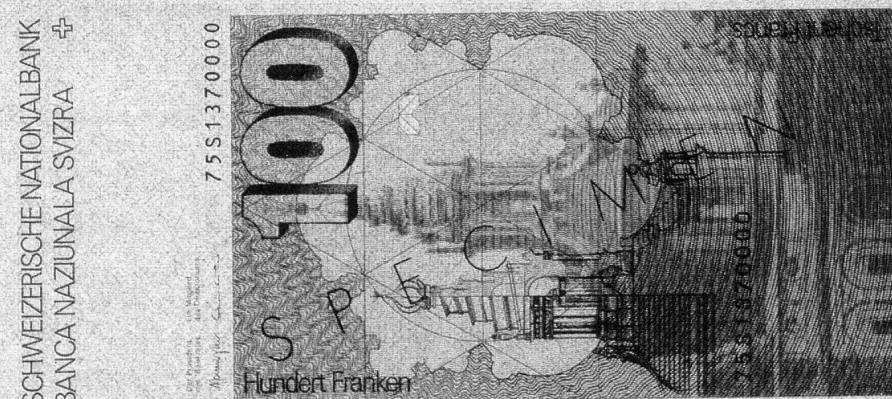
All the constituent parts of the note (paper, colour, combination of offset and gravure printing) will help to prevent forgeries. The

the white spaces in between. If one tilts the note so as to look at it obliquely, the white spaces disappear, making the portrait appear almost black, and four fine white streaks can be seen in the hair on the right side of the head.

The Swiss National Bank has endeavoured to give the new series an individual stamp which will distinguish it from foreign banknotes. However, at least as important as the design, if not more so, is security against forgery. Design and security must therefore be combined as well as possible. We hope that, seen as a whole, we have succeeded in expressing the spirit of our rich cultural past and have also created a handy and safe means of payment.

#### Biographical Note on the Author

Johann Ammann was born the son of a Protestant clergyman in 1929 and grew up in the parsonage at Hasle-Rüegsau in the Emmental. He attended university in Berne and completed his political economy studies in 1954, when he became a Dr. rer. pol. After eleven years in private business (the printing trade and Swissair) he entered the Federal Administration's Central Office for Organizational Matters in 1965. In 1968 he was appointed Head of the Federal Mint and carried out the change-over from silver to cupro-nickel coins. He became the Swiss National Bank's adviser on the banknote system in 1969, and in 1971 Director of the National Bank, where he is responsible, among other things, for the manufacture and issue of banknotes.



The principal theme on the front is the portrait of the Ticinese architect, Francesco Borromini. Francesco Castelli, known as Borromini, who was born in Bissone in 1599 and died in Rome in 1667, was one of the

gravure printing of the portrait has been so arranged that anyone can carry out a visual test of the note's genuineness. When looking straight down at the note, one sees not only the lines of the portrait in relief but also

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