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## Unesco

Thirty years ago, on 29th January 1949, or a little over two years after the Organization was founded (4th November 1946), Switzerland joined Unesco (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

**Unesco is first and foremost an ideal:** «Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.» Its Constitution requires that everything undertaken by Unesco shall be directed towards this idea: the maintenance of peace between nations, the promotion of international understanding and cooperation at world level.

**But Unesco is also** one of the specialized agencies within the United Nations system. With its 146 Member States it has almost attained universality, which is reflected in the range of its activities: besides the spheres indicated by its name (education, science and culture) it extends to the social sciences and communication as well. Examples include its campaigns on behalf of the world's cultural heritage, of educational planning and of teacher training, its literacy programmes, the establishment of the World Science Information System UNISIST, the MAB programme (Man and Biosphere), studies in the social science field, and close collabora-

tion with the non-governmental organizations, to name but a few.

**Furthermore, Unesco is** an international Secretariat situated in Paris, with a staff of more than 3,000 (working either at headquarters or in the regional offices) from nearly 120 countries. Its programme and its budget are fixed by the General Conference, which meets every two years; in the interval the Executive Board (of which Switzerland is a member) supervises its activities.

In its «Message» to the Federal Assembly on **Switzerland's accession to Unesco** the Federal Council stated:

«We, for our part, consider that our country would be isolating herself politically and intellectually if she refused to collaborate with an international organization whose objectives are so manifestly in harmony with those which she herself is seeking to achieve at a national level and in her relations with other countries. After the isolation of the war it is in her own interest to seize eagerly every opportunity to widen her horizons, to establish contact with other cultures and to collaborate in efforts to bring nations together and teach them to speak to one another in a language other than fear, hatred or force.

«By so doing she will not be repudiating or compromising any of the principles on which

her political and cultural life is based. On the contrary, as a member of Unesco she will be able to demonstrate anew that her neutrality is not to be equated with a selfish retreat behind her frontiers, but that it finds its natural complement in an awareness of the duties imposed by solidarity among nations. Furthermore, Unesco has to grapple, on a larger scale, with problems similar to those which Switzerland herself has had to solve in order to ensure the co-existence of diverse languages and cultures. The principle of federalism, too, which in our country is as vigorous as it is essential, especially in cultural matters, will have to permeate Unesco's activities.»

This principle of **«reciprocal collaboration»** has always been the basis of relations between Switzerland and Unesco: if Switzerland gains many advantages from her active participation in the Organization's work, both at national level and in international relations, she has undoubtedly made an important contribution to Unesco from the very beginning by allowing it to benefit from the experience of her institutions. Moreover, Switzerland has often been called upon to act as a mediator because of her reputation for impartiality and objectivity.

The Organization's presence in our country makes itself felt principally

through the **Swiss National Commission for Unesco**. The National Commissions are characteristic institutions of Unesco; their function is to strengthen its presence in the Member States and to stimulate cooperation in both directions.

The Permanent Delegations to Unesco maintain contact between the governments, the National Commissions and the Secretariat.

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## **The Swiss national commission for Unesco**

The Swiss National Commission for Unesco (it could be called the **«Embassy of Unesco in Switzerland»**) was set up by the Federal Council on 6th May 1949. At present it numbers some 60 members, chosen from Swiss educational, scientific, cultural and information circles and elected in their personal capacity by the Federal Council for a four-year term. Some seats are also reserved for **«ex officio»** members drawn from the Federal Administration or other national institutions. It is customary for about a third of the Commission to be replaced at each election so as to enable the greatest possible number of Swiss personalities to take part in its work. Its present Chairman is Ambassador Felix Schnyder. Administratively the secretariat is part of the Federal Political Department. The National Commission is a component part of Swiss cultural life and, through its links with National Commissions in other countries, an important element of Switzerland's international cooperation.

### **It has four main functions:**

- a) It is the **consultative** organ of the Federal Council and the Administration for our relations with Unesco as a whole; in particular, it plays an important part in the formulation of Switzerland's suggestions to the Organization about its programme and its budget.
- b) It is the normal **liaison** organ between Unesco and educational, scientific, cultural and information circles in our country. It maintains close contact with official services, institutions, organizations, associations and private individuals working in those fields; it informs the Organization of their activities and, at the same time, brings to their attention such of Unesco's views, suggestions, investigations or recommendations as may be of interest to them. It also plays a part in Switzerland's international relations by maintaining friendly and active contact with the National Commissions of all the other Member States and by drawing up programmes for collaboration at various levels with some of them, particularly in Europe and Africa. This network of relationships enables it to establish very favourable contacts with many countries.
- c) As an **information** organ it endeavours to make both interested circles and the general public aware of the big problems with which Unesco is concerned and of the need for international cooperation. To achieve this it employs a variety of means: press bulletins (Unesco Press), distribution of information material, provision of films, slides, exhibitions etc. It also keeps the Organization and the other National Commissions in-
- d) But it is above all an executive organ: in order to fulfil its functions it organizes seminars, meetings, discussion panels, youth camps; it establishes contacts at various levels; it publishes scientific papers and material for the general public; and it encourages the Administration and private circles to implement Unesco's programme at a national level.

formed of its own activities and of important events in our country's cultural and scientific life.

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### **In the service of the community**

The Swiss National Commission is there to serve everyone. It is eager to establish close relations with all Swiss institutions, with communities and with individuals.

- It will inform you about Unesco's work.
- It will put you in touch with Unesco.
- It will enable you to make contact with National Commissions and associated institutions in other countries.

### **The National Commission is Unesco's Embassy in Switzerland.**

Address:  
Commission national suisse  
pour l'Unesco  
Département politique fédéral  
CH-3003 Berne  
Tel. 031 61 35 50

#### The federal authorities in 1979:

President of the National Council:  
President of the Council of States:  
President of the Confederation:  
Vice-President of the Federal Council:  
Chancellor of the Confederation:  
President of the Federal Court:  
President of the Federal Insurance Court:

Luigi GENERALI  
Ulrich LUDER  
Hans HUERLIMANN  
Georges-André CHEVALLAZ  
Karl HUBER  
Harald HUBER  
Artur WINZELER

#### Composition of the Federal Council and allocation of departments:

Political Department:  
Department of the Interior:  
Department of Justice and Police:  
Military Department:  
Department of Finance and Customs:  
Department of Public Economy:  
Department of Transport,  
Communications and Energy:

Pierre AUBERT  
Hans HUERLIMANN  
Kurt FURGLER  
Rudolf GNAEGI  
Georges-André CHEVALLAZ  
Fritz HONEGGER  
Willi RITSCHARD

## National Council Elections – 21st October 1979

Dear Compatriots,

The Federal Act of 17th December 1976 on political rights, accepted by the Swiss people on 4th December 1977, provides that **the cantons shall send a complete set of voting papers to each elector not later than 10 days before election day**. For reasons connected with organization and printing it was necessary to fix a shorter time-limit than the three weeks prescribed in the case of referendums.

The Federal Council will circularize the Cantons about the National Council Elections, asking them to send the voting material for the Swiss abroad to the «communes of presence» in Switzerland as soon as possible.

**To be on the safe side, however, we would advise you, if possible, to plan your visit to Switzerland in such a way that you can cast your vote in your «commune of presence» or in your voting commune between 11th and 18th October 1979.**

Yours sincerely, Federal Chancellery

#### Federal ballots 1979 20th May, 21st October, 2nd December

Schweiz  
Suisse  
Svizzera

**Porträtmärken**  
**Timbres-poste portraits 1978**  
**Francobolli effigie**

Ausgabetag  
Jour d'émission 14.9.1978  
Giorno d'emissione



Abbé Joseph Bovet  
1879-1951  
Komponist  
Compositeur  
Musicista



Henri Dunant  
1828-1910  
Philanthrop  
Philanthrope  
Filantropo



Carl Gustav Jung  
1875-1961  
Psychologe  
Psychologue  
Psicologo



Auguste Piccard  
1884-1962  
Physiker  
Physicien  
Fisico

Entwürfe  
Dessins Disegni

Stahlstiche  
Gravures Incisioni  
Karl Bickel jun.  
Walenstadt

Format  
Format 24×29 mm  
Formato

## Book reviews

All the books mentioned below may be obtained through the intermediary of the Secretariat of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3000 Berne 16, or from your local bookseller.

#### «Die Reise auf den Uetliberg» (Journey to the Uetliberg)

This is a journey described by Salomon Schinz in 1774; he had made it in the company of the botanist David Breitinger. It is a lively page of Zurich history, ornamented with enchanting illustrations. It is a small work which will delight every citizen, and concerning the largest Swiss town. It exists in German only. 96 pages. Price: SFr15.80, to be ordered from Schweizer Verlagshaus AG, 8008 Zurich, Switzerland.

#### «Grosse Schweizer sehen sich selbst» (Great Swiss look at themselves)

To get to know a certain number of great helvetic personalities, is the wish of Fritz René Allemann who paints the portraits of great Swiss from Zwingli to Spitteler. This remarkable treatment will enchant the amateurs eager to know the personalities who have made Switzerland. It is published in German only. 464 pages for only SFr 23.—, to be ordered from Schweizer Verlagshaus AG, 8008 Zurich, Switzerland.

#### «Almanach der Schweiz» (Almanach of Switzerland)

This is a book of reference concerning Switzerland, published by Peter Lang AG, Muenzengraben 2, 3011 Berne, Switzerland. This work is the production of the Institute of Sociology of the University of Zurich. It is a social report concerning Switzerland, complemented by statistics and diagrams which relate to the complex structural evolution of the State. It is a book which contains a great deal of research in various fields, also including a short chapter devoted to the Swiss abroad. Published in German only. 286 pages. Price SFr 30.—

#### «Romands, Alémaniques, Tessinois»

«This book has not been written to please» announces its author Jean-Pierre Vouga modestly at the very beginning of his introduction. And yet, it pleases because it asks some real questions – what is more important than a linguistic problem in a federative state? – and offers some sound answers. Jean-Pierre Vouga knows his subject, for he worked for four years in the federal administration as assistant to the delegate for the management of territory. It is a concise book, a serious digest and quiet appeal to clarity. It is in French only. Editions de la Baconnière, 2000 Neuchâtel. It has 144 pages and costs SFr 19.50.

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