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Official Communications

Switzerland's Accession to the UN:

Statement to the Press by Federal Councillor Pierre Aubert after the Federal Ballot of 16th March 1986

The people and the cantons have today voted, in accordance with the Federal Constitution, on our country's accession to the United Nations. They have both voted against accession. The Federal Council regrets this decision but respects the freely expressed will of the sovereign people.

As the preceding campaign showed, this negative decision does not challenge the basic principles underlying our foreign policy. In the view of the Federal Council, permanent and armed neutrality, solidarity with the international community, universality in Switzerland's foreign relations and our availability to others – particularly as regards our good offices – will continue to determine our relations with other states. In the same spirit we shall continue our endeavours to strengthen international law and human rights and to foster respect for them.

By not joining the UN, Switzerland is deprived of an instrument which the Federal Council and both houses of Parliament considered important for the conduct of our foreign policy. Remaining outside the UN constitutes in today's world a disadvantage which it will hardly be possible to counterbalance fully. The Federal Council will nevertheless continue to do everything in its power to defend Switzerland's interests and standpoints in the world, both at bilateral level and in the international organizations to which we belong.

It is the Federal Council's firm resolve to maintain its involvement and pursue its cooperation with the international organizations. This is an integral part of our for-

eign policy and is in accordance with what the international community is entitled to expect from our country. ●

«No» to UN Accession

16th March 1986: the people voted against Switzerland's accession to the UN (75.7% against, 24.3% in favour).

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CH-3011 BERNE

By 31st December 1986:

Exchange of old Swiss driving licences

Swiss driving licences issued before 1st July 1977 must be replaced by new ones by the end of this year. The simplest way to exchange them is to go in person to the cantonal road traffic office competent for the place entered on your old licence (last domicile or Swiss contact address of relatives, friends etc.). In addition to your old driving licence (original), one or two passport photographs, according to canton, will be required. Anyone unable to visit Switzerland is asked to write to the competent cantonal road traffic office to find out how to proceed. ●

*Service of the Swiss Abroad,
Federal Department of Foreign
Affairs*

More stringent exhaust gas emission standards

The Federal Council has decided to introduce regulations on exhaust gas emission as stringent as those which have been applied in the United States since 1983 (US-83-standards). They will come into force for private cars on 1st October 1987 and for light commercial vehicles a year later. These measures represent an important step in the improvement of the quality of the atmosphere. By introducing them, Switzerland, together with Austria, will lead the European countries in this field.

In the present state of technology the application of the new standards is only possible with three-way catalytic converters and lambda probes. Since catalytic

converters involve the use of lead-free petrol, the Federal Council was not able to put the US-83-standards into operation immediately but has to wait until the neighbouring countries have an adequate supply of lead-free petrol. ●

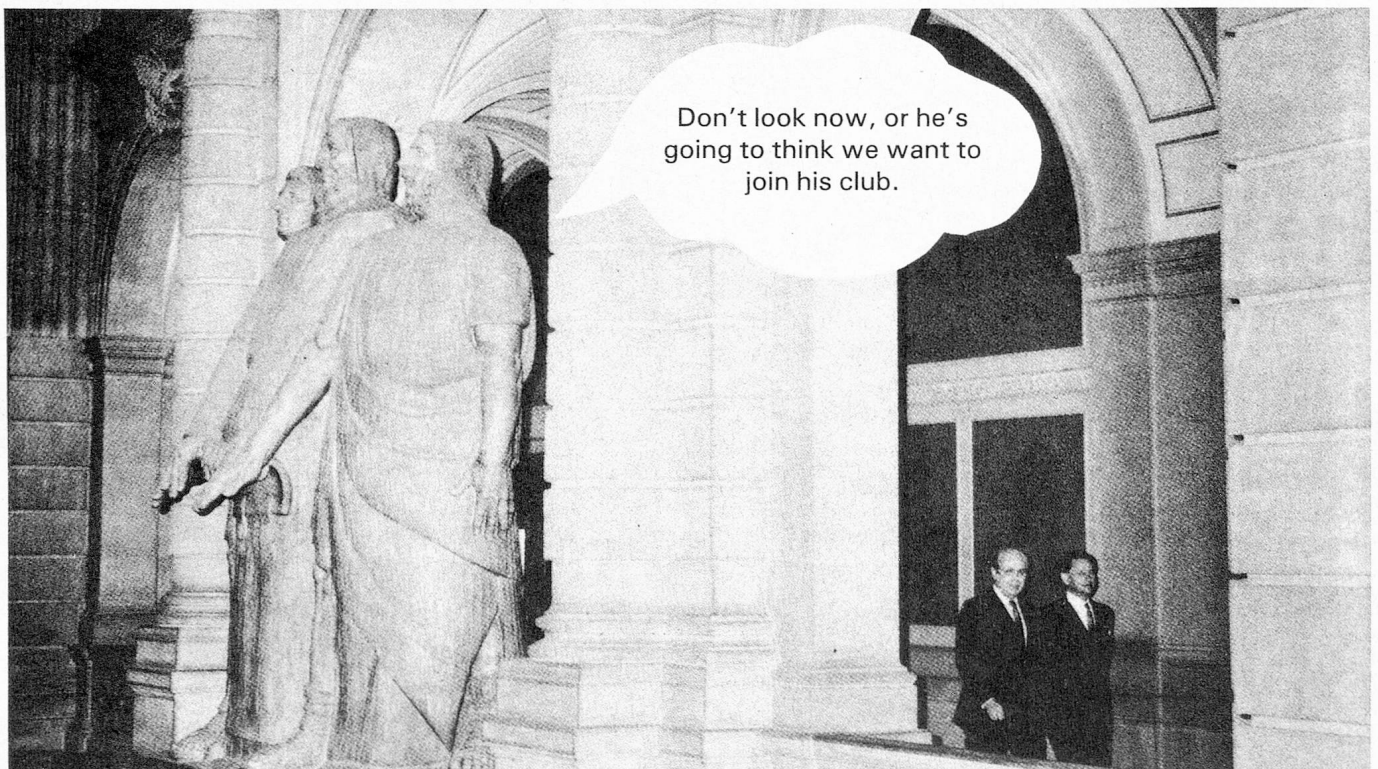
*Information and Press Service,
Federal Department of Justice
and Police*

Next Federal Ballots

**28th September and
7th December 1986**

The subjects will be:

Sugar decree (referendum), initiatives on culture and on tenant's protection, each with counter-proposal, initiatives on protection against dismissal and on occupational training. It has not yet been finally decided how these matters will be divided between the dates.



On the UN vote: UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar (left) in Federal Parliament in July 1985, accompanied by the Head of Protocol, Ambassador Manz (taken from «Nebelspalter»; photo: Michael von Graffenried).