

The authorities' European policy : to remain compatible with Europe

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Objekttyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad**

Band (Jahr): **16 (1989)**

Heft 1

PDF erstellt am: **01.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-906428>

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herself today for her future entry into the EEC. The alternatives are clearly defined. The only degree of freedom which remains for Switzerland – which is though not negligible – derives from the fact, that the

realisation of the Domestic Market will require far more time than anticipated. There are enough reasons though for us to get used to it.

Marian Stepczyński

effects on the economy as a whole would predominate. However, in the foreseeable future, the neutrality and political questions are to prevent any steps towards entry. The Federal Council does not though exclude the evolution of the EEC towards a Federal State with a stronger federalism, and this is the reason why Switzerland's position concerning the entry question should be looked at periodically and brought up for discussion.

The Authorities' European Policy

To remain compatible with Europe

The Federal Council published a detailed report in autumn 1988 entitled 'Switzerland's position within the European Integration Process'. In this report it establishes that at present an entry into the EEC is not the goal of our integration policy, but that we must nevertheless adopt a 'European reflex'.

Europe hasn't only become a point of discussion in Berne since there have been signs that the unified EEC Domestic Market is about to come into effect. As a small state, Switzerland was and is dependent for its exports on an open world trading system. Therefore she reacts to everything which gives the appearance of creating a further concentration of economic interests within exclusive circles of privileged participants. The EFTA was envisaged as being above all a means of combat – as established by Lévy, former Trade Diplomat. On the one hand the EFTA exists to prevent discrimination against non-EEC member states. On the other hand as an opposition to the supra-national concept of the EEC through its own free trade philosophy. This foresight was not wrong and found ratification at the first joint meeting of EEC and EFTA Ministers in 1984, where they pledged unity to a homogenous and dynamic european economic field having conditions as comparable as possible to a domestic market. The Federal Council considers EFTA still today as an important european political platform.

Active Integration Policy

The irreversibility of the EEC integration process, which was at first thought to be questionable, but which has proved itself through consolidation and constant expansion, forced Switzerland, however, to make a legal ruling of her bilateral relationships to the EEC. This she did in 1972 with the signing of a Free Trade Agreement. It essentially regulates free exchange of industrial products. The contractual partners recognised

already in 1972 that this would in the long term not optimally cover the participation in the integration process. The agreement therefore includes a development clause for the expansion of relationships in other areas. Based on this clause the relationships have since been deepened and expanded with a network of over a hundred legal agreements.

The Federal Council admits in its report about the european integration process, that the economical outcome of a full participation in the EEC Domestic Market would be predominately positive in the long term. Despite strong pressure to adjust, which would be especially difficult in the agricultural field, the efficiency and prosperity

Switzerland: A part of Europe

The central question today, however, is how Switzerland could belong to this Europe,

EEC Seminar

A Seminar entitled 'EEC 92 and the Swiss Abroad' is to take place 9-10 June 1989 as a continuation in further depth of the main theme of last year's Assembly of the Swiss Abroad held in Näfels. The Seminar is to be organised by the New Helvetic Society in cooperation with the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad and the Service for the Swiss Abroad of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Details are to be found on the green local pages of the European issues of the Swiss Review or direct from the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16.

without becoming a member of the EEC. Switzerland is part of and central to Europe and does not want to become aloof to this continent, to which she belongs as a natural



Popular Initiative and Referendum: The question of the EEC-compatibility of new Swiss laws is to be posed with or without a Swiss EEC-Entry. (Picture: Keystone)



partner based on her history, culture and economical network. Switzerland wants to observe her joint responsibilities in and towards Europe. Not becoming an EEC member does not mean renouncement of participation in the european integration process. This does not require any fundamentally new orientation, it rather renders possible the consequential continuation of the pragmatic cooperation with the EEC as it exists today, which bases itself on a strict reciprocity of rights and duties. The requirements would undoubtedly become stronger, one reason why Switzerland should continually improve her ability to remain compatible with Europe. This compatibility requires amongst other things an organisation of its own legal system to conform with the rest of Europe so that Switzerland's legal regulations align as closely as possible to those of her european partners.

The right of codetermination of the EEC politics, not applicable to third party states, must be compensated for by a sharper awareness of possible aims which could effect national interests, as well as by active efforts to make contacts and a readiness for consultation. The Federal Council stresses, however, that Switzerland must above all remain constantly so attractive and so vital, in relation to the EEC european, economical and competition politics, that she should always be able to decide for or against an EEC-entry, should this come about, freely and calmly.

Raul Lautenschütz,
NZZ Parliamentary Editor, Berne

Column

Switzerland: The Future lies in Europe



A few months ago the authorities, media and general public started to realise that the development and the acceleration of the efforts towards european integration are to have a direct effect on Switzerland, her inhabitants and business operations. This impression is accurate.

Since the Treaty of Rome (1957), the European Economic Community has been developing steadily. Today the EEC has a political organisation which is laid down in its constitution, the European Single Act (1986). The Executive is the European Commission, a sort of european Federal Council. The advisory bodies are firstly the European Parliament – a kind of National Council – and the Council of Ministers – a sort of Council of

States. The legal authority is embodied by the European Court of Justice.

These Institutions work out and enforce a common policy in various areas, for example in agriculture, social welfare, science, transport, development collaboration, the fighting of terrorism, etc. There is a strengthened economical and social solidarity between the member states. There exist moreover common principles and rules concerning foreign policy.

The Community produces a common law, which has a comparable relationship to the individual national laws of the member states, as does Federal Law to Cantonal Law. In addition the Community has a budget, an administration and a currency unit (the ECU) and a european passport, which will be issued to all of its 320 million inhabitants.

With the exception of the defence policy – the majority of the Member States belong, however, to NATO – the Community shows nonetheless many characteristics of the future United States of Europe.

Bearing this changing reality in mind, there are many voices saying: 'Switzerland cannot belong to the EEC'. This is, however, a conclusion which is drawn before real considerations have begun. How can we avoid asking certain questions, when French and German – who have fought against each other in three wars in the space of 100 years – have fundamentally reviewed their relationship and the English have had to reconsider their insularity? Today it is quite clear, that the United States of Europe will one day emerge out of the European Economic Community. Switzerland must become involved with this to ensure that this European State Federation can be democratic, federalistic, social, having a legal state, capable of defending itself, of respecting and developing human rights.

Switzerland must become involved, because it is dependent on Europe and the decisions made by Europe. It must also become involved because it has a lot to contribute to this Europe in its construction stage: As a democratic legal state, which bases itself on individual freedom, Switzerland has a wide experience in federalism; its negotiation sense and skills in compromise have allowed Switzerland to form and administer a political house in which various groups of people, languages, cultures and confessions find their place. Switzerland is a model for the Europe of tomorrow.

The Europe of today is the Switzerland of 1847: the Europeans of the 20th century are now in the throes of constructing, on a continental level, what the Confederation realised on a national level in our country in the 19th century.

Let us then live in the present and look reality in the face! Let us have faith in ourselves and accept the challenge: Then if Switzerland is our homeland, Europe will be our future.

Guy-Olivier Segond, Mayor of Geneva, National Councillor, President of the Swiss European Movement

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August 16–September 9, 1989