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Contents



- 4 Forum
1992: The European Challenge
10 Gold Diggers and Tradesmen
Local News
11 Looking back on 1988
14 Mosaic
16 New Media for the Swiss Abroad
17 Communications of the SSA
18 Official Communications

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The EEC-building in Brussels; William Tell monument in Altdorf UR. (pictures: pd, Rolf A. Stähli)

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Editorial

Switzerland – an Island?



The year 1992 is being talked about more than any other date by us Swiss. 1992, as everybody knows, is the year that the European Community, whose member countries surround Switzerland, wants to put into effect its Domestic Market Programme. This step to be made by the EEC holds a very special importance, irrespective of whether the EEC's goal can be reached on time or not. It will call forth important consequences, both on the economic level and in many other areas too. These consequences will not only effect the EEC member states, they will also have an effect on Switzerland.

Now is the time to review our position in the light of this development. It is of little use to stick to our 'special case mentality', which has been used all too often in the past. We too must increasingly develop a 'European reflex', as already is the case of the majority of other European countries. This makes it impossible for us to remain passive and to consider the new European integration dynamic as a mere threat to be simply dismissed. We should rather learn to actively accept it as a challenge for our people and country—and one from which we can by all means profit. We are, after all, interested as Europeans in a Europe which functions well within the increasingly dense international network. This should be independent of whether or not we are ever to become a member of the EEC.

In view of this new European challenge, we feel that it is vitally important that you too, as our fellow citizens abroad, should be informed about this subject. The implications for Switzerland are highlighted from various viewpoints by competent authors in this issue. A future issue will deal with the direct and indirect consequences of the present integration dynamic, above all for those Swiss residing in EEC member states.

Minister Walter Fetscherin, Head of the Service for the Swiss Abroad in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs