

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 17 (1990)
Heft: 4

Rubrik: Impressum

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 21.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>



Impressum

Swiss Revue

Magazine for the Swiss Abroad
17th year of issue

Published quarterly in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish, in about 30 regional editions.
Printing: Berne, Paris, Lugano, New York, Johannesburg, Buenos Aires
Total circulation: 254 900

Editorial staff:

Dr. Stephan Müller, Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Berne
Heidi Willumat, Service for the Swiss Abroad, Department of Foreign Affairs, Berne
Jacques Matthey-Doret, Radio-Télévision Suisse romande, Lausanne

Translation:

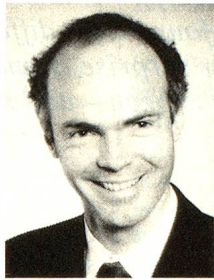
George Alexander, John Miles

Publisher, central editorial offices and advertising administration:

Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad
Alpenstrasse 26
CH-3000 Berne 16
Telephone 031 44 66 25
Telex 912 118 asse ch
Telefax 031 44 21 58
Postcheck (Swiss national giro) account: 30-6768-9

Editorial

Language barriers



Next year the Confederation will be celebrating the 700th anniversary of its foundation. An irrepressible desire for freedom led our forefathers to form alliances which have held firm up to the present day and which could be described as an expression of a deeply-rooted concept of solidarity. In the course of our country's history, which has not been without its stresses and strains, this sense of solidarity of which we are so proud has grown stronger.

Mercenaries, craftsmen and merchants all institutionalized, so to speak, contacts with other cultures. As the Confederation grew, the Romance-language element became an integral part of our political system.

Although French enjoys great prestige, there is still a latent tension in relationships with the Alemannic language region. Over-shadowed by the German and French speaking Swiss are the people of Ticino, whose language is not always given the necessary attention that it merits north of the Gotthard.

Beside the three official and national languages, German, French, and Italian, the Rhaeto-Romansch tongue, our fourth national language, has difficulty in holding its own. Happily this linguistic treasure from the Roman era has survived. From the fusion of the Rhaetian tongue with the colloquial Latin of the colonisers emerged a Rhaetian-type Vulgar Latin which, through phonetic changes, gradually developed into the present-day Rhaeto-Romansch.

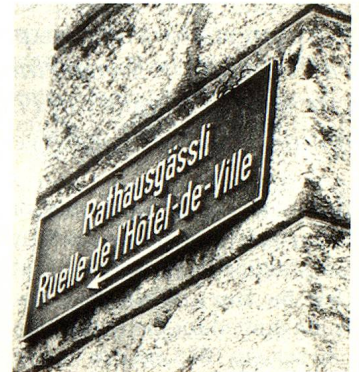
The Swiss are proud of the fact that the different language groups respect each other. But the mutual penetration that is so much to be desired seems to belong to the realms of Utopia. In actual fact Italian is subordinate to the other languages, a situation which already seems to be almost regarded as the natural order of things, at least in the German-speaking part of Switzerland. French succeeds in holding its own but the excessive use of dialects in German-speaking Switzerland in recent decades has widened the rift between German and French speakers, because as a result many of the latter lack the motivation to learn German. A little more tact towards our compatriots would help to lower the existing barriers.

The harsh reality of economic life, which is dominated by German-speaking Switzerland, shows that little heed is paid to structures which have grown naturally. Pessimists therefore like to predict that one day English will become a common means of communication for our young people. It is true that a great many people have a knowledge of the "fifth national language" but if we cultivate our heritage carefully we need have no fears for the present about the preservation of our four existing national languages.

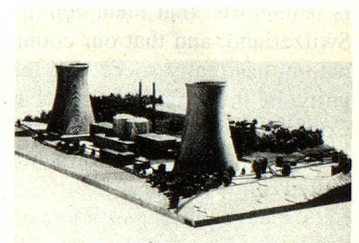
Finally, I should like to introduce myself, as successor to my namesake Jürg Müller, who has joined the Swiss Telegraphic Agency. My duties include collaborating on the "Schweizer Revue" and further information work. I look forward to maintaining friendly contacts with you.

Stephan Müller, Auslandschweizer-Sekretariat

Contents



Forum:
The four languages
in Switzerland **4**

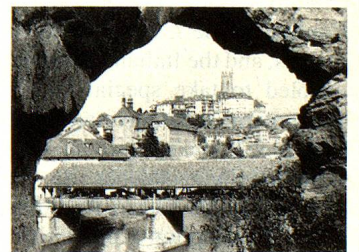


Politics:
Comments on the results
of the referendum
of September 23 **13**

Green pages:
Local News

Mosaic **15**

Switzerland's
700th anniversary **18**



Communications
from the SSA **19**

Official
Communications **21**



This is how the four languages can appear. (Photos: Ruedi Becker)