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Swiss Abroad Reception for Federal Council

On 1 August 1991 all seven members of the Federal Council visited the Place of the Swiss Abroad. Hundreds of Swiss Abroad received the Federal Council in the tent designed by Ticino architect Mario Botta. Congratulatory messages from all over the world underlined the presence of the «Fifth Switzerland» in every continent.

The Botta-designed tent gave a special aspect to the Place of the Swiss Abroad, which is intended to symbolise the solidarity of the Swiss Abroad with their homeland this year and in the years to come. The Swiss Abroad warmly applauded the distinguished guests, the Federal Council, the Speakers of European Parliaments and the members of the Council for the Swiss Abroad. In his address Professor Walther Hofer, President of the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, stressed that Switzerland and Europe depended on each other. In view of the historic decisions they would be called upon to make, Professor Hofer urged the Swiss Abroad to make active use of the newly-acquired right to

vote by post and to set a good example to their fellow-citizens in Switzerland as regards voting figures.

As representative of the federal

government, Federal Councillor René Felber gave a further indication of Switzerland's positive attitude in its approach to Europe. In their messages of congratulation, five Swiss living abroad, representing all five continents, emphasised their belief in an open-minded attitude to Europe and the world. They all expressed their faith in Switzerland, whose fortunes they followed with great interest, even though living abroad.

Here are two quotations from the congratulatory messages:

«Home for us is Switzerland... But home for us is also where we live, where our children grow up...» (Elisabeth Michel)

«... I congratulate Switzerland on this very special day. May Switzerland remain forever prosperous, may its mountains never crumble and may it keep producing chocolate...» (Indira Varma)



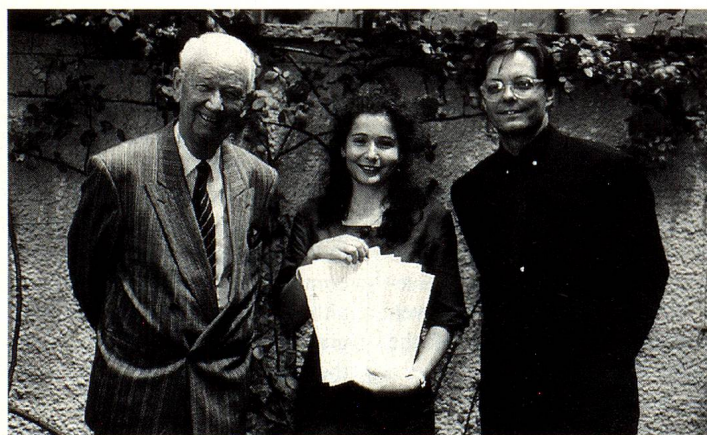
All seven members of the Federal Council sign the official guest book. (Photo: Keystone)

Fund-raising campaign for the Place of the Swiss Abroad

Draw for Five Weekends

All donors whose contributions helped to make possible the purchase of the Place of the Swiss Abroad were entitled to take part in a draw for five weekends at the Hotel Waldstätterhof in Brunnen. It took place at the offices of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad in Berne at the end of June, under the supervision of a notary.

The winners were: André Vaucher, Paris; Berta Dobler and Gerhard Belz, Bregenz (Austria); Edith Bowman, Mt. Vernon (USA) and Clara Leonhardt, Singen (Germany).



From left: Professor Walther Hofer (President, Organisation of the Swiss Abroad), Michèle Burnier (Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad) and Hans Peter Aeberhard, lawyer and notary.

Parties courting the Swiss Abroad

The introduction of the right to vote by post some time next year has prompted the Swiss political parties to think about how they can enlist Swiss living abroad for their cause.

The Radical Party (FDP), for instance, has founded an organisation called «FDP Switzerland International» aimed at promoting relations with the Swiss Abroad. Other parties are taking similar steps or are considering doing so.