

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 19 (1992)
Heft: 4-5

Vorwort: Editorial
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CONTENTS

Forum

Switzerland at turning-point

Tourism

Little Switzerland

Sport

Marc Rosset – Switzerland's Olympic gold

SSA-News

70th Congress of the Swiss Abroad



Cover: KeyColor

IMPRESSUM

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 19th year of issue and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 20 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 286,000. Regional news appear four times a year.

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Publisher, Editorial Office, Advertising: Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16; Tel: 41 31 44 66 25, Fax: 41 31 44 21 58; Postal Cheque Account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. Printed by: Buri Druck AG, CH-3001 Berne.



A recent leader in a respected Swiss daily referred to a two-fold error by "the custodians of the past" – referring to opponents of the EEA and the EC in the centre-right parties. First, like the old 19th century conservatives they stick to the proven values of the past and simply reject anything new – whether it be trans-Alpine railways, EEA or EC. Second, they are quite happy with the idea of going it alone and maintain that it is quite possible to obtain the best of the EC through bilateral treaties. Switzerland is at present facing a situation similar to that of 1848, the leader goes on, and hopes that the "innovators" will win once more so that the future of Switzerland as a state may be assured.

The question of whether a Yes to the EEA and the EC is the only way to save Switzerland in its present form is a fair one. But we must accept the fact that developments are at present taking place in Europe which certainly deserve the word "historic". There is no way in which Switzerland can avoid coming to terms with them and finding a new role on the European scene. The present number of Swiss Review is devoted mainly to defining facts and examining prospects in the general subject-area "Switzerland within Europe", as well as to providing information on the EEA referendum and its likely consequences for the Swiss Abroad. And in this editorial I shall begin by giving you my own – very personal – view on the matter.

Both in Switzerland and throughout the EEA there are very few people ready to say Yes to a united Europe without any reservations. For my part, I would much prefer the future Europe to be "more Swiss", i.e. more federal, than the union-builders

in Paris or Bonn want it to be. And more open to the outside, particularly to the so-called "Third World". And more progressive too in environmental protection. But I shall still vote Yes to the EEA, as also to EC entry if and when it comes. I shall do this in the hope that Europe will develop in the best interest of the peoples of the whole world and in the belief that Switzerland must be in a position to make its contribution.

My view is based on the fact that Switzerland has long been interwoven with the rest of Europe, in economics even more than in politics – and this brings me back to the leading article I mentioned earlier. The EEA is simply the confirmation of something which already exists, and the future Union of all European states will be the logical continuation of many years of development. There is still a good deal missing from "the European house". Nor is the integration process likely to run quite as smoothly as some officials in Brussels would have us believe – and Denmark's No to the Maastricht Treaty will have surely been taken as a sign of the times. But these are not reasons good enough to stand aside – particularly for a country which lies at the very heart of geographic Europe. At the time when our federal state was founded, liberal and democratic Switzerland was one of the most open and most modern countries of the continent. "The custodians of the past" forgot this, perhaps on purpose, when they call up traditional values to reject the new.



René Lenzin