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Swiss Radio International

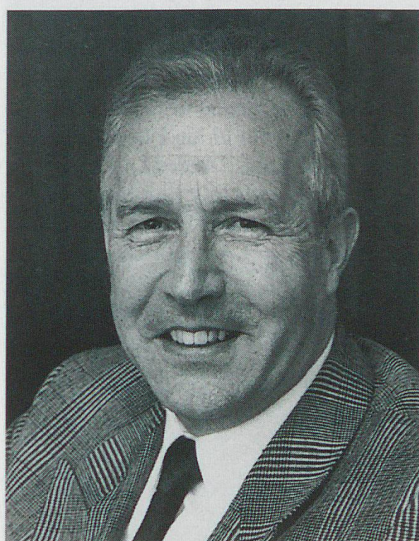
Strengthening SRI's role as ambassador of Swiss abroad

In March 1993, Ulrich Kündig became the new director of Swiss Radio International. Mr. Kündig, a former director of German language Swiss television, DRS, and director of Programme Services at the head office of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation, succeeded Roy Oppenheim who was director for two and a half years before becoming head of the new Swiss TV channel S-Plus.

One of SRI's main tasks over the years has been that of an information service for the Swiss Abroad outside the four language regions within the country. This task will continue to be an important one in the future.

It sounds like a simple way to promote Switzerland's presence around the world. But the authorities see SRI's role as being more complex. Not only do they want SRI to promote Switzerland's presence in the world, they want it also to make a contribution to international understanding and to increase outside understanding of Swiss interests. Journalistically, these are three distinct tasks but they are closely interlinked as far as SRI's role as ambassador for the 500,000 Swiss Abroad is concerned.

These Swiss are constantly promoting international understanding at their work and other activities abroad. They constantly make a genuine and lasting contribution in all spheres of society towards promoting Switzerland's presence in the world. If they are to continue doing so they need regular and reliable information through the media about the rapidly changing real-



Ulrich Kündig, Director SRI.
(Photo: SRI)

ity in Switzerland. To experience and communicate this reality, they need factual and comprehensive background information about events in everyday Swiss life, about Swiss relations with Europe and the rest of the world, and about how Switzerland sees itself.

Moving from rendezvous radio to 24-hour programming

Some two thirds of Swiss Abroad live in Europe. They can tune in to countless radio and TV stations not only in their host countries, but also those from outside. Up until now, SRI has broadcast on shortwave, offering a brief daily rendezvous with Switzerland. But today, in view of the high quality of broadcasting

technology, few listeners are enthusiastic about the relatively poor reception on shortwave.

Since 1992, SRI shortwave programmes have been carried on ASTRA satellite in Europe, complemented by a selection of programmes from regional SBC services. Unfortunately this type of programming lacks the continuity which is an essential element in radio. This is where the new SRI strategy comes in. We want to offer continuous programmes in German, French, Italian and Romansch via satellite. There will also be a fourth programme, mainly in English, for an international audience in Europe with the aim of strengthening Switzerland's presence abroad. But as long as satellite reception is not mobile, shortwave will continue to be used in Europe, albeit in a reduced way.

A rapid move to satellite

Thousands of Swiss Abroad outside Europe have shared the same experience: SRI and the transmitting technology of the Swiss PTT is a poor relation to major European stations. This too will change, although no improvement can be expected in its shortwave operations. SRI transmissions on shortwave will remain modest and will even have to be reduced to certain target areas because of cost considerations. But this is by no means a break in links with Swiss Abroad. SRI is working doggedly to expand its satellite transmissions. Even today, Swiss Abroad in farflung parts of North and South America can receive SRI programmes via Intelsat-K, and this will be gradually extended to all continents by 1997.

Ulrich Kündig, Director SRI ■

SRI Committee of the Public

The Programme Commission of Swiss Radio International has now been replaced by a Committee of the Public. This has 15 members, with Zurich journalist Arnold Isler in the chair – and the Swiss Abroad are represented. The new committee will function as ombudsman and will deal with any complaints about SRI programmes. The address is as follows:
SRI Ombudsman's Office
P.O. Box 42
CH-3000 Berne 15

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in Switzerland:

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Inventory

Dissolution of community property
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