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**Cover:**

State-of-the-art technology enables satellite images to be translated into true to life pictures of countries and regions – in this case of central Switzerland. (Photo: © ESA, Imsat Geneva 1995)

**I M P R E S S U M**

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To our compatriots abroad and to all readers of Swiss Review. After nearly five years at the helm of the Service for the Swiss Abroad at the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs I shall be taking up a new post as Consul General in Hong Kong at the beginning of 1995. So I would like to take the opportunity now of writing you a few lines to say good-bye.

During my time here I have had the great privilege of witnessing a number of important pioneering developments for the Swiss Abroad. These have included the introduction of the vote by correspondence, the redesigning of Swiss Review and the publication of the Advisor to the Swiss Abroad. In the course of my work I have become aware how eminently important information about our country is for all of you who live abroad. I believe I can say that with the Advisor and the Swiss Review's new look we have made great progress in this field. As I have discovered from many echoes which have reached my ears Swiss Review's popularity has risen substantially. While the extremely competent editorial team looks after the high quality of the magazine, we at the Foreign Ministry will try to ensure that you continue to receive it several times a year free of charge.

Information for the Swiss Abroad is important and necessary – and it also costs the federal government quite a lot. (You are no doubt aware that the much-coveted Advisor to the Swiss Abroad is also available free to those who ask for it.) This should not be regarded as a matter of course, as a rough com-

parison with other countries shows.

It is true that the number of those who have registered to exercise their right to vote by correspondence has now risen to over 50,000. This is considered to be very satisfactory, but I cannot help feeling it could be much higher. When we think that at the last count on June 1, 1994, there were almost 392,000 Swiss Abroad entitled to vote we realise that an enormous potential is still lying fallow. I would like to use this opportunity of urging those who have not yet taken the step to register to vote with their diplomatic post (embassy or consulate) and so to participate actively in shaping the future of our country.

In my many contacts with our fellow citizens all over the world there is one thing that has impressed me far above all others, namely their close attachment to the homeland. We shall do all we can to foster this feeling and strengthen it in every way possible. My own experience has shown me that you enjoy a huge amount of sympathy and goodwill in our country. Here at home the "Fifth Switzerland" is by no means an empty cliché. But it must be emphasised that mutual respect and affection do not flourish without being nurtured. Constant effort and imagination on both sides are required to maintain it. With my very best wishes to you all.



**Rolf Bodenmüller**