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People

● **George Malbois**, a specialist on money laundering and drug trafficking, and **Roger Sauvain**, former training director of the Neuchâtel cantonal police, are the first of ten police contact officials to be posted abroad. Malbois represents the Swiss criminal prosecution authorities in Washington, while Sauvain is with Interpol in Lyon.



● Vaud Liberal Democrat **Olivier Chevallaz** has retired from the National Council to head the Paris office of Switzerland Tourism (formerly Swiss National Tourist Office).

● Only 14 months after his appointment to head the Basle diocese Bishop **Hansjörg Vogel** has resigned for personal reasons. He had an affair with a woman who is now expecting his child. The cause of his resignation has led to much controversy amongst believers and non-believers alike on the whole question of priestly celibacy.

● Professor **Hans Haug** has died at the age of 74. He taught public law from 1967-86 at the University of St. Gall. He was also president of the Swiss Red Cross and a member of the International Committee of the Red Cross. In 1990 he was awarded the first Brandenberger Prize for his contribution to the international struggle against torture.



● After four years in Dusseldorf, **Heinz Spoerli** is returning to Switzerland as director of ballet at Zurich Opera House from the 1996/97 season. From 1973 to 1991 Spoerli made Basle one of the most prestigious centres of Swiss ballet.

● **Ivo Fürer**, **Norbert Brunner** and **Giuseppe Torti** are the latest Swiss bishops to be appointed. Fürer follows Othmar Mäder in St. Gall, Brunner will succeed Cardinal Henri Schwery in Sion, Torti follows Eugenio Corecco in Lugano who died recently.

Fewer government employees

The federal government has once again reduced the number of its employees. In 1994 the figure dropped by 3,848 to 137,624. The biggest falls were in arms production (down 6.7%), in the alcohol administration (down 6.6%), in the federal railways (down 3.8%) and in the postal authority (down 3.3%). The administration itself reduced its staff by only a very modest 0.4%. In 1994 more than two-thirds of all federal employees were with the post (59,579) and the railways (34,591).

Unemployment as a whole in Switzerland dropped, however, with the figure hovering around 4%. Experts at the Federal Office for Employment and Labour (BIGA) reckon that the average number of unemployed will be around 150,000 in 1995.

Point of view

"A German-speaking Swiss is ready to give his much-loved daughter to a French-speaking Swiss but not his company".

Pascal Couchepin, Valais National Councillor, on the much discussed language frontier.

Swissair ∞ Sabena

Swissair has acquired a 49.5% interest in Belgium's state airline, Sabena, for 6.5 billion Belgian francs (about Sfr. 260 million). With this cooperative venture Sabena obtains the inflow of capital it badly needs, and Swissair gains an opening to the European market. A year and a half after the failure of the Alcázar joint project with Holland's KLM, Scandinavian Airlines and Austrian Air-

lines, Swissair believes it has now found the right way to deal with the threat of discrimination in the European Union's substantially liberalised civil aviation market from 1997.

The new cooperation and holding contract will create a large number of

Separate companies - joint strategy. By linking up with Sabena, Swissair hopes to strengthen its position in the international airline business.

synergies: coordinating and optimising schedules, sharing existing international routes with Switzerland's other partners, Austrian Airlines and Delta Airlines, cuts in staff and rental costs as a result of joint sales offices and airport desks in other countries. Over the medium term it should also be possible to harmonise aircraft fleets and increase technical cooperation in maintenance, say the heads of both companies – which will nevertheless remain legally independent.



Diary

Festivals and folklore

August 12–13
 Saignelégier, Jura: National "Marché
 Concours", horse fair, horse-races
 and popular festivities
 August 19–20
 Chur, Grisons: Swiss wrestling
 festival

Congresses

August 24–27
 Berne: Congress of the Swiss
 Abroad

Music and theatre

Mid-August – mid-September
 Zurich: "Theaterspektakel", theatre
 performances

August 16–September 19
 Lucerne: International Festival of
 Music (classical)

August 19–September 19
 Montreux, Vaud: International Music
 Festival (classical)

August 31–September 3
 Willisau, Lucerne: International Jazz
 Festival

Art exhibitions

June 9–October 8
 Lugano, Ticino: Museo Cantonale
 d'Arte: Kandinsky and Switzerland
 June 24–September 24
 Môtiers, Neuchâtel: "Môtiers 95",
 national open-air sculpture exhibition

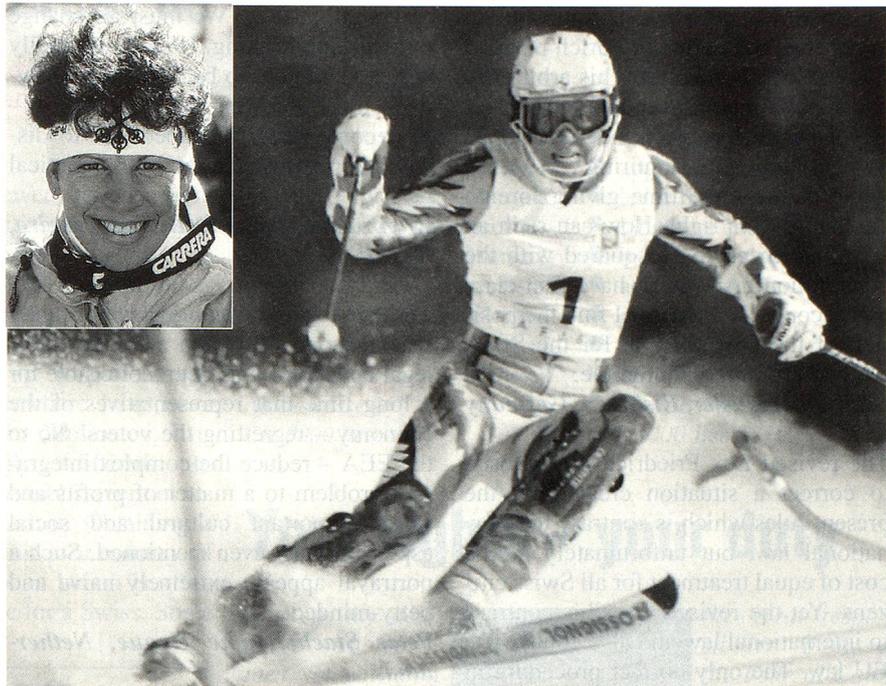
Fairs

August 29–September 1
 Zurich: "fera", international TV, radio
 and hi-fi exhibition
 September 13–14
 Lausanne, Vaud: Palais de Beau-
 lieu, "Comptoir Suisse", national fair

Sport

August 16
 Zurich: International Athletics
 Meeting

Vreni Schneider retires



From now on Switzerland will have to do without probably its most successful sportswoman of all time. After 11 years in world cup skiing, 30-year old Vreni Schneider from Glarus retired from competitive sport at the end of the 1994/95 season. This great champion has won everything that Alpine skiing has to offer. Her range of trophies covers them all: she was Olympic gold medallist, world champion and all-round World Cup holder three times each. She was a medal holder in 100 World Cup races, 55 times in first place. She won the World Cup for slalom 6 times and for giant slalom 5 times. She was Swiss champion 9 times.

Fans will probably remember best her performance in her last season when she

After 11 years at the top of international skiing, Vreni Schneider is retiring from competition. We shall miss her "famous second run"!

took home the all-round World Cup in the very last race and with the tiniest lead over Germany's Katja Seizinger. After the season's high point – the world championships at Spain's Sierra Nevada – was abandoned for lack of snow, she even took part in downhill races with considerable success to win the Cup. The Swiss public will also sadly miss her "famous second run": she often succeeded in coming from far behind to win races when it appeared hopeless. Vreni Schneider will leave a big hole in Swiss skiing. ■

Grasshoppers champions, Sion wins Cup

Zurich's Grasshoppers are Swiss soccer champions for the 23rd time. They dominated the championship from beginning to end, permanently in first place way ahead of runners-up Lugano. They scored the most goals, let the ball through the least often and obtained the highest number of points since the second round system was introduced. Their only setback was in the Cup Final itself, where in an excellent game they lost 4-2 to FC Sion. The Valaisans were taking part in the final for the 7th time and won it for the 7th time. ■

Giro d'Italia for Tony Rominger

For the first time since Carlo Clerici 41 years ago, a Swiss has won Italy's main professional cycle race. After taking the Round Spain 3 times, Tony Rominger has now come top in the Giro d'Italia – and with no one close behind him. Rominger's superiority was most marked in the 3 timed stretches, all of which he won. This victory in the Giro was also his 100th in professional cycling. Rominger's run of good form started with his top place in the Tour de Romandie earlier in the season. ■

Swiss hostages freed

Three Swiss kidnapped in January by the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone have been released unconditionally after more than three months in captivity. A Swiss man and a Swiss woman were kidnapped by Bosnian Serbs outside Sarajevo and freed for a ransom after being held for 34 days. All five hostages were traumatised by their experience but are in good health. ■

Texts: René Lenzin

Photos: Keystone