

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 23 (1996)
Heft: 1

Inhaltsverzeichnis

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 24.02.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

CONTENTS

Forum
Switzerland and its cantons

4-7

Official News

9/10

SRI News

11

Portrait

President of the Confederation
Jean-Pascal Delamuraz

12

Culture

Contemporary furniture design
in Switzerland

13

Votes

Federal referendums
of March 10, 1996

14/15

Mosaic

Ping-Pong

16/17

SSA News

18

19

Cover:

The 26 Swiss cantons use their coats of arms to foster their history and culture and express their autonomy. They also contribute to cultivating the identity of Switzerland as a whole.

(Cartoon: Heinz 'Pfuschi' Pfister)



When we were children we had great fun spotting the various cantonal flags on the garlands fluttering from balconies... The red and blue of Ticino (a deliberate reference to the colours of Paris) next to the ibex of Grisons, the bull of Uri, the stylised bear of Berne and the eagle of Geneva.

Later at school we learned all that lay behind these flags, each so different from the others yet all united by the common denominator of the white cross on the red background. As we reached adulthood, the territorial and human realities represented by the flags became part of our lives: so many little states (cantons and half cantons), each with its own mentality and therefore its own institutions and rituals – and not only at the political level.

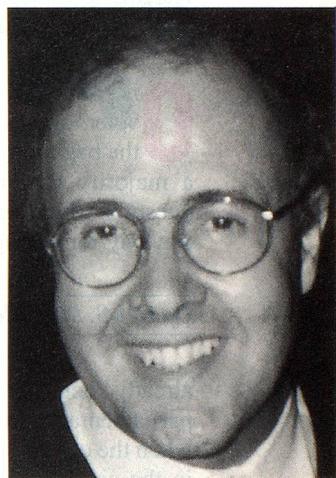
Switzerland is incorrectly called a confederation, which means an alliance. It is in fact a federal state, a single entity divided up into parts enjoying controlled autonomy. But it owes much to its cantons. Historically speaking, they built the Switzerland of today. When we look more closely, it became a nation state only after 1848, when a substantial number of the powers which used to be cantonal were handed over to Berne. And the cantons are also the most manifest expression of Swiss federalism, which reflects differences actually existing within the country. It brings each citizen nearer to a seat of power. It allows minorities to be part of the whole. And it ensures flexible application of laws approved at the national level.

But it is also true – particularly during the last few years – that the cantons have de facto delegated so much of their power to the central government that they now seem to do little more than carry out its orders. This means that one of the fundamental elements of balance

on which our country rests is being compromised. So it is hardly surprising that today's cantons should be demanding that this balance should be re-established – although this certainly does not mean that they harbour secessionist longings. We see the cantons constituting their own cantonal conference, asking for a better share-out of the state's financial resources, forming regional economic and administrative "alliances", e.g. the "Central Plateau", opening up – for those in a position to do so – cross-border policies, e.g. the "Regione Insubrica" in southern Ticino.

So we are seeing a revival of cantonal institutions including new forms of inter-territorial cooperation, not only within the country but with neighbouring regions of foreign countries. This is happening not only in Switzerland but also to some degree elsewhere in Europe. I am thinking, for example, of the different types of cooperation within the Alpine region. In western Europe at least, this marks a return to a regional way of thinking more flexible than the national one, which is characteristic of the nineteenth century and based on rigid territorial division.

Should we be afraid for national unity, in Switzerland or elsewhere? I do not think so. Because the Europe of regions (with the Swiss cantons as a dynamic force) should not be seen as opposed to the Europe of the nation state but rather as complementary to it. That at least is what we hope.



IMPRESSUM

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 23rd 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 310,000. Regional news appears four times a year.

Editors: René Lenzin (RL), Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad (chairman); Alice Baumann (AB), Press Bureau Alice Baumann Conception; Pierre-André Tschanz (PAT), Swiss Radio International, Berne; Giuseppe Rusconi (RUS), parliamentary correspondent for "Corriere del Ticino". Editor of Official News: Robert Nyffeler (NYF), Service for the Swiss Abroad, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, CH-3003 Berne. Translator: Ian Tickle.

Publisher, Editorial Office, Advertising: Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16; Tel: 41 31 351 61 10, Fax: 41 31 351 61 50, Postal Cheque Account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. Printed by: Buri Druck AG, CH-3084 Wabern.

No. 1/96 (26.1.1996)

Giuseppe Rusconi