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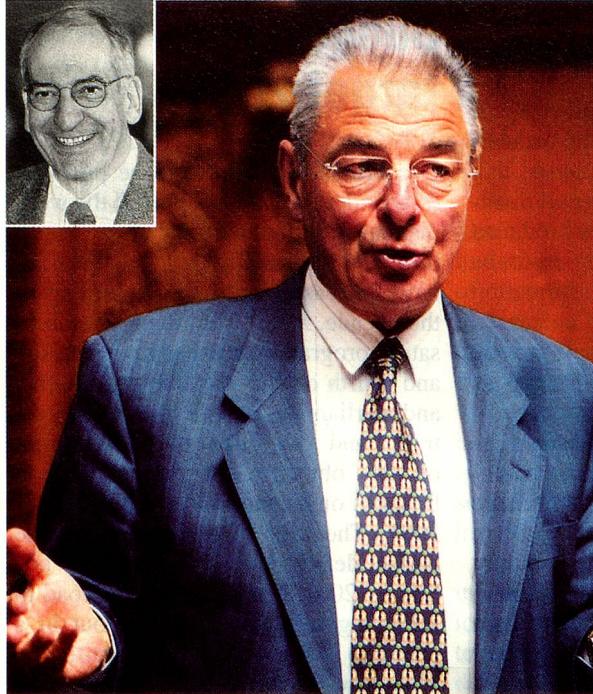


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Jean-Pascal
Delamuraz and
successor Pascal
Couchepin.

Federal councillor Jean-Pascal Delamuraz retires

Departure of a pedigree politician

Jean-Pascal Delamuraz resigned at the end of March after 14 years in the government. He has put this decision down to health grounds. After two serious operations the 62 year-old politician from Vaud is visibly not the man he was. Shortly after announcing his resignation he had to go back to hospital for treatment. Delamuraz was elected to the Federal Council on December 7, 1983, and initially took over the Federal Military Department, as it then was; since 1987 he has headed the Federal Department of Economic Affairs.

Delamuraz is a pedigree politician, a real "animal politique" who has devoted

the whole of his life to politics. In 1970 he was elected at the age of 34 to Lausanne city council; four years later to the city's mayoralty; again a year later to the National Council and in 1981 to the cantonal government. A scion of Vaud Liberal Democrats, Delamuraz is much loved in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and is seen as an integrator. For a long time he was less popular in German-speaking Switzerland, not least because of remarks made without thought after votes. It was only in his last few years in office that respect for him started to rise east of the language border. His joie de vivre, cheerfulness and vivacity helped him through many a political defeat.

There has been speculation about the possibility of Delamuraz's retiring for some years. But he never left any doubt that he alone would decide. Now his health requires him to leave an office in which he worked with great pleasure and complete commitment.

The Federal Assembly has elected Pascal Couchepin as Jean-Pascal Delamuraz's successor. This 56-year old from Valais has been a national councillor since 1979 and has been seen for some time as the crown prince among French-speaking Liberal Democrats – if only for lack of a worthy alternative.



Win a trip to Switzerland!

What do you know about the history behind the foundation of modern Switzerland?

Swiss Radio International (SRI) will be presenting Swiss history from 1798 until 1848 in 13 episodes.

We shall be asking a competition question between 29.4.-3.5., 10.-14.6., 26.-30.8., and 23.-27.9.1998 in all of SRI's seven language programmes.

The winners will receive prizes from Michel Jordi's *The Spirit of Switzerland* ethno-look range (watches, ties, wallets, etc.) plus CDs by SRI.

At the end of October, there will be a draw among all the correct replies for the main prize, which is a trip to Switzerland for two persons.



Point of view

"This country has now reached a point where it can look back with quiet seriousness at the great achievements of its political culture, as well as on evil and guilt; and accept all of those things as a part of itself. Only when it does so will its head sit easy, free and fearless on its shoulders."

From the speech given by Zurich professor of literature Peter von Matt at the Aargau state ceremony "200 years of modern Switzerland".