

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 29 (2002)
Heft: 5

Rubrik: [Impressum]

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: 17.04.2026

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

Age is no criterion

Too old at 70 to hold a political office! This was the decision of the community assembly of Madiswil, a village of 2000 inhabitants in the canton of Berne. A motion to ban anyone over 70 from political office was approved by an overwhelming majority.

Put into context, the decision was a compromise solution: the aim was to increase the restricted term of office for members of the executive from two to three terms without provoking the ire of those opposed to "entrenched seats" on the Community Council. So the simplest way to solve the dilemma was to define an age limit beyond which it was not permitted to stand for office.

If the intention behind the decision of the Madiswil community assembly was to raise the sleepy community out of anonymity, then they succeeded way beyond their wildest dreams! The news raised eyebrows around Switzerland, and for a few days little community was the eye of a media storm. But the attention was short-lived. The news was regarded as a bizarre incident with no notable impact on Swiss everyday life.

So the village of Madiswil once again disappeared as fast as it had been catapulted into the headlines.



Pablo Crivelli

"the idea of limiting the eligibility of older people for public office appears impractical."

(One exception was the "NZZ am Sonntag", which published an article claiming that age limits are also being enforced in other Bernese communities without causing any controversy.) By the way, remember Stierva? In 1997 the community assembly

of this tiny Grisons locality withdrew the right to stand for office from over-65s, but the decision had to be rescinded because it was judged to be in violation of the cantonal constitution.

Unlike the media, which rapidly shelved the topic, the senior citizens of Madiswil and retirement organisations are not willing to let the subject go and be treated as second-class citizens. The Swiss Senior Citizens' Council has announced that it aims to fight what it regards as a grievous injustice. The organisation cites Article 8 of the Federal Constitution which forbids any form of age-related discrimination.

The issue is still not resolved, and in the meantime the "Madiswil affair" has neatly thrown light on the minor and major contradictions in our society. Against a backdrop of an increasingly ageing population and constantly rising life expectancy, the idea of limiting the eligibility of older people for public office appears impractical. In an age when young people have little interest in politics and the working population is so busy holding down a job that they have no time for other obligations, senior citizens offer the only solution to the burgeoning crisis which faces many communities when it comes to filling political offices. This is especially true of peripheral regions which are most acutely affected by a drain on the population.

Many older citizens have the time and interest to serve society and put their life experiences to good use. The exclusion of over-70s from active politics is an affront, especially when one thinks of the often-expressed concern that the retirement age may have to be raised to 68 or even higher in the near future in order to rescue the AHV.

Pablo Crivelli

Translated from the German.



FOCUS

Crisis in schools **4**

REFERENDA

Three Nos **9**

OFFICIAL NEWS

The Fifth Switzerland is growing **12**

OSA

Swiss Abroad at Expo **14**

MAILBAG

17

MOSAIC

18



What ails our schooling system? Violence is on the increase in schools, the reading skills of school-leavers are declining, teachers are suffering from burn-out, parents are turning their backs or over-protecting their offspring. Experts give their opinion.

COVER: Imagopress

SWISS REVIEW

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 29th year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in more than 25 regional editions. It has a total circulation of over 360 000. Regional news appears four times a year.

Gabrielle Keller (gk), Editor-in-Chief; Rolf Ribi (RR); Isabelle Eichenberger (IE); Pablo Crivelli (PC); Patricia Messerli (MPC), responsible for the Official News, Swiss Abroad Service EDA, CH-3003 Berne. Translation: Nicolette Chisholm.

Publisher, Editorial Office, Advertising: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16; Tel: +41 31 351 61 00, Fax: +41 31 351 61 50, Postal Account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9.

Printed by: Buri Druck AG, CH-3084 Wabern.

Change of address: Please advise your local Embassy or Consulate – do not write to Berne. Single copy CHF 5.–

Internet: <http://www.revue.ch> E-mail: revue@aso.ch