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## More facts about Switzerland

Many thanks for the Review. It is my sole information channel for Switzerland, since unfortunately we have no cable or Internet connection here.

I would like to make a suggestion which, in my humble opinion, might help to improve the Review.

I think that if you were to feature a page dedicated to geographical, historical and geopolitical information on Switzerland, it would help to make our home country better known abroad (very often people abroad associate Switzerland only with the cold and snow. The better-informed may perhaps think of banks and Nazi gold).

*Mélie Célène, Le Raizet  
(Guadeloupe/France)*

## Neutral or not?

SR 02/2002, S.8



Pablo Crivelli opines in his contribution "We remain neutral" that Swiss neutrality has been "non-existent" since the early 1990s (sanctions against Iraq and ex-Yugoslavia). Indeed, Crivelli's example proves quite the opposite. The entire point is that Switzerland was in a position to decide, of its own accord. In future, Switzerland will enjoy no such discretion. The loss of that ability is an unfortunate, and indeed unneces-

sary, divestment of Swiss sovereignty.

*Paul Oertly, Nelson,  
(New Zealand)*

## When does life begin?

SR 01/2001, p. 3

The moment of fertilization unites 23 chromosomes from the father with 23 chromosomes from the mother. The resulting human embryo is a complete, genetically programmed, 46 chromosomed, unique individual. At no other point in the subsequent growth and development of that individual can a more pivotal event be said to have occurred than the moment of fertilization. And, if as some say, the resulting embryo is not human and can thus be destroyed to obtain stem cells, than (a) what is "it"? and (b) when, precisely, does "it" become a human? A vague

answer to these questions is a poor excuse indeed to justify such research.

*Fritz Baumgartner  
Los Angeles (USA)*

## Most concerned

SR 02/2002, S. 9



I always thought that morality was an immutable value.

I received the Swiss Review and am very disappointed that first-trimester abortion is also mentioned under this category. Surely there are enough effective methods of prevention around nowadays to render this „solution“ unnecessary? I am most concerned.

*Maria Frei, Vienna (Austria)*

## Important information for pensioners in the EU



Aura

At the end of July 2002, persons drawing a Swiss AHV/IV pension and resident in an EU member state will receive a letter from the Swiss Insurance Law (KVG) Joint Facility, stating the most important aspects of the impact which the agreement on free movement of people will have on obligatory health insurance. The addresses of pensioners were provided by the Central Compensation Office (Zentrale Ausgleichsstelle, ZAS). The letter provides information on whether or not pensioners are obliged to take out a Swiss health insurance policy for themselves and family members who are not employed. It also lists criteria governing exemption and an information sheet on reduced premiums for pensioners and family members not in employment who are living in reduced economic circumstances and insured in Switzerland. Forms to apply for a Swiss health insurance policy or have your insurance obligations checked, etc., are also enclosed.

Address of the Joint Facility: Gemeinsame Einrichtung KVG: Gibelinstrasse 25, PO Box, CH-4503 Solothurn, info@kvg.org, Tel +41 32 625 48 20, Fax +41 32 625 48 29.