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The Fifth Switzerland at Expo.02



Radiant Swiss Abroad at the "Images Suisses" Italy stand.

On 10 August the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad held its Swiss Abroad day under the motto "Images Suisses" as part of the Expo.02 National Exhibition. Over 14,000 visitors took the opportunity to find out about the Fifth Switzerland. Statistically, one in two Swiss visited Expo.02. In

all, 10.3 million tickets were sold, and the exhibition attracted an estimated half a million visitors from abroad. In financial terms the picture is not quite so positive. While expenses were only CHF 10 million over budget, income fell CHF 465 million short of the target. 

Free movement of persons

Switzerland took a step closer to its European neighbours. The bilateral accords with the European Union (EU) and the revised agreement with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) came into force on 1 June, introducing free movement of citizens of these countries within their respective borders. Swiss nationals are now treated the same as citizens of EU and EFTA countries. Subject to certain conditions they are permitted to work in an EU or EFTA member country and settle there with their family. The agreements also entail further concessions, for instance the recognition of diplomas and the possibility of acquiring property in Europe.

Switzerland joins the UN

On 3 March 2002, 54.6% of Swiss voters voted in favour of UN membership. This

paved the way to Switzerland becoming the 190th member of the United Nations. Statistics on Swiss votes from abroad showed an 80% Yes vote, with 78.5 percent of Swiss Abroad voting Yes in the canton of Lucerne (as opposed to 51.5% at home). In the canton of Geneva, the seat of the United Nations, 78.2% of Swiss Abroad voted in favour of the proposal (compared to 66.9% of voters at home), while 81.3% of Swiss Abroad voters voted Yes in the canton of Vaud (compared to 63.5% at home).

Austrian Abroad is a Swiss

The World Association of Austrians Abroad nominated Swiss actor Maximilian Schell as the 2002 Austrian Abroad of the Year. Born in Vienna in 1930, Schell moved to Switzerland eight years later. His acting career was launched in 1954, and four years later he made his film debut in Hollywood. In 1961 he won an Oscar for the best actor in

"Judgement at Nuremberg". This was followed by six more Oscar nominations. He won three New York Critics Awards, several Golden Globes and seven federal film awards. In 1992 he received an honorary doctorate from the Spertus College of Judaica in Chicago, and was appointed guest professor at the University of Southern California. His first novel, "The Rebel", was published in 1997.


Swiss Abroad of the Year

The FDP International awarded the Swiss Abroad Prize for the first time this year. The award went to Raymonde Berthoud (82) in Budapest, who has worked selflessly in the interests of Swiss citizens and disadvantaged ethnic groups in Hungary for over 50 years (see "Swiss Review" 03/2002). The prize will be awarded again in 2003.

Lisbeth Fehr at Swiss Ping Pong

Lisbeth Fehr, National Councillor (SVP/ZH) and member of the Council for the Swiss Abroad (CSA), was appointed the new President of the Swiss Ping Pong encounter programme in June 2002. She succeeded Huguette de Haller (GE), who held the office for ten years. Lisbeth Fehr chairs the sponsors' committee which is made up of the following organisations: Sponsoring canton (annual rotation), allianceF (Association of Swiss Womens' Organisations/BSF), Swiss European Womens' Union (SEFU), Swiss Association of Charitable Womens' Organisations (SGF), Swiss Catholic Womens' Association (SKF), DFA's Organisation for the Swiss Abroad (OSA), Pro Patria and swissinfo/SRI.

The Fifth Switzerland is growing

At the end of June this year 598,934 Swiss nationals were registered at Swiss embassies and consulates around the world. This represents an increase of 7,274 Swiss Abroad since last year. 421,680 Swiss Abroad (70.4%) have dual nationality (see also "Swiss Review" 05/2002). 

Text: Gabrielle Keller

Photos: Imagopress/Patrick Lüthy

Kurt Wüthrich, Swiss professor of biophysics and acclaimed for his research into prions, was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry. He shares the award with an American and a Japanese. The Swiss Nobel laureate is retiring from Zurich's Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in a year's time, after which he intends to emigrate to the USA to set up a laboratory.

Pro Helvetia appointed Michel Ritter as the new director of the Centre Culturel Suisse (CCS) in Paris in mid-February. Born in 1949, Ritter was formerly Head of the Fribourg-based cultural centre „Fri-Art“. The foreign branch of the Swiss cultural foundation, set up in 1985, needed a replacement for the current incumbent, Daniel Jeannet, who is retiring next summer after eleven years in office.

Federal Councillor Ruth Dreifuss



is retiring from office. During her time in the government the Social Democrat succeeded in leaving her mark on policies governing drugs, research, environment and, above all, social security.

Federal Councillor Kaspar Villiger, on the other hand, is staying on for another year. The media speculated on a double vacancy based on Dreifuss and Villiger resigning. Villiger's term of office ends on 31 December 2003. The decisive debate on the successor to the Liberal-Democrat Federal

Councillor will therefore be held only after the federal elections.

Hans Peter Tschudi, Federal Councillor between 1960 and 1973, died in Basle at the end of September shortly before his 89th birthday. The popular Social Democrat is mainly remembered as the "father of the AHV". Tschudi was born in Basle in 1913.

Georges-André Chevallaz died in Lausanne in early September at the age of 87. Between 1974 and 1983 Chevallaz was a Liberal-Democrat Federal Councillor. In 1980 he was elected as President of the Swiss Confederation and at the same time moved from the Department of Finance to the then Military Department, which he continued to head until his retirement on 29 December 1983.

The end of Swissair caused major repercussions. According to CEO André Dosé, the new airline, Swiss, is on track. Swiss spokesman Dominik Werner announced that the airline is sticking to its goal of breaking even next year. So far the business plan has exceeded its targets and the payload has continually improved. During the first

half-year of 2002 Swiss reported revenues of CHF 1.754 billion and a loss of CHF 447 million.

Museum for Swiss residents abroad

The Château de Penthes in Geneva houses the Museum of Swiss Abroad. The new foundation president is former Swiss ambassador in Paris, Benedikt von Tscharner, who took over this post from Jean-René Bory in October in tandem with Anselm Zurfluh, the new institute and museum director. At the launch of their new home page www.chateau-de-penthes.ch the management announced their intention to extend the scope of the museum to show globalisation and Swiss history "in a different way", and to offer Swiss interests abroad a platform for document archiving, research, exhibitions and small events. The foundation receives no state subsidies and is seeking financial support. The increased search for donors to fund planned projects has prompted the foundation to focus its attentions on Swiss companies abroad.



SNIPPETS

BERNE'S CANTONAL GOVERNMENT is considering a revision to the community law which would introduce a ban on the general age limit for community bodies. This was prompted by criticisms of a new provision which the community of Madiswil introduced to its organisational regulations (see also "Swiss Review" 05/2002, Editorial).

THE FIRST VOLUME of the weighty new reference work on the nation, the "Historical Dictionary of Switzerland", was presented to Federal Councillor Ruth Dreifuss in October: the product of the largest humanities project supported by the government.

DUE TO SCANDALOUS PROFITS realised from LTS (Long Term Strategy) by Rentenanstalt managers, the Swiss Investors Protection Association is considering pressing charges. According to the "Sonn-

tagszeitung" the current CEO of Rentenanstalt, Roland Chlapowski, who until recently was also a member of the LTS board, managed to more than quadruple his stake of CHF 967,000 and cashed in gains of CHF 3.2 million. Likewise, ex-CEO Manfred Zobl almost quadrupled his stake in the LTS and cashed in CHF 2.2 million. Ex-CFO Dominique Morax made a profit of CHF 3.6 million – almost five times his original holding. Commenting on the affair in the "Blick", Minister of Economic Affairs Pascal Couchepin said: "People who demand so much money despite mismanaging a company have no sense of honour."

POSSIBLE TERRORIST ATTACKS on the next World Economic Forum are to be prevented by military deterrents, according to the future General Chief of Staff Christophe Keckeis. Among other options up for discussion is a move to block air space.

