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Declining quality of Swiss schools

Swiss Review 05/2002, Focus

The article "Schools in crisis" was a real eye-opener, although it should really come as no surprise: the attempt to integrate in Switzerland's traditionally high-calibre education system pupils from third-world countries or countries with highly disparate or lower standards was doomed to failure from the outset. This is confirmed by the study conducted by the Canton of Basle City Department of Education. According to its findings, 50 percent of juvenile crimes in Switzerland are committed by young foreigners. It would not surprise me if this group were involved in at least half of the gang crimes mentioned in the article. Small wonder that the "attractiveness of the job is suffering as a consequence". What intelligent young person decides on a profession where he or she has to deal with lack of respect, disciplinary problems, and even criminal behaviour?

Ulrich Kaempff
Los Altos, USA

An angry Vaudois

Swiss Review 05/2002, Mosaic



I fully support Albert Banderet, the mayor of Champagne. I wish him success with his suit before the European Court of Justice. Long live the "appellation Champagne", this excellent little wine from the north of Vaud.

I couldn't help laughing when I read your article. Paris claims that the name "Champagne" is confused with the only true champagne produced in France.

What, then, should we say about Gruyère: the only true Gruyère is produced in our country, yet a cheap imitation is sold

throughout France. We could equally well be offended.

From a Swiss in a country which is indifferent to our little Switzerland and who wants to defend his beautiful country.

Claude Mast, Moissac-Bellevue,
France

Picture-book passports

Swiss Review 06/2002, Official News



Should our future passports look like a picture-book? It would be a pity if our Swiss passports fell victim to designer chic. The old passport is so distinctive that everyone (at least in European countries) recognises it. That will no longer be the case with a designer passport. No external authority can claim that it is familiar with individual cantonal attributes.

Tino Walz, Munich, Germany

Crying shame

Swiss Review 05/2002, Mosaic

The story of the Vaudois "Vin de Champagne" being banned by the bilateral accords is several years old.

While I fully support any process of legal harmonisation with the EU, I see only one solution. We must prove to Europe's old-style masters of hegemony exactly who has the last word in Switzerland, and resolve to continue producing and selling "Vin de Champagne".

I am convinced that civil disobedience still produces results (think of the way Eastern Europe's borders were opened up in 1989). And lots of EU citizens will support this move – at least from a moral standpoint!

The fact that the Federal Council has permitted an EU region to make such a claim is a crying shame.

Nils W. Bräm
Neunkirchen-Seelscheid, Germany

Not only banks, cows and Lindt

Swiss Review 05/02, Expo.02

Is "Swissness" really limited to cows, chocolate and watches? Can we only feel Swiss when we have the Swiss flag in front of us? And is there no other interesting character than Heidi to symbolise "Swissness"?

Expo.02 was far from perfect but it did attempt to pose some questions, particularly with regard to what it means for each of us to be Swiss ("Heimat-Fabrik" exhibition in Murten). The answers were open to interpretation; ultimately they were about a Switzerland that is open to the world.

Having lived in the UK for six years (since I was 19 years old), I was proud to come back from my visit to Expo.02 with some beautiful, interesting photos to show my friends: photos of an innovative, modern and progressive Switzerland that consists of much more than banks, cows and Lindt!

Our country should not be viewed as merely a beautiful memory which we nostalgically conjure up whenever we think of home. Switzerland contains a huge diversity of people. Let us join them in progressing!

Sophie Kasser, London, UK

Iten-Treffen im Ägerital / Schweiz am 30./31. August 2003.

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