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Demographic trends

Swiss Review 06/2002, Focus



I found your article on demographic trends in Switzerland highly astonishing. The entire article is written based on the implicit assumption that human population growth is intrinsically good and desirable. Not even once is the question posed if this can be true for an extremely densely populated country such as Switzerland. It is obvious that a decreasing population, or even one with a decreasing rate of growth, creates problems financing the AHV. However, unlimited population growth cannot be the eternal solution and must at some point be halted.

Marc Kéry
Laurel, MD, USA

Trace back

Swiss Review 6/2002, Focus

As a Swiss national living abroad for over 40 years this was a very interesting article in the "Swiss Review" Nr. 6. Today's Swiss must have forgotten that Switzerland historically always benefited from its immigrants in the long run (i.e. Huguenots). All those politicians who are afraid of immigrants should once make

an effort to trace back their ancestry (paternal and maternal). Most of them are not descendants of William Tell or Werner Stauffacher. Perhaps even Christoph Blocher will find an immigrant among his ancestors.

Dieter Linder
New York, USA

Show a little more respect

Swiss Review 6/2002, Focus

I believe we should show Swiss emigrants a little more respect. I have been living in Portugal for six years and have got to know lots of expatriate Swiss, Austrians and Germans. We have all been cordially welcomed and accorded respect. If we Swiss want to be treated well abroad, we should also treat the foreigners who live peacefully in our country with the same respect. What I find ironic about the whole business is the fact that your magazine criticises something with which most Swiss will be familiar. I have come to know some Swiss here in Portugal who have been living here for years yet their Portuguese vocabulary is limited to "Obrigado" ("thank you"). Before criticising foreigners living in our country, shouldn't we first make sure our compatriots are not behaving the same way abroad?

Brigitte Poças
Lisbon, Portugal

What is the home country?

Maya Duerst is launching an Internet project on the subject of "The home country" as part of her post-graduate studies in scenography at the College of Design and Art, Zurich. You can take part by logging on to <http://heimatspiel.hgkz.ch>. Maya is collecting the impressions, aspirations and dreams of Swiss nationals living abroad. To assist in the project you can send in images (photos, videos etc.), texts (newspaper articles, letters, stories etc.) and sounds (music, noises etc.) via Internet or by post. The Internet project begins on 5 May 2003 and will run for a year.

Contributions will be collected on a monthly basis and posted on the Internet. Internet address: <http://heimatspiel.hgkz.ch>. Postal address: heimatspiel.ch; PO Box 66; CH-8488 Turbenthal

Dear Swiss Government

Things are fine in Holland. Two people come from another country and so have become Swiss. It's snowing in Holland and I send my greetings!
Bye bye

Lukas (age 5)
Maarn, Netherlands

(According to the mother of this young Swiss Abroad, Lukas believes it is only right and proper that Switzerland knows what he is up to – since the "Swiss Review" tells Swiss living abroad all about what Switzerland is up to. And of course he is absolutely right. Ed.)

A matter of decorum

Swiss Review, Mailbag

What always gets me are the angry readers' letters about certain articles. Let's be honest: Even Switzerland only uses water for cooking and is by no means the land of milk and honey.

Ultimately, freedom of opinion rules in Switzerland and anyone can write whatever he wants. But how you express yourself is a matter of decorum and good manners. Even Switzerland has its negative aspects, but if possible people should not write about them in a way that incites anger among other Swiss.

Hugo Landert
Sofia, Bulgaria

Not politically correct

Swiss Review 06/2002, "Testing times for farmers"

The main picture accompanying the above article on Swiss farmers showed a child (or youngster) milking a cow. Despite the implicit and understandable fact that the child is a member of a farming family who helps his parents with their chores, this picture is not politically or socially correct, especially when published by an official Swiss organisation. Child labour in developing countries is currently a hot topic; there are even groups who call for a boycott on products that rely on child labour.

I am a loyal reader of "Swiss Review" and would appreciate it if "my" Review took account of such socially sensitive issues.

Vincent Nguyen
Almaty, Kazakhstan

Mike Barnett-Bischof

Jamaica, West Indies

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