

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 31 (2004)  
**Heft:** 1

**Vorwort:** EU membership on the back burner  
**Autor:** Veuthey, Charly

### **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:** 22.08.2025

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



# EU membership on the back burner

At the end of the 2003 political year, as Switzerland was holding its collective breath during parliamentary and Federal Council elections, EU supporters came to the bitter realisation that EU membership was not an election issue. The only politicians who addressed the European question did so from a standpoint of stubborn opposition. Most came from the ranks of the SVP. In view of the party's growing strength and the election of Christoph Blocher, who owes his success in no small measure to his opposition to EU membership, EU supporters had to accept the fact that the situation was now more complex.

As early as mid-day on 10 December, shortly after the composition of the new government was announced, a friend's e-mail expressed the disappointment of EU supporters. In it, he urged his friends and acquaintances to support the manifesto of the New European Movement for Switzerland (NEMS): "Please sign to register your protest to the triumph of anti-Europeans!" On 21 November, 73 prominent Swiss personalities called for EU membership negotiations to be taken up in 2004 ([www.europa.ch](http://www.europa.ch)): "At the threshold of the new legislature period, this appeal clearly expresses the sentiment that Switzerland's future lies with the European Union, and that only by joining the EU will our country be able to pursue its interests in a dignified manner."

The membership process has now been brought to a standstill. On 28 January, the Federal Council confirmed the priorities of the Bilateral II round and emphasised that only a simultaneous conclusion to negotiations in all areas was acceptable. This view is only partially shared by the EU. The bilaterals may be facing other problems: expansion of the EU to the East, which will bring ten new countries to the negotiating table on 1 May, threatens to make the task even more difficult, as do certain opinions within the EU which claim that Switzerland wants to have its cake and eat it. Switzerland is called upon to make a substantial contribution to strengthening European unity.

As far as actual membership is concerned, recent statements by the Federal Council make it clear that this will not happen until 2006 or 2007 at the earliest, i.e. the end of this legislature. But the implication is that the matter will not necessarily be addressed during the next legislature period. The only thing that now gives EU supporters cause for hope is that the SVP's efforts to withdraw the application for membership have failed. So the issue has merely been put on the back burner.



Charly Veuthey

## At first glance, Switzerland's attitude to the EU is ambiguous.

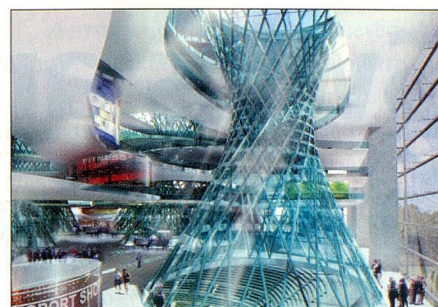
By insisting on the fundamental importance of the bilaterals, our country is essentially underscoring the necessity of integration in the EU. Yet the refusal to talk of membership gives the impression of a deal done behind closed doors. It appears that our politicians are

afraid of openly admitting to Swiss citizens that there is no way round the European issue.

The second paradox lies in the fact that Switzerland is perceived abroad as a country turned in on itself. As citizens of the world, you are the living proof that the opposite is true. You proved this in the survey conducted last year by the gfs Institute: 58 percent of you want Switzerland to join the EU by 2007. Our architects, who are featured in this issue's Focus section, also reflect this open, cosmopolitan spirit: they construct buildings around the world, creating new objects with no thought of restrictive boundaries.

Charly Veuthey

Translated from German.



### FOCUS

Swiss architecture: beautifying the world **4**

### DOSSIER

The Swiss say it with flowers **8**

### POLITICS

Tough spending cuts **11**

### OFFICIAL NEWS

Implications of expansion to the East **14**

### MAILBAG

**18**

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**19**



Basle architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron achieved international fame with their Tate Gallery of Modern Art in London: an astonishing mixture of sober geometry and artistic flair.

TITLE PICTURE: Nils Jorgensen / REX Features

## SWISS REVIEW

[www.revue.ch](http://www.revue.ch)

Swiss Review, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 31<sup>st</sup> 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), **Charly Veuthey** (CV), **Gabriela Brodbeck** (BDK), responsible for the Official News, Swiss Abroad Service EDA, CH-3003 Berne. **René Lenzin** (RL), reporting from parliament. Translation: **Nicolette Chisholm**.

**Publisher, Editorial Office, Advertising:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3000 Berne 16, Tel. +41 31 356 61 10, Fax +41 31 356 61 01, Postal Account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9.

**Printed by:** Zollikofer AG, CH-9001 St. Gallen.

**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](mailto:revue@aso.ch)