

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 34 (2007)  
**Heft:** 6  
  
**Rubrik:** Imprint

#### **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:** 23.02.2026

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

## A weatherproof system

**S**WISS POLITICS ARE RARELY MENTIONED IN THE FOREIGN MEDIA. The goings-on in the Federal Parliament are usually far too mundane to raise any interest abroad. This isn't helped by the fact that the mechanism of our system of direct democracy is difficult for outsiders to grasp. Indeed many foreign journalists fail to comprehend how our seven-member government can consist of representatives from four different political parties, that we hold referenda and that true power lies with the Swiss people themselves.

As a result, Switzerland is generally only written about on the business and culture pages or, ever since Roger Federer started making waves, under sport. Even our federal elections have largely been ignored abroad up to now. After all, we neither elect a charismatic president nor bring left- or right-wing parliamentary majorities to power. Political life in Switzerland is simply so stable that it's boring for outsiders.

This time round things were rather different for once. Never before have the media in Frankfurt, London, New York and elsewhere reported so extensively about Swiss politics. And what would a review of the world's press have us believe? The international media described a racist, egotistical and divided country. For instance, the Washington Post ran a piece under the headline "Swiss Fury at Foreigners Boiling Over". Spiegel Online in Germany knew we were a "Democracy on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown". And the Independent newspaper in England fretted on its front page that Switzerland had become "Europe's Heart of Darkness".

It is traditional in the run-up to an election for current or former members of the Federal Council who have studied the international press to publicly voice concerns about Switzerland's image abroad and even worry that negative reporting could turn investors away from Switzerland.

But this will not be the case. Even after the most expensive, emptiest, and bitterest election campaign of all times, Switzerland is neither racist nor xenophobic, and it still



Heinz Eckert

isn't run by the SVP and Christoph Blocher alone, no matter what the foreign media try to sell their readers. "Our system is weatherproof," said legendary former SP leader Helmut Hubacher. Foreign reporting of Switzerland this election year was extremely one-sided, subjective and far from the truth. That's rather a shame. The Swiss political system deserves to be treated in a more differentiated and thorough way, even in the foreign media.

As we went to press, the new Parliament hadn't yet decided whether or not to confirm the present seat allocation in the Federal Council. The Federal Council election won't take place until 12 December. Both [www.aso.ch](http://www.aso.ch) and [www.swisinfo.org](http://www.swisinfo.org) will provide regular updates on the eagerly-awaited outcome.

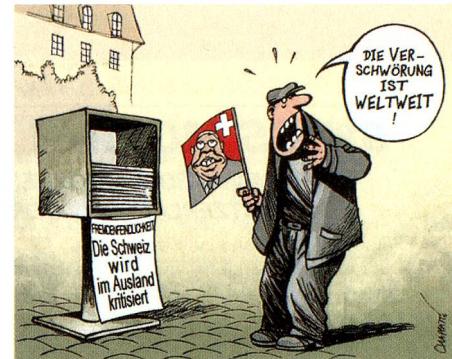
The editorial team of the Swiss Review would like to thank you for the interest you have taken in our work, and wishes you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

HEINZ ECKERT, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

**IMPRINT:** "Swiss Review", the magazine for the Swiss abroad, is in its 34th year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 21 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 400 000. Regional news appears four times a year.

■ **EDITORS:** Heinz Eckert (EC), Editor-in-Chief; Rolf Ribi (RR), René Lenzin (RL), Alain Wey (AW), Gabriela Brodbeck (BDK), responsible for DFA information pages, Service for the Swiss Abroad, DFA, CH-3003 Berne Translation: CLS Communication AG ■ **POSTAL ADDRESS:** Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Tel.: +41 31 356 61 10, Fax: +41 31 356 61 01, Postal account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9, Internet: [www.revue.ch](http://www.revue.ch) ■ **E-MAIL:** [revue@aso.ch](mailto:revue@aso.ch) ■ **PRINT:** Zollikofer AG, CH-9001 St.Gallen.

■ **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please advise your local embassy or consulate. Do not write to Berne.



"XENOPHOBIA: Switzerland Criticised Abroad. Everyone's plotting against us!"  
The cartoonist Chappatte in "NZZ"

**5**  
Mailbag

**5**  
Books: Music from French-speaking Switzerland

**6**  
A Christmas journey on the tram

**7**  
Images: Eduard Spelterini: Photographer and pioneering balloonist

**8**  
Einsiedeln Abbey: A glance inside the monastery

**12**  
Notes from Parliament

**14**  
Federal elections 2007

**15**  
Election summary: Truly historic

**16**  
OSA news

**18**  
Interview: Federal President Micheline Calmy-Rey

**19**  
News in brief

**Cover:**  
Angel figure in front of Einsiedeln Monastery church  
Photo: Keystone