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■ Switzerland's **chief of armed forces, Roland Nef**, was suspended and has now resigned. When Nef was appointed in 2007, Defence Minister Samuel Schmid did not hand over full details to the Federal Council. A complaint of harassment from Mr Nef's former girlfriend was covered up. He has received CHF 275,000 in severance pay.



■ Switzerland picked up **six medals at the Olympic Games** in Beijing. Roger Federer and Stanislas Wawrinka brought home the gold in the tennis doubles. In cycling, Fabian Cancellara from Berne won gold in the time trial event and bronze in the road race. Bronze medals were also won by Sergei Aschwenden from the Canton of Vaud in judo, Nino Schurter from Grisons in cross-country cycling and Karin Thürig from Lucerne in cycling (time trial).

■ **The Swiss People's Party (SVP/UDC) is losing support** after excluding Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf and its Grisons branch party. While Switzerland's biggest party still had the backing of 30.4% of voters in March, it can now only count on 23.3% of the vote according to an Isopublic survey published in the SonntagsZeitung. 3.8% of the electorate support the rebels from

*"Many Swiss people must be willing to buy domestic products. But quality costs. Healthy products of a certain standard are better than lettuce from southern Spain."*

Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor and Minister of Economic Affairs

*"Switzerland's contribution to the UN is valued very highly thanks to the creativity of its diplomats and the resources it provides. Switzerland is not seen to have a hidden agenda."*

Nicolas Michel, Swiss UN Under-Secretary-General

*"Mr Blocher belongs to the political past, not the future. For me, it is inconceivable that he will become a Federal Councillor again."*

Fulvio Pelli, President of Switzerland's Free Democratic Party

*"We have often suffered defeats and then won elections. People say to themselves, the SVP has lost, we will have to vote for them properly at the next elections."*

Christoph Blocher, Vice President of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) and former Federal Councillor

*"Switzerland is gradually becoming the 28th member of the EU. Without the right to vote, it dutifully follows what the 27 full members decide. Swiss democracy is simply towing the line."*

Roger de Weck, Publicist

*"The battles of Morgarten and Sempach have become mythical. The facts have been elaborated and interpreted to suggest that the road to Swiss unity was predestined by God."*

Volker Reinhardt, Professor of History at the University of Fribourg

*"The unconditional, total will to win is a characteristic that we do not possess. From outside we are seen as reflective, hardworking, reliable and reserved."*

Jost auf der Maur, Journalist

*"It is as if change has been outlawed in public areas in Switzerland. We very much regret that Moneo's design for the conference centre in Zurich has been blocked and that Zaba Hadid's casino project will not be built in Basel."*

Jacques Herzog, leading Swiss architect

*"More and more cocaine is being consumed, and the users are getting younger. Today, cocaine is used by all levels of society and even in schools."*

Rita Hubrich, Head of the "Contact Netz" advice centre in Berne

*"What I really appreciate about Switzerland is being able to move around freely here. I don't have to lock my car, and I don't have to worry about being attacked."*

FC Basel's Argentine goalkeeper, Franco Costanzo, the best goalkeeper in Swiss football

Berne, Grisons and Glarus who have formed the new Civic Democratic Party.

■ **FC Basel** will take part in the group stages of the **Champions League** for the second time in its history thanks to a 2-1 victory over Portuguese side Vitoria Guimaraes. In a fantastic run in 2002/2003, the Rhine team were a match for the big guns of European football including Juventus, Liverpool and even Manchester United.

■ Ten years after the conclusion of the global agreement

on **Jewish unclaimed assets**, USD 1 billion has been paid to 448,703 people who asserted their rights. The agreement with the major Swiss banks provides for the payment of USD 1.25 billion in total.

■ The **number of bankruptcies** in Switzerland fell in the first seven months of 2008 to 2237, the lowest figure since 1991. The number of companies created has increased by 4% in a year.

■ **Tragic European record:** one young male suicide victim in two chooses firearms

to end his life in Switzerland. The international study by the European Alliance Against Depression says this dramatic figure (43.6% of suicides amongst 15 to 24-year-olds) is explained by the fact that men keep army-issue weapons at home in Switzerland.

■ After a four-year reign, **Roger Federer has ceded his number 1 position** in world tennis to Rafael Nadal. The prodigy from Majorca had been Federer's heir apparent since July 2005.

■ **Inflation** in Switzerland continues to rise at levels not seen for fifteen years with an annual rate of 3.1% in July, according to the Federal Statistical Office. The USS and Unia unions are calling for salary increases of 2.5% and say that the average rise of 2.2% obtained in 2008 has been swallowed up by rising prices.

■ **Sales of solar collectors** for hot water and heating rose sharply by 65% in the first half of 2008. According to



Swissolar, market growth will reach 30% this year if the trend continues, which is much higher than in 2007 (25%).

■ **Swiss pension funds** lost CHF 55 billion in 2008 from a total investment of CHF 650 billion. The funds' index shows an 8.38% fall in return for the first six months.