

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 36 (2009)  
**Heft:** 3  
  
**Rubrik:** Echo

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■ At the G-20 summit at the start of April, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) published a black list of tax havens and a "grey list" of 39 countries, which included Switzerland. This "grey list" features countries that have announced a relaxation of their fiscal information policy, but have not yet implemented it. Switzerland is required to sign twelve double taxation agreements based on OECD criteria by September in order to be taken off the "grey list". The Swiss Confederation already signed seven in June. The disputes over tax may be drawing to a close.

■ Didier Cuche won the **crystal globe in the giant slalom**, a trophy which he adds to those won in downhill in 2007 and 2008. He also finished 3rd in the overall rankings for the third year running. Carlo Janka, from Grisons, won the crystal globe in the super-combined.

■ Switzerland's **Marc Forster** has made a short publicity film for the airline Swiss. He appears in the film and invites viewers to take a personal journey of the mind. The film title, "LX forty", refers to the number of the Swiss flight from Zurich to Los Angeles.

■ Having celebrated the 10th anniversary of his circumnavigation of the earth in a balloon in March, Bertrand Piccard presented the prototype of the **Solar Impulse** - his solar aeroplane which is to fly non-stop around the world without jet fuel - in Düsseldorf (Zurich) in June. The first test flights will take place in Switzerland at the end of the year.

■ **The Swiss Federal Railways (SBB)** has launched the biggest call to tender in its his-

*"This is the latest stage on the road to the longest wonder of the world. And this wonder of the world is in Switzerland."*

Moritz Leuenberger, Federal Councillor and Minister of Transport, at the breakthrough of the Gotthard base tunnel between Erstfeld and Amsberg.

*"I handed my military rifle in to the arsenal. I'm not a very good shot. I can't hit anything."*

Ueli Maurer, Federal Councillor and Minister of Defence

*"The fact is that Switzerland is not part of any major alliance, neither the G-7 or G-20, nor the EU or NATO."*

Doris Leuthard, Federal Councillor and Minister of Economic Affairs

*"My opponents hoped I would leave politics after my de-selection, and that Blocher's time would finally come to an end. It has not worked out that way."*

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

*"Couchepin was the last politician left in the Federal Council after Blocher's de-selection. There will be no politicians left in the Federal Council after autumn."*

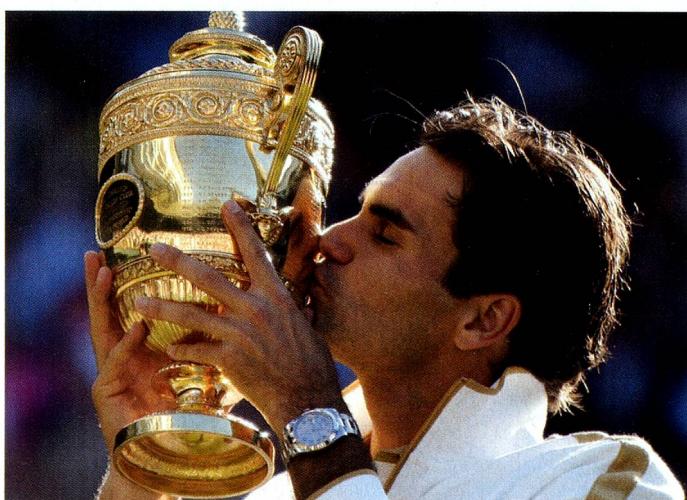
Peter Bodenmann, former President of the Social Democrats (SP)

*"In Switzerland we vote on extremely diverse specialist topics every three months at communal, cantonal and federal level. That is asking a lot of people."*

Werner Seitz, political scientist

*"It is not Switzerland's fault that it has governed more wisely than the rest of Europe over the past century."*

Michael Stürmer, German historian and publicist



In winning Wimbledon for the seventh time, Roger Federer has regained the No.1 position in world tennis and has become the world's greatest tennis player of all time.

tory for the purchase of 59 new double-decker trains costing CHF 2.1 billion. With a 30% rise in passenger numbers since 2004, the SBB urgently needs to increase the capacity of its rolling stock.

■ **The world's biggest fondeau?** Weighing in at 1,441 kg and 300 grams, it was made in La Chaux-de-Fonds with a tonne of bread, 20 kg of garlic and shallots, 400 litres of

wine and 8 litres of kirsch. Around 4,000 guests enjoyed tasting it.

■ A record: Swiss customs officials seized 2,199 **falsified documents** last year, 40% more than in 2005. They included counterfeit passports, visas, identity cards, residence permits and even driving licences.

■ **The UN's anti-racism conference** was held in

Geneva in April. Intended to evaluate the progress since the Durban Conference in September 2001, the meeting at Lake Geneva was tainted by the explosive remarks of the Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, about Israel. Outraged by the comments, the delegates of the 23 EU countries left the room. The silence of the Swiss ambassador was condemned by the Swiss political parties.

■ Switzerland hosted the **World Ice Hockey Championships**, but Ralph Krueger's protégés did not manage to get through the qualification round. Russia, coached by Fribourg's Slava Bykov, beat Canada to win the title.

■ The National Council is tightening up on **naturalisation**. To combat abuse of the system, it has extended the period during which fraudulently obtained naturalisation can be annulled from five to eight years.

■ Swiss people **are smoking less**, according to a study by the Federal Office of Public Health. Between 2001 and 2008, the proportion of smokers fell from 33% to 27% among people aged 14 to 65. There was an even sharper drop in the 14-19 age group (from 33% to 23%).

■ Boom in **electric bicycles**: more than 11,600 electric bicycles were sold in 2008, twice as many as in 2007.

■ **A 3rd economic recovery plan** of CHF 750 million has been launched by the Federal Council. The measures focus on tackling unemployment and boosting purchasing power by reducing health insurance premiums. Taking into account the first two economic recovery plans, total spending is now estimated at CHF 1.7 billion.

AW/RR