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■ **The ban on smoking** in public places came into force throughout Switzerland on 1 May 2010. The proportion of smokers in Switzerland dropped from 33% to 27% between 2001 and 2009. The campaign led by lung disease groups has taken a giant step forward as more previously enjoyed freedoms went up in smoke.

■ Since the opening of the World Expo in Shanghai on 1 May, the **Swiss Pavilion** has proven a big hit. Visitors had to wait almost three hours to enter the building above which a six-seater cable car is suspended. In an exhibition area measuring 4,000 m², Switzerland's theme is "interaction between urban and rural areas". This adventure is set to last until 31 October.

■ According to a study by the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland's **performance in innovation** is the best in the world. It is the most innovative economy with regard to both industry and services. In terms of the innovation performance of SMEs, Switzerland is at the forefront, along with Sweden and Finland, ahead of Israel, the USA and Japan.

■ Panini World Cup stickers have come up against an original competitor – the "**Der König**" album presents **Switzerland's best wrestlers** who will compete in the Swiss national wrestling tournament and alpine festival in Frauenfeld from 20 to 22 August 2010. More than a million stickers have been sold.

■ The Federal Council recommended the rejection of the popular initiative calling for six weeks of **holiday** a year for all workers. The union Travail Suisse submitted the necessary signatures in June 2009 and the Swiss people will now decide at

"When I introduced myself at the UN, I said I was as precise as a Swiss watch and as versatile as a Swiss army knife."

Joseph Deiss, former Federal Councillor, new President of the UN General Assembly

"When the volcano erupted in Iceland no-one was to blame. The newspapers could not call for resignations, except for perhaps that of St. Peter."

Moritz Leuenberger, Federal Councillor

"Efforts should be made to facilitate the integration of border regions, such as Alsace, Aosta, Bolzano, Vorarlberg, Savoy, Baden-Württemberg, Varese and Como as new Swiss cantons."

A serious proposal by Dominique Baettig, SVP National Councillor

"Switzerland is too small for high-speed trains. By the time a train between Berne and Zurich had accelerated to a speed of 300 km/h, it would have to start braking again."

Max Friedli, who is stepping down as Director of the Federal Office of Transport

"Experts believe between CHF 600 and 900 billion in untaxed money is now being kept in our banks."

Werner Messmer, Free Democrat (FDP) National Councillor in Thurgau

"I fail to see why the Swiss devote so much time and energy to the state when foreigners neither carry out military service nor pay exemption tax."

Bruno S. Frey, former professor at the University of Zurich

"Switzerland needs to consider its future direction. Otherwise good musicians will no longer come here with their performances of Guarneri and Stradivari."

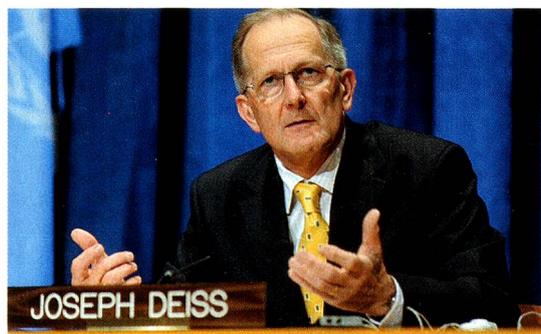
Patricia Kopatchinskaja, a violinist living in Berne whose precious instrument was confiscated by customs officials in Zurich

"In terms of the representation of women in politics, Swiss women are in the bottom third in Europe with a 30% share."

Patricia Schulz, Head of the Federal Office for Gender Equality

"The racists should be reminded that Switzerland was also once a country of emigration. Few people believe me when I tell them that my grandparents emigrated in 1928 because of poverty."

Melissa Auf der Maur, Canadian Swiss and international rock star



Former Federal Councillor Joseph Deiss (term of office: 1999-2006) has been elected President of the UN General Assembly. He will succeed Libya's Ali Treki on 14 September for a year-long mandate. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs played a key role in Switzerland's accession to the UN in 2002.

a referendum in 2011 or 2012.

■ **Air pollution** in Switzerland is still too high. Greenhouse gas emissions reached 53.2 million tonnes in 2008 – 0.5% more than in 1990 and 4.6 tonnes

above the limit set by the Kyoto Protocol.

■ The conflict between Switzerland and **Libya** over the Hannibal Kadafi affair has finally been resolved. The two

Swiss citizens detained in Libya have been released, Rachid Hamdani in February after 19 months and Max Göldi in June after almost 700 days. The Minister of Foreign Affairs Micheline Calmy-Rey hopes that Swiss relations with Tripoli can now return to normal.

■ According to a survey, more than half of the Swiss population surf the **Internet** (55%) every day compared to 51% of Austrians and 43% of Germans. A study by Pro Senectute showed that just 38% of senior citizens are online.

■ **The employment indicator** of the "Konjunkturforschungsstelle" (Economic Research Unit) is pointing upwards again, reaching 2.9 points in April compared to -14.2 points in April 2009. This suggests a return to growth and a turnaround on the labour market.

■ **The army** will have to pay out more than a billion francs to clean up pollution left by military exercises, particularly target practice. Damage was caused by the heavy metal and residue from flamethrowers which contaminated the earth and polluted ground water in some 1,500 locations.

■ The Federal Administrative Court has annulled the 333-million-franc fine imposed by the Competition Commission (Comco) on **Swisscom** for charging its mobile competitors excessive termination fees. Swisscom nevertheless still faces another 220-million-franc fine, pronounced by Comco in June 2009, for abusing its market position in broadband Internet connections.