

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 38 (2011)
Heft: 2

Inhaltsverzeichnis

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: 17.04.2026

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

New prospects

POLITICAL COMMENTATORS and analysts believe that 2011 is set to be a momentous election year for Switzerland, which may even result in far-reaching changes to the political system. The party landscape has changed enormously over the past four years. You can read about how this situation has arisen and who the new and main protagonists are from page 8 onwards.

The Swiss media all agree that Parliament and, even more so, the Federal Council have failed to make a good impression over recent years. Mistrust, animosity and antagonism have dominated politics for long periods. Is this really the kind of government the people have wanted? Of course not. This inevitably raises the question of whether the problem lies with the present incumbents – would an influx of fresh faces make everything better? Or do we perhaps need a new system?

Is the system of political concordance with all the major parties in government, which has been in place since 1959, perhaps outdated? Does this system no longer meet the requirements of modern times? That may well be the case. The issue is certain to be the subject of heated debate this year. In the past, political parties have on several occasions threatened to leave the government and go into opposition, and the Social Democrats (SP) now suspect others of plotting to throw them out of government as well.

That would result in a system with a coalition government and an opposition – a system that is commonplace outside Switzerland. But is that desirable? The immediate response would be “no”, as it would obstruct our unique, highly sophisticated system of direct democracy with its power of referenda for parties and interest groups, with federalism and cantonal majority. Such an idea is bound to provoke fear and a defensive reaction. However, it is also evident that under a system of coalition government and opposition it would be much clearer who bears responsibility for what. It would prevent parties from participating in government while behaving like the opposition – an approach successfully adopted by the Swiss People's Party (SVP) for many years.



Barbara Engel

Realistically, the chances of a change of system at the grand finale to the election year – the complete re-election of the Federal Council on 14 December – are slim. This would require the middle-ground parties, the FDP and CVP, to opt for the centre-right with the SVP or the centre-left with the SP. The FDP and CVP are unlikely to risk making such a move as both lack strong leaders.

Incidentally, “direct democracy in an international context” will be the main theme of the Congress of the Swiss Abroad in Lugano in August.

And now to matters concerning our magazine. My predecessor, Heinz Eckert, announced in the last edition of “Swiss Review” that I would be taking up the position of Editor-in-Chief at the beginning of the year. To produce a good magazine, we, as the editorial staff, are reliant on interaction with our readers. We cannot always know at our offices in Switzerland which issues matter to the Swiss abroad in Berlin, Ouagadougou, Shanghai or New York. I therefore welcome your suggestions, feedback and criticism, and hope this results in a fruitful exchange.

BARBARA ENGEL

5

Mailbag

5

Books: A book full of legends

7

Images: Munich retour. An exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Berne

8

Switzerland in election year:
Solitary, pressured, successful

12

What do we worry about?
What can be done to allay our fears?

14

A living legend: Heinz Spoerli is set to step down

Regional news

17

Notes from Parliament

20

Barely affordable: The mobility of the Swiss

21

Referendum: Weapons to remain at home

22

I vote!

24

OSA news

26

100 years of the Jungfrau railway

28

Journey of adventure and eco-project

30

A new travel magazine for aficionados

31

Echo

Cover photo: The official photograph of the new Federal Council. More on the photo and on the goals and policies of the Swiss government on pages 8 to 11 and 18 (Photo: donated)

IMPRINT: “Swiss Review”, the magazine for the Swiss abroad, is in its 38th year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 14 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 395,000. Regional news appears four times a year. The ordering parties are fully responsible for the content of advertisements and promotional inserts. These contents do not necessarily represent the opinion of either the editorial office or the publisher.

■ **EDITORS:** Barbara Engel (BE), Editor-in-Chief; Rolf Ribi (RR); René Lenzin (RL); Alain Wey (AW); Jean-François Lichtenstern (JFL), responsible for “Notes from Parliament”, Service for the Swiss Abroad, DFA, CH-3003 Berne Translation: CLS Communication AG ■ **LAYOUT:** Herzog Design, Zurich ■ **POSTAL ADDRESS:** Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, CH-3006 Berne, Tel.: +41313566110, Fax: +41313566101, Postal account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. Internet: www.revue.ch ■ **E-MAIL:** revue@aso.ch

■ **PRINT:** Swissprinters St.Gallen AG, CH-9001 St.Gallen. ■ **CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Please advise your local embassy or consulate. Do not write to Berne. ■ All Swiss abroad who are registered with a Swiss representation receive the magazine free of charge. Anyone else can subscribe to the magazine for an annual fee (Switzerland: CHF 30 / abroad: CHF 50). Subscribers are sent the magazine direct from Berne. Copy deadline for this edition: 07.02.11