

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 40 (2013)  
**Heft:** 1

**Vorwort:** Fragile international relationships  
**Autor:** Engel, Barbara

#### **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:** 22.02.2026

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

## Fragile international relationships

**U**ELI MAURER TAKES OVER THE PRESIDENCY OF SWITZERLAND THIS YEAR. Parliament half-heartedly elected the Head of the Federal Department of Defence to the office in December. Even Maurer himself does not appear particularly enthralled by the honour and responsibilities of serving as President of Switzerland. He asked colleagues close to him whether there was any way of forgoing office. Ueli Maurer, who, together with his Swiss People's Party, advocates a policy of isolationism in foreign affairs, is now Switzerland's figurehead in the international arena. The question of whether that is beneficial to our nation has to be raised. This is especially valid in view of the fact that Switzerland's relations with the international community are fragile and we increasingly find ourselves in the pillory on the world stage due to the disgraceful conduct of our banks, our tax policy and for showing a lack of solidarity, to name but a few reasons. Maurer nevertheless seems to have a degree of insight into the different issues although he has asked foreign minister Didier Burkhalter to represent Switzerland in his place at various meetings abroad. You can read more about Ueli Maurer's profile and career in the article on page 14.



One issue of major concern to Switzerland's people and politicians is the healthcare system. Costs are continuing to rise, which is explained by a range of factors. Any proposal put forward to curb spending has to date been fought tooth and nail by one faction or another - doctors, insurance companies or the pharmaceutical industry - and with a high degree of success. In contrast to his predecessors Didier Burkhalter and Pascal Couchepin, Federal Councillor Alain Berset, who has been Head of the Federal Department of Home Affairs for over a year now, appears to be intent on finding solutions and does not shy away from conflict. Our focal article on page eight provides an insight into the problems facing Switzerland's healthcare system and the solutions proposed, as well as a fascinating interview on the ethical aspects of possible cutbacks in medical services.

Finally, I would like to say an official farewell to René Lenzin as a member of the editorial team. He has worked for "Swiss Review" for 20 years, initially as the managing editor and later as the Swiss political affairs editor. René Lenzin accepted a new position on the home affairs desk at the Zurich "Tages-Anzeiger" last year, which will require all his journalistic energy. We wish to thank him for everything he has done for "Swiss Review". He will most certainly be missed by the editorial team. Lenzin's successor is Jürg Müller, a well-known and prominent journalist who possesses an in-depth knowledge of Swiss federal politics. He was a journalist on the Bernese "Bund" newspaper until three years ago and now works as a freelance journalist and lecturer. We are delighted to welcome our new colleague onto the editorial team. He has made his debut in this issue with his profile of Swiss President Ueli Maurer.

BARBARA ENGEL

**IMPRINT:** "Swiss Review", the magazine for the Swiss abroad, is in its 40th year of publication and is published in German, French, Italian, English and Spanish in 14 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 400000, including 140000 electronic copies. 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; Marc Lettau (MUL); Jürg Müller (JM); Alain Wey (AW); Jean-François Lichtenstern (JFL), responsible for "Notes from Parliament", Relations with the Swiss Abroad, FDFA, 3003 Berne, Switzerland. Translation: CLS Communication AG ■ LAYOUT: Herzog Design, Zurich ■ POSTAL ADDRESS: Publisher, editorial office, advertising: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad, Alpenstrasse 26, 3006 Berne, Tel.: +41313566110, Fax: +41313566101, Postal account (Swiss National Giro): 30-6768-9. ■ E-MAIL: revue@aso.ch ■ PRINT: Vogt-Schild Druck AG, 4552 Dierendingen. ■ 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. ■ INTERNET: www.revue.ch

5

Mailbag

5

Books: Love stories from Switzerland

6

Images: Alpine delicacies

8

Our healthcare system - very expensive and ill-equipped for the future

12

Environment Arena in Spreitenbach - a cocktail of conservation and commerce

14

Swiss President Ueli Maurer - a complex politician

16

Literature series: Cilette Ofaire

## Regional news

17

Meret Oppenheim - portrait of an artist

20

Luc Hoffmann - a man with a mission

23

Didier Défago - our reluctant great hope

25

OSA news

27

Notes from Parliament

30

Echo

### Cover image:

Meret Oppenheim, international figurehead of Swiss art, photographed by Peter Friedli. Source reference: SIK-ISEA Zurich