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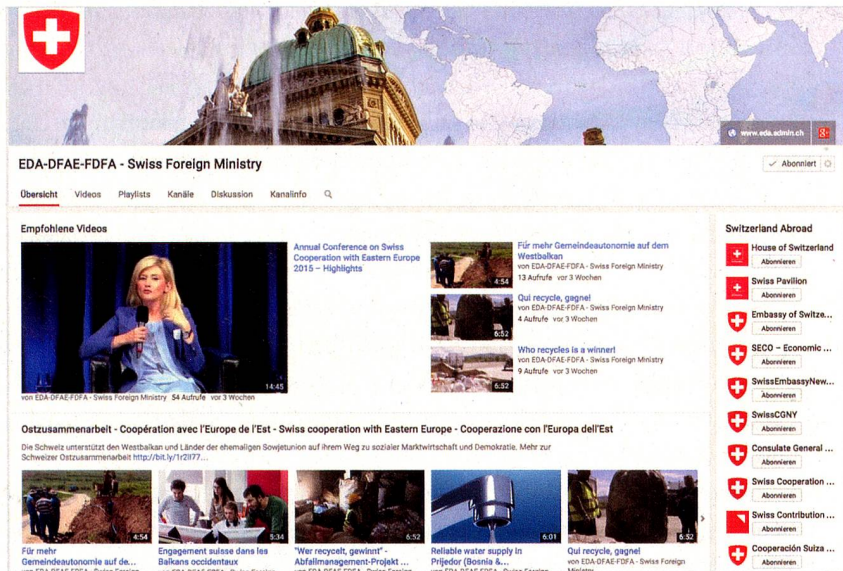
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Facebook, Twitter and Co. at the FDFA

The advance of social media has not escaped the federal administration. The FDFA deploys social media where expedient in line with its information strategy. The internet nevertheless remains the most important electronic information channel.



The FDFA's YouTube channel (Screenshot von www.youtube.com/swissforeignministry)

The Federal Council and federal administration have an information mandate under the federal constitution. They are obliged to inform the public comprehensively and in good time about their activities, foster relations with the public and keep informed of "the opinions and concerns expressed in public debate". At the same time, social networks are becoming increasingly important due to the development of e-government, especially in the field of e-voting. If one day the entire information and decision-making process were to work electronically for the voting and electoral system, the casting of votes would only be a click away from a "like" on Facebook.

It is a logical step to also use social networks for information although the federal administration is under no obligation to do so. All departments can freely decide how and where to use social media. Guidelines only exist with regard to corporate design so that the channels are easily recognisable as part of Swiss government. The Federal Council itself sends tweets to the Swiss people via the Federal Council spokesperson. Federal Councillor Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf has her own Facebook page and Federal Coun-

cillors Alain Berset and Johann Schneider-Ammann are Twitter users, as are the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) and various federal offices.

Social media at the FDFA

The FDFA is also taking account of these new, changed communication requirements and is taking its information mandate via the additional medium of social networks very se-

riously. It sees the new means of communication as an opportunity but without overlooking the risks (keywords: data protection, personal rights, own dynamics).

The FDFA has drawn up a strategy to foster direct dialogue with citizens via the social networks. The strategy also seeks to reduce the risks given that social networks are not sender-to-recipient communication in the conventional sense as recipients can also become senders. They enable messages to be distributed worldwide in the blink of an eye.

The FDFA uses social media where it is expedient. It is primarily used by the representations abroad (embassies, consulate generals and cooperation offices) but also by the Consular Directorate with its travel advice, Presence Switzerland, the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (HA/SHA), Switzerland at the UN and at the OSCE, and the post-2015 agenda. In this way they raise the profile of their own work and convey a comprehensive and authentic image of Switzerland and its foreign policy. The representations abroad and the organisational units are unrestricted in their choice of network. They nevertheless bear responsibility for the content and quality assurance of their channels.

Overall, the FDFA today has around 80 of its own pages on social networks worldwide. The most widely used media are Face-

Which version of "Swiss Review" do you read?

The "Swiss Review" you have received is effectively an anniversary issue. The first electronic version of the information magazine published by OSA for the Swiss Abroad was published exactly five years ago. The e-paper today has 170,000 recipients worldwide, while 230,000 copies of the printed version are produced.

With each copy weighing 72 grams, that totals around 100 tonnes of paper a year. In addition, 2,760,000 metallic staples and packaging material are also required, while postal dispatch worldwide can take up to three weeks. The electronic version reaches you much more quickly and obviously also in a less expensive and more eco-friendly way.

If you currently subscribe to the printed version we therefore recommend that you change your "delivery preference" from the paper to the online version at www.swissabroad.ch. You will also be making a contribution towards protecting the environment.

Of course, we hope you continue to enjoy reading "Swiss Review".

book and Twitter, followed by YouTube and Instagram. All of the FDFA's social network pages can be found at www.eda.admin.ch/socialmedia-en

■ Social media refers to web-based applications or platforms that enable people to exchange information, photos, videos, opinions and experiences with other people electronically. However, they are not simply another form of internet but instead follow their own logic. They require a new form of communication on their own channels and have great mobilisation potential. These sites are being used increasingly frequently worldwide. More and more people – and not just

youngsters or IT-savvy target groups – are spending increasing amounts of time on social networks. The importance of social networks is also growing because the opinion-forming process is also increasingly shifting from the traditional media (newspapers, radio and television) to free, interactive platforms. Facebook, Twitter and co. are not just used privately but also professionally by media specialists and deci-



Twitter profile of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit.
(Screenshot <https://twitter.com/SwissHumAidUnit>)

sion-makers in the fields of politics, business and culture. They can play a key role in regions with restricted media freedom.

Important notice

Please notify your Swiss representation of your email address(es) and mobile telephone number(s) and/or any changes to these and register at www.swissabroad.ch to ensure you do not miss any communications ("Swiss Review", newsletter from your representation, etc.).

The latest issue of "Swiss Review" and previous issues can be read and / or printed out at any time at www.revue.ch. "Swiss Review" (or "Gazzetta Svizzera" in Italy) is sent free of charge to all households of Swiss Abroad who are registered with an embassy or consulate general, either in printed format or electronically (via email or as an iPad/Android app).

Publications

Stories and faces of Holocaust survivors

This book contains the summaries of 16 previously unpublished memoirs of survivors living in Switzerland. It also details the history of the publication of these memoirs, the highlight of which was an official celebration at the Federal Palace in Berne. The FDFA supported

the publication of this book. Both the book and the individual memoirs are available free of charge at www.eda.admin.ch/publikationen Keyword: Holocaust.



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Federal referenda

The federal elections (National Council elections) will take place on 18 October 2015 as the last ballot of the year. You can find information, instructions, useful facts and further links at www.ch.ch/en/elections2015 – the joint website of the Federal Chancellery, Parliamentary Services, the Federal Statistical Office and ch.ch.

Voting dates in 2016:

28 February / 5 June / 25 September / 27 November

Popular initiatives

At the time of going to press, no new federal popular initiatives had been launched since publication of the last issue of "Swiss Review".

The list of pending popular initiatives can be found at www.bk.admin.ch under Aktuell > Wahlen und Abstimmungen > Hängige Volksinitiativen.

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