

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 45 (2018)
Heft: 2

Rubrik: Top pick : Stress

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Stress



Stress, who is 41 years old, is to Swiss rap what Stephan Eicher is to Swiss rock music – he's just as well-known and identifiable. His seventh album is being released this year. The youthful Stress, who was born on the shores of the Baltic Sea, draws inspiration for the energy of hip hop from rock and not black groove. "I am rock-oriented. I grew up on housing estates in Estonia. There wasn't much crime because the State were the criminals. We had to queue for toilet paper and bread, and – as there was no alcohol – people drank cologne. What about Lausanne? "It was a safe haven for me," revealed the rapper in a report on the "La Première" programme broadcast in November 2017.

Stress talks about Switzerland and money with great eloquence and cheeky humour. He was criticised after he made a advert for Coca-Cola. He defended his decision by poking fun at a country that does not like stars. "You've sold lots of records? That's an issue! You worked for Coca-Cola? That's terrible! When I was 15 years old, drinking a Coca-Cola was the best thing ever," he explained.

Stress, who has moved to Zurich, is a strong advocate of a multi-cultural Switzerland. He has voiced this sentiment by aiming some hostile words at the Swiss People's Party over the years. "There are lots of people with populist opinions in German-speaking Switzerland," he bemoaned, rebuking fellow rappers. "Some of them do the "juutz". You can't do the natural yodel mate! We're from the urban music scene which is culturally diverse." A businessman with a social conscience? This could be the oxymoron that best sums up this restless soul.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

Victims of compulsory social measures to receive 25,000 Swiss francs

The first victims of compulsory social measures will receive their solidarity contribution this year. All applicants will receive a payout of 25,000 Swiss francs. This is the maximum amount that was earmarked. Compulsory social measures were arranged in Switzerland until 1981. Tens of thousands of children and young people were hired out to farms or placed in homes, and many were mistreated or abused. People underwent forced sterilisation, were used in drugs trials or were locked up without a court ruling because their lifestyles did not meet the expectations of the authorities. In autumn 2016, Parliament approved a total of 300 million Swiss francs for solidarity contributions. This meant the amount paid out would be dependent upon the number of applications. As there were fewer than 12,000 applications, all victims whose applications have been approved will now receive the maximum amount.

Belair Airlines saved from insolvency

The German investment company SBC has rescued the Swiss firm Belair Airlines after Air Berlin went into liquidation. Belair halted flights at the end of October 2017, and liquidation proceedings were initiated. Belair was part of the insolvent Air Berlin. The 200 Belair staff were made redundant as part of the planned liquidation. They are now being asked whether they are interested in returning to their old jobs. Flights are to resume as soon as possible.

Wild cats return to Geneva

Wild cats have returned to the canton of Geneva for the first time since their eradication over 100 years ago. Evidence of a dozen wild cats has been produced using photo traps. The Department for the Environment in Geneva says that this species is a distant relative of the domestic cat and is on the list of protected animals in Switzerland. The last confirmed sighting of wild cats in the canton of Geneva was back in 1887.

Age-old gap in the motorway system bridged

Switzerland and Austria are to be linked by motorway for the first time ever. Ever since the motorway in the most north-easterly corner of Switzerland was opened 54 years ago, there has been debate over a direct link to the highway on the Austrian side of the border. Cross-border traffic has been running along ordinary roads and through villages for decades. Work on the link between St. Margrethen on the Swiss side and Dornbirn in Austria is set to begin in 2021 at the earliest, and the opening is scheduled for 2026.