

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 47 (2020)
Heft: 6

Vorwort: Switzerland and Europe
Autor: Lettau, Marc

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: 23.02.2026

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

Switzerland and Europe

5 Mailbag

8 Focus

The Switzerland-EU relationship is becoming very complicated

10 Society

COVID-19 pandemic – just when you thought the worst was over

The ibex is the “kings of the Alps”. Why was it ever wiped out?

Swiss city dwellers – increasingly forgoing their own car

18 Report

Switzerland’s only official hermit is anything but lonely

21 Literature

22 Science

Swiss soil acoustics – listening to the chattering grubs in the ground

25 Politics

27 September was a political “Super Sunday” – the results

Switzerland to decide whether to enforce a nationwide burka ban

Palm oil imports face stiff opposition

31 OSA news

36 news.admin.ch

38 Books / Sounds

39 Top pick / News



Switzerland works by direct democracy. Everyone is regularly invited to go to the polls and have their say in national politics. This deeply embedded culture of co-determination was suspended by the pandemic for a few months before returning emphatically in early autumn. “Super Sunday” on 27 September saw an extremely high turnout as the people had their say on a number of significant issues. Top of the list was a re-

sounding no from the Swiss electorate to the SVP’s “limitation initiative”, which clarified Switzerland’s position towards the European Union (EU). Voters want to maintain the current partnership-based bilateral arrangement with the EU.

If the initiative had passed, it would have most certainly marked the end of the close relationship between Switzerland and the EU. As a non-EU country, Switzerland cannot leave the EU. Yet for Switzerland, surrounded by EU member states, terminating the bilateral agreements would have been on a par with such a scenario.

The people expressed themselves clearly, but this should not be interpreted as a ringing endorsement of Brussels. The relationship between Switzerland and the EU is one of conflicting perspectives. On the one hand, close proximity naturally results in economic, cultural and even personal interdependence. However, most Swiss are not primarily supporters of the EU as an institution; their interest lies more in a Europe of open borders with freedom of movement – something that people value even more now since the lockdown showed us just how small our country really is when the borders are closed. The people opted for a pragmatic approach: “European openness” and accessibility means having a regulated relationship with the EU.

The eligible voters of the “Fifth Switzerland” mainly live in the EU and their support for the bilateral relationship was particularly strong. Nonetheless, that does not mean Switzerland and the EU are now ready to ride off happily into the sunset. Nothing could be further from the reality. Partnerships work by establishing agreements – and the diplomatic back and forth over the small print of the bilateral agreements will continue. The stage is set for further drama, as we explain in this edition’s Focus report.

MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cover photo: Ibex, photographed on the Niederhorn (BE) by Martin Mägli, www.naturbild.ch

“Swiss Review”, the information magazine for the “Fifth Switzerland”, is published by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad (OSA).

