

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 48 (2021)
Heft: 1

Vorwort: Delayed democracy
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: 31.01.2026

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

Delayed democracy

4 Focus

The belated advent of women's suffrage 50 years ago

8 Images

Caran d'Ache – from small pencil factory to global brand

10 Report

Mitholz – mountain village and ticking time bomb

13 Literature

How Germaine de Staël infuriated Napoleon Bonaparte

14 Society

Betty Bossi – the cook who is found in every Swiss kitchen

News from your region

17 Politics

The Responsible Business Initiative – popular but unsuccessful
A controversial alternative to the password jungle

20 Profile

On the big screen – Bruno Manser's rainforest crusade

22 Covid-19 pandemic

Second wave hits Switzerland hard

24 SwissCommunity

The big verdict – results of the "Swiss Review" reader survey

29 Mailbag

31 News



Hanna Sahlfeld-Singer is a Swiss Abroad. The 77-year-old, who lives in Germany, says she takes part in every federal vote – honouring time and again the legacy that she herself helped to create. Sahlfeld-Singer is one of the many women who campaigned tirelessly for women's suffrage in Switzerland. She was also one of the first handful of women ever to be elected to the National Council 50 years ago. The cover of this edition of "Swiss Review" captures Sahlfeld-Singer's big moment in 1971, when she swore an oath to the constitution under the mighty dome of the Federal Palace. A telling anecdote: the freshly elected member of parliament had difficulty getting to the ceremony in the first place, as she was initially told to use the visitors' entrance.

Everyone else got there before us, be it Australia (women's suffrage since 1902), Azerbaijan (1918), Albania (1920), the Central African Republic (1946), or Cyprus (1960). Why did Switzerland of all countries – one of the world's oldest democracies – insist on excluding half of its population, i.e. women, from political life for so long? Both world wars triggered natural social upheaval in other countries. However, men in Switzerland long continued to believe that giving women the right to vote was reckless, unnecessary and even went against the natural order. The male half of the country simply refused to budge, suggests the historian quoted in this edition's Focus article.

On another important but completely different topic, the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has hit Switzerland hard. People normally get together during the festive season. Not in 2020. Tens of thousands of Swiss Abroad were unable to visit friends, family and old haunts in their country of origin over Christmas. The only way to catch up was by video call, as we were once again reminded that the wonders of technology are no substitute for a roomful of actual human beings.

MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PS: The online version of "Swiss Review" has been repackaged and is now available via the [swisscommunity.org](https://www.swisscommunity.org) information platform. From now on, the revamped [swisscommunity.org](https://www.swisscommunity.org) website will also house all other content produced by our publisher, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad. Furthermore, the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad itself will appear increasingly under the "SwissCommunity" label in future.

Cover photo: The swearing-in of National Councillor Hanna Sahlfeld-Singer before the Federal Assembly on 13 December 1971. Photo: Keystone

"Swiss Review", the information magazine for the "Fifth Switzerland", is published by the Organisation of the Swiss Abroad.

**Swiss
Community**