

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 48 (2021)
Heft: 6

Vorwort: International musical success - and a more controversial export
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: 17.04.2026

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

International musical success – and a more controversial export

- 5 Mailbag
- 6 Focus
The Swiss arms industry
is on the defensive
- 14 Culture
Singer Priya Ragu is winning over hearts
and audiences all over the world
- 16 Switzerland in figures
- 17 Literature
- 18 Science
Swiss mathematicians have calculated pi
more accurately than anyone ever before
- 20 Politics
The Swiss people say a decisive
yes to marriage for all
- 22 Society
Swiss households are hoarding
record quantities of cash
- 23 Covid-19
Traditional political parties struggle
to respond to the pandemic
- 25 SwissCommunity news
- 27 Notes from the Federal Palace
Returnees to Switzerland receive help
reintegrating into the world of work
Former indentured contract children
can continue to draw assistance
- 30 Books/Sounds
- 31 Top pick/News



“For refugees, starting a new life in a country where you are not necessarily welcome feels almost like a miracle,” says our cover star, Priya Ragu. Priya, who hails from St. Gallen, speaks from experience. She grew up in a Tamil refugee family, but has seen her fortunes turn around dramatically. Priya is now a world-renowned singer (page 14). Her career has taken off like a rocket, and she now belongs on the biggest

stages, winning over hearts not just at festivals like Montreux, but also in the language region where her parents come from. The values she endorses and spreads far and wide in Tamil reflect at the same time a very Swiss sensibility. For example, her best-selling song Kamali discusses the rights and status of women in society and the empowerment of girls to live out their dreams.

Also best-sellers but of a very different kind are Swiss-made weapons. Arms exports are high, and the issue is politically explosive. There is perpetual debate over which countries Swiss guns, munitions, armoured vehicles and other armaments and military equipment should be exported to. After all, arms exports affect Switzerland’s self-perception as a neutral, peaceful country that prefers diplomacy to sabre-rattling. As so often, the reality is more complex than one might at first imagine. For many years, the means to wage war – not cheese and chocolate – were the country’s biggest export. Over three centuries, Swiss mercenary soldiers served on the battlefields of Europe and in colonial armies all around the world. And they were not known for their restraint.

As such, the modern self-image of Switzerland as humanitarian, peace-loving and neutral is the result of consciously implemented changes. Mercenary soldiering has long been prohibited, and exports of military equipment are subject to strict rules. In fact they are now getting even stricter: parliament has tightened up the legislation further in response to public pressure. The government is losing its existing freedom to grant exceptions.

That is welcome, but it does not mean an end to the controversy over arms exports. Ultimately, the question of whether arms exports can ever make the world more peaceful has not been resolved by this legislative tightening.

MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cover photo: Priya Ragu, Swiss singer with Tamil roots.
Photo: courtesy of Warner Music

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

**Swiss
Community**