

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 49 (2022)  
**Heft:** 3

**Vorwort:** Their meagre luggage belies a heavy burden  
**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:** 07.01.2026

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

**4 Focus**

Switzerland welcomes  
refugees from Ukraine

**8 Top pick / News****10 Nature and the environment**

When everyone in search of relaxation  
wants a piece of the forest

**12 Images****14 Science**

Generating heat from lakes? Switzerland  
discovers hydrothermal power

**News from your region****17 Switzerland in figures****18 Society**

The Council of the Swiss Abroad calls on  
the Federal Council to ban Nazi symbols

**20 Literature**

Charles Linsmayer – the advocate of for-  
gotten Swiss authors

**22 Report**

Switzerland's biggest nuclear bunker  
evokes memories of the Cold War

**25 Sport**

Sprinter Mujinga Kambundji writes her  
own chapter in Swiss athletics history

**26 Notes from the Federal Palace****29 SwissCommunity news****30 Discussion**

Comments from our readers

Cover photo: Street protest in Lausanne  
against the Russian invasion of Ukraine:  
Photo: Jean-Christophe Bott, Keystone

# Their meagre luggage belies a heavy burden



Bucha, Irpin, Mariupol – we have all seen the terrible images from Ukraine. They show the reality of war: fear and horror, death and destruction, atrocities and displacement. This war challenges everyone. It is even changing Switzerland. Having maintained a restrictive refugee policy for many years, the country is now opening its doors. Tens of thousands of refugees from Ukraine, who arrived laden with troubles but with few belongings, have been admitted into the country, no questions asked. The war is also making Switzerland question itself. How is a small country that calls itself neutral to behave? When does neutral non-involvement turn into indifference?

When the war started, the Federal Council initially decided neutral Switzerland would not impose sanctions on Russia, opting instead to ensure the country could not be used as a platform for circumventing sanctions. It was far from clear what that actually meant in practical terms.

Since then, Switzerland has been on something of a mission. Just a few days later, the country adopted all the EU sanctions, as neutrality could not mean not taking a position, said Ignazio Cassis, the president of the Confederation. Russia responded by placing Switzerland on its list of unfriendly countries. Meanwhile, Russia's dealings with Switzerland remain extensive and opaque. Some 80 per cent of Russia's commodity trading goes through Switzerland. Oligarchs with ties to the Kremlin have assets worth up to 200 billion Swiss francs stashed away in Switzerland.

Swiss asset hunters have only located and frozen a fraction of that amount. This has prompted the Helsinki Commission, an independent US government authority, to pull no punches, calling Switzerland a "leading enabler of Russian dictator Vladimir Putin". Switzerland may well have to conduct a detailed review of its anti-money laundering laws as a result.

But what about those who have no billions but their lives and future to worry about? We met some displaced Ukrainians currently living in a small village near Berne, and asked the question: how is Switzerland treating refugees from Ukraine?

MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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

**Swiss  
Community**