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Louis Nusbaumer aka 'Ara'



His totem name is Ara. Why choose this for his scouting nickname? Louis Nusbaumer, a 21-year-old student of geography and environmental sciences, no longer remembers. He was seven when he became a Cub. Today, Ara is the chief of the Venture Scouts, a group of 15- to 17-year-olds from the St-Michel scouting group in Delémont, canton of Jura. Like thousands of other scouts, he was involved in the 'mova', the federal camp for the Swiss scout movement, which took place this summer in the Goms valley (VS). Ara arrived at the camp before it opened, along with other chiefs of the Venturers unit from the cantons of Jura and Berne. The group built a log tower in the camp. "The view was stunning. We connected four tarpaulins to make a roof for ourselves," he tells us. Amongst other activities, the Venturers helped build a giant tree hut. They strolled around freely in this enormous camp of 30,000 scouts. There was only one rule: stay together and be contactable by phone. "We spent two weeks living together and that created some very strong bonds," smiles Ara, for whom one of the key values in scouting is acceptance of oneself and of others. Why have a uniform? "Scouting comes from the army, so it's from there," comments the young man, considering this a reasonable question. In scouting language, the uniforms distinguish between different age groups: turquoise shirts for the Cubs, beige for the Scouts, red for the Venturers and green for those in charge. Within the St-Michel scouting group, the leaders have chosen to wear red, "to remain closer to the Venturers". Will Ara be at the next 'mova', in 14 years' time? "Why not? The movement always needs volunteers," says Nusbaumer.

STÉPHANE HERZOG

News

National Bank posts loss of 100 billion francs

The Swiss National Bank (SNB) reported a loss of almost CHF 100 billion in the first half of 2022. This was the SNB's biggest loss in its over 100 years of existence. Falling shares and interest-bearing securities were the primary cause of the decline, which was forecast by experts. A loss of this magnitude is of particular concern to the cantons and federal government since part of the SNB's earnings is distributed to them. It is still unclear what the record loss means for the anticipated distributions. (MUL)

Tough fight against fighter jets

The Swiss military intends to purchase new Lockheed Martin F-35 fighter jets from the USA for six billion francs. However, a popular initiative signed by 103,000 people in mid-August aims to prevent this. The petition's initiators believe the government's choice of jet is unsuitable and too expensive. The initiative puts the Federal Council in a quandary, because the US government's purchase offer for the aircraft is only valid until the end of March 2023, but time constraints mean it would be almost impossible to put the initiative before voters by then. Not putting the initiative to a vote at all, however, would be problematic for democratic policy. (MUL)

Geneva Motor Show cancelled for fourth time

The Geneva International Motor Show will not take place in 2023, either. This is the fourth time in a row that it has been cancelled, with the first cancellations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Now, organisers are blaming the global economic situation and geopolitical uncertainties. Whether the show, which usually attracts well over half a million visitors each year, still has a future is becoming increasingly unsure. The motor show is also facing an uphill battle because climate change is altering the perception of the car as a status symbol – it now has connotations other than absolute personal freedom. (MUL)

Dying fish in Swiss rivers

The sustained extremely high temperatures this summer are leading to dry riverbeds and warmer lakes in Switzerland. The result is a fish fatality rate of "historic proportions", as the Swiss Fisheries Association warned in mid-August. Water temperatures of over 25 degrees become life-threatening for many fish native to Switzerland, such as trout. (MUL)

Kambundji sprints to EC 200-metre gold

"Sprinter Mujinga Kambundji is aiming high" was the headline in July's "Swiss Review". In the meantime, the 30-year-old from Berne celebrated another glorious moment when she won gold in the 200 metres at the European Championships in Munich in August. She also took silver in the 100 metres after missing out on gold by a hair's breadth. In an interview with the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung", the popular athlete stated that she could still run even faster: "I can top that." (MUL)