

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 50 (2023)
Heft: 2

Rubrik: Switzerland in figures : Art - in a roundabout way

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Art – in a roundabout way

“Swiss Review”, the magazine for the Swiss Abroad, is in its 48th year of publication and is published six times a year in German, French, English and Spanish in 13 regional editions. It has a total circulation of 431,000, including 253,000 electronic copies.

“Swiss Review”’s regional news appears four times a year.

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All Swiss Abroad who are registered with a Swiss representation receive the magazine free of charge. Anyone else can subscribe for an annual fee (Switzerland: CHF 30 / abroad: CHF 50).

ONLINE EDITION
www.revue.ch

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 CH97 0079 0016 1294 4609 8 / KBBECH22

COPY DEADLINE FOR THIS EDITION
 1 February 2023

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3,000

Over 3,000 roundabouts ensure that traffic runs smoothly in Switzerland. But the artistic installations in the middle of these roundabouts are often an acquired taste, to put it mildly. “Kreiselkunst” (literally “roundabout art”) has become an ironic term in German. But there is hope. Many of the older roundabouts are now being dismantled – as are the “interesting” installations that accompany them.

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The Swiss like to pat themselves on the back for being prolific recyclers. But could recycling a lot simply mean you are consuming too much? According to the marine conservation organisation Oceancare, Switzerland has a significant plastic problem. Annual per capita plastic consumption stands at 127 kg – a European record – of which 95 kg is, incidentally, not recycled.

90,000,000,000

Plastic waste is a shameful legacy. The more conventional legacy we leave to our loved ones is less likely to end up in the landfill. Some 90 billion Swiss francs is bequeathed from one generation to the next every year in Switzerland (2020). An enormous amount of money. Half of all personal monetary assets in Switzerland are not earned but inherited. Although many people inherit nothing at all.



450,000,000,000

Switzerland has another hidden source of immense wealth. All the underground pipelines for water, sewage, electricity, gas, and district heating in Switzerland have a total physical value of 450 billion Swiss francs, according to recent estimates. The government now intends to keep a closer eye on these assets and put together a national inventory.

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You can measure and quantify almost anything – including hope. According to the latest University of St Gallen “hope barometer” survey of the Swiss population (2022), a majority of just over 55 per cent say they are satisfied and hopeful at least in relation to their own personal lives. Hope increases as people move up the age groups, with 18- to 29-year-olds being the least optimistic.