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CONTRIBUTION from our DELEGATE to the SWISS ABROAD

New Federal Constitution is ready

"Was lange währt wird endlich gut"
During the Winter Session (Dec. 1998), both Chambers of the Federal Parliament passed the new Constitution, thereby completing an extensive parliamentary project.

On the 18th April 1999 it will be up to the Swiss voters to say yea or nay! The revision of the Constitution holds special significance for the "5th. Switzerland" (All the Swiss abroad), not least because Article Nr. 45 'bis.'

Since 1966 this Article formed the legal basis of the Policy followed by the Federal Parliament.

The **new basis** of the law now contained in Article 40 will have the following wording **specific to the Swiss Abroad**:

1) The Confederation promotes the relationships among Compatriots abroad as well as with the mother country. It will support organisations that pursue this goal.

2) It will issue regulations concerning the rights and obligations of Swiss living abroad, namely in relation to exercising the political rights within the Confederation, the fulfilment of military- or alternative services, as well as the support of Social Welfare.

For the "5th Switzerland" the new formulation represents a better statutory base, since the Confederation's social engagement towards the Swiss Abroad is now specifically

laid down in Law. The wishes of the Swiss Abroad Organisation have now largely been taken into consideration, meaning that the very sensitive area of social security insurance will flow into the wording of the new Article. This will also give the voluntary AHV / IV a stronger constitutional recognition.

Attention to all you Voters from Canton Schwyz!

Combined with the Federal Referenda on 18th April 1999, the Executive Council of the Canton Schwyz is proposing to its voters to open up Cantonal Referenda and Elections to its citizens abroad.

If accepted Schwyz will follow the lead given by the Cantons of Berne, Basel-Country, Geneva, Solothurn, Jura and Ticino. According to the latest statistics, 744 Swiss Abroad are registered in Schwyz.

Your delegate;
Heinz Leuenberger.

SOCIETY AGM

5 - 7 June 1999

(Queen's Birthday Weekend)

To be hosted by Wellington Club

Please forward any remits or motions, in writing, to:
PO Box 4035, Hamilton East

Agenda and Minutes will be published in the May issue of *Helvetica*

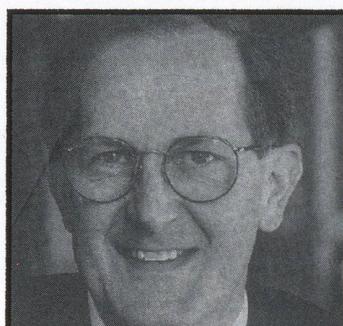
All members (incl. non-club) are invited to attend, and I look forward to meeting and greeting people from throughout New Zealand.

Beatrice Leuenberger, President



The election of 2 new Federal Councillors to the Swiss Parliament took place in Berne on 11 March 1999. The resignation of Federal Councillor Arnold Koller and Flavio Cotti both from the CVP-Party made this necessary.

The new Minister of Police and Justice, 34 year old **Ruth Metzler**, from Canton of Appenzell-Innerrhoden, replacing Arnold Koller.



The new Foreign Minister of Switzerland, 52 year old **Joseph Deiss**, from Canton of Freiburg, replacing Flavio Cotti.



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