

Zeitschrift: Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand
Herausgeber: Swiss Society of New Zealand
Band: 69 (2003)
Heft: [7]

Artikel: Introduction to Switzerland for our younger readers or 2nd, 3rd, 4th generation Swiss
Autor: [s.n.]
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-945626>

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: 07.12.2025

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

If undelivered please return to:

The Secretary of the Swiss Society of New Zealand (Inc)
Silvia Schuler
Skinner Rd, RD 23
STRATFORD



(Registered at the GPO Wellington as a Magazine)
Monthly Publication of the Swiss Society of New Zealand (Inc)

Address by Pascal Couchepin

Address by Pascal Couchepin, President of the Confederation, on the occasion of the Swiss National Day

Dear fellow citizens,

On behalf of my colleagues in the Cabinet and myself, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all on the occasion of our national celebration.

We all know the importance of these moments of togetherness and I'm very happy to be able to share this particular moment with you.

You are here today because you are closely connected to your country. This link is deeply felt and strong; in this vast, open world in which we live, we all have the need to find our roots.

The world is changing. Science, technology, economy and relationships are all being called into question. These fundamental changes also affect Switzerland. Many citizens are worried about their future and are harking back to the past to what they see as Switzerland's golden era, for answers. But that is a dead-end route.

Switzerland cannot escape big social changes. No one knows better than those of you living abroad that Switzerland has at its disposal all the tools necessary to deal with these changes.

You represent a country, which manages to hold its place in this world fairly well. Seen from the economic point of view, for example, Switzerland is one of the ten most important investors in the world economy. It also strengthened its political position when the Swiss people and the cantons voted in favour of becoming a member of the United Nations.

In Switzerland itself, we have a solid and generous social system. Unemployment

remains low compared with other countries and the education provided in our schools and high schools is excellent.

Switzerland has the power to surprise, even when it is least expected. I can't help but think back to the marvellous achievement of the Alinghi team, who won the America's Cup in the face of competition from many seafaring nations.

Switzerland is a country that is still doing well but it needs to face reforms, especially in the social field. I hope that we can discuss problems freely and without haste. The federal elections this autumn offer a good opportunity for us to have a more in-depth debate.

I want to use this occasion to encourage you to participate in this discussion. You may not live in Switzerland but the problems we face also concern you...

...and you're aware of this fact - more and more of you have been voting by post. In 1991, there were 14,000 Swiss nationals living abroad who were registered on the Swiss electoral register. By 2002, representatives of the 'fifth Switzerland' numbered more than 82,000.

I hope that even more of you will exercise your democratic rights this autumn. As a group, you carry some political weight, because the 600,000 Swiss abroad rank fourth in terms of size after the cantons of Zurich, Bern and Vaud which have the largest populations in Switzerland.

Your participation in the elections is therefore of great significance and will contribute to building a Switzerland that is creative, open and shows solidarity. I hope you enjoy the celebrations.

Introduction to Switzerland for our younger readers or 2nd, 3rd, 4th generation Swiss

Switzerland, for long one of the world's greatest tourist countries, contains within a relatively small area an extraordinary abundance of natural beauties and other attractions, and at the same time, in spite of the country's varied geographical pattern and difference in language, religion and way of life among its inhabitants, offers an admirable example of unity in diversity. The 4000m (13,124ft) peaks of the high Alps and the lesser summits of the Pre-Alpine regions began to attract the first modern tourists - mainly British - during the 19th century; but Switzerland has developed since then into a mecca for visitors of every nationality and every age and condition, who find here accommodation to suit every taste from modest to luxurious, modern tourist facilities and a hospitable welcome.

Geographically, Switzerland is made up of three very dissimilar parts. The south-eastern half of the country consists of the Alps; to the north-west are the Jura Mountains; and between these two mountain regions is the lower-lying Mittelland, extending from Lake Geneva in the south-west, where the Jura beyond the rift valley of the Rhine abuts on the Alpine chain, to Lake Constance in the north-east, beyond which lies the German Alpine foreland region. The total area of the country is divided fairly equally between the Jura and Mittelland on the one hand and the Alps on the other - one half well cultivated and densely inhabited, the other offering the grandeur and beauty of the high mountains.

Source: Baedeker's Switzerland