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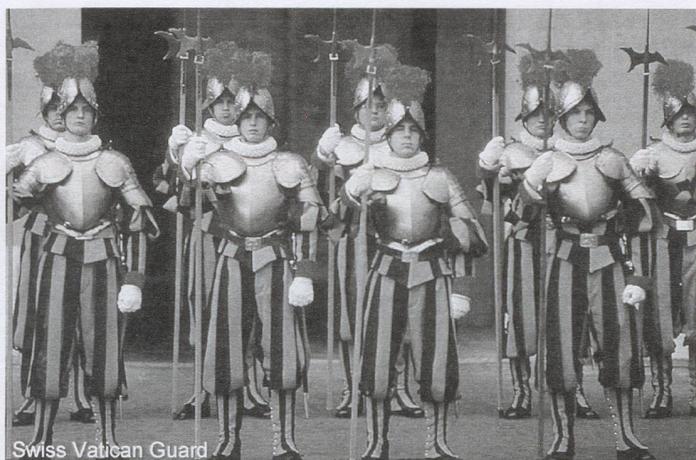
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New Papal Guard members sworn in

Thirty-four new members of the Swiss Vatican Guard have been sworn in in St Peter's Square. New guards enter service every year on May 6 and a mass also takes place in memory of the 147 Swiss Guards who died in 1527 defending Pope Clement VII during the Sack of Rome. The Swiss Vatican Guard, which is known as the smallest army in the world, comprises 110 men. It reports to the Pope and is financed by the Vatican.



Swiss Vatican Guard

The Vatican City gendarmerie, under the orders of the Vatican, is also responsible for the Pope's security and law and order matters, as are the Italian police outside the Vatican City walls. *swissinfo*

Zürich voters reject ban on "suicide tourism"

A proposal to restrict access for foreigners to assisted suicide only to those living at least one year in the canton was rejected by 78.4 per cent of voters. A second popular initiative launched by fringe conservative parties, the Federal Democratic Union and the Evangelical Party, seeking a national ban on assisted suicide was rejected by an even greater majority. The main rightwing and leftwing parties had campaigned against both initiatives, calling on their supporters to vote against them. About 200 people commit assisted suicide each year in Zurich.

Under Swiss law it is legal to assist a person to commit suicide as long as the helper has no vested interest in the death. Assistance can only take a passive form, for example it is legal to procure lethal medication for another person but not to administer it.

Dignitas, the only Swiss association that helps applicants from abroad commit suicide, accompanied 1,138 people in taking their own lives in 2010.

from swissinfo

More funding for hazardous waste site

The cantonal parliament of Aargau has allocated an additional SFr57 million for the decontamination of the Kölliken hazardous waste landfill site. The latest tranche of funding, which the parties said they accepted "through gritted teeth", brings the total cost of remediation work on the site to SFr770 million.

Kölliken is Switzerland's largest hazardous waste site and was in operation, run by a consortium, from 1978 to 1985, when it was closed by the local authorities for environmental reasons. The remediation work, which began in 2007, is now running SFr325 million over budget and is due to be completed by 2016 - four years later than expected. During its years in operation, a total of 475,000 tonnes of hazardous waste was deposited in drums, bags and as loose waste.

A second phase of removing the waste matter began in March. Three sealed halls with internal negative pressure were specially built to carry out the removal process.

from swissinfo

Life expectancy varies from canton to canton

Men in the central canton of Zug live on average almost four years longer than their compatriots in nearby canton Glarus. Women wanting a long life should head to Ticino.

Nationwide the average life expectancy was 79.6 years for men and 84.3 years for women, according to a survey on mortality published by the Federal Statistics Office. The only nations to outlive Switzerland are Japan, Hong Kong and Iceland.

In Zug the average life expectancy for men was 81.4. Other cantons above 80 were Uri, Basel Country, Ticino, Nidwalden, Zurich, Aargau, Geneva and Appenzell Inner Rhodes.

Women reached an average age of 85.8 in Ticino and 85.2 in Geneva.

The wooden spoon went to Glarus - just 20km from Zug - for both genders: 77.7 years for men and 82.5 years for women. The statistics office pointed to various factors when explaining the cantonal differences, but was wary of drawing any firm conclusions. It highlighted social and professional set-ups, regional food habits, the number of smokers, hospital infrastructure and religion.

swissinfo

The definition of a truly great person is one who makes everyone feel truly great.