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SWISS CHEMICAL EXPORTS IN 1977

In 1977, the Swiss chemical industry exported nearly 8.5 billion francs' worth of products. The EEC remained the main market with 3.5 billion, i.e. 41.7% of total Swiss chemical exports, those to EFTA countries amounting to 705 million (8.3%). West Germany, with 1.1 billion francs in 1977, kept her place as the Swiss chemical products industry's most important client, followed by France with 892 million. Exports were divided up as follows among other

important groups of countries: Africa 6%, North and South America 14.6%, Asia 14.5%, OPEC countries 6.1%, Eastern bloc countries 8.9%. Chemical exports to OPEC countries increased by 9.2% to 519 million, which is considerably less than the increase in Swiss exports as a whole for the same year to these countries (+26.3%). The biggest increase is recorded by Africa (506 million, +18.2%). The chemical industry accounted for 20.1% of Switzerland's overall exports in 1977.

PLASTICS ARE DOING WELL

Swiss production of plastics (raw materials) in 1977 amounted to 105,000 tonnes, i.e. 3% more than in 1976; imports increased by 15.7% to 391,000 t and exports by 14% to 124,000 t. The apparent consumption (production + imports - exports) rose by 12.4% to 372,500 t. This corresponds to a consumption of 58.9 kg per head of the population, that is to say one of the highest in the world. The number of employees in this branch, i.e. 19,000, has not varied since 1976. In spite of the growth indicated by these figures, firms in the plastics industry experienced a falling off in their profit margins in 1977.

DATE CHANGE!

In view of the concentration of exhibitions covering the field of electronics and electrical engineering in September 1979, the exhibitors' advisory committee has decided to postpone the date of the INELTEC 79, International Exhibition for Industrial Electronics and Electrical Engineering held biannually in Basle, which was originally fixed for the beginning of September, to the period from 9th to 13th October, 1979.

On the other hand, the INELTEC 81 is planned to take place from 8th to 12th September, 1981.

This notification only received by *Swiss Observer* on 21st August, 1978, too late for issue dated September, 1978, which is printed in August.

Editor

News in brief

• According to recent estimates, consumer credit in Switzerland amounts to 2.3 billion Swiss francs, i.e. to 350 francs per head of the population, which is considerably below the European average.

• The film "Die dritte Haut", produced by the Swiss firm Condor-Film AG, was awarded a *first prize* at the German/Austrian/ Swiss Budget Film Festival in June 1978.

• An incinerating plant built by the Swiss firm of *Widmer & Ernst Co. Ltd.* at Ingolstadt in West Germany, which will handle 70,000 tonnes of refuse a year, has just been put into operation two months ahead of schedule.

• The Swiss watch factory Omega won a *gold medal* at the Brno Fair (Czechoslovakia) for its ladies' *analog quartz watch* whose quartz calibre is the smallest in the world.

• In view of the unpredictable course of external factors, especially in the currency sector, it is extremely difficult to forecast future results. There is no sign of general economic recovery. As matters stand at present, we must therefore reckon with a lower level of sales and profits in 1978 than last year.



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