

Objekttyp: **TableOfContent**

Zeitschrift: **The Swiss observer : the journal of the Federation of Swiss Societies in the UK**

Band (Jahr): - **(1975)**

Heft 1711

PDF erstellt am: **24.09.2024**

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Forty Years of shortwave broadcasts from Switzerland

There are several ways to celebrate an anniversary: with pageantry or discretion, joy or sadness, hope or regret. It depends on the nature of the anniversary and on who – or what – is being honoured.



Joël Curchod, Director of the Swiss Short Wave Service since 1965

The 40th anniversary of Swiss shortwave broadcasts is being observed discreetly. Because we are by nature discreet? Possibly. Because of necessity? Without a doubt. Inflation is hardly an appropriate incentive for sumptuous ceremonies. For those of us involved in the daily life of SBC's European and overseas Services, this anniversary is an occasion to assess our position and pay tribute to our predecessors.

To assess our position does not mean to draw up a balance sheet. Balance sheets take into consideration only the assets and liabilities to date, and are often associated with the closing of accounts.

On the other hand, an assessment, while appreciating the past, goes on to analyse, remodel and chart a course for the future. One draws from one's own experience and is inspired by the experience of others. One seizes the moment in order to understand it better, and

then project into tomorrow the essential lessons of yesterday.

In wireless terms, this means to confront the motivations of the recent past with our present environment in order to have a better definition of the basis for future broadcasting.

The one constant factor in our forty years of international shortwave broadcasting always has been the listener. Because of him, for him and around him, SBC was born, grew and continues to expand.

Radio in 1975 is an integral part of the daily life of most human beings no matter where they live or what they do. Although radio has evolved into a companion, its importance as a service continues to grow. No longer a novelty, it can be found everywhere. It is indispensable.

Shortwave broadcasts, transmitted over great distances to listeners in foreign countries defy routine classification. They have a specific purpose, in which ideology is not always absent. For some, shortwave radio is a formidable, tool of propaganda. For others – including SBC – it is a remarkable instrument for the instantaneous and world wide dissemination of information.

Paradoxically, we live at a time when two apparently contradictory phenomena co-exist: one is the extraordinary daily flow of news and ideas, a veritable deluge of over-information, with which the world's mass media inundate their readers, listeners and viewers. The other phenomenon is the enormous gaps in this same information, gaps which are generally linked to the geographical and political situations of certain listeners.

In providing programmes aimed at

AVS/AI

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