

# Translation of speech (abridged) to Congress by Joseph Deiss Minister of Foreign Affairs

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### Past events....

#### 3 November: Fritz Adams Cup Jassen

With our community of active jassers shrinking, it was very encouraging to see 12 participants turning up on the night. As always, the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly with just the right mixture of competitive spirit to make it interesting.

As the name of the cup indicates, it was donated by Fritz Adams, Charge d'affaires at the Swiss Embassy in the late seventies, who died recently. Andre Schleicher gave a short eulogy and asked for a minute of silence to mark our respect.

The cup was won by Emanuel Züst with 3011 points, a narrow victory over Hans Buess with 2903 points. New-comer to the game, Ruth Lüssi, achieved fifth place, a very respectable result.

Congratulations to all three.

#### 10 November: Garage Sale

Our members contributed varied, weird and wonderful items to the sale which was again organised by Heinz Jäggi, with help from committee members and friends. While it was not quite the success of last year's sale, it did raise \$630, a much needed contribution to our roof-replacement fund. Talking of the new roof: check out the exciting design concept next time you are in the clubhouse!

#### 11 November: Brunch

The wise folk who took the trouble to travel to Wainuiomata for a scrumptious brunch (bacon, eggs, Rösti, Züpfe) certainly did not regret it. In fact, the exclusive circle of munchers enjoyed their feast to the full and made it last well past noon. For those who now feel sorry they

have missed out, there will be another chance on 10 March 2002!

### Forthcoming events...

#### December 2: Samichlaus.

This is the children's party, please reserve the date and do come. Guaranteed to be most enjoyable! And the best opportunity of the year for members' children to meet each other.

#### December 8: Christmas Party

December 9: Carol singing in the Botanical Garden

*(Invitations will be sent to all members for these events).*

December 14: last Coffee afternoon of the year.

#### 2002

January 27: Society Shotgun - Shooting / Outdoor activities  
Fun for the whole family.

February 9/10: Cowbell Competition in Kaponga, Taranaki. In

### Translation of Speech (abridged)

to Congress by Joseph Deiss  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Swiss citizens live in every country around the world - and this global presence doesn't just serve those who experience it, but it is a form of "capital" for our country as a whole. You will know that the Federal Constitution obliges the Government to promote the relationship among our

citizens abroad and the home country. I came to this congress not out of a sense of duty, but because I know that almost every 10th Swiss lives abroad, and that from outside, Switzerland is looked upon differently than from within, so I am interested in your opinions.

**Matters concerning the Swiss Abroad:** Since the last congress, several things have changed:

- The revisions of the voluntary AHV/IV came into force on 1.1.2001. Some changes for residents of EU countries have been dramatic, but for those outside the EU, the status quo remains, which is particularly important for countries with insufficient social security policies.

- Political rights of Swiss Abroad: for the past year a working group, composed of State and cantonal representatives, is looking into the possibility of electronic voting.

- Ratification of the bilateral contracts with the EU: not yet complete, but will have significant effects.

- For some time there have been technological and logistical improvements made within our Embassies and Consulates regarding registration, which will remove administrative hurdles - for example when changing from one Consular region to another.

- Financial constraints have often meant that we've had to close or curtail our representation, but for at least the last two years we have actually been able to increase representation overseas. Wherever possible, we try to extend services, such as appointing Honorary Consuls.

**Switzerland's entry into the UN:**

Already when addressing the



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congress in Lausanne in 1999, I was convinced that the time had come to take our country into the United Nations. I felt then, that the Congress would be the best catalyst to launch my personal campaign to achieve this foreign policy target during the 1999 - 2003 legislature period. The positive acceptance of this organisation became a significant incentive for me.

Now we have come a good deal closer to this target. Important influences were the people's initiative, "Swiss entry into the UN" on 6 March 2000, as well as the parliamentary motion seeking the same. As the second to last country, the then talked about Tuvalu was recently admitted to the UN family, now leaving Switzerland as the only 'outsider' (apart from the special case of the Vatican). Debates in Parliament and in the Cantons; and among political parties and business organisations have been positive. I'm very grateful to the Swiss Abroad Organisation for your convincing support.

The question of entry has now received the decisive phase. The Senate (Ständerat) is in favour by a big margin of 37 - 2. The National Council (Nationalrat) will debate the matter during the Autumn Session. I am hoping that the referendum will be held by mid next year. YOU, delegates, will be put under pressure. I'm very pleased that the UN was made the central theme for your congress. It signifies your interest in this question. Thanks to your experiences, your specific knowledge of the world at large, you can make a considerable contribution to the discussions, and I invite you to do so.

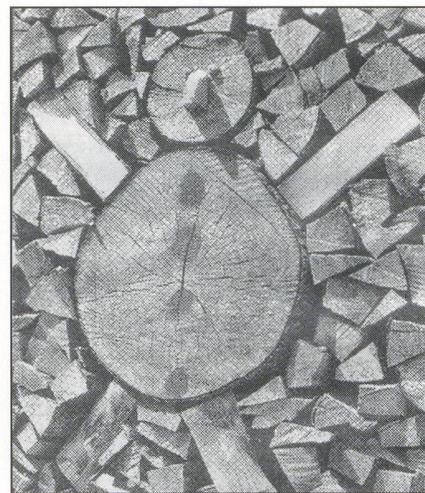
What are the reasons for Switzerland to join the UN? There are many good reasons, and not a single one against. The targets of the UN Charta correspond with Switzerland's - the UN seeks world peace, economic development and political stability. We are already a member of all the special UN organisations and annually pay Sfr. 500million into the UN systems. We can look back over a long and successful participation with the UN. Yet, in spite of this extensive participation, we have no say in the running of this universal forum where all the big and important questions are being debated.. The entry of our country is nothing more than a natural and logical

progression. It is also a sensible step, as we have absolutely nothing to lose and everything to gain - for example, more credibility. We are a country of solidarity and humanity, and our country enjoys high esteem abroad. We earned this through our humanitarian tradition; our intensive engagement in the promotion of human rights; and our efforts to help alleviate poverty. As a UN member, we would be in a better position to promote these things.

And regarding neutrality - be reassured that as a full UN member, Switzerland will *remain* neutral. When opponents claim UN membership is not compatible with neutrality, they are simply wrong. As a member, we can offer our good services with more credibility - a commitment for the targets of the UN Charta, as well as for our engagement in the promotion of peace and preventative diplomacy. Our neutrality is not a hurdle, but rather an extra reason for membership. (supplied by Heinz Leuenberger, Delegate of the Swiss Abroad)

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