

Echo

Objektyp: **Group**

Zeitschrift: **Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad**

Band (Jahr): **42 (2015)**

Heft 4

PDF erstellt am: **27.09.2024**

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More immigrants

Immigration to Switzerland has increased. According to the State Secretariat for Migration, there were 22,942 more foreigners living in Switzerland at the end of March than at the end of 2014. In total, there were 1,967,844 people without a Swiss passport – 3.4 % more than a year earlier. Over two thirds of them come from EU/EFTA states. The vast majority of immigrants come to Switzerland for work or as family dependants. The proportion of recognised refugees (4.8 %) and foreigners without gainful employment (4.5 %) is relatively small.

More money for the promotion of culture

Parliament supported the Federal Council's culture policy during the summer session. The National Council and Council of States approved the dispatch on culture for the period 2016 to 2020. Various motions proposing cuts failed miserably and 3.4 % more is to go to culture over the coming years. In total, the Federal Council plans to spend 1.12 billion Swiss francs on the promotion of culture during the period 2016 to 2020.

No change to tax for cross-border commuters

The canton of Jura will not tax cross-border commuters itself in future. An initiative put forward by the SVP for taxation at source was rejected by over two thirds of the electorate. A counterproposal by the government and parliament was approved by 63 %. Under this proposal the canton will receive reimbursement of 4.5 % of the gross salary from neighbouring states.

Protest over exhibition

An exhibition by the Israeli organisation *Breaking the Silence* has sparked uproar in Zurich. *Breaking the Silence*, which was set up by an Israeli officer in 2004, shows reports by members of the army on their deployment, particularly in the Palestinian territories. The soldiers tell of brutal treatment, arbitrary killings, violations of human rights and the impact on morale in the armed forces. The Israeli embassy in Berne protested through diplomatic channels against the exhibition, which has also received financial support from the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

Ueli Maurer

Federal Councillor Ueli Maurer left the National Council chamber on 18 June without a word. Parliament had just thrown out his army reform. The next day, the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" wrote that Ueli Maurer's party, the Swiss People's Party (SVP), had played the main role in the National Council "game of poker" over the future development of the army. The SVP was in fact calling for a much larger army and far more money – an extra 400 million Swiss francs – than the preliminary consultation committee had proposed.

"Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies."

Groucho Marx (1890 – 1977), US comedian

"We have gone through four difficult years with a centre-left government and a centre-left parliament."

Toni Brunner, SVP President

"These claims of a centre-left government are astonishing. I do a recount every Wednesday before the Federal Council meeting – it's not true."

Federal Councillor Alain Berset

"To name things wrongly is to add to the misfortune of the world."

Albert Camus (1913 – 1960), French writer

"Football can make better people of those drawn to it."

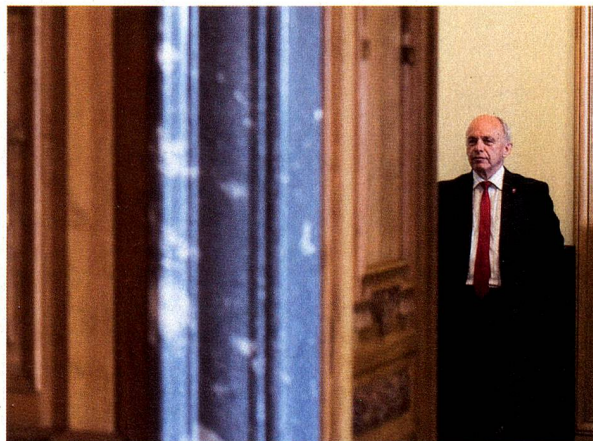
Sepp Blatter, FIFA President

"Switzerland is not FIFA."

Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter

"We reach 1.6 billion people. FIFA is more influential than all other countries or religions in the world."

Sepp Blatter again



"A bore is a person who opens his mouth and puts his feats in it."

Henry Ford (1863 – 1947), founder of the Ford Motor Company