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Information for Swiss Abroad entitled to vote

Towards the "information super-highway"?

People wishing to vote in referendums and elections should be well informed. This is not always easy for those resident abroad. Here are some details about the information available.

24 heures

ARRIERE DEL TICINO

Nouvelliste
et Feuille d'avis du Valais

JOURNAL
du JURA

Tages-Anzeiger

giornale del Popolo

Bündner Zeitung

neue Zürcher Zeitung

TRIBUNE DE GENÈVE

LE NOUVEAU QUOTIDIEN

Luzerner Zeitung

JOURNAL de GENÈVE
ET GAZETTE DE LAUSANNE

TRIBUNE DE GENÈVE

St. Galler Tagblatt

Die Ostschweiz

Der Bund

L'EXPRESS

LNN
JAZERNER NEUSTE NACHRICHTEN

Le Quotidien Jurassien

Blick

You are at the moment reading Swiss Review. You may wonder why you receive it. The reason is quite simply that the

René Lenzin

federal government believes that one of its duties is to keep Swiss Abroad up-to-date with events in Switzerland and therefore supports media with this aim (see Box). But there are also newspapers which are widely read abroad and even have a special format for dispatch abroad.

International editions

Those speaking German are better off, since the two biggest serious daily papers both have foreign editions. "Tages-Anzeiger" publishes a weekly international edition containing the most important articles of the week and printed on airmail paper to reduce postal costs. At present "TA-Fern" has a circulation of about 7,600, but it is hoped that over the medium term this will rise to at least 10,000.

"Neue Zürcher Zeitung" (NZZ) at present sends about 17,000 copies abroad, which makes it the most widely read Swiss newspaper outside

the country. Since March this year the NZZ's international edition has been printed in Frankfurt and Passau. This means that at least in Germany and Austria it can appear on breakfast tables just like local newspapers, and readers do not have to wait until the day after or even later, as used to be the case. The NZZ hopes that this will enable it to double its foreign readership over the next five years. It also publishes a monthly magazine, "Swiss Review of World Affairs", which contains NZZ background articles translated into English. This includes a page on which the most important events of the month in Switzerland are summarised.

Getting to the post on time

"Journal de Genève/Gazette de Lausanne" is the most read French-language paper outside the country. On weekdays about 2,800 copies are sent abroad, and this figure rises to about 3,500 for the weekend edition. "Nouveau Quotidien", which has been on the

market for only a few years, sells about 500 copies abroad every day. The corresponding figure for the main Italian-language daily, "Corriere del Ticino", is about 200. Apart from the cost, the main problem in selling papers abroad is that of time. A daily paper loses its attraction if it cannot be read on the day it appears. This problem is worse in countries far afield with unreliable postal systems. On the other hand articles about elections and referendums mostly do remain valid for some time after they are published, which means that regular perusal of a Swiss newspaper does complement the information range provided by Swiss Review and SRI.

In an age of growing computerisation and rapid expansion of the so-called "information super-highway", news transmitted electronically is gaining in importance. Various media, including Swiss Review, are at present examining possibilities of electronic communication. This would at least solve the problem of getting to the post on time. ■

Swiss Review and SRI: Helping the voter decide

Since as early as autumn 1994 this year's elections have been a central subject of Swiss Review. A series of portraits of the parties represented in parliament comes to an end in this number. The next one will be devoted entirely to the National Council elections. It will include basic civic information as well as the points of view of the various parties on individual issues. There will also be a general overview of the elections. Although our magazine is financed by the federal government, it is published by the Organisation for the Swiss Abroad, a private body. It is editorially independent, is supplied free of charge to all registered Swiss Abroad and has a circulation of about 310,000.

One of the most important tasks of Swiss Radio International (SRI) is providing information to Swiss Abroad over short-wave and by satellite. SRI is making a very special effort in this regard in the run-up to the elections. From August on, each language programme will transmit special election broadcasts in which the most important issues will be discussed with representatives of the parties. In addition, SRI has prepared a special election audio cassette in which Swiss political institutions and voting methods are explained and the parties represented in parliament described. Those receiving referendum cassettes on a regular basis will automatically get the election one. Others interested may order it from:

SRI, Referendum and Election Cassettes, CH-3000 Berne 15 (Please state preferred language: French, German or Italian)

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