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■ **A heist like in a Hollywood movie?** Four pictures by Paul Cézanne, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh were stolen from the Emil Georg Bührle Collection in Zurich. With the haul worth a total of CHF 180 million, the police believe this to be one of **Europe's biggest-ever art thefts**. Four days earlier, two Picassos with an estimated value of CHF 4.8 million were stolen in Pfäffikon in the canton of Schwyz.

■ The winter of 2006-2007, the warmest for more than a century, accelerated **glacial decline in Switzerland**. According to the Academy

*"We have a problem that is currently getting worse. More and more children and young people are overweight, and suffering from motor deficiencies and coordination problems."*

MATTHIAS REMUND, HEAD OF THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT FOR SPORT, ON THE "HEALTHY BODY WEIGHT" CAMPAIGN.

of Natural Sciences in Berne, 88 of the 91 glaciers measured in 2007 had shrunk. The Vadret da Roseg in Grisons has retreated 127 metres within a year, while the Gauligletscher in the Bernese Alps has receded by 100 metres.

■ Last year 40% of the 38,000 young people due to undertake Swiss military or civil service were declared **unfit for duty**.

■ According to a report published by the Federal Statistical Office entitled **Equal Opportunities for Women and Men**, in international comparison Switzerland is

one of the European countries with the highest proportion of women in employment, behind Denmark, Norway and Iceland. 59% of women in Switzerland were in employment in 2005, compared with 49% in 1990. The significant increase is due largely to the high level of part-time employment. 58% of Swiss women work part-time, the second-highest proportion in Europe.

■ Since 1 January 2008, watch in the **army has generally been kept with a loaded weapon**. This decision by Defence Minister Samuel Schmid has caused so much uproar that the army's new commander-in-chief, Roland Nef, has been forced to take conciliatory steps. He has given reassurances that live ammunition will not be used in residential areas.

■ Television viewers of the three national broadcasting chains voted the wrestler Jörg Abderhalden **Swiss personality of the year 2007** at the sixth "Swiss Awards" event. He succeeds Köbi Kuhn. Swiss Awards were also presented in five different categories. Daniel Borel, the co-founder of Logitech (IT equipment), picked up the business award. The Swiss Award in the politics category went to Carla Del Ponte, former chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

■ The European Union has approved the agreement that will lead to the lifting of automatic controls at Switzerland's borders. Switzerland ratified the agreement in spring 2006 and must now make the necessary amendments to cantonal laws and introduce practical measures at airports to ensure they

comply with the new regulations. The agreement also covers a joint visa policy and a police database, the Schengen Information System (SIS). The Federal Council plans to accede to the **Schen-**

coins are to be minted annually until 2010.

■ **UBS announced the first annual loss** in its history. The deficit amounted to CHF 4.4 billion. The treasury has also felt the ef-

*"That is the highpoint of my career. Only Olympic gold could top winning here."*

DIDIER CUCHE, THIS YEAR'S WINNER OF THE WORLD'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS DOWNHILL SKI RACE ON THE LEGENDARY "STREIF" PISTE AT KITZBÜHEL IN AUSTRIA.


**gen area** on 1 November 2008.

■ There has been a sudden mysterious increase in demand for Swiss money. Production at the Swiss mint, the organisation responsible for **making Swiss coins**, increased threefold in 2007 from 32 million to 90 million units. Around 80 million

fects of the underperformance, with the federal government estimating a tax shortfall of more than CHF 1 billion. Credit Suisse, by contrast, posted record profits of CHF 8.55 billion for 2007, up 3% on the previous year, despite the subprime lending crisis. ALAIN WEY

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