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■ After record losses last year, **SBB Cargo** has announced 400 job cuts at its Bellinzona, Basel and Fribourg plants.

Employees, trade unions and the authorities are protesting against the loss of one tenth of the workforce.

■ Federal Councillor Hans-Rudolf Merz wants to abandon the reform for **separate taxation of spouses** in favour of targeting improvements for unmarried and single parents instead.

■ The **Internet company Yahoo** is relocating its European headquarters from London to Switzerland. Several hundred jobs are to be created in Rolle in the Canton of Vaud. Yahoo's competitor Google is opening a development centre in Zurich with 350 employees.

■ The National Council has approved the increase in the **retirement age for women** from 64 to 65 years of age. Plans to make early retirement easier for people on lower incomes have been rejected. The left is threatening a referendum against the 11th AHV review.

■ The SVP has replaced the CVP as the strongest party in the cantonal **elections in Schwyz and St. Gallen**. The results mean the continuation for now of the triumphant progress of the Swiss People's Party (SVP) in cantonal elections.

■ This **Easter** was the coldest for almost thirty years. Temperatures dropped to freezing point in central Switzerland. Heavy, sustained snowfall caused a number of accidents on the roads over the holiday period.

■ After a takeover battle lasting almost a year, the UK hedge fund Laxey has abandoned plans to acquire Switzerland's

"If we had said 'No' to the free movement of people, there was a huge risk that the EU would have terminated the bilateral agreements with Switzerland. Then we would have been forced to join the EU."

DORIS LEUTHARD,
FEDERAL COUNCILLOR AND MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

"Election to the Federal Council came as a surprise. I have not acted surreptitiously, and I have not lied to anyone. The allegations made by the national SVP are unfounded."

EVELINE WIDMER-SCHLUMPF,
FEDERAL COUNCILLOR AND JUSTICE MINISTER

"We are ready for the Federal Council. We will join it if the others are ready to accept us. We will take up office."

VELI LEUENBERGER, NATIONAL COUNCILLOR FROM GENEVA
AND PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS GREEN PARTY

"The size of the army has fallen from over 600,000 to a mere 200,000 in just a few years. Unfortunately, I fear this may spell the end of the militia system in the long term."

MICHELE MOOR, OUTGOING PRESIDENT
OF THE SWISS OFFICERS' SOCIETY

"The Swiss guardsman with the halberd provides a service of honour, not a security service. The Guard is equipped with modern firearms."

ELMAR MÄDER, OUTGOING COMMANDANT
OF THE PAPAL SWISS GUARD IN ROME

"The wearing of a headscarf is protected as an act of religious freedom through the freedom of religion and conscience in the Federal Constitution."

THE SWISS FEDERAL SUPREME COURT ON THE DECISION
OF AN AARGAU COMMUNE TO REFUSE A MUSLIM WOMAN A SWISS PASSPORT

"Genetic engineering was developed in Switzerland. It could have provided major economic gains. The technology is now in the hands of the Americans and the Chinese."

PETER BRABECK,
CHAIRMAN AND CEO OF NESTLÉ

"Renewable energy is a wonderful opportunity for Switzerland with huge economic potential. Why shouldn't we set ourselves ambitious goals?"

BERTRAND PICCARD, WHO WANTS TO FLY AROUND THE WORLD
USING JUST SOLAR POWER WITH HIS "SOLAR IMPULSE" PROJECT

largest construction company **Implenia**, but still remains by far the largest shareholder.

■ **Marcel Ospel** is stepping down as Chairman of the Board of Directors at major bank **UBS**.



■ The national Swiss People's Party (SVP) is seeking to force **Eveline Widmer-Schlumpf** to resign from the Federal Council and from the party. But the Grisons SVP is backing its Federal Councillor. 100,000 people expressed their solidarity with the Federal Councillor on the Bundesplatz in Berne.

Ospel's decision is in response to the write-down of a further CHF 19 billion in the wake of the mortgage crisis in the USA.

■ The Federal Council wants to restrict the export of military **training aircraft**. Exports to conflict zones are to be banned. A Swiss Pilatus aircraft had been converted for combat missions in Chad.

■ A youth court in Zurich has convicted two young men of the **rape** of a 13-year-old. The 19-year-old man received a prison sentence of three and a half years and the 17-year-old was sent to a young offenders' institute.

■ **FC Basel** beat Young Boys Berne 2-0 in front of 38,000 fans in Basel's St. Jakob's Park stadium to **win the Swiss football championship** for the 12th time and qualify for the European Champions League.

■ The **Glarus cantonal assembly** has elected liberal Marianne Dürst as its first female chief political officer, known as the Landammann. The outgoing Landammann, Röbi Marti of the SVP, will hand over the assembly sword to a woman for the first time ever.

■ The **Berne SVP** has declared its opposition to the expulsion of the Grisons cantonal party from the national Swiss People's Party (SVP). The national SVP called for the move as the Grisons party is still backing Federal Councillor Widmer-Schlumpf.

■ German Chancellor **Angela Merkel** has been received by the Federal Council. The main issue on the agenda is the aeroplane noise row between the two countries. New tests will be used to measure noise pollution in the border area.

■ **Jean Ziegler's** mandate as UN Special Rapporteur on the right



to food came to an end at the end of April. As he stepped down, Ziegler called for more aid for Palestine and more money for the World Food Programme.

■ Cows' intestines from Paraguay will help overcome supply shortfalls in the production of **Cervelat sausages**. According to the Swiss Meat Association, it should be possible to import intestines from Brazil again from next year.