

The printed word under pressure

Autor(en): **Lettau, Marc**

Objektyp: **Preface**

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

Band (Jahr): **45 (2018)**

Heft 6

PDF erstellt am: **22.07.2024**

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Excuse us for first briefly talking about ourselves - the "Swiss Review" that is. Finding well-thumbed copies on the tables in Lyon, Tarragona, Vancouver, Invermay, Newcastle, Berlin or Hong Kong tells us that the printed edition passes through many pairs of hands, and often acts as a starting point for family discussions or is perhaps sometimes even a matter of dispute. It is also always a small and tangible piece of

Switzerland. That is why we would like to ensure the long-term continuation of the "Review's" printed edition. But printed matter is under pressure due to the costs.

Ironically, the future of the printed edition of the "Review" depends upon those readers who enjoy the benefits of the electronic edition. Those who access the contents of the "Review" online or via our – improved – app and unsubscribe from the printed edition, instead of tossing it into the waster paper basket without having read it, help reduce the high printing and shipping costs and thus help protect the future of the printed edition. Specific tips on this topic are provided on page 22.

Will the printed word survive? We took a closer look at how books, which have long been declared dead, are doing in Switzerland. It is astonishing. After years of decline, new bookstores are opening up again for the first time. The classic, printed book itself is doing much better than the book trade. It is conquering new markets. In 2017, 9,000 new books were published in Switzerland. That is almost twice as many as 50 years ago, at a time when the book was still entirely unrivaled. In addition, a feeling of "digital fatigue" can be observed in Switzerland, which helps the classic book: e-book sales are stagnating and do not even account for ten percent of sales in the book market.

One story has yet to be written: the tale of suspense that is the tough negotiations over the future relationship between Switzerland and the European Union. The tense final phase of the showdown is underway, with Bern and Brussels raising the stakes. We offer a brief guide to the matter of debate, which is not always clear, even to those interested in politics. What is clear though, is that the tussle between Bern and Brussels will influence the elections in Switzerland. During the election year 2019, Switzerland itself will be the subject of debate as seldom before: What will happen to the "Swiss model of success"? How can it be safeguarded? What threatens it? These are also the first questions for those who want to start preparing for the upcoming autumn elections.

MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cover photo: printed books are holding up surprisingly well in Switzerland. Image: iStock