

Zeitschrift: Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad
Herausgeber: Organisation of the Swiss Abroad
Band: 47 (2020)
Heft: 3

Artikel: The coronavirus crisis in Switzerland
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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-1033014>

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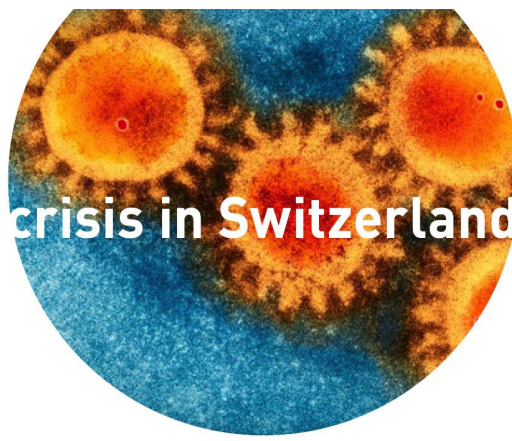
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Colourised electron microscopic image of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Photo: iStock

The coronavirus crisis in Switzerland

Swiss coronavirus curve on a sharp trajectory

Switzerland reported its first coronavirus case on 25 February 2020. The number of cases reached 10,000 on 25 March. Nought to 10,000 in the space of a month. The number of coronavirus fatalities within that time was 150. By 30 March, only five days later, over 300 people had died and more than 15,000 had become infected as the Swiss coronavirus curve continued rising steeply beyond the first month. There was real concern at the possibility of intensive care units in Swiss hospitals being overwhelmed. By the time the various language versions of this latest edition of “Swiss Review” had been translated and proofread one month later, the death toll had hit 1460, with 29,700 recorded infections (30 April 2020). (MUL)

The coronavirus crisis and the content of our magazine

Much of the content in the last edition of “Swiss Review” was produced before COVID-19 reached Switzerland. Some content in edition 2/2020 was overtaken by events. This includes information on important votes that have since been postponed. The complexity of publishing “Swiss Review” in four different languages and 13 different regional versions meant it was not possible to make further corrections. We thank you for your understanding. This, the latest issue of the magazine (editorial deadline of 26 March), was produced while the crisis in Switzerland was beginning to escalate, hence we are not completely satisfied with the end result. Please also note that most of the events listed under regional news will not take place as announced, if at all. MARC LETTAU, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

COVID-19 – what you need to know

Keep your distance, wash your hands, stay at home.

The vast majority of people have been following the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) guidelines on preventing the spread of infection very closely.

Further information: [ogy.de/corona-bag](https://www.bag.admin.ch/coronavirus)

Stranded abroad?

Thanks to flights specially chartered by the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), many Swiss who were stuck abroad have since been repatriated.

Further information: [ogy.de/corona-eda](https://www.eda.admin.ch/corona-eda)

Most Swiss media outlets are currently providing in-depth and continually updated online coverage of the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on Switzerland. This includes a dossier that swissinfo has specially compiled for members of the “Fifth Switzerland” (www.swissinfo.ch).

Further information: [ogy.de/corona-swissinfo](https://www.bag.admin.ch/corona-swissinfo)

Federal Council postpones votes scheduled for 17 May

On 18 March 2020, the Federal Council decided to postpone the federal votes scheduled for 17 May 2020. Two days later, the Federal Council passed an ordinance suspending the collection of signatures as well as subsequent campaigning in relation to all pending votes (popular initiatives and optional referendums). Furthermore, the Federal Council strongly urged cantons and municipalities to ban local council meetings in all but exceptional cases.

The background information that we provided in the last edition of “Swiss Review” about the Swiss Hunting Act and the SVP’s limitation initiative continues to apply. Only the voting date no longer applies and will be rescheduled. (MUL)

A challenge for Swiss pensioners

Every year, Swiss expatriates who receive pension benefits under the old-age and survivors’ insurance (OASI) or disability insurance (DI) must submit notarised proof of life confirmation to the Central Compensation Office (CCO) in Geneva. The coronavirus pandemic means that people in many countries are having difficulties contacting authorities, meeting deadlines and sending documents by post. We therefore advise pensioners to send their documents as well as any questions they may have by email to sedmaster@zas.admin.ch. Where possible, we urge people not to telephone the CCO directly, as the CCO hotline is currently experiencing an enormous volume of calls. For further up-to-date information, please visit www.zas.admin.ch. (MUL)

Further information: The first month of COVID-19 in Switzerland – see Renat Kuenzi’s timeline account on page 20.