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Official Communications

The Federal Political Department asks itself some questions

«How can one work most effectively?» That is a question of concern to every citizen. Caught since 1974 between the hammer of budgetary cuts and the anvil of a ceiling on staff, the Federal Administration must face up to it with an urgency that cannot be avoided. It was against this background that Mr Pierre Graber, Federal Councillor, President of the Confederation and Head of the Federal Political Department, instructed his Director of Administration, Ambassador Janner, to set up a working group with the following brief:

«To examine the tasks and the working methods of the Political Department and to make the necessary recommendations for the most rational use of the means available in the interests of our foreign policy.»

In carrying out its assignment, the «Florian working group» found itself face to face with two difficulties peculiar to all foreign ministries.

First, the function of our foreign policy to «watch over the interests of the Confederation abroad» is formulated in very general terms. It could not be otherwise, because the realities of world politics, with which our country has to come to terms, are largely outside its sphere of influence. Switzerland's foreign policy, and above all its diplomacy, must be and must remain in a position to cope with the unexpected.

Secondly, the Federal Political Department, as the trustee of Swiss foreign policy, does not act independently but at the request, or for the benefit, of other state or semi-state bodies or simply bodies subsidized by the state. The Polit-

ical Department therefore does not have an entirely free hand in disposing of its diplomatic and consular apparatus.

That was the basis on which the working group, comprising 21 members divided into six committees, examined from March 1974 to February 1975 in the course of 68 working sessions, *possible ways of improving the output of the Department. The working group was actuated by the principle that our diplomatic service must remain entirely available as proof of a small neutral state's commitment to the international community.* At the same time, however, the protection of interests, that is to say, help to Swiss nationals abroad, must be adjusted to the limits of the federal budget. The working group recommends:

- a restructuring, leading to a reasonable reduction in the network of diplomatic and consular representations, which has already exceeded its optimum size, although several new posts will be opened in the future;
- rationalization of a technical nature in the fields of the AVS/AI, military control, military exemption tax and information for the Swiss abroad;
- better financial compensation for the services rendered by the Federal Political Department to Swiss nationals abroad (this applies especially to work done by the offices in Berne), and if necessary reducing them where they go beyond the legal duty of assistance or where other organizations and institutions are available. This reduction will to some extent affect the often

excessive use made by tourists in particular of our representations abroad;

- an improvement in the organization of the Federal Political Department itself, which, with its network of approximately 200 representations abroad and with two thirds of its personnel working abroad, represents a special case in the federal administration.

However, the working group's report is not simply an austerity programme, if only because the interests of the country require *not the cheapest possible but the most efficient possible foreign ministry.* This point of view calls for a critical self-portrait in a number of sectors which are of special importance with respect both to the Department's range of tasks and to the public's expectations of its officials. To mention just a few subjects – the flow of information between headquarters and representations abroad, the aims and importance of duty trips and representation, and staffing requirements.

In this connexion it should be

National Anthem

The Federal Council has decided to keep the «Swiss Hymn» by A. Zwyssig and L. Widmer as the official *national anthem.*

This decision is based largely on the result of a survey carried out by the Department of the Interior in the cantons and among those Swiss organizations most interested in the question.

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remembered that, because of its heavy recruitment programme during the war years and the subsequent prohibition on recruitment imposed by Parliament for nine years, the Political Department today has an unfavourable age structure. Consequently, the Department will lose about a third of its diplomatic staff by retirement between 1978 and 1984 and about the same percentage of its consular staff between 1981 and 1988. This will be a real exodus, which cannot be made good by massive short-term engagements because it is essential for foreign service officials to have a long period of training and to acquire a vast fund of experience.

Apart from the question of numbers, general problems of *personnel policy* peculiar to a foreign ministry, and of which the public have a somewhat false picture, occupy an important place in the report. The working group has not been afraid to evaluate and compare the rights and obligations of the transferable official and to *suggest reforms* in the interest of a better balance. These reforms refer particularly to the position of women, the political rights of the foreign service official and the free choice of an occupation by members of his family.

The report is not a handbook but rather a review of activities, intended to give information about the tasks and problems facing our foreign ministry at present and in the foreseeable future; it can claim to have been composed «*sine ira et studio*». Its authors note that *it is not enough, in an efficient state, to proclaim the efficiency of the foreign ministry, it is necessary to experience it daily.*

The Federal Council took note of the report on 30th April 1975 and instructed the Political Department to follow its recommendations. The report was also favourably received by the parliamentary committees directly concerned. It

is published in the hope of achieving a relationship of frankness and confidence with the public, whose objective and constructive criticisms

will be welcomed by the working group. It can be consulted in the libraries of our representations.

Political rights of the Swiss abroad

In its sitting of 24th September 1975 the National Council approved – with one small amendment – the Federal Council's draft law on the political rights of the Swiss abroad. Details of the draft law have already been published in one of our previous numbers. The amendment consists in the

fact that the voter can have his name entered in the electoral register of the commune of his choice; he is therefore not obliged to apply before each ballot or election.

It is expected that the Council of States will deal with this business in its December 1975 session.

Swiss Holiday Pass re-named Swiss Holiday Card

The Swiss Holiday Pass, introduced in 1972, has proved a success. Striking evidence of this is the fact that, although tourism shows a downward tendency, sales are increasing still. Far more than 100000 Holiday Passes have been sold already and a great many clients have spontaneously expressed their delight and satisfaction at this comprehensive travel document so easy to use.

No wonder that this is so, for the Swiss Holiday Card, as the Holiday Pass will be named from 1976 onward, is indeed the key to a carefree holiday in Switzerland. It offers unlimited travel on the entire network of the Swiss Federal Railways involving almost 3000 km (1860 miles) as well as on the lines of 80 private railway companies extending over 2000 km (1250 miles), on ten boat lines comprising more than 500 km (310 miles), but also on the postal motorcoach network with a length of 3500 km (2170 miles), giving a total of as many as 9000 km (5600 miles). With the Swiss Holiday Card in your pocket you need not keep to a fixed program,



(Photo Studer)

but may decide from one day to the next, board any train, boat or postal motorcoach and travel whenever and wherever you like, perhaps just giving consideration to the weather conditions.

Who is entitled to the Swiss Holiday Card?

Everyone residing outside Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. No photograph is required but you simply have, when placing your order, to produce either your passport or an identity document, so that its number can be entered in the Holiday Card.

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Notice

concerning the declaration of Swiss and Liechtenstein property, interests and claims in the German Democratic Republic

(official publication in the Federal Bulletin, December 1975)

I

Within the framework of the negotiations with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) concerning compensation, persons who, as owners, creditors or otherwise, have interests in that country are invited to notify their claims to the Federal Political Department. The interests of the following categories of persons are included:

- a) individuals, provided they possessed Swiss citizenship at the time of the intervention by the State and have done so ever since then and were never at the same time during that period citizens of the GDR as well;
- b) corporate bodies and commercial companies, provided they can furnish proof of a predominant Swiss interest during the same period;
- c) the same conditions apply to individuals, corporate bodies and commercial companies of Liechtenstein.

II

The following can be declared:

- a) property or interests which existed on the present territory of the GDR on 8th May 1945 and were in Swiss possession. This normally applies to property and interests subject to the decree of 6th September 1951 on the administration and protection of foreign property in the GDR;
- b) claims which existed on 8th May 1945 in respect of debtors living on the present territory of the GDR and which are normally subject to the decree of 6th September 1951 on the administration and protection of foreign property in the GDR;
- c) property, interests and claims which passed to a Swiss citizen on the present territory of the GDR after 8th May 1945 and which cannot be disposed of freely.

In order to prevent any misunderstandings, the categories of property, interests and claims are listed below in the original German:

III. Bezeichnung der Vermögenskategorien

- 100 Grundvermögen
- 101 Liegenschaften
- 102 Land- und Trümmergrundstücke
- 103 Bodenreform
- 104 Zwangsevakuiierung zwecks Schaffung eines Sperrgebietes entlang der Zonengrenze
- 105 Landwirtsch. Betriebe, die freiwillig den DDR-Behörden w/ Rückkehr i. d. Schweiz übergeben wurden
- 200 Kapitalbeteiligungen
- 201 Wirtschaftliche Unternehmen/Betriebe
- 202 Mehrheitsbeteiligungen
- 203 Minderheitsbeteiligungen
- 204 Überführung in VEB
- 205 Überführung in LPG
- 300 Bankkonten
- 301 Bankkonten mit Guthabenbescheinigungen
- 302 Bankkonten ohne Guthabenbescheinigungen
- 303 Postscheckkonten
- 304 Postsparkassenkonten
- 305 Vorzugssperkkonten
- 306 Handelssperkkonten
- 307 Sparkassenkonten
- 308 Andere Bankkonten
- 400 Hypotheken/Darlehen
- 401 Hypotheken
- 402 Goldhypotheken

- 403 SFr.-Grundsulden
- 404 Hypothek, gesicherte Darlehen
- 500 Forderungen
- 501 Darlehen und Vorschüsse an Versorgungsbetriebe
- 502 Forderungen aus Dienstleistungen, z.B. Provisions-/Spesenabrechnungen, Arbeitsleistung
- 503 Forderungen aus Warenverkehr, z.B. aus Warenlieferungen, Nichtlieferung bezahlter Waren
- 504 Urheber-Patent-Autorenrechte, Lizenzen
- 600 Mobilien
- 601 Wertsachen aller Art und Kunstgegenstände
- 700 Versicherungen
- 701 Private Lebensversicherungen
- 702 Sterbekassen
- 800 Sozialversicherungen
- 801 Alter
- 802 Tod
- 803 Invalidität
- 900 Bankdepots
- 901 Aktien
- 902 Obligationen und Anleihen von öffentlichen/privaten Schuldnern
- 903 Pfandbriefe
- 904 Wertpapiere anderer Art
- 905 Kautions – Prämien – Reserve – Dépôts
- 906 Zahlungsmittel

IV

Only the number and the category of property should be given in the declaration. If several claims are submitted in the same category, the number of claims must be stated, for example: 101. Liegenschaften: 3.

The declaration must contain precise personal data of the applicant (date and place of birth, commune of origin, present address and telephone number).

In cases of inheritance, precise personal data of the deceased must be supplied. A «community of heirs» (in cases where there are several heirs) must appoint a representative with full powers to look after their interests.

The successors in law of corporate bodies or commercial companies must supply the equivalent information about the previous holders of the rights in question.

A declaration must be made in every case, even if a claim has already been submitted to the Federal Political Department, to other official organizations or to the Swiss Compensation Office in Zurich.

After the declarations have been received the applicants will be sent a questionnaire in which all further details of the case must be entered. Declarations must arrive by 31st March 1976 at the latest, that being the final date for the lodging of claims. Declarations received after 31st March 1976 cannot be considered.

The settlement of every claim will depend on an individual decision. Declarations must be addressed as follows:

Swiss claimants living in Switzerland:

Eidgenössisches Politisches Departement
Direktion für Völkerrecht
Sektion Entschädigungsabkommen
3003 Bern

Claimants living abroad (Swiss and Liechtenstein citizens):

to the diplomatic or consular representation
competent for their place of residence

Citizens of Liechtenstein living in Switzerland or Liechtenstein:

Botschaft des Fürstentums Liechtenstein
Willadingweg 65
3006 Bern