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Markus Börlin is appointed ambassador to the Netherlands

After over four intensive years as head of Political Affairs Division VI (Swiss Abroad), ambassador Markus Börlin is leaving the headquarters in Berne to take up his new position as Swiss ambassador to the Netherlands in the autumn. In Berne he was, with the support of three heads of section, responsible not only for crisis management and the provision of consular and diplomatic protection for Swiss citizens abroad, but also for the Service for the Swiss Abroad. In this role, he developed key relationships with the Swiss abroad and gained a valuable insight into their lives, interests, joys and concerns away from home through personal meetings with the Swiss community abroad which he greatly appreciated. He very much regrets that these meetings with fellow citizens abroad were often too short as his term as head of Political Affairs Division VI was marked by various crises that required his presence in Berne. These included the logistically challenging evacuation of Swiss citizens during the war in Lebanon, the devastating earthquake in Haiti and various serious cases of abduction concerning Swiss citizens in recent years. Such incidents have repeatedly underlined the importance of ensuring that Swiss representations abroad have accurate, up-to-date contact details (incl. e-mail address as well as telephone and mobile numbers) for Swiss citizens abroad. This is the only way to ensure that the Swiss authorities can provide citizens with rapid support in emergency situations or targeted information about matters specifically concerning the Swiss abroad (such as the electronic newsletter produced by the respective representation, the e-voting project or the modern electronic version of "Swiss Review"). Registration is also a prerequisite for exercising political rights in Switzerland.

Important information on the delivery of "Swiss Review"

Since January 2010, "Swiss Review" has been delivered as an online edition as standard. This means that anyone whose e-mail address is registered with a Swiss representation will receive the magazine by e-mail unless they have expressly registered for the printed version.

In addition, only one copy of "Swiss Review" per household has been sent since April 2010. This measure has been generally welcomed and it is enabling us to reduce costs while also protecting the environment.

All entitled Swiss citizens abroad can receive their own copy of "Swiss Review", either printed or online. To ensure you receive the next edition in the format you require, we recommend you take the following steps:

- If you have not received "Swiss Review": check with your Swiss representation (embassy/consulate) that your address has been registered correctly (postal or e-mail address). The contact details of the Swiss representations abroad can be found at <http://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/de/home/rep.html>

Ambassador Börlin, who will become a Swiss abroad again himself in the autumn, is very keen to maintain and strengthen the cherished relationship he has with the Swiss community abroad. He is looking forward to his new position in The Hague and is confident that he will be able to maintain a close and constructive relationship with the Swiss abroad in his new position as well.

Switzerland at the World Expo in Shanghai

The World Expo is being held in Shanghai from 1 May to 31 October based on the theme of "Better City, Better Life". This is a World Expo on an unprecedented scale – spanning an area 5 km² and running for six months, it is expected to attract 70 million visitors.

In keeping with its national communication strategy, Switzerland is presenting itself with an open and interactive pavilion focusing on the Expo sub-theme of "rural-urban interaction". The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), through Presence Switzerland, is responsible for the project.

Presence Switzerland has a remit to foster a positive image of Switzerland abroad and implement federal government's strategy for Swiss national communication. Presence Switzerland meets its national communication obligations by carrying out projects abroad, organising visits by foreign decision-makers and opinion-leaders to Switzerland and developing and distributing information material about Switzerland. Presence Switzerland is also responsible for Switzerland's presence at major international events, such as Olympic Games and World Expos.

- You can catch up on any editions missed in the Archive section at www.revue.ch.

- If you wish to change the form of delivery of "Swiss Review" for yourself (from online to paper, or vice versa), you can do so via www.swissabroad.ch. Please note that the change can only be made by persons registered as the head of the household, i.e. those to whom "Swiss Review" is currently addressed.

- If registration at www.swissabroad.ch does not work, you can submit your change request directly to your Swiss representation.

- Please contact your Swiss representation directly about all future matters concerning "Swiss Review". The editorial team at "Swiss Review" does not have access to your address or administrative details.

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At this year's World Expo, Switzerland is represented with a 4,000 m² pavilion designed by ARGE Buchner Bründler Architects and element design GmbH. The building is an open hybrid construct of technology and nature that combines town and country in perfect harmony. It is covered by a transparent façade in the form of a curtain of coarse woven metal with a total of 10,000 cells that generate electricity using state-of-the-art solar technology and visibly illustrate the creative force of the sun's rays. Inside the exhibition space visitors meet twelve Swiss men and women who stand in front of a huge projection featuring Swiss mountain landscapes and tell the audience about their life in Switzerland. On the ramp which runs through the pavilion, 50 telescopes give a three-dimensional view of specific Swiss projects in the fields of air and water quality, sustainable construction and mobility. At the end, a chair-lift takes visitors up to the roof of the pavilion which is brimming with greenery, symbolising the interaction between town and country.

In addition to the permanent exhibition, there is also space for temporary exhibitions and performances. The Jungfrau region of Berne, for example, presented itself to the Chinese public for a month, as did the Criss&Cross exhibition, which is touring the world to exhibit Swiss design with support from Pro Helvetia. The stage is also being used for the "When Swiss Bands Meet Chinese Bands" artists-in-residence programme presented by Montreux Jazz and Pro Helvetia. This is bringing four Swiss artists to Shanghai during the Expo to collaborate on projects with Chinese bands and to perform in the Swiss Pavilion. Leading Swiss jazz musician Lucien Dubuis and well-known songwriter Fiona Daniel from Zurich got the programme underway.

Swiss specialities are served to guests Chinese-style in the Swiss Pavilion's restaurant. Around 550 meals are sold daily. Raclette and chocolate fondue are among the favourites. Chinese visitors have also been impressed by the range of goods available in the Swiss Pavilion shop. Swatch watches, of which around 80 are sold daily, are particularly popular.

Switzerland's presence at Expo 2010 Shanghai is a key platform for its national communication strategy and is enabling the country to sustainably enhance its image in China as well as to develop existing relationships and establish new ones. Various Swiss companies are using the platform for their own events or to present themselves in China, a market of the future, as a sponsor of the official Swiss Pavilion.

The FDFA is pleased with the Swiss presence in Shanghai at the half-way stage. From the start, the Swiss Pavilion has proven one of the most popular and most visited pavilions at the World

Expo. It attracted over 1.1 million visitors in the first three months, including high-ranking delegations. The head of the FDFA, Micheline Calmy-Rey, paid a visit to the Swiss Pavilion as part of her working visit to China at the end of June. She is one of the twelve Swiss figures who address visitors in a life-size presentation on the screens in the Swiss Pavilion's exhibition space. Swiss President Doris Leuthard took part in the celebrations in the Swiss Pavilion at the Expo on Swiss National Day, 12 August, with around 400 guests.

From 2011, Nicolas Bideau will take over as head of Presence Switzerland. He is currently in charge of the Film Section at the Federal Office of Culture. Bideau will succeed Johannes Matyassi, who has been appointed ambassador to Argentina.

Further information on the Swiss Pavilion and files to download can be found at:

www.schweizerpavillon.ch

NEW POPULAR INITIATIVES AND REFERENDA

By the time of going to press, the following new popular initiatives had been launched since the last edition:

- "Ja zur Aufhebung der Wehrpflicht" (Yes to the abolition of compulsory military service), initiative committee: GSoA Gruppe für eine Schweiz ohne Armee, deadline for collection of signatures: 06.01.2012.
- "Stipendieninitiative" (Grants initiative), initiative committee: VSS Verband der Schweizer Studierendenschaften, deadline for collection of signatures: 20.01.2012.

By the time of going to press, there were still referenda pending, but the deadlines for the collection of signatures will expire by the time that "Swiss Review" is published. We have therefore decided not to list them.

Please visit the site www.bk.admin.ch/aktuell/abstimmung. There you will find a list of pending referenda and popular initiatives and the corresponding signature forms if available. Please complete, sign and send the forms directly to the relevant initiative committee.

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