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A year after the “franc shock” The impact of the strong currency



I am amongst those who lost their jobs because of the franc shock. But instead of registering as unemployed, I emigrated and am now working abroad.

PHILIPP REDERLECHNER, IZMIR, TURKEY

Switzerland is just a small cog in the global economy. The abandonment of the fixed exchange rate to the euro obviously shocked the world of finance but there are many other factors influencing the current challenging global economic situation, such as the fall in the price of raw materials and the decline in exports from China, etc. I have been affected by the strong Swiss franc in two ways. On the one hand, the value of my shares fell significantly during the recession but, on the other, the strong franc is providing me with a higher pension in Thai baht where I live.

ERNST RÜTIMANN, THAILAND

The continued euro weakness, possibly soon to be made even worse by Brexit or another political or economic shock, could lead to the Swiss franc remaining at this rate or higher for a number of years. The labour force's flexibility (working longer hours for the same pay or short-time working) means that many jobs have been kept, but I worry that a long-term strong franc will have a permanent impact on industry in Switzerland – especially at a time when global demand is slowing.

CHRISTOPHE WINKLER, ENGLAND

The referendum on 5 June Free lawyers for asylum seekers?

I welcome a speedier decision-making as to who may stay and who may not. I live in Australia and would be cautious about the idea of free legal representation for refugees. Here we have had that for years, with the result that some refugees have spent months, some even years in detention centres, always hoping that a “no” decision would be overturned. This has caused a lot of angst, mental illness and self-harming, fed by lawyers dangling the carrot of a wonderful life in Australia – although Australia suffers from increased unemployment, like most other countries. In the end, everyone is frustrated: the refugees who wait in vain for years, and the Australians, because they are tarnished by the media as heartless, despite welcoming thousands of refugees every year. The only happy ones are the lawyers who get paid handsomely out of the citizens' taxes. Personally, I would advocate a speedier procedure, including free legal representation for one appeal only and not an endless backwards and forwards.

DIANE HOBIGER, AUSTRALIA

Of course we should be open to taking in refugees. But from where? As we know from Germany, many of those arriving in great hordes are not willing to adapt. Many are not refugees but instead seeking a better future in the West.

I believe Switzerland should work with organisations such as Open Doors that are familiar with the situation of people in Syria, for example. They also know who the genuine refugees are.

DORIS ESCURRIOLA, VALENCIA, SPAIN

We are comfortable and contented members of an affluent society living in political and economic security and are afraid that something will be taken away from us, which is in fact not the case. Unfortunately, the humanity factor and the need for compassion are sometimes completely disregarded. Refugees are condemned as economic migrants across the board, denying the fact that these people are fleeing from circumstances partially caused by our own prosperity. The right to asylum is a human right which everyone is obliged to uphold. The provision of free legal aid for people who cannot afford it should go without saying in a constitutional state. If only those with enough money get justice, that is no longer a constitutional state.

KLEMENS GRAF, GERMANY

The final resting place – Swiss-made! Offbeat funerals in Switzerland



I like the idea of a person being turned into a diamond after death. I would prefer to end up a diamond than be eaten by worms in a dark coffin. Diamonds are very beautiful and may provide

my descendants with pleasure. Instead of “ashes to ashes and dust to dust”, it would be “ashes to carbon and graphite to diamond”. That sounds a bit more modern, doesn't it?

KARINA FENNER, ALICE SPRINGS, AUSTRALIA

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