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Claude Longchamps



How many Sundays have we spent in front of the TV listening to the analysis of this dapper gentleman who always wears a bow-tie in front of the camera. We like his blend of meticulous elegance, which his bow-tie suggests, and his unique charm. When Claude Longchamps dissects the latest voting results on Swiss television, we always see him as this rather well-nourished man with the air of a bartender, commenting on the projections eloquently, pertinently and expertly. What a fascinating character!

Claude Longchamps has been a firm fixture on Swiss TV for many years when it comes to elections and referenda. A voting Sunday without the university lecturer and pollster from Fribourg is impossible to imagine. But things are now set to change as the 59-year-old political scientist and historian has decided to scale down his working commitments. He was omnipresent as chief executive of his GfS Research Institute in Berne, but Longchamps now wants to hand over the company. He will remain chairman of the Board of Directors until 2019, but he passed operational management on to Executive Board members Urs Bieri and Lukas Golder on 1 May.

For us, this means we will have to get used to voting Sundays without the man in the bow-tie in future. Longchamps is planning to take a break from the Swiss political scene next year to go on an extended trip around the world, as he revealed to the magazine “Bilanz”.

MARKO LEHTINEN

Dimitri dies at the age of 80

He was Switzerland’s most famous clown. A whole generation grew up with his mimes and beaming smile. Dimitri took to the stage for the first time in 1959 with a solo act but achieved his major breakthrough with guest performances at the Circus Knie during the 1970s. The trained potter was also famous for his own theatre and the “Accademia Teatro Dimitri” theatre school in Ticino. He gave an extensive interview to “Swiss Review” last winter. Dimitri seemed on the ball, sharp-witted and full of vigour, talking about a film project without dialogue that tells the story of a station master called Molinari. It did not come to fruition. Dimitri passed away peacefully on the evening of 19 July after a performance. He was 80 years of age.

First arrests of returning jihadists

The first returning jihadists have been arrested in Switzerland. After a first case in June, the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland arrested a further returnee, a 29-year-old with dual Swiss and Tunisian citizenship, at Zurich airport in August. He was from French-speaking Switzerland and flew back to Switzerland from Turkey. He now faces charges for infringement of the ban on IS and for supporting a criminal organisation. The latest figures released by the Federal Intelligence Service (FIS) indicate that the number of travelling jihadists recorded since 2001 stands at 77. The number of those returning reached 13 as at the end of July, according to the FIS.

Bulgaria honours Marc Lettau

The “Swiss Review” journalist and editor Marc Lettau has been presented with the “golden laurel branch” by the Bulgarian foreign ministry. The Bulgarian embassy in Switzerland paid tribute to his major contribution to Bulgarian democracy through his projects. The award was presented as a mark of gratitude and in recognition of his efforts. Lettau first visited Bulgaria as an orienteer 25 years ago. He then supplied food and medicine for local people through his Variant 5 association, helped out in nurseries, established dental practices, supported the fight against tuberculosis locally and set up media projects for journalists. Marc Lettau and his family now spend around two months a year in Bulgaria.