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Blick boosts sales

THE Zurich-based daily, Blick, has boosted its average daily circulation to 364,000 – by far the highest sale ever recorded by any Swiss newspaper.

Over the past year Blick has increased its daily sale by almost 10 per cent. The newspaper claims that it is read every day by “well over 800,000 people”, representing about one in eight of Switzerland’s total population.

These figures are exceptional because although German is the country’s predominant language, Switzerland is divided up into four language regions and therefore has no national daily.

When Blick was launched in 1958 with a heavy content of sex, sport and human interest stories, critics predicted that the newspaper had little hope of success in traditionally staid Switzerland.

Aid

THE Swiss Journalists’ Federation has sent a donation of Sfr

10,000 (£3,000) to needy journalists in Poland, as part of its relief campaign for media personnel in that country.

Most of the latest donation is in the form of food vouchers, and the rest is for “urgently-requested” medicines.

The Federation said its relief campaign would continue and that “medicines in particular are a priority”.

Prizes

BRITISH TV critics have joined their foreign colleagues in expressing concern “over the profusion of prizes” being awarded at the Golden Rose of Montreux television festival in Switzerland.

Forty programmes were entered for this year’s international festival – and 11 prizes and special mentions were awarded.

The statement of concern was expressed by the 24 members of the international Press Jury, which concluded three British representatives – Richard Last

(Daily Telegraph), James Murray (Daily Express) and Edward Durham Taylor (Television Today).

‘Brutal’

THE editor-in-chief of a leading Swiss daily has been found guilty by a Lucerne court of defaming a local policeman. He has been fined Sfr 600 (£200) and has also been ordered to pay the costs of the case, amounting to nearly Sfr 2,000.

But the court rejected the policeman’s claim for damages.

The journalist is to appeal against his conviction.

The case dates back to 1982 when the Luzerner Neuste Nachrichten carried a report by editor-in-chief Christian Müller, in which he accused two policemen of “brutally mistreating” two young girls.

The girls had been suspected of creating a disturbance in a restaurant.

The girls were later cleared of the charges, and a subsequent enquiry also revealed that only

one of the policemen had mistreated the suspects.

Charges

A SWISS press photographer is filing charges against two bodyguards who he claimed attacked him in a Lausanne street when he tried to photograph President Mobutu of Zaire.

The President was on a private visit to Switzerland, where he has a residence.

Roland Schlaefli, proprietor-manager of the Lausanne-based ASL news photo agency claims the President’s two bodyguards punched him and “almost strangled” him with his camera straps.

Swiss press reports also alleged that local police were slow to intervene.

Several years ago a photographer from Blick claimed that bodyguards damaged his camera and ruined his film when he attempted to photograph the then Emperor Bokassa of the Central African Republic.

The Emperor – also on a private visit to Switzerland – was shopping in Berne in his Rolls Royce.

On that occasion Swiss police briefly detained the bodyguards, and an aide promised to pay for repairs to the camera.

Switzerland’s press, radio and television not only report the news – they sometimes make it as well. This round-up by Colin Farmer spotlights some of the recent happenings back home in which the media made their own headlines.

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