

Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility, and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

Switzerland

National air sovereignty and our politicians

“Our air space has to be controlled under all circumstances and to be defended if necessary even over weeks by the existing and the new means (the TTE)!”

by Peter Regli, engineer ETHZ, retired Major General, former fighter pilot in the Air Force

Below the replacement purchase of new combat aircraft planes for Switzerland is placed in a larger context. The media uproar unsettling our citizens, will be classified and evaluated. Bad losers as well as the settling of political scores are to be blamed for much of it. Political solidarity and a forward-facing rousing common impulse are needed in favor of our security and sovereignty.

Success model Switzerland

Our country is a success model! In the heart of Europe, surrounded by EU countries with increasingly grave problems, Switzerland is characterized by economic success, financial stability, practised direct democracy, internal peace and order, prosperity and a high living standard.

Thanks to a consistent expense brake our public finances are under control. The economy is performing well despite the strong Swiss franc and intense pressure from outside. Our successful model can only survive by a guaranteed security in an international situation that is getting

ever more critical and explosive. Security and protection against multiple threats are the preconditions of freedom and economic success, now as ever.

National security and its reserve

It is the state's task to ensure national security. The pillars of this security (the so-called security network in Switzerland) are the intelligence service, the police, the judiciary, the border guard, the army, the civil protection as well as the emergency services. The exterior and economic policy contribute significantly to security, as well.

These pillars of national security can only be supportive and bear their load sustainably if the necessary means and competences are granted purposefully and permanently. Hence, politics on federal and cantonal level is responsible.

Events of the recent years have shown that the means of the cantons' and cities' civil authorities have come to their limits after about two or three days of a major event, a disaster or a longer-lasting crisis. In that case the civilian authorities that got into trouble will each send an appeal to the Confederation, which will mobi-

lize its reserve for crisis situations: the army. Today our army is multifunctional. In the shortest of time it is in the position to support subsidiary civil authorities actively in difficult situations. All over Switzerland, the army remains the only way for crises, disasters and conflicts at best. They are the only security reserve of the state government.



Peter Regli,
retired Major General
(picture ma)

Air sovereignty

Switzerland is a sovereign state. On its national territory, it is responsible for the security on the ground and in the air. Therefore the airspace over our country must be able to be monitored, controlled and, in extreme cases, also defended. Such is our army's mandate, as established in the Federal Constitution. The air sovereignty of Switzerland is managed administratively by the Federal Office of Civil Aviation. The practical execution of maintaining air sovereignty is the task of the army. The Air Force ensures air sovereignty in all weather conditions, around the clock, day and night, 365 days a year.

Maintaining air sovereignty is one of the main tasks of our Air Force. It has the means of air surveillance (including radars), the anti-aircraft and fighter planes to fulfill this task.

For the identification of flying objects illegally intruding into our airspace manned aircraft are exclusively used. The daily practice of this intercept and identification operations is a core function of our fighter pilots. Today there are 33 aircraft F/A-18 "Hornet" available for day and night missions, in any weather and at high altitudes.



SAAB-Gripen-demonstrator in the Valais canton 2012. (picture VBS)

continued on page 2

"National air sovereignty ..."

continued from page 1

Longer crises

The overall situation in the world, as well as in Europe has further deteriorated in the past year. Nobody knows the influences that the disastrous economic and financial situation of many European countries and the hereto associated social unrest will have on the security situation. Uncontrolled migration, organized crime, Islamism with global terrorism, violent extremism from the right and from the left, as well as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber-war and other threat factors can generate unpleasant scenarios, difficult to control and spreading across border in the shortest time. Governments can quickly reach the limits of their own capabilities. The control over the events can easily slip out of their hands. "Thinking the unthinkable" and "expecting the unexpected" would therefore be appropriate. A country, whose own government never trains for the event of a crisis and who only knows the long-term forward-looking security-related thinking by hearsay, runs particularly great risks. In a complex, long-lasting crisis one should also be able to guarantee air sovereignty. So, around the clock, Switzerland would constantly have at least four F/A-18 combat aircraft in its airspace: two in the west and two in the east of the country.

After about two weeks, the 33 F/A-18 would be on the ground. Due to the many flight hours and the abrasion they would have to be maintained, checked and repaired if necessary. In this situation, our airspace would remain without protection and without active control. The air traffic control would indeed be able to discover intruders. But it would not be possible to identify them positively, to force them to leave our airspace or to land. Swiss airspace would thus be at everyone's disposal. Our country would no longer be able to fulfill its international obligation as a sovereign state.

Major events

It is also necessary to take action to ensure the national air sovereignty during large-scale events such as international conferences (G8, Francophonie-Summit, WEF) and sporting events (EURO 08, Olympics, World Championships).

The 2012 Summer Olympics in London, as a recent example, have shown that the protection of national security or rather the national air sovereignty could only be guaranteed through the use of British armed forces. During the games by means of a sophisticated "Air Security Plan" the airspace over London was monitored, controlled and secured by the combination of sensors (radars), anti-air-

craft resources, combat aircraft and helicopters. So, around the clock, air sovereignty was permanently guaranteed. The operational plan was to deter on the basis of existing resources, particularly with combat aircraft and helicopters (for slow-flying targets), to clearly demarcate geographically, to discover in time, to decide and to combat if necessary. Great importance was attached to the deterrence ("deterrence") by the specific publicly, nationally and internationally, communicated defensive strategy. As possible violators of air sovereignty radio-controlled model aircraft, drones, light aircraft, helicopters, business jets and (as a worst case) hijacked airliners came into consideration. For the "Operation OLYMPICS" the armed forces put a total of 23,000 members of Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force (2500) at the disposal. On two airfields the armed combat aircraft Typhoon was ready on alert in five and ten minutes.

Partial Tiger Replacement (TTE)

There are large gaps in our air force's own stocks. The F-5 Tiger, no longer adapted to current requirements, must be withdrawn from service as soon as possible and be replaced by a new modern combat aircraft. Some 22 new aircraft are intended to replace a part of the remaining 54 tigers. This is the origin of the term "Partial Tiger Replacement".

On behalf of the Federal Council specialists of the DDPS (among others test pilots, engineers, buyers, staff officers) have examined different solution variants. For years this work has taken place in the usual professional, competent, reliable and incorruptible Helvetian way. Due to the current Federation's financial situation the Federal Council decided in December 2011 to acquire 22 type JAS-39 Gripen E combat aircraft from Sweden. The aircraft meets the defined requirements and is the cheapest solution. It now flies in the variant C/D in the Swedish Air Force as well as in Hungary, Czech Republic, South Africa and Thailand. The Gripen is single-engined, which, in addition to lower purchase costs, brings not least great advantages also in regard to maintenance and upkeep.

With the JAS-39 Gripen not only air defense could be covered, but also the division reconnaissance and combat of targets on the ground. Thus our Air Force, after the retirement of Hunter and Mirage reconnaissance aircraft, would once again be able to ensure its mission in an active and comprehensive way in peace as well as in the case of tension and conflict.

Svenska Aeroplan Aktiebolaget (SAAB)

In the politically troubled times of 1937 in Europe, Sweden had recognized the

need to establish their own aircraft industry, and thus be able to become independent from abroad with respect to the procurement of fighter aircraft for their own Air Force.

The first jet aircraft of their own production, with its first flight in March 1947, was called Saab J-21R. It was followed by the fighters AJ-29 Tunnan ("flying barrel"), the A-32 Lanser, the J-35 Draken (which in the then Swiss fighter-evaluation was taken into account as a competitor to the Mirage III), the AJ-37 Viggen as well as its successor, the JAS-39 Gripen. The Gripen is the backbone of the current and future Swedish Air Force ("Flygvapnet").

For more than 75 years, the Swedish aviation industry has proven a manufacturer of high-quality, modern, reliable combat aircraft and has developed an outstanding name.

Hence we can assume with great confidence that Saab will be able to successfully implement the development of today's JAS-39 C/D Gripen into the successor model JAS-39 E within the next decades. Everyone should understand that the Gripen demonstrator of 2013 cannot be identical to the serial aircraft of the 2018. Even the competitors Rafale (F) and Euro Fighter (D) will look different from today due to retrofit programs in 2018. This type of combat performance upgrade during the life cycle of a weapon system is standard and necessary in military aviation. Thus, for example, the family of the F/A-18 Hornet with the first models -A/B has developed into today's latest version -I/F.

Our parties and the Federal Council

After the successful evaluation and the decision of the Federal Council opponents drew, as could be expected, attention towards the selection of the type and its procurement. The losers of the evaluation, including the producers from France, apparently mobilized the media, PR agencies and individual politicians to cry havoc against the decision.

The Social Democratic Party of Switzerland (SPS) decided the abolition of the Swiss Army in its party program from August 2010. The Air Force is an integral part of this army. For the procurement of the TTE we can count only on those SPS representatives that have historical antennas to Sweden and can think independently. Moreover, a majority of the Swiss Greens will not support the project for ideological reasons.

There are therefore primarily the civic parties: SVP, CVP, FDP and BDP. Unfortunately, there is still no visible consensus and no definite closing of ranks concerning TTE.

On neutrality, air sovereignty and international obligations

Switzerland must stay an area of peace. Hypocritical double standards must be revealed.

me. Reflecting the thoughts of Major General *Regli* under international law aspects, one encounters the following context:

Switzerland is a “permanently neutral state”. Switzerland has chosen this status on its own, and it can terminate this contractual obligation, as well. However, neutrality is very deeply rooted in the population, as the annual surveys conducted by the Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH) show. The values have even risen slightly in the last few years to now 95% (in words: ninety-five percent).¹

The international law contract of 1907, “Convention on the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers” (the so-called Hague Neutrality Convention), ratified by Switzerland, is still valid and guarantees neutrals the integrity of their territory. In return, however, they must meet certain requirements, which include to be willing and able to militarily defend the neutrality status (self-defense capability).

International law requires that the armament must not be homeopathic, but must be in a credible relationship to the capabilities of possible third parties. Moreover, a Neutral in terms of the Agreement *shall not tolerate* that his territory and his airspace be used for fighting by third parties. The Neutral must “punish” such injuries in accordance with the text of the Agreement (Articles 2 and 5 of the Hague Convention). In this respect the Neutral is more under obligation than other states. He simply may not allow foreign powers to do as they please militarily. Otherwise he would violate contractual obligations. Therefore three features characterize Swiss neutrality: it is self-selected, everlasting and armed.

Since the respect of international law is something that Switzerland has itself explicitly obliged to in the Federal Constitution of 1999, there should have been a broad political consensus from right to

left, to meet these obligations towards the international community, that is to maintain an Air Force (and Army) that is capable to protect neutrality and to defend the territory (Art. 2 par. 4 and Art. 5 par. 4 of the Constitution). Since it is usually the Left, which puts special emphasis on the observance of international law, one cannot let the Socialist Party get away with a hypocritical double standard on this issue. One may hope that *Helmut Hubacher*, the “grand old man” of the SP, will be heard, who pronounced himself for the Gripen with considerations, that have a grip on reality (see *Current Concerns* No 38/39 of 17.9.2012).

An additional word for Switzerland as an area of peace: If the Left really advocates peace, it will acknowledge Switzerland as an area of peace. If we ensure that no war is possible with us, we and others

continued on page 4

“National air sovereignty...”

continued from page 2

The Federal Council increasingly adopts the PR role of the “Group for a Switzerland without an Army” (GSoA). For years, the Council has been controlling our defense in view of finances and savings instead of real existing threats and needs. In the last 20 years, the Federal Council has saved between 46 to 273 million francs in army expenditures every year. This has always happened in favor of the other six departments. The financial decisions for the defense were mostly made by the government without any real fair assessment of the situation. The Federal Council will now even play off the procurement of the Partial Tiger Replacement against the real and urgent needs of our ground forces (the army) via finances.

The civic Parliament is accountable

The civic part of the Parliament (which still has the majority in the Assembly) is accountable. *They must insist that the Parliament’s ruling of autumn 2011 (Army with 100,000 members, 5 billion francs annually for the Army, including procurement of the Partial Tiger Replacement) is respected and implemented by the Federal Council.* The dissenters and snipers in the party of the Defense Minister as well as those in the FDP (Liberal Party) Board must finally give up their particular interests and support the Federal Council’s decision on

the plane type. The notorious skeptics in the civic camp are to recall: He, who is not willing, will always find arguments; and he, who is willing, will find a solution and contribute to the success. The parliamentarians should be committed to the security of our country, demand the procurement of the TTE and promote it. Our air sovereignty is to be guaranteed again in a sustainable and credible way.

Citizens and information

The Federal Council has requested the procurement of TTE with 22 JAS-39 Gripen E from Sweden by the arms message 2012 from the Parliament. Parliament will therefore have to find an answer before spring 2013. It is then up to the Head of Department, to the responsible civil servants, to specialists and to the independent media, to clearly illustrate the facts. The citizens should be given a convincing and reasonable explanation of the sense and purpose of air sovereignty. This way the electorate will be invited to scrutinize the actions of their political representatives with a critical view and assist them by taking influence. The confident and committed people’s representatives should seek civic solidarity, act as multipliers and clearly and unambiguously advocate the public procurement of TTE.

Concluding remark

The TTE evaluation has been carried out correctly in all respects. This was confirmed by the Chairman of the Sub-Commission of

the Security Commission (SiK), National Councilor *Thomas Hurter* (Swiss People’s Party, SVP), after a thorough, meticulous review of the evaluation process conducted by *Armasuisse* and the Air Force.

The time between ordering and delivery of the Gripen E is to be bridged by a squadron of Gripen C/D of the Swedish Air Force as a loan. This is a masterful move by our Head of DDPS. Thus, our pilots can be trained on a recent, modern, all-weather fighter aircraft and thus prepared in time for the modern successor-E. Maintaining our air sovereignty can be increased rapidly and efficiently thereby.

In December 2012 the Swedish Parliament decided with great support of the Social Democrats to procure 40 to 60 JAS-39 Gripen-D fighters for their own air force. This positive decision which could be expected, however, links the order to a valid international treaty between Sweden and Switzerland over the purchase of 22 aircraft for the Swiss Air Force.

The Federal Council’s decision for a type is on hand. It is practical. Our airspace is to be defended by the existing and the new control means (the TTE) in any critical situation, even over weeks, and may possibly also be defended actively!

The last word on the Gripen procurement will be at the hands of our electorate at the polls, expected in spring 2014. •
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

The Federal Council's and Parliament's security policy violates the constitution and international law

by Dr Rudolf P. Schaub, Walchwil/Switzerland

On the occasion of his retirement as head of the army in late 2007 Lieutenant-General Keckeis informed the public for the first time about the fact that the Swiss army was no longer operational and could no longer fulfill its defense mandate in accordance with the Constitution. Both the Federal Council and Parliament took note of his statement as if it were a minor information of everyday politics. Measures to restore the defense capability of Switzerland required in the Constitution (Article 58 Federal Constitution) and in military law (Art. 1 Military Law) have so far not been a topic of discussion for the majority of the Federal Council and Parliament, let alone been initiated. It has never been investigated how this gradual and silent inability to defend our country has come about, why the people were not informed about it before 2007 and who must be held responsible. In the Federal Councils no one has ever requested a parliamentary enquiry committee al-

though this has often been done in case of government failure of much smaller significance.

The disregard of the constitution and law seem to be no problem for the Federal Council and the Federal Assembly although they themselves are the main offenders. The army's incapability to fulfill its task, which has been known since 2007, neither triggered off any efforts in the Federal Council nor in Parliament, at least an effort to be honest and not to try to pretend anything in accordance with Article 58 of the Federal Constitution (FC) and Article 1 of the Military Law (ML) the content of which is in fact no longer secured.

Does the Federal Council need tutoring on the meaning of the Constitution?

By the end of June 2010, the Federal Council on the other hand, presented

his preliminarily final periodic "Report to the Federal Assembly on the Security Policy of Switzerland" (below called "report") – which had been finished only after extraordinary frictions. In this report, outlining the "Guidelines for the development of security policy in the coming years" (ibid., 2), the Federal Council confirmed its intention to pursue a security policy abiding by the Constitution and international law. On page 35 of the report we can read (emphasis added by the author of the article): "The tasks of the army are listed in Article 58, paragraph 2 of the Federal Constitution and defined in Article 1 of the Armed Forces Act of 3 February 1995. They include preventing war and maintaining peace, defense, support of civil authorities and peace building measures. The tasks are the long-term requirements for the Army. The DDPS (Federal Department of Defense,

continued on page 5

"National air sovereignty..."

continued from page 3

can work from here for a saner world in terms of our humanitarian tradition. For example, if Geneva remains a safe place for honest dialogue with all States, this is a great contribution to peace from a small state. Foreign guests always emphasize this. Where do you negotiate better than in a country that signs and maintains contracts, that is capable of dialogue and that sets right over power?

Or does the Left really believe that infamous Brussels' night marathons or the Washington circles generate genuine, sustainable and reliable results?

From the perspective of conflict research, neutrality is a recent concept for peace, and an honest Left cannot have difficulties with this concept. Its counterpart, the *interventionist internationalism* has long since been unmasked as the Empire's glove. Asians have long since said: "It is a concept of the past", and his followers have no future. Who wants to hold on to it must declare himself and must step aside when it comes to the peace issue.

We at least want to be able to fulfill the obligations of neutrality with the Army and Air Force. •

Hague Convention Respecting the Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers

(Classified Compilation of Federal Legislation, SR 0.515.21)

EXTRACT

Chapter I

The Rights and Duties of Neutral Powers

Art. 1

The territory of neutral Powers is inviolable.

Art. 2

Belligerents are forbidden to move troops or convoys of either munitions of war or supplies across the territory of a neutral Power.

Art. 3

Belligerents are likewise forbidden to:

- (a) Erect on the territory of a neutral Power a wireless telegraphy station or other apparatus for the purpose of communicating with belligerent forces on land or sea;
- (b) Use any installation of this kind established by them before the war on the territory of a neutral Power for purely military purposes, and which has not been opened for the service of public messages.

Art. 4

Corps of combatants cannot be formed nor recruiting agencies opened on the territory of a neutral Power to assist the belligerents.

Art. 5

A neutral Power must not allow any of the acts referred to in Articles 2 to 4 to occur on its territory.

It is not called upon to punish acts in violation of its neutrality unless the said acts have been committed on its own territory.

¹ ETH Study: Security 2012, opinion making concerning Foreign and Security and Defence Policy in the trend

"The Federal Council's and ..."

continued from page 4

Civil Protection and Sport) then deduces *the orders to the army* based on a regular scrutiny of threats and dangers. These in turn will be concretized in the performance profile of the army."

Hence the Federal Council is of the opinion that the DDPS is its own client in security policy and is able to determine at its own discretion the orders transferred to the Federal Council and Parliament by the Constitution for limited periods. The Federal Council's statements are in clear contradiction to the actual allocation of competences and are all the more surprising as the Confederation employs an army of lawyers. One of these would certainly have been available to tutor the members of the Federal Council on the significance of law and the Constitution as binding instructions for federal agencies in general and the DDPS in particular. But most likely they did not want to take legal advice because it did not suit their own intentions. The Federal Council with its abstruse statement on the role of the DDPS wants to make the latter responsible for an allegedly self-determined security policy, for which the Council and Parliament alone actually have the responsibility.

The attempt of the Federal Council to shift responsibility to the DDPS has a good reason why. For a long time it has denied the DDPS the financial resources which would be required to fulfill the mandate of the people in accordance with the Constitution and the law. Should this mandate actually be outdated, it would be the Federal Council's duty to ensure an amendment of Article 58 FC and Article 1 ML. This has not been done to this day, because the Federal Council knows that the realistic-minded majority of the Swiss people would not vote for a defenseless Switzerland with a non-functioning army upgrading concept (this concept includes a rapid upgrading of the Swiss military in case of an actual threat). Federal Councilor Maurer himself eloquently commented on it in a lecture on 16 October 2010 in Lucerne according to the manuscript (reprinted in *Pro Militia*, No. 4/10 of 22 November 2010, p.1): "*This upgrading concept primarily served to sedate the conscience and to cover up the loss of the overall defensive competences at least on paper.*" That is why Federal Councilor Maurer honestly spoke about the "*trick with the paper army*" in the lecture.

As the Federal Council, despite the "*the diffuse threat that has become unpredictable*" (Report, pp. 8, 60), estimated that the likelihood of a military attack on Switzerland for the foreseeable future was low (Report, p. 13), "*the shift from defense towards tasks in monitoring, guarding, safe-*

ty and security [should] be continued" (Report, p.53). The army was to "*maintain and develop core skills to guide military and defense operations in top quality but quantitatively limited*" (Report, p. 36). It is assumed that the army "in the sense of a core competence" should at least master the use of brigades/ battle groups and provides the necessary leadership conditions (Report, p. 36).

Reduction of the army towards incapacity to defense

The reduction of the army to *two combat brigades with significant equipment shortages* clearly indicates that the army no longer has to fulfill the defense mandate laid down in Article 58 FC. It would also no longer be able to. In this context, it is worth noting that the new (as yet unpublished) DDPS papers do no longer speak of a "high-quality, but quantitatively limited development of the ability to lead military defense operations", but only of targeted "*reasonable, but quantitatively limited defensive skills*" ("*savoir faire*"). With this new standard the DDPS abandoned the criterion of "high quality" according to the safety report; it can now further reduce the defense effort, which would require investments. However, the new DDPS documentation also most blatantly claims that the reduction of defense expertise corresponds with the maintenance and development of an appropriate defense expertise in compliance with the current security policy requirements.

The Army Report 2010 of the entire Federal Council released on 1 October 2010 (below "AREport") does also not only confirm that the Army can no longer fulfill the still existing defense mandate, but that it will also not be able to maintain and develop the above described "key skills for guiding military defense operations [...], in high quality, but quantitatively limited". This is excluded because "militarily necessary systems" have not been procured, which, according to the Federal Council, results in capability gaps (AREport, p. 21).

It must be added here that not only the failure to procurement, but also the (premature) liquidations of important military equipment have already led to such capability gaps (for example, the existing bridge-laying tanks, armored recovery vehicles and mortar tanks and infantry mortars). The know-how to use these essential resources on the current and future battlefield cannot be acquired (again) and maintained on paper or by using the computer. The true state of our army becomes completely obvious with the Federal Council's concession that the army *has no comprehensive, updated defense doctrine* (AREport, p. 15). Therefore, the Federal Coun-

cil has also completely unrealistic ideas about the complexity and necessary preparation of Army recruits.

Lack of expertise or acting against better judgment?

According to the Report (p. 50) the Federal Council is not willing to draw up a "detailed upgrading concept for a possible future military conflict," because "both nature and extent of the required skills would depend on the specific threat". In its view it is not possible "to plan the achievement of necessary military capabilities in detail" as long as it is not clear "what the army must prepare for." With the postulated "upgrading" of the army not before a threat has become evident, the entire Federal Council has finally confirmed that they also lack expertise in the military field or even act against better judgment.

In view of the notorious difficulties to realize costly defense projects quickly in Switzerland and without realizing those successful delaying tactics on the part of particular "experts" or "fundamental" arms opponents, the Federal Council should have concluded with little common sense that its upgrading concept could not work in a future (definite) case of threat. Due to numerous hurdles it cannot ensure timely dissuasion effects and the Army's defense capability.

The fact that something impossible is demanded with the timely defense capability due to the postulated "Army upgrading", may probably be no problem for the Federal Council. For the upgrading concept does not have to work on day X; it must act today as a tranquilizer for the population who is worried about the unsettled state of the army. Even Federal Councilor Maurer pointed to that fact (see quote above). It really amazes that the Federal Assembly took note of the "Security Report" and the "Army Report" without any significant resistance. Either all parliamentarians are pussyfooters or they are lazy or no one has the required legal or military expertise to relentlessly uncover the tricks and false reasoning of the Federal Council in a debate.

Federal Constitution required true defense competence

As head of the DDPS Federal Councilor Maurer could not be satisfied with the Federal Council's "Security Report 2010" and "Army Report 2010", even more so as they include a significant risk for him to one day be presented as the one who disrespected the Constitution and who was the "liquidator" of the defense force. As head of DDPS he commissioned Professor Dr Rainer J. Schweizer, Professor of Public Law, European Law and Internation-

continued on page 6

"The Federal Council's and ..."

continued from page 5

al Law at the University of St. Gallen, to work out an "opinion on the requirements of constitution and international law for the defense competence of the army and the future performance profile".

According to Professor Schweizer a "partial reorientation" of the army requires no amendment to the federal Constitution, "*as long as the army keeps to the approved orders of Article 58 paragraph 2 of the Constitution*" (Opinion, p. 11). The army cannot be dispensed from the defense mandate without a constitutional revision (Opinion, p. 28). This is a "*core function*" (Opinion, p. 41) and calls for a "*real defense competence*" (Opinion, pp. 10 and 44). With two combat brigades and serious gaps in their equipments, and an unsuitable upgrading concept the Army does not meet the requirement of "real defense competence", even under the currently favorable security conditions. The requirement of a mere "partial realignment" is also not observed when there are only 22,000 members of the military who look after the fulfillment of the "*core task*" laid down in the constitution and 35,000 members of the Army (insufficiently regulated in the Constitution) do assistance service in favor of cantonal authorities. The security policy of the entire Federal Council is therefore unconstitutional. Moreover, it also violates international law, which is also binding for the necessary defense effort (Art. 5 par. 4 of the Constitution).

**As a neutral state bound
by international law to maintain
defense capability**

Under international law, Switzerland as a neutral country is actually obliged "*to guarantee the required defense duties with reasonable, affordable defense competence, which is materially equipped and personally realizable and adapted to the relevant threat*" (Opinion, p 50). It cannot be said in all seriousness, the Federal Council and the Federal Assembly had provided the Army with funds in a reasonable and sustainable size in the years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, if we compare the expenses for the Swiss Army with the other expenses of the (less wealthy) European countries for their armed forces. The security policy of the Federal Council is therefore also illegal under international law, because the mere slogan of "upgrading" has not created an instrument ensuring *that real defense competence according to international law will exist when needed.*

The Federal Council has taken note of the Swiss professor's considerations (see, AReport, pp. 80.). The expert's very

clear reasoning regarding the indispensable real defense competence in accordance with the Constitution and international law are merely commented by the Federal Council under the heading "defense competence" with the lapidary sentence (AReport, p. 81) that "the constitutionality of the Army's power profile circumscribed in the present report can only be assessed if there has been constitutional clarification on the roles and the cooperation between the Confederation and the Cantons in the security union Switzerland." Thus the Swiss Federal Council insinuates a statement that Professor Schweizer has *never* made. Professor Schweizer refers to the defense of the country being subject to a constitutional revision as a core task of the army (Opinion, pp. 8, 41) and in this regard, he does not indicate necessary arrangements with the cantons at any point. However, he criticizes the inadequate embedding of the Army's assistance service in the Constitution (Art. 58, par. 2 of the Constitution) and recommends discussions with the cantons in regard to the creation of an adequate control (Opinion, pp. 12, 76).

**Financial considerations
count instead of military facts**

In his lecture, "Chance militia" of 16 October 2010 in Lucerne (reference see above) Federal Councilor Maurer complained that politics had been withdrawing financial resources from the Army since 1990 (reduction from 1.6% to 0.8% of the gross domestic product) which had resulted in a "reform marathon". Any reform failed however, because the funding was again insufficient for the new reduced army. Development Step 2008/11 as the newest project does neither differ in quality nor in problem from earlier reforms. Federal Councilor Maurer explained in his lecture, "With the Development Step 2008/11 the focus was put even more on the subsidiary support of civil authorities. The capability to repulse a military attack was again reduced. The reason was mainly due to financial resources." In all frankness Federal Councilor Maurer makes again clear with the last quoted sentence that no military figures but financial considerations were the Federal Council's deciding factor for the reduction of the defense competence, which will include some costs.

In his lecture, Federal Councilor Maurer announced a message to the Federal Assembly on the adjustments of Military Law and a regulation on the Army's organization by 2012. In 2013, the Federal Council must address the motion. According to Federal Councilor Maurer the "implementation" is planned to begin in 2015. Hopefully he will be mistaken in this assumption. Due to the recent development

of the security policy we cannot assume that the Federal Council and Parliament will be able to present a convincing factual and constitutional solution. Most likely they will later try to legitimize the already established state with a mere change in the law and thus annul Article 58 paragraph 2 of the Constitution. Its amendment would be subject to the mandatory referendum. However, a mandatory referendum in security policy is probably to be avoided at all costs as far as the Federal Council and Parliament are concerned. However, a mere change in law would be advantageous in political terms in so far that the referendum would be optional. This would have to be signed by 50,000 voters within 100 days, which might not work. Thus a retroactive legitimizing of the unconstitutional security policy since the fall of the Berlin Wall would be elegantly achieved without the hassle of dealing with the troubled nation.

**Let us ensure a secure Switzerland
for the younger generation**

The civic forces that reject a defenseless Switzerland, military units and organizations, and all Swiss citizens, who for their children and grandchildren wish a secure Switzerland in uncertain times must be anxious to ensure that the people themselves can decide on their security policy on the basis of a referendum. This issue is too important for us to leave it to the Federal Council and the Federal Assembly. •

Source: www.gruppe-giardino.ch, 16.11.2012

(Translation Current Concerns)

Swiss Army – abandon dangerous primacy of financing

Findings from the Lilienberg events on security policy and Army 2012

cc. Entitled “Security policy must become an issue again” the “Stiftung Lilienberg – Unternehmerforum“ (Lilienberg Foundation – Entrepreneur Forum) published an excellent brochure on the current state of our army. It also points out the need for action and the obligation of the singular corporations in our country to act.

“Politics has resigned to the fact that the army has been deprived of funds for over 20 years!” This phrase was coined by Federal Councillor *Ueli Maurer*, head of the DDPS (Federal Department of Defense, Civil Protection and Sport) at an event on the Lilienberg on 15 November 2012, where the current state of the army was discussed.

Indeed, in recent years, the army’s budget has repeatedly been cut, so that the army, in terms of our gross national product and the total federal budget, has a much smaller financial scope than it had in previous years and decades. In this context we often hear that the DDPS has become the quarry of the Federation: While other departments and areas of responsibility of the Federation expanded significantly their activities in some cases, the DDPS had to serve as “Saving Department”, so that organization and equipment of the army are only defined in terms of finances and not in terms of overall goals and holistic considerations.

This is dangerous and ultimately irresponsible since providing security towards the outside and the inside is one of the core responsibilities of each and every state. Moreover it must be clearly stated that neutral Switzerland is obliged to defend its sovereignty against the international community, armed if necessary. Moreover our country must demonstrate that it is able to ensure the protection of the well-known international organizations established in our country. There must be no doubt in this regard.

Diffuse threats – changed security awareness

The lack of a concrete enemy respectively threat image is mostly put forward as a main reason for this development: “We’re surrounded by friends”, is the popular, but very superficial *bon mot*. It is certainly undisputed that the security situation today is very different from what it was during the Cold War with the threat and clearly definable concept of an enemy at that time. However, this does not at all mean that no threats remain. On the contrary: They exist, and they are diffuse and diverse. And that is what may pose some difficulties for the discussion about the

sense of national defense and the organization and equipment of the army, but it is even the more important. Furthermore, the awareness in large parts of the population is changing. New fears and needs have replaced the old ones: fear of data manipulation and sabotage (cyber warfare), environmental disasters, nuclear accidents, unemployment, crime and violence in everyday life prevail in most people’s consciousness, today – therefore seemingly all the areas for which the army in its classical role as a defender of the country is not responsible or even appropriate. This is, however, only true at first glance: since all these fears and threats in almost any combination with social unrest, refugee flows and terrorist activity of any kind could lead to situations in which precisely the army as the only means of power and the last reserve of the Federation must come into play, however this is beyond the imagination of many. One could also phrase it differently: security has become such a self-evident good that we forget that it must be continuously developed, maintained and defended if necessary as guarantor of freedom and prosperity – which involves costs!

It lacks a comprehensive and comprehensible security policy

That this lack of awareness in our country is so dominant and characterizes the so-called security policy discussion is mainly due to two facts: in our country there is no substantial debate on a comprehensive, holistic and easily understandable security policy, neither is there a debate on an appropriate, timely and sustainable assessment of our army. There is also a fundamental discussion missing, a discussion on the strategic interests and objectives of Switzerland in our increasingly globalized world! We cannot afford this deficiency as a small state in a more and more competition-driven world, where the fighting is sometimes very hard! The Federal Council does not seem to be really aware of that. This assessment goes along with the observation that in our country there are hardly no notable security politicians and that security policy does not have a strong lobby.

Deep uncertainty and loss of trust

This serious vacuum and the continuous disputes over organizational and technical details, exaggerated by the media, as well as by the maneuvering of the DDPS leader accompanied by an unfortunate way of communication cause a feeling of uneasiness among the population and especially among those many men and women who

give their best to reliably play their part in the army.

Moreover, all those citizens are disconcerted and deeply frustrated who campaign in various organizations for a strong army and a credible security policy their leisure time. As the result, this uncertainty creates a serious loss of confidence of the people in all institutions responsible for our security policy!

Need for action – who is challenged?

The Federal Council

The Federal Council must finally assume its leadership role the security policy and stimulate a debate on the strategic interests and objectives of Switzerland and thus on a comprehensive, easy to understand security policy which is also worth the name. In addition the Federal Council should settle its undignified dispute with the Parliament held on the back of the army about money, competencies and priorities (in connection with the major project “Further Development of the Army”).

The Parliament

Parliament must insist on its rights and request the Federal Council to fully inform about the different variants and the resulting army budget. Further Parliament should insist on its decisions in autumn 2011 (for example the expenditure cap of 5 billion Swiss francs) and must support a financing policy, which ensures planning security for the army.

The DDPS

The DDPS must come to rest and move away from its activism, noticeable as such from outside, and from any harmful rush or at least restrict it. Only by a steady operating and objectively arguing can the DDPS restore the credibility in the institutions. The DDPS has to consider, what the population and army-friendly circles are doing and it has to intensify the contact with them. The dominant impression is that the DDPS – quite-apart from the population – is busy with its internal issues. This impression must disappear from people’s perception: the DDPS has to solve this task itself. The factual proof is still lacking.

The DDPS Chief

The Chief DDPS is often at the forefront and has shown credible commitment to a strong army on numerous occasions. He is often on his own in his collegiate of-

"Swiss Army ..."

continued from page 7

face and must therefore act in a very tactical manner. This behavior must not lead to contradictory statements via a hasty and unfortunate communication strategy and result in even more confusion – neither with the army friends!

The army top

The army top must appear in public in unity and in a sense of loyalty and avoid independent initiatives of individual generals. Its work has to be done in a professional and credible way within and

concerning the army so that the people's confidence may grow in this institution and the people doing military service may maintain their high motivation and willingness to perform.

The economy

Economy must finally become aware that security means a huge locational advantage for Switzerland – and that this security has a price. Therefore economy must contribute to ensuring the safety, mainly by a benevolent attitude to those employees who need to do their military service, and in particular to those who volunteer for the leadership training in the army.

Army-friendly organizations

The army-friendly associations must be aware that they are the only real lobby for a credible security policy at the time. Therefore, it is important to strengthen their cooperation, to close the ranks, so that they can act in a united way, as they do now in the fight against the initiative of the group for "a Switzerland without an army" (GSoA). Further, they must seek factual information and bring the security policy discussion to the people and the political parties, and motivate them to care increasingly for this topic.

Conclusion: Security policy must once again become a topic by all means!

Summary

Ensuring safety is a core task of the state. Security is also a locational advantage for the economy. Therefore, our country must specify a comprehensive and easy-to-understand security policy, which goes hand in hand with the strategic interests and objectives of Switzerland. Only then a proper, modern and future-proof comprehension of the army can be discussed. Financial considerations must play a certain role, but must not be the driving force. Only this approach will lead to more objectivity, credibility and more trust in the institutions that are responsible for our security.

To refer to: Lilienberg Unternehmertum
Industriestrasse 1, 8340 Hinwil
Phone: + 4144 938 70 00, fax: + 41 938 70 99
info@lilienberg.ch
www.lilienberg.ch
(Translation Current Concerns)



Lilienberg Entrepreneurs Forum in Ermatingen TG. (picture ma)

Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility, and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

Subscribe to Current Concerns – The journal of an independent cooperative

The cooperative *Zeit-Fragen* is a politically and financially independent organisation. All of its members work on a voluntary and honorary basis. The journal does not accept commercial advertisements of any kind and receives no financial support from business organisations. The journal Current Concerns is financed exclusively by its subscribers.

We warmly recommend our model of free and independent press coverage to other journals.

Annual subscription rate of
CHF 40,-; Euro 30,-; USD 40,-; GBP 25,-
for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of
CHF 20,-; Euro 15,-; USD 20,-; GBP 12,50
for all other countries.

Please choose one of the following ways of payment:

- send a cheque to *Current Concerns*, P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich, or
- send us your credit card details (only *Visa*), or
- pay into one of the following accounts:

| | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| CH: | Postscheck-Konto (CHF): | 87-644472-4 | IBAN CH91 0900 0000 8764 4472 4 | BIC POFICHBEXXX |
| CH: | Postscheck-Konto (Euro): | 91-738798-6 | IBAN CH83 0900 0000 9173 8798 6 | BIC POFICHBEXXX |
| D: | Volksbank Tübingen, Kto. 67 517 005, BLZ 64190110 | | IBAN DE12 6419 0110 0067 5170 05 | BIC GENODES1TUE |
| A: | Raiffeisen Landesbank, Kto. 1-05.713.599, BLZ 37000 | | IBAN AT55 3700 0001 0571 3599 | BIC RVVGAT2B |

Sovereignty, law and power

“No state is worth more than another. No country should control another. No people should suppress another.”

Address by President Ueli Maurer at the President of the Swiss Confederation's reception for the Diplomatic Corps on 9 January 2013 in Bern



President Ueli Maurer (picture ma)

*Your Excellency Nuncio,
Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps
Federal Councillor
President of the National Council
President of the Council of States
Your Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen*

On behalf of the Federal Council, I would like to express my thanks for the good wishes extended to our country and our citizens. I was very moved by the New Year's greetings sent to both the Federal Council and me. It is both an honour and a pleasure for me to convey to you and the countries you represent the best wishes of the Federal Council and the Swiss People.

Law and power in Switzerland

I visited the Museum of Swiss Charters in Schwyz over the New Year period. Our Federal Charter of 1291 is kept there. This contains the first covenant from which the Swiss Confederation developed over the centuries.

The historical background is exciting: our country was founded on the basis of a peace order between the valley communities of central Switzerland. Peace order really is the translation of the Latin term used for this ancient treaty. The valley communities recognised each other as equals. This agreement laid down how mutual conflicts were to be resolved without disputes. The parties agreed not to dominate each other.

That is historically significant: The law of the jungle no longer applies where the strongest rules; it is no longer simply the case that the more powerful prevail. The parties to the treaty are equals. They approach one another with equal rights. And particularly significant: they replace power with law.

Law and power in Europe

As you all know, international relations are determined by these two factors: power and law.

As the representative of a small state, this relationship is of particular interest to me. I wish to consider it in greater depth:

The Peace of Westphalia developed into what is known as the system of Westphalia: the Individual states are sovereign and have equal mutual rights.

Although this did not bring lasting peace to Europe, it did give our continent decisive political stability. And thus led to sustained progress and economic growth.

Law and power in the world

Globally seen, this process repeated itself after the First and Second World Wars and at the end of colonialism.

It was in 1918 that former American president *Woodrow Wilson* demanded the right of self-determination for all peoples.

“For I believe that different countries should resolve their differing challenges in different ways; in ways that correspond to their character. I believe in peaceful competition between national economies. I believe in the diversity of this world; in the peaceful multiplicity of sovereign states that deal with each other as equal and fair partners.”

For this purpose, I want to look at Europe and its history, simply because I am most familiar with Europe's history and its political structures. I am sure that the history of other continents will provide similar lessons.

Europe has a wonderfully rich history. But also a bloody one that is marked with suffering. The Thirty-years' War was a particularly bloody and painful epoch. It brought misery – but also one achievement. With the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, a new principle emerged in international politics: the sovereignty of states and law as the basis for inter-state relations.

For years, negotiations were held in Munster, Osnabruck and Nurnberg in search of a new order of peace. The result finds its parallel in our Federal Charter. The partners recognise each other as equals, and in their mutual dealings power is replaced with law.

The Peace of Westphalia is therefore seen as the historic beginning of a European order of peace between states with equal rights. It stands at the beginning of a development that finally led to the modern sovereign national state and modern international law.

He was later honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize.

And after the Second World War, these principles of national sovereignty were integrated into the Charter of the United Nations.

Thus, according to Article 1 clause 2, the United Nations' aims include “to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace”.

And in Article 2 clause 1 of the Charter it is written: “The organisation is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its members”.

So in summary: No state is worth more than another. No country should control another. No people should suppress another. In other words: States are sovereign and are equals. Their relations are based on law and not on power.

Law and power today

I am however quite concerned that these principles could be forgotten:

continued on page 10

"Sovereignty, law and power"

continued from page 9

The debt crisis and a global recession are aggravating conflicting interests. This makes it more tempting for larger countries to no longer accept smaller states as equal partners: Why should a large state engage in long and complicated negotiations with a minor one if it can simply dictate its demands? If it is much simpler to declare national law applicable even beyond national boundaries?

Lately I have sensed that this trend towards international power politics is again on the rise. And it makes me uneasy.

of the Additional Protocols of 1977 and 2005. This is because humanitarian commitment is part of our heritage: 150 years ago, in 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the ICRC, was founded in Geneva. In 1864, twelve states signed the first Geneva Convention. Since then Swiss aid workers have been relieving suffering caused by crises and wars all around the world.

We are pleased if we can provide neutral territory where talks can be held. We are proud that numerous important international organisations are based in Geneva. And we continue to do our utmost to contribute to peace in this world.

"I am convinced that you do your utmost to champion a peaceful and prosperous world. A world in which people and states interact with mutual respect and deal with each other as sovereign partners and equals. A world in which sovereignty and law take priority over power politics."

For I believe that different countries should resolve their differing challenges in different ways; in ways that correspond to their character. I believe in peaceful competition between national economies. I believe in the diversity of this world; in the peaceful multiplicity of sovereign states that deal with each other as equal and fair partners.

Sovereign states that regulate their mutual relations through contracts; that is the recipe for global economic prosperity and well-being. Because each country is able to position and organise itself in the way that corresponds best to its peculiarities.

In this way, all may benefit from each other. Even the larger countries from the smaller. Switzerland's private sector for example has invested some 900 billion Swiss francs in other countries. Swiss companies thus provide, among other things, 2.6 million jobs throughout the world, not counting those more than a quarter of a million cross-border commuters who earn their money here.

Switzerland also has the tradition of serving as a mediator, fostering understanding between states. As a neutral, independent country we are predestined for this role. We are a small state and belong to no power block; no one expects us to pursue our own agenda of power politics.

Switzerland is the depositary state for the *Geneva Conventions* of 1949 and

Our impartial commitment is based on our conviction that countries vary, that they are allowed to differ and should be different.

Conclusion

The sovereignty of states and dealings between states must be based on law and not on power – this is the lesson we can learn from history. These principles are based on the experience gained from great tragedies. But they are also based on the experience that it is every state's interest that all states – even the smallest – should be allowed to flourish.

I am convinced that you do your utmost to champion a peaceful and prosperous world. A world in which people and states interact with mutual respect and deal with each other as sovereign partners and equals. A world in which sovereignty and law take priority over power politics.

Esteemed guests, in the name of the Federal Council, I wish you every success in the vital work that you do. •

Source: *Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sports (DDPS)*

http://www.vbs.admin.ch/internet/vbs/en/home/documentation/news/news_detail.47393.nsb.html

Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility, and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

Publisher: Zeit-Fragen Cooperative

Editor: Erika Vögeli

Address: Current Concerns,

P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 350 65 50

Fax: +41 (0)44 350 65 51

E-Mail: CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch

Subscription details:

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 40,-, Euro 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-

for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 20,-, Euro 15,-, £ 12,50, \$ 20,-
for all other countries.

Account: Postscheck-Konto: PC 87-644472-4

The editors reserve the right to shorten letters to the editor. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *Current Concerns*.

© 2011. All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

People's initiative "Save our Swiss Gold"

The "Gold initiative" wants to secure our National Bank's gold reserves

by National Councillor Luzi Stamm

A majority of the population has not realized that a part of our "National gold" is lying abroad and that more than half of the gold reserves have already been sold.

The United States (respectively the American central bank FED) and the EU (or the European central bank ECB) are about to destroy the value of dollars and euros. More and more, our National Bank is forced to take big risks. The bigger the risk, the more important is a sufficient gold reserve!

Independence and prosperity of Switzerland can only be secured by an independent National Bank respectively an independent currency. The larger the gold reserves the more independent the National Bank will be and the less it can be put under external pressure. This initiative does not only strengthen the independence of the National Bank, but of Switzerland as a whole.

Even the world's best financial experts do not know how financial markets, stock prices, exchange rates, etc. will develop. But all experience shows: The more uncertain the economic times are, the more gold reserves will be important. The initiative "Save our Swiss Gold" requires:

1. Further sales of gold reserves are prohibited.
2. The National Bank's gold must be stored in Switzerland.
3. The National Bank must imperatively store a part of its reserves in gold (at least 20% of its assets).

All attempts in this direction were rejected in the Swiss Parliament. There is only one thing left: the People's Initiative!

Wording of the People's Initiative

The Constitution of the Confederation will be changed as follows:

Art. 99a (new)

The gold reserves of the Swiss National Bank

- 1 The gold reserves of the Swiss National Bank are not for sale.
- 2 The gold reserves of the Swiss National Bank have to be stored in Switzerland.
- 3 The Swiss National Bank has to keep her assets in gold to an essential proportion. The proportion of gold must not be less than 20 %.

Art. 197

Item 9 (new) Provisional Regulations for Art. 99a (gold reserves of the Swiss National Bank):

- 1 For the implementation of Art. 2 there is a transitional period of two years after article 99a has been adopted by the people and the states (cantons).
- 2 For the implementation of paragraph 3 there is a transitional period of five years after the adoption of Art. 99a by the people and the states.

To 1. More sales of gold reserves are prohibited.

Sold – despite all promises ...

Until ten years ago, Switzerland had the largest gold reserves per head of the population worldwide.

It has repeatedly been stressed that a sale of this national wealth is out of question. So for example on 19 June 1995 Jean Zwahlen as a former board member of the National Bank stated, "To say it openly: the Swiss National Bank intends in no way to sell its gold reserves. [...] For thousands of years, gold stood for wealth and status, for trust and reliability. Without doubt, the loyalty of the National Bank to gold strengthens its reputation and credibility."

Shortly after, everything was different: The speech of Federal Councillor Arnold Koller on 5 March 1997 came as a real bombshell in the National Council when he advocated out of the blue that the National Bank should sell "excess" gold reserves of seven billion Swiss francs. This happened shortly after the Federal Council itself had reassured that the gold (the "silverware") would not be sold.

At that time Switzerland was under fire because of "dormant assets" and alleged misconduct during World War II. Federal Councillor Koller therefore advocated a "7-billion Solidarity Foundation" (among others for the victims of the Holocaust), funded by gold sales. The Solidarity Foundation was rejected by the people at the ballot box. The gold was sold anyway; from May 2000 1,300 tons for the time being – a ton day by day during a period of almost five years. This action was hardly completed, when the sale of another 250 tons followed.

... and on top at a miserable price

Up to 2000, with its 2,590 tons of gold our central bank still owned a full eight percent of the total official gold worldwide, a huge reserve for a country the size of Switzerland.

In 1998, the Federal Council boasted such high gold stock in the following words (official Bulletin): "The Germans

have about 3,000 tons of gold and 90 million inhabitants. We have 2,600 tons and 7 million inhabitants. The US with a lot more inhabitants has 8,000 tons, which is only about three times the amount of Switzerland."

Shortly afterwards Switzerland announced massive gold sales. On 20 May 1999, the former US Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan told the American "House Banking Committee", "It's pretty obvious that central banks are aware that – if they announce gold sales – the price will decrease and that lower prices mean lower revenues for them. No trader with just a bit of self-respect would ever commit such a stupidity."

The Swiss National Bank, however, announced in advance that it would sell half of its gold. Just two years after completion of the first sales campaign that gold had been worth about twice as much. If we still had the total of the 1,550 tons sold, the SNB would have around 70 billion francs of additional reserves (in numbers SFr 70,000,000,000.00) according to the current market price of gold.

Without the population's consent

It is worth emphasizing that our citizens have never been able to comment on the subject of selling gold or not, even though it was about their own national wealth.

There have never been any political debates or referendums about the sales issue, but only about the question of how sale proceeds should be distributed (from the "Gold-initiative AHV" [Old Age Insurance – AHV] on 22/09/2002 to the "Kosa Initiative" on 24/09/2006).

The parliament, too, has never voted on the gold sales. However, it must put up with the accusation that it facilitated the legal requirements for gold sales, with most parliamentarians being misled and hardly being able to notice what the impact of the various revisions would be.

The gold sales were always discussed and decided within a small circle. That had already happened in the case of the plans for the above mentioned "Solidarity Foundation": The idea of the gold sales worth seven billion Swiss francs was "sold" to the former Federal Councillor Kaspar Viliger by director Hans Meyer (one of the former three board members of the National Bank) during a walk in the woods.

The current regulations are as simple as they are worrying: The three members of the National Bank Board may decide on

"People's initiative 'Save ...'"
continued from page 11

their own whether or how much gold is sold. They do not even need the Federal Council's consent.

An alleged "windfall of gold" and "profit"

On 1 January 2000 the new Swiss Federal Constitution came into effect. Although at the time the population was told nothing of the sort prior to the referendum, it is now claimed that it meant abolishing the gold backing of the Swiss franc. Hardly was the Constitution was in force that the massive gold sales began on the grounds that the National Bank made large profits. The "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" wrote on 5 January 2001 euphorically: "Windfall of gold for the National Bank, 25.4 billion francs net revaluation gains".

"Windfall"? The National Bank had received no additional gram of gold! It had only rerated its gold: From the up to then fix conversion value required by law of Fr. 4595.74/kg, the gold in the National Bank's books was corrected to the then market price of Fr. 15.391.00/kg. By entering the gold at a much higher price – as in a "bookkeeper trick" – money was created overnight that was allegedly "superfluous and no longer needed" which was used to justify the following sales.

By simply arguing by value instead of weight, dust was and is thrown into the outsider's eyes. Who just reads the statistics superficially will not realize that the amount of gold decreases if at the same time the book value of the gold is adjusted upwards and the total "price-quantity-scale" increases. With rising gold prices, the citizen thinks there is a "windfall" even if gold is sold continuously.

Ad 2. The gold reserves of the Swiss National Bank are to be stored in Switzerland.

The National Bank gold is national wealth. All the more surprising is that the Swiss public is given no information as to where the gold is. Not even the Parliament is provided insight. Having become suspicious, numerous National Councillors have been asking critical questions in recent years: Where is the Swiss gold stored? Is it partly stored abroad? Has it been lent and is it possibly no longer existent? The response of the Federal Council in charge to National Councillor *Günter's* question became famous: "Where exactly these gold bars are stored, I can unfortunately not tell you, because I do not know, do not have to know and do not want to know."

What is known is that part of it is stored abroad. There it is of no use in a really serious crisis, when other countries pursue only their own interests and the deliv-

ery of gold can no longer be enforced by a small country such as Switzerland. Therefore the initiative calls for all gold reserves being stored verifiably in Switzerland.

Ad 3. The SNB must hold part of their reserves necessarily in gold (at least 20% of assets).

Finally, the initiative requires from the National Bank to keep at least 20 percent of their assets in gold. Thus, the independence of the National Bank is not put into question: It still can freely increase its balance and buy foreign currencies on a large scale. This initiative only requires that the National Bank, hand in hand with such activities, must also invest partly in gold. Thus, the national capital is protected if the National Bank misjudges the situation and makes mistakes.

The very fact that the national bank has sold Gold en masse (nota bene at a frac-

tion of today's price) in the past ten years shows that even such an institution can assess the situation completely wrong. So it is even more important that it holds gold as a valuable reserve. Twenty percent of the assets are a reasonable proportion. Just imagine: If you were travelling with the off-road vehicle on four wheels in risky terrain you would do well to take at least a spare wheel with you for safety reasons. Applied to the National Bank: Who is on the road with 80% foreign currencies containing very large risks is well advised to keep at least 20 percent real security in his baggage.

The more unstable the situation is with banking and currency crises, the more important is a "yes" to this People's Initiative. We have not yet collected the necessary signatures. We are grateful for every additional signature.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)



Eidgenössische Volksinitiative «Rettet unser Schweizer Gold (Gold-Initiative)»

➔ Im Bundesblatt veröffentlicht am 20. September 2011
Die unterzeichneten stimmberechtigten Schweizer Bürgerinnen und Bürger stellen hiermit, gestützt auf Art. 34, 136, 139 und 194 der Bundesverfassung und nach dem Bundesgesetz vom 17. Dezember 1976 über die politischen Rechte, Art. 68ff, folgendes Begehren:

➔ **I. Die Bundesverfassung wird wie folgt geändert:**
Art. 99a (neu) Goldreserven der Schweizerischen Nationalbank

- 1 Die Goldreserven der Schweizerischen Nationalbank sind unverkäuflich.
- 2 Die Goldreserven der Schweizerischen Nationalbank sind in der Schweiz zu lagern.
- 3 Die Schweizerische Nationalbank hat ihre Aktiven zu einem wesentlichen Teil in Gold zu halten. Der Goldanteil darf zwanzig Prozent nicht unterschreiten.

II. Die Übergangsbestimmungen der Bundesverfassung werden wie folgt geändert:
Art. 197 Ziff. 9 (neu)

9. Übergangsbestimmung zu Art. 99a (Goldreserven der Schweizerischen Nationalbank)
- 1 Für die Erfüllung von Absatz 2 gilt eine Übergangszeit von zwei Jahren nach Annahme von Art. 99a durch Volk und Stände.
- 2 Für die Erfüllung von Absatz 3 gilt eine Übergangszeit von fünf Jahren nach Annahme von Art. 99a durch Volk und Stände.

Initiativkomitee
Das Initiativkomitee, bestehend aus nachstehenden Urheberinnen und Urhebern, ist berechtigt, diese Volksinitiative mit absoluter Mehrheit seiner stimmberechtigten Mitglieder zurückzuziehen:

Co-Präsidenten: Lukas Reimann, Nationalrat, Ulrich-Rösch-Strasse 13, 9500 Wil; Ulrich Schläger, alt Nationalrat, Webergasse 11, 8416 Flaach; Luzi Stamm, Nationalrat, Seminarstrasse 34, 5405 Dättwil.

Mitglieder: Toni Bortoluzzi, Nationalrat, Betpurstrasse 6, 8910 Afloltern am Albis; Yvette Estermann, Nationalrätin, Bergstrasse 50a, 6010 Kriens; Hans Fehr, Nationalrat, Salomon Landolt-Weg 34, 8193 Eglistal; Sylvia Flückiger, Nationalrätin, Badweg 4, 5040 Schöfland; Patrick Freudiger, Stadtrat, Allmengasse 41, 4900 Langenthal; Oskar Freysinger, Nationalrat, Crettamaleratz, 1965 Savilise; Thomas Fuchs, Grossrat, Niederbottigenweg 101, 3018 Bern; Andrea Gelsbühler, Nationalrätin, Halten 18, 3037 Herrenschwanden; Alfred Heer, Nationalrat, General-Wille-Strasse 128, 8002 Zürich; Hans Kaufmann, Nationalrat, Niederweg 18a, 8907 Wettswil; Ernst Schibli, alt Nationalrat, Landstrasse 22, 8112 Otelfingen; Jörg Stahl, Nationalrat, Haldlerstrasse 8, 8311 Brütten; Christoph von Rotz, alt Nationalrat, Feldheim 2, 6060 Sarnen; Walter Wobmann, Nationalrat, Sagigass 9, 5014 Gretzenbach

Bitte unterzeichnen Sie die Volksinitiative «Rettet unser Schweizer Gold (Gold-Initiative)»

Auf dieser Liste können nur Stimmberechtigte unterzeichnen, die in der genannten politischen Gemeinde in eidgenössischen Angelegenheiten stimmberechtigt sind. Bürgerinnen und Bürger, die das Begehren unterstützen, mögen es handschriftlich unterzeichnen. Wer bei einer Unterschriftensammlung besticht oder sich bestechen lässt oder wer das Ergebnis einer Unterschriftensammlung für eine Volksinitiative fälscht, macht sich strafbar nach Art. 281 beziehungsweise nach Art. 282 des Strafgesetzbuches.

| Kanton: | PLZ: | Politische Gemeinde: | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| Name/Vorname <small>handschriftlich, Blockschrift</small> | Geb.-Datum <small>Tag/Monat/Jahr</small> | Wohnadresse <small>Strasse, Hausnummer</small> | Unterschrift <small>eigenhändig</small> | Kontr. <small>(leer lassen)</small> |
| 1 | | | | |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |

Ablauf der Sammelfrist: 20. März 2013
Amtl. Bescheinigung (wird vom Initiativkomitee eingeholt).

Die unterzeichnende Amtsperson bescheinigt hiermit, dass obenstehende (Anzahl) Unterzeichnerinnen und Unterzeichner der Volksinitiative in eidgenössischen Angelegenheiten stimmberechtigt sind und ihre politischen Rechte in der erwähnten Gemeinde ausüben.

Die zur Bescheinigung zuständige Amtsperson (eigenhändige Unterschrift und amtliche Eigenschaft):
Unterschrift: _____
Amtliche Eigenschaft: _____

Ort: _____ Datum: _____



Ampelstempel

Ganz oder teilweise ausgefüllte Bogen bitte einsenden an: Initiativkomitee «Rettet unser Schweizer Gold», Postfach 23, 8416 Flaach

Media release

It is about maintaining the workplace Switzerland Federal popular initiative “For an economy to the benefit of all”

The ongoing collection of signatures for the federal popular initiative “For an economy to the benefit of all” receives reinforcement from the German-speaking part of Switzerland. A recently founded support committee engages in the final spurt of the initiative. The collection period expires on 1 May 2013.

The western Swiss winemaker Willy Cretegy launched the initiative “For an economy to the benefit of all” a year ago and urged a comprehensive discussion. Just at the right time, as the global economic problems urge the citizens of all countries to a more active role in decision taking. In the wake of globalization, important rights and self-protective mechanisms of nation-states were abolished and undermined, mostly excluding the people concerned. This has a profound impact on economy and society. In Switzerland, opportunities for action and options of shaping the Swiss economy have been restricted, too.

The goal of the initiative is to win back the lost, essentially important protection mechanisms and the scope of action for the workplace Switzerland. Without pro-

tection, there is no development and neither a sustainable opening-up policy. The prerequisite to determine one’s economic policy oneself is the mutual respect for each nation’s free choice. This requirement of the initiative is in clear contrast to the dictates of the so-called free market, which has gained the upper hand in the last decade. The protection of economic interests must consider their contribution to the common good.

The initiators are committed to ensuring that future generations will have sufficient natural resources and can participate in a social and economic environment of high-quality. The unilateral philosophy of growth and competition that has ruled until now is to be replaced by a newly developed economic order, which serves the common good and an economic system is to be created that principally serves the people.

The Swiss population is invited by the popular initiative “For an economy to the benefit of all” to actively shape the future economic system in our country. As the highest democratic body our people have the opportunity and the right by constitutional amendment (Art. 94 par.

1 and 4, Art. 96 par. 1-3, Art. 100 par. 3, Art. 101 par. 2, Art. 102 par. 2, Art. 103, Art. 104, par. 2) to correct economic failures and to eliminate undesirable influences.

The support committee

The committee consists of citizens who want to engage actively for making the initiative known to a wider public in the German-speaking part of Switzerland and to support the ideas of the founders. It calls for a nationwide collection of signatures and debate in favour of an open, direct-democratic design process for an economic order in Switzerland, which benefits the people.

We should grasp this opportunity for a new orientation! •

Support committee:

Willy Cretegy,
La Vrille, Case postale 171, 1242 Satigny,
info@lavrille.ch,
www.lavrille.ch,
www.economie-utile-a-tous.ch

Reinhard Koradi, Dietlikon,
Spokesman,
reinhard.koradi@bluewin.ch,
www.wirtschaft-zum-nutzen-aller.ch
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Concerning the Federal popular initiative “For an economy to the benefit of all”

by Hermann Dür, lic. oec. HSG, milling entrepreneur in Burgdorf, president of the Milling Cooperative in the Canton of Bern, Member of the executive board of the Swiss Union for Industry and Agriculture

As an economist and entrepreneur I have been asked to express my thoughts to this initiative. I am happy to comply with this request.

When at the beginning of the 90s the cold war came to an end in favour of free-enterprise systems, there was good reason for euphoria. “Free market” and the magic word “efficiency” became untouchable icons and at the same time “protectionism” became an abusive word. With the claim for deregulation and free market economy, aptitude checks and differentiations in regard to subject fields and framework conditions were no longer carried out.

In the beginning the economy behaved somewhat as predicted by the mainstream of economists. However, by the end of the 90s and certainly by the beginning of the new millennium – the more the world was globalized and declared as a so-called “global village” –, more and more phenomena have appeared which were neither foreseen nor compatible with the conven-

tional thought patterns any longer. Since that time there have been more and more clues that we presently go – possibly by globalisation – through one of the maybe biggest social transformation phases of the last centuries, in which the old model conceptions about politics and economy must be revised along general lines. A “Copernican revolution” in the models of the economic policy is emerging.

But there are many people who still stick to their old thought patterns. They still live in the world of the outdated Doha round – instead of the world of the current World Agrarian Report; they believe, that the Cassis-de-Dijon-principle will lower the prices, and do not notice how the quality has decreased instead; GDP and economic efficiency are valid for them as economic guiding stars – instead of “systems most capable of survival” as are claimed by modern economists today; our political neighbours are all our friends – although they blackmail us with grey lists in case of need, allow to break contracts or let whole

banks gradually perish; crises still have advance warning times – although during the last years we have absolutely unexpectedly been shaken ever more often by extremely unlikely events (“black swans” as they are called by *Nassim Taleb* in his book with the same title); liberalisation is inevitable in the old line of thinking and is good without exception – although just the undifferentiated liberalisation of the financial markets has caused costs amounting to billions and sends an urgent reminder to differentiate with respect to the liberalisation issue in the future; the free market always steers us ideally – although today nobody can claim free market for ivory trade, hard drugs or child pornography in all seriousness, a lot of alternative energy would have no chance on the free market and the UBS was actually saved only by complete elimination of the free market.

Free market precisely does not only mean profit, but – by definition – also the

“Concerning the Federal popular...”

continued from page 13

possibility of bankruptcy. Hence, the absolutely free market may only be established where we can afford a ruin. Food supply certainly does not belong to it. It is a high-risk industry; it is system-relevant. It is “too important to fail”!

As a consequence, vital functions, as for example the securing of food, must be inherently safe. In other words, those vital functions must be guaranteed in a decentralised manner and in own responsibility, so that the really existing instabilities of the modern age cannot spread uncontrol-

ably, even if this must happen in deviation of free enterprise practise, if necessary.

In the completely free market economy only short-term efficiency is recompensed as a consequence of the system. For example, decentralised production, redundancy or own resources are only seen as cost factors by an efficiency carried to extreme, and not as resources essential for survival what they really are. In the free market economy the product prices contain no risk loading for the expenses of unwanted social developments. Hence, the private has – as a consequence

of the system – no incentive to change his behaviour. Quite the contrary: Just the increase of risks leads paradoxically to profit at short notice as the financial industry demonstrated to us before it broke down!

Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Prize laureate of the economic sciences in 2011, said: “The ideology of the completely deregulated markets has served its time”; this must be a cause of concern. To the best of my belief we need liberalism – but not the naive fair-weather liberalism still sung in the 90s, but a robust all-weather liberalism. A liberalism in which we are increasingly aware of modern system instabilities, which are typically no longer precisely predictable. There and only there the state has to protect us where it serves the protection of vital systems; on the grounds of its internal logic the free market cannot do this at all.

If the initiative “For an economy to the benefit of all” stimulates public thinking, debate and action, it helps us to revise the criticised old thought patterns and taboos and to face urging problems of the modern age.

(Translation Current Concerns)

WEITERGEBEN

Eidgenössische Volksinitiative «Für eine Wirtschaft zum Nutzen aller»

Im Bundesblatt veröffentlicht am: 1. November 2011

Die unterzeichneten stimmberechtigten Schweizer Bürgerinnen und Bürger stellen hiermit, gestützt auf Art. 34, 136, 139 und 194 der Bundesverfassung und nach dem Bundesgesetz vom 17. Dezember 1976 über die politischen Rechte, Art. 68ff, folgendes Begehren:

I Die Bundesverfassung wird wie folgt geändert:

Art. 94 Abs. 1 und 4
Hand und Kantone setzen sich ein für eine Wirtschaftsförderung, die Rücksicht nimmt auf die Umwelt und auf die lokalen gesellschaftlichen und wirtschaftlichen Strukturen.

Art. 96 Wettbewerbspolitik
Der Bund erlässt Vorschriften gegen unfaulsten Wettbewerb und gegen Dumping.
Er erlässt Vorschriften zum Schutz der Inlandproduktion; insbesondere:
a. reguliert er den Markt über Zölle auf eingeführten Waren;
b. reguliert er den Markt über Einfuhrkontingente;

c. schreibt er vor, dass die eingeführten Waren Anforderungen im Sozial- und Umweltbereich und an die Produktionsformen genügen müssen, die den Schweizerischen Anforderungen entsprechen.

Er trifft Massnahmen:
a. zur Verhinderung von Missbräuchen in der Preisbildung durch marktbeherrschende Unternehmen und Organisationen des privaten oder des öffentlichen Rechts;
b. zur Bekämpfung schädlicher gewerkschaftlicher und wirtschaftlicher Auswirkungen des preisbildenden Wettbewerbs.

Art. 100 Abs. 3
Aufgehoben

Art. 101 Abs. 2
Er kann Massnahmen treffen zum Schutz der inländischen Wirtschaft.

Art. 102 Abs. 2
Aufgehoben

Art. 103 zweiter Satz
Aufgehoben

Art. 104 Abs. 2
Ergänzend zur zumutbaren Selbsthilfe der Landwirtschaft fördert der Bund die bodenbewirtschaftenden ländlichen Betriebe.

II Die Übergangbestimmungen der Bundesverfassung werden wie folgt ergänzt:
Art. 197 Ziff. 9 (neu)

9. Übergangbestimmung zu den Artikeln 94 Abs. 1 und 4, 96 (Wettbewerbspolitik), 100 Abs. 3, 101 Abs. 2, 102 Abs. 2, 103 zweiter Satz und 104 Abs. 2

Nach Annahme von Artikel 96 Absatz 3 durch Volk und Stände darf, bis die entsprechende Ausführungsverordnung in Kraft getreten ist, kein Freihandelsabkommen in Kraft treten, ratifiziert oder unterschrieben werden.

– Auf dieser Liste können nur Stimmberechtigte unterzeichnen, die in der genannten politischen Gemeinde in eidgenössischen Angelegenheiten stimmberechtigt sind. Bürgerinnen und Bürger, die das Begehren unterstützen, mögen es handschriftlich unterzeichnen. Wer bei einer Unterschriftensammlung besticht oder sich bestechen lässt oder wer das Ergebnis einer Unterschriftensammlung für eine Volksinitiative fälscht, macht sich strafbar nach Art. 281 beziehungsweise nach Art. 282 des Strafgesetzbuches.

| Kanton | Postleitzahl | Politische Gemeinde | Name (handschriftlich und möglichst in Blockschrift) | Vorname | Genaues Geburtsdatum (Tag/Monat/Jahr) | Wohnadresse (Strasse und Hausnummer) | Eigenhändige Unterschrift | Kontrolliert (Ja/Nein) |
|--------|--------------|---------------------|--|---------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

Ablauf der Sammelfrist: 1. Mai 2013

Die unterzeichnete Amtsperson bescheinigt hiermit, dass oberstehende (Anzahl) Unterzeichnerinnen und Unterzeichner der Volksinitiative in eidgenössischen Angelegenheiten stimmberechtigt sind und ihre politischen Rechte in der erwähnten Gemeinde ausüben.

Die zur Bescheinigung zuständige Amtsperson (eigenhändige Unterschrift und amtliche Eigenschaft):

Amtsstempel: Amtliche Eigenschaft:

Datum: Ort: Unterschrift:

Das Initiativkomitee, bestehend aus nachstehenden Urheberinnen und Urhebern, ist berechtigt, diese Volksinitiative mit absoluter Mehrheit seiner stimmberechtigten Mitglieder zurückzuziehen: CHAPUIS SARAH, rue Chandieu 1, 1202 Genève – CHAPUIS PIERRE-LOUIS, rte de St-Julien 98, 1228 Plan-les-Quates – CRETEGNY CAMILLE, rte du Mandement 101, 1242 Satigny – CRETEGNY WILLY, rte du Mandement 101, 1242 Satigny – VUAGNAT BERNARD, rte de la Donzelle 8, 1283 Dardagny – BENE CEDRIC, rue Chandieu 1, 1202 Genève – PETERSON IVAR, Quai Charles-Page 49, 1205 Genève – ROULIN DORIS, chemin de la Montagne 74, 1224 Chêne-Bougeries – BERGUER FRANCOISE, Rampe de Chouilly 35, 1242 Satigny – SJOLLEMA-MARQUET ANNE-MARIE, rue des flois 19, 1204 Genève

Weitere Unterschriftenlisten können bestellt werden bei: La Ville, Postfach 171, 1242 Satigny, www.economie-utile-a-tous.ch

SCHÜTZEN – ENTWICKELN

Spring heath – the first herald of Spring

by Helmut Hintermeier, 91605 D-Gallmersgarten (Helmut_Hintermeier@web.de)

Especially in the region of the Alps, the spring heath brings the first extensive honey flow of the year to the bees, even though the peoples satisfy their own needs first at this early stage.

Even more than the rampant bloomage of summer gardens and meadows, the heralds of spring, often appearing as early as in February, give us delight after the grey winter days: in parks and gardens, the winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*), crocus (*Crocus spec.*) and the flower bells are blooming mostly in greater accumulation.

The highly branched dwarf shrub belongs to the family Ericaceae and can appear in its wild form in the Alpes of Europe as well as in the foothills up to over 2000 m above sea level. The needle-like, evergreen leaves are standing in dense whorls and serve as caterpillar feed to a number of butterfly species. At the same time, they are a welcome “bridging graze” for deer. The rows of flowerbells which carry plants of up to 10 cm length represent the first nectar and pollen source for honeybees, early spring bumblebees and solitary bees and butterflies which have wintered in moth stage. Even on a 10 cm-single plant, some wild bees and four little foxes (*Aglals urticae*) could be counted here meeting in a rendezvous.

Rich nectar and pollen supply

Already in fall, the flowers of the winter heath are laid out as buds for the next year so that they can develop with the first warm sunrays. In full bloom, the crown forms a long pipe even surmounting by far the red-coloured petals. As long as the anthers are still enclosed in the corona ample nectar with a high fructose content is secreted at the base of the flower. From this the bees prepare a light to dark yellow, sometimes even almost orange honey. Pure honey from winter heath has a strong aroma and a very tart taste and is often extremely rich in ferments. The pollen is offered all day with a maximum at between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. and is collected in whitish panties. If the dark, reddish-brown anthers hang far out from the crown pipes, a pollution trough wind is possible, too. As can be taken from the equally common name of “mountain or Alpine heath”, the winter heath constitutes a characteristic part of the sub-Alpine and Alpine region, where the soil in sparse pine forests or dwarf shrub thicket is poor in nutrients, though sunny and warm. The winter heath is the only species which likes to grow on calcareous ground, but which can also survive on slightly acidic soil. The solid acorns which reach only 15 to 30 cm in



12 garden species of the flesh-coloured basic form of the winter heath (*Erica carnea*), whose colours range from white to dark red, are available in specialised shops. They are also suited for balcony planters. (picture H. Hintermeier)

height, may reach an age of up to 30 years. The roots of these plants stand in intimate closeness to soil fungi and constantly grow new branches which lie over older or dead ones so that over time a very dense substrate is developed.

Several varieties

Because of its modesty, its fine, evergreen foliage but above all because of its wealth of pretty flowers, there are more than a dozen varieties of winter heath bred until today. Its color scale ranges from white through various pink stages up to carmine and dark red. As of November, the “Winter Joy” presents itself in clear violet-red. Soon after it is followed by the similar-coloured but more compact “Winter Ruby” and the pink “Winter Beauty”. If the daytime temperature lies above freezing point, the main flowering period begins in the new year. The also red flowering “Winter Sun” shows an attractive bronze-coloured foliage even before flowering. “Whisky” gleams in fine, needle-like, rich orange-coloured leaves and “Golden Scarlet” shines with a goldish yellow foliage. With plenty of light, these cultivated breeds thrive magnificently almost everywhere, if rampant competition, no matter which, is kept at bay. With its

varieties, *Erica carnea* is particularly suitable for rock gardens and also for winter planting on windowsills. Featuring colourful varieties, the little acorns are comforting on cloudy days, in a way that one could say without exaggeration, “Winter heath brings winter joy”.

The Closest Relatives

„A little flower blooms on the heath and it is called Erika!“ This usually more loudly than nice battered marching song is botanically not correct. As a rule, it is the Solluna, the common heather which blossoms on the heath. The bell heather (*Erica*) may also be found in coastal regions of Western Europe, but hardly in the classical heatherland, which is referred to in the song line quoted above. The common bell heather (*Erica tetralix*) is more closely related to the winter heath. It stands as beautiful jewelry on turf and peat moss (turf, peat and swamp heather) in several European countries.

In areas with high humidity, it quite often grows in large flocks and as excellent bee forage, has greatly contributed to the good reputation of „heather honey“.

continued on page 16

Cooperation with Samen-Mausser – to the benefit of our bees

by Robert Sieber, editorial SBZ, and Theodor Gubler, Samen-Mausser AG (theodor.gubler@samens-mausser.ch)

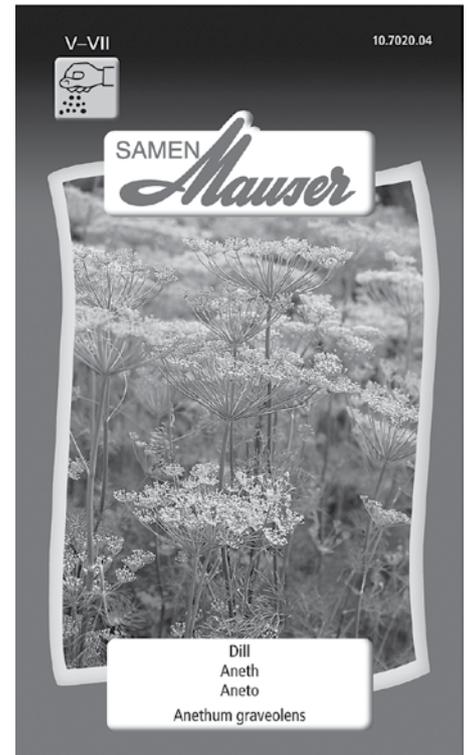
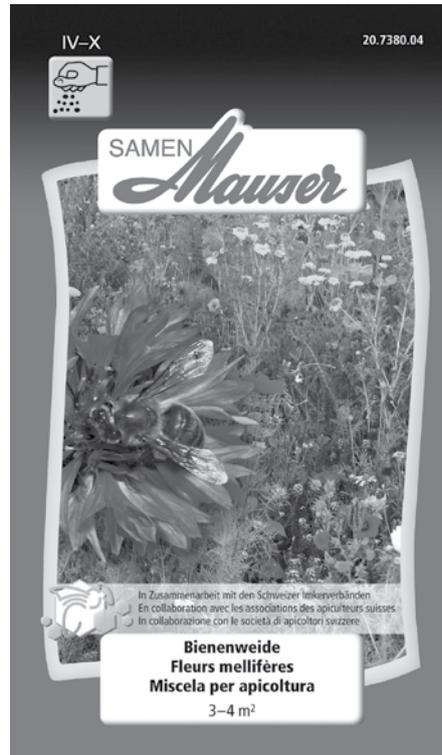
Two years ago, Samen-Mausser and the VDRB (“Verein deutschschweizerischer und rätoromanischer Bienenfreunde” – Association of German-Swiss and Rhaeto-Romanic bee-friends) launched a cooperation: an offer of seed mixtures for attractive honey plants. Neither Samen-Mausser nor VDRB make money out of this cooperation. The only winners are the bees.

The idea of a cooperation is equally simple and fascinating: Experienced colleagues of VDRB identify plants which offer an attractive range of pollen and nectar (for the bees). Samen-Mausser (www.samens-mausser.ch) verifies whether such seeds can be offered, whether they are suitable for different soils and whether they are eligible for annual or perennial areas of cultivation. The distribution of these conjointly developed seeds is offered by Samen-Mausser.

The concept proves effective

Many beekeepers have dared to make the experiment and made a piece of land available for the cultivation of honey plants. The feedback has been consistently positive. The plants are not only a true eye candy for us, but they are also eagerly visited by bees. But not only our honey bees, also wild bees, bumble bees, butterflies and other insects are heading for these meadows.

On the basis of experience, the mixtures are updated every year – and new ones are added. There have also been surprises; in the second year, for instance, the meliot (Melilotus) reached a size of 1.5 m and other plants were suppressed (Whether it disturbed the bees, is not known!). A new product now is a low honey plant. Also the California bluebell, dearly-beloved by bees, as green manure or the herb dill, which also serves the swallowtail caterpillar as fodder plant, are highly recommended as honey plants. At the beginning of the year bulb plants are already visit-



Two examples of honey plants from “Samen-Mausser’s” product range: “low honey plants” and “aneth”.

ed by bees, long before meadows and fruit trees are flourishing. Crocus, daffodils and winter aconite may not have the best nutrition-values of pollen and nectar, but are valuable because they are already offering nutrition in March or April. Even the blooming daffodils and grape hyacinths are objects of desire for the bees. (Time to plant the bulbs is September to November).

All this for less than 5 CHF

Here are a few examples to choose from:

- Annually seed for bee pasture for 3 m²: CHF 4.50, for 18-24 m²: CHF 16.50
- Low bee pasture for 3-4 m²: CHF 4.50
- California bluebell green manure for 50 m²: CHF 7.50
- Garden Dill for 2.5 m²: CHF 2.00

Source of supply:

The Samen-Mausser articles are available online www.samens-mausser.ch, telephone +41 52 234 25 25 or in all major specialist garden centers.

Source: “Schweizerische Bienen-Zeitung” 01/2013, (Swiss Bee Journal)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“Spring Heath - the first herald”

continued from page 15

Although the „heath“, the swamp heath (*Erica tatarix*), sung of by poets, resembles the common heather (*Calluna vulgaris*), it has larger blossoms of bell shapes, which condense in a bundle at the end of the 40 cm-high stem. Cultivated species are offered in two varieties, in white and pink, which bloom be-

tween June and September. Because of their beauty, they are often cultivated in gardens as mooreites.

Source: “Schweizerische Bienen-Zeitung” 01/2013 (Swiss Bee Journal)

Literature:

Maurizio, A.; Schaper, F. (1994) “Das Trachtpflanzenbuch” (The honey plants book). 4th edition. Ehrenwirth, Munich.

Hecker, U. (1985) “Laubgehölze – Wildwachsende Bäume, Sträucher und Zwerggehölze” (Broad-

leaved Woody Plants – Wild Trees, Branches and Dwarf Woods). BLV-Verlagsgesellschaft, Munich.

Haenchen, H.; Saure, H. (1974) “Blumen & Garten. Das praktische Pflanzen-ABC” (Flowers and Gardens. The Practical Alphabet of Plants), 8 volumes, Orbis Verlag, Hamburg.

Westrich, P. (1989) “Die Wildbienen Baden-Württembergs” (The Wild Bees of Baden-Wuerttemberg), Volume 1 and 2. Eugen Ulmer Verlag, Stuttgart. (Translation *Current Concerns*)