



Switzerland in the foreign media: 3rd quarter 2024

Direct democracy: challenges and opportunities

"Prosecutors probe allegations of fake voter rolls in Switzerland's vaunted direct democracy"

(Associated Press, USA)

Switzerland's direct democracy, with its various instruments, garnered media interest abroad in various contexts. Several articles provided objective coverage of suspected irregularities in the commercial collection of signatures for popular initiatives in Switzerland, portraying Switzerland's political system as unique and in fundamentally positive terms, but at times critical of possible weaknesses.



Signatures collected for the popular initiative 'Yes to fair OASI pensions for married couples too', submitted on 27 March 2024. © [FAZ](#)

Good offices and neutrality remain in the news

Even after the Summit on Peace in Ukraine at the Bürgenstock resort, Switzerland's good offices continued to receive coverage in the foreign media, for example with Geneva as the venue for the United States-led talks on the war in Sudan. In addition, some foreign media outlets continued to focus on Swiss neutrality in various contexts. Several articles provided objective coverage of the report of the security policy study commission appointed by the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport, and discussed the possible impact of its recommendations relating to Switzerland's neutrality policy. Russian media continued to spread the narrative that Switzerland is no longer neutral.

"A definition of Swiss neutrality remains elusive, but at least the debate has begun"

(The Irish Times, Ireland)



Patrouille Suisse jets illustrate an article on the rapprochement with NATO and the EU recommended by the security policy study commission. © [Politico](#)

First use of the suicide capsule makes headlines

The first case of euthanasia carried out using the 'Sarco' suicide capsule in Switzerland triggered a very large media response worldwide. The reporting was generally objective, underscoring that although euthanasia is handled more liberally in Switzerland than in other countries, it is strictly regulated. Reports also noted the Federal Council's position that the use of the suicide capsule contravened Swiss law. Its unlawful use also caused a stir in Switzerland.

"While assisted dying is legally protected in some circumstances in Switzerland, it is strictly regulated and the Sarco pod has encountered opposition"

(BBC, UK)



The 'Sarco' suicide capsule in a forest in Switzerland, where it was used for the first time in September. © [O Globo](#)

Storms and the climate crisis: consequences for the Swiss Alps

The severe storms in July and August, which led to flooding, landslides and fatalities in Switzerland, attracted a great deal of attention in the foreign media. In the reporting, Switzerland was portrayed as vulnerable to natural disasters. With reference to a climate-related increase in extreme weather events, foreign media subsequently reported in more detail on the effects of climate change on the Swiss mountain regions, and several European media outlets highlighted the risks to Alpine settlements. Photos circulating on social media illustrating the melting of Swiss glaciers appeared in leading media around the world as an important indicator of climate change.

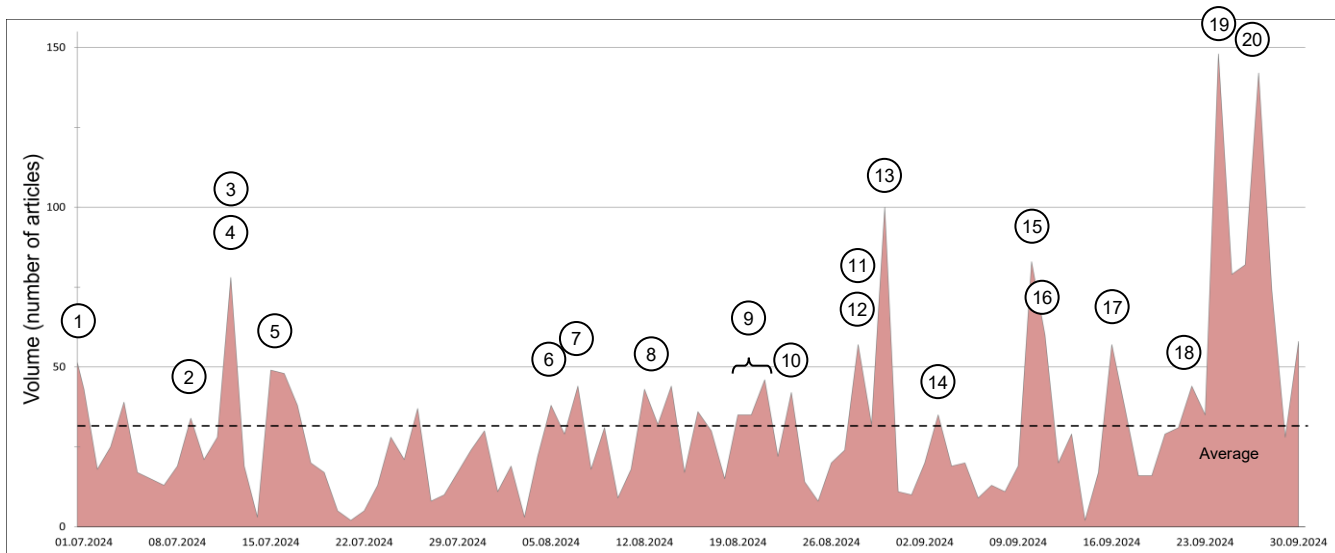
"Dans le Tessin, le sort incertain des villages alpins menacés par les éboulements"

(Le Monde, France)



Two pictures taken by a tourist 15 years apart from the same spot showing the enormous retreat of the Rhone glacier went viral on social media. © [The Guardian](#)

Quantitative trends in foreign media coverage related to Switzerland



Changes in the volume and tone of foreign media coverage related to Switzerland (volume = number of articles per day in the leading media analysed, 01.07.2024 – 30.09.2024). A spike can correspond to multiple events. The numbered events have been selected on the basis of their volume and significance.

(1) Severe storms (2) Various reports on euthanasia in Switzerland and the 'Sarco' suicide capsule (3) Return of Catalan separatists from exile in Switzerland (4) Prilly VD scaffolding collapse with fatalities (5) Ukraine war: various reports on Switzerland, including meeting between Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in New York (6) Glencore convicted of corruption in DRC (7) Glacier melt: viral social media post (8) Talks in Geneva on the cessation of hostilities in Sudan (9) Ideas competition on how to dispose of munitions dumped in Swiss lakes (10) New Nestlé CEO (11) Proposal to lift ban on new nuclear power plant construction in Switzerland (12) 1MDB: Federal Criminal Court ruling (13) Basel named host city of the Eurovision Song Contest 2025 (14) Irregularities in signature collection for popular initiatives (15) Geneva Court of Appeal convicts Tariq Ramadan (16) Femicide in Binningen BL (17) US gymnast Jordan Chiles applies to Federal Supreme Court for annulment of CAS decision (18) Federal vote (biodiversity initiative, BVG reform) (19) First use of 'Sarco' suicide capsule (20) Death of Muriel Furrer at road cycling world championships in Zurich

Focus: personal accounts of life in Switzerland by immigrants

Switzerland is a popular immigration destination, especially for people from neighbouring countries and southern Europe. This fact has recently been reflected in the European media in various testimonials from people who have migrated to Switzerland. These are often based on anecdotal posts on social media, which enjoy greater resonance there. For example, several TikTok accounts are currently regularly publishing curious anecdotes and experiences from Spaniards living in Switzerland, which are subsequently reported on by various leading Spanish media outlets.



The TikTokker [heidjinx](#) reports on unexpected challenges during her move to Switzerland. (Source: [TikTok](#))

In terms of content, the articles range from concrete help and tips for new arrivals in the country to factual explanations of everyday life in Switzerland. Sometimes social characteristics, such as perceived prejudices among locals towards different migration groups, are also addressed critically. Video clips on social media such as TikTok, Instagram etc. make it possible to convey personal experiences of a diaspora in Switzerland in a lively, everyday way. Picked up subsequently in the print media, they play a significant role in shaping perceptions of Switzerland abroad.



On the TikTok account [suiza.en.español](#), a Spaniard living in Switzerland explains how strict and, above all, expensive Swiss waste disposal regulations can be. (© [El Confidencial](#))

Monitoring the image of Switzerland in the foreign media covers all the reporting on Swiss-related topics in the leading media of 23 countries – Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, the UK and the US – as well as in the leading pan-Arab and EU media. Contact: FDFA, Presence Switzerland, Monitoring and Analysis, Bundesgasse 32, 3003 Bern, tel. +41 58 462 34 63, prs@eda.admin.ch, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/praesenzschweiz>