



Switzerland in the foreign media: Second quarter 2018

The ‘Sovereign Money Initiative’ in the headlines

The Sovereign Money Initiative attracted lively interest in the international media both before and after the vote, further strengthening the emblematic link between Switzerland and the banking sector. All the different aspects of the initiative were scrutinised – often in great detail – not only in Switzerland but also globally, as were the arguments of the initiative’s protagonists and opponents. Although, according to the media, the initiative had little chance of success because it was seen as too

radical for a country like Switzerland, the country is often seen as a political laboratory in view of its system of direct democracy. This kind of

debate – complex but nonetheless essential – had relevance beyond the country’s borders. There was also speculation about how big an impact such a measure would have had if the initiative had been accepted. The outcome of the vote prompted a lively response especially in the British and the German-language media, which saw the relevance of the situation in their countries and the European Union. Overall, the outcome of the vote was presented from a neutral perspective.



‘Sovereign Money Initiative’ No campaign (©)

Big impact of David Goodall’s assisted suicide in Switzerland

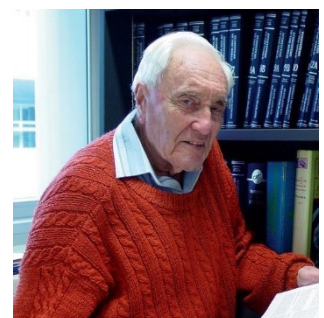
The assisted suicide in Switzerland of the Australian national David Goodall captured more attention in the foreign media than any other event in Switzerland during this quarter. This is explained both by the topicality of the issue in many countries as well as by the very strong emotional public response and its appearance in the media in connection with an individual with a certain renown as a botanist who made it his cause. It was above all Goodall’s criticism of his own country on the issue of euthanasia that sparked a lively debate in Australia. Media coverage of assisted

suicide legislation in various countries, including Switzerland, and the level of official acceptance of assisted suicide in different Swiss cantons was by and large based on facts. The rare instances of criticism in Switzerland, where the term ‘death tourism’ could be heard, caught the attention of the Austrian media. Although assisted suicide in Switzerland is a recurrent topic of debate in the European media, in this case it attracted interest around the world, including on social media, because it was associated with a well-known figure.

‘Renowned Australian scientist David Goodall, 104, will travel to Switzerland to end his life’
(Fox News, USA)



‘Sovereign Money Initiative’ Yes campaign (© Jingji Ribao)



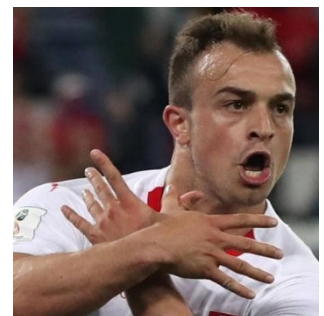
Australian David Goodall in Switzerland to undergo assisted suicide (© Clarin)

Kosovo double-headed eagle gesture made by Swiss footballers

The gesture of the double-headed eagle of Kosovo made by members of the Swiss football team Granit Xhaka, Xherdan Shaqiri and Stephan Lichtsteiner during the Switzerland-Serbia match in the World Cup was widely commented on in the foreign

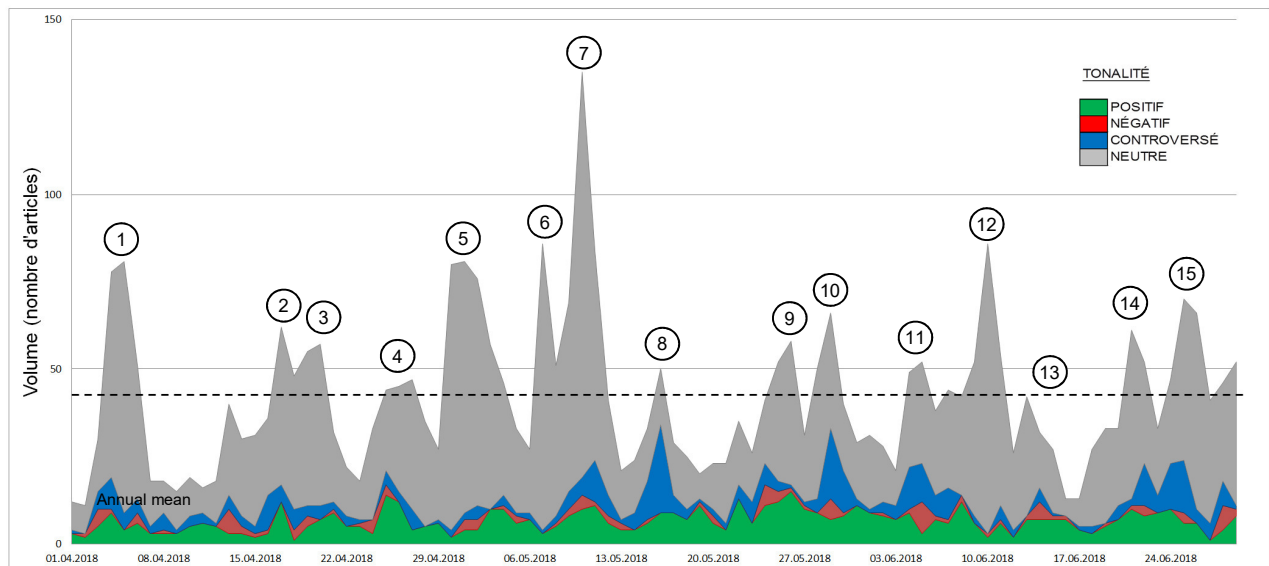
media and on social media, reflecting the political dimension of the rivalry, or tensions, between Kosovo Serbs and Albanians. The issues of migration to Switzerland as a result of the war in Kosovo and the multicultural composition of the Swiss national team were also the subject of debate. Links were at times made with tensions associated with national identity issues currently circulating in Europe. Although the Serbian press voiced harsh criticism of the behaviour of these players, the media in other countries explained it by the heavily-charged emotional context during the match and the attitudes of certain supporters. The understanding expressed by Federal Councillors Ignazio Cassis and Guy Parmelin was also reported in some media outlets. The media reporting ended by focusing on the fine imposed by FIFA on the players concerned.

«Schweizer Jubel-Eklat: Die Nation im Griff des Doppel-Adlers»
Die Welt, Deutschland



Swiss striker Xherdan Shaqiri during the Switzerland-Serbia World Cup match (© Corriere della Sera)

Quantitative changes in foreign media coverage on Switzerland



Changes in the volume and tone of foreign media coverage in connection with Switzerland (volume=number of articles per day in the reference media analysed (01.10.2018–31.12.2017)). A spike can correspond to multiple events. The events that gave rise to the most, or the most significant, media coverage are listed below.

(1) Arrest of Hervé Falciani in Madrid. (2) Discussions on the role of the Spiez Laboratory in the context of the inquiry by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons into the poisoning of the former Russian spy, Sergei Skripal. (3) Weakening of the Swiss franc. (4) Supply of chemical products to Syria. (5) Announcement by Australian national David Goodall to seek assisted suicide in Switzerland. (6) USD 7.15 billion deal between Nestle and Starbucks. (7) Assisted suicide of David Goodall in Switzerland. (8) New evidence concerning payments by Novartis to Donald Trump's lawyer. (9) Golden Lion award for the Swiss pavilion at the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale. (10) Ranking of the most expensive cities in the world. (11) Run-up to the 'Sovereign Money Initiative'. (12) Popular votes of 10 June 2018, in particular the rejection of the 'Sovereign Money Initiative'. (13) Art Basel. (14) Visit by Pope Francis to Geneva. (15) The Kosovo double-headed eagle gesture made by players during the Switzerland-Serbia World Cup football match in 2018.

A closer look: Swiss architecture awarded at the Venice Architecture Biennale

Swiss architecture was a recurring subject of articles in the foreign media during the second quarter. Most of the coverage focused on the major figures with well-established international reputations. The ongoing interest in the work of Le Corbusier and in some personal and at times controversial aspects of his life, including his alleged links with fascism, is one typical example. The work of various contemporary Swiss architects, such as Mario Botta and Peter Zumthor, are frequently the subject of critical acclaim. The spectacular works of Herzog & de Meuron are regularly applauded, recent examples including the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg and Tate Modern in London. But it was the names of less well-known, promising young architects that caught the attention of the media in the current quarter – or in fact made the headlines in a very big way. This was the case with the Swiss pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, which won the Golden Lion award for the first time. The news attracted international media attention, especially in Europe. The focus of interest was both on the originality and the thought provoked by the project, known as *Svizzera 240: House Tour*, which was presented by a group of young architects from the ETH Zurich (Alessandro Bosshard, Li Tavor, Matthew van der Ploeg and Ani Vahervaaraw) and supported by Pro Helvetia. The big impact both in the traditional press and in social media of this event, which is one of the most important in the world of architecture, brought high visibility to Switzerland and its architectural excellence, and thrust the work of this new generation of architects into the limelight.

Switzerland's monitoring of foreign media includes all coverage in connection with Switzerland in reference media in 18 countries (Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, France, Germany, Spain, Great Britain, India, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, USA) in addition to reference media across the Arab world and in the European Union.

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