



EIDGENÖSSISCHES VERKEHRS- UND ENERGIEWIRTSCHAFTSDEPARTEMENT
 DEPARTEMENT FEDERAL DES TRANSPORTS, DES COMMUNICATIONS ET DE L'ENERGIE
 DIPARTIMENTO FEDERALE DEI TRASPORTI, DELLE COMUNICAZIONI E DELLE ENERGIE
 DEPARTAMENT FEDERAL DA TRAFFIC ED ENERGIA

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An den Bundesrat

Informationsnotiz

Teilnahme von Bundesrat Adolf Ogi bei den 700-Jahr-Feierlichkeiten in Grossbritannien sowie Besuch beim britischen Verkehrsminister Malcolm Rifkind (28. Juni - 2. Juli 1991)

1. Zweck des Besuches: Teilnahme bei den 700-Jahr-Feierlichkeiten in Grossbritannien

In Grossbritannien leben 17'000 Auslandschweizer. Diese Landsleute haben einen regen Kontakt untereinander, und auch auf kulturellem und wirtschaftlichem Gebiet sind die Beziehungen der in Grossbritannien lebenden Schweizer mit ihrer Heimat sehr eng. Somit bringen diese dem 700-Jahr-Jubiläum ein spezielles Interesse entgegen und führen unter der aktiven Aegide des Schweizer Botschafters in London ein beeindruckendes Programm, das sich über das ganze Jahr erstreckt, durch.

Die Auslandschweizer schätzten es daher sehr, dass der Bundesrat durch die persönliche Anwesenheit eines Mitgliedes bei den Feierlichkeiten vertreten war. Der Unterzeichnende überbrachte bei der Feier im Londoner Battersea-Park, wo 8'000 Schweizer anwesend waren, die Grüsse der Landesregierung (Rede liegt bei).

Daneben nahm er auch an einem Empfang in der Swiss Mercantile School sowie an einem Swiss Evening in London teil. Dort traf er mit dem britischen Verteidigungsminister Tom King sowie mit einigen Mitgliedern des Ober- und Unterhauses zusammen. Am Rande der Visite traf er auch zufällig den Präsidenten der Europäischen Bank für Wiederaufbau und Zusammenarbeit (BERD) Jacques Attali. Der Unterzeichnende packte die Gelegenheit mit diesem kurz und spontan über europäische Verkehrsfragen zu diskutieren. Attali bedauerte dabei auch den Weggang seines Exekutivdirektors Nicolas Imboden, den der Bundesrat ja in der letzten Sitzung zum Delegierten für Handelsverträge ernannt hat.

2. Treffen mit Verkehrsminister Malcolm Rifkind

Im Gespräch mit dem britischen Kollegen ging es im wesentlichen um drei Punkte:

um den Stand der Transitverhandlungen Schweiz - EG, um die Pläne der britischen Regierung zur Reorganisation der Bahnen sowie um den Eurotunnel unter dem Ärmelkanal.

2.1 Transit

Hier zeigte Rifkind viel Verständnis für die schweizerische Haltung und anerkannte, dass das jüngste Angebot der Schweiz die Diskussion deblockiert habe, was in der Mandatsverlängerung für die EG-Negotiatoren zum Ausdruck komme.

Er hielt vier Punkte fest im Hinblick auf das Zustandekommen eines Vertrages:

- den Wunsch, noch in diesem Jahr ein Abkommen abzuschliessen
- die Notwendigkeit eine Lösung zu finden, die auch langfristig und über die EG hinaus etwas bringt
- die Berücksichtigung der berechtigten Interessen der Schweiz
- sowie die Notwendigkeit, den Güterverkehr im Binnenmarkt nicht zu behindern.

Der Unterzeichnende strich die Bedeutung eines Transitvertrages gerade auch für die EG heraus. Ein Binnenmarkt könne nur mit funktionierenden Transitachsen Erfolg haben, die Schweiz werde diese jedoch nur unter annehmbaren Bedingungen ausbauen. Auch diese Äusserungen nahm Rifkind mit Verständnis entgegen.

2.2 Reorganisation der britischen Bahn

Die britische Regierung plant, den Güter- und den Personenverkehr vermehrt von der Strasse auf die Schiene zu verlegen. Dazu soll einerseits die Infrastruktur verbessert werden, andererseits aber auch

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mehr Wettbewerb im Bahnwesen Einzug halten. Das heisst, dass das Monopol der British Rail gebrochen werden soll.

Dank dem Eurotunnel erhofft sich Minister Rifkind auch einen besseren Zugang der britischen Bahnen zum Kontinent. Offen ist, wie erfolgreich die britische Regierung mit diesem Programm sein wird. Sicher ist aber, dass sie dem Bahnverkehr nun die nötige Priorität einräumen will.

2.3 Eurotunnel unter dem Kanal

Trotz einiger Mehrkosten scheinen die Briten und Franzosen in der Lage zu sein, den Eurotunnel im Sommer 1993 zu öffnen.

Im Gegensatz zu Frankreich ist in Grossbritannien die Frage der Zufahrten jedoch noch nicht gelöst. Immerhin will Minister Rifkind die von der Regierung Thatcher fallengelassenen Pläne einer Schnellbahn von London nach Folkstone mit neuer Linienführung wieder aufnehmen - dies durchaus im Bewusstsein, dass er damit politische Opposition vor allem in der Grafschaft Kent provozieren wird.

Zu diesem Zweck plant Grossbritannien - analog der Schweiz - eine Straffung des Plangenehmigungsverfahrens für neue Eisenbahnlinien.

Beide Verkehrsminister betonten übereinstimmend die Bedeutung des Eurotunnels und der NEAT im Zusammenhang mit der Verlagerung des Güterschwerverkehrs auf die Schiene. So wird der Eurotunnel jährlich 400'000 LKW-Fahrten von der Strasse auf die Schiene bringen.

EIDGENÖSSISCHES VERKEHRS- UND
ENERGIEWIRTSCHAFTSDEPARTEMENT



Adolf Ogi

The spoken word is valid !

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Speech

of

Swiss Federal Councillor Adolf Ogi

Minister for Transports, Communications and Energy

at the Swiss Fair, Battersea Park

London, 29th June 1991

Liebi Schwyzer, chers concitoyens,
cari concitadini,

Grüessech mitenand, bonjour, buongiorno, hello
everybody !

It is such a pleasure for me to speak to you.

At this memorable moment, and in this beautiful
Battersea Park.

But first I did not want to speak here.

I wanted to bring you something along from
Switzerland instead.

You see, last weekend I was at the
Eidgenössisches Turnfest - the Federal Celebra-
tion and big get-together of all Swiss gymnasts in
Lucerne.

There I was able to follow the colourful, ener-
getic and harmonious display of the different
groups.

That was a good piece of Switzerland.

So I wanted to bring one of these groups of
gymnasts along here to London.

To celebrate with you here in Battersea Park and
to do some exercises with you.

Full of the joy of life - full of energy.

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But how to transport several hundred Swiss gymnasts to England ?

The government-plane is certainly too small.

And even Swissair does not have a spare Jumbo-Jet.

You can see, how even the Minister of Aviation has his limits.

So I had to leave my dear gymnasts at home and instead I am speaking myself.

However, I am very pleased to welcome you here in Battersea Park, and to bring you greetings and best wishes from the Federal Council.

Chers compatriotes, je suis heureux de vous transmettre les salutations et le plus cordial message du Conseil fédéral.

En terre étrangère, vous êtes tous les ambassadeurs d'un pays que nous aimons profondément.

Dans un monde où les frontières s'estompent et où de profondes mutations remettent tout en question, votre rôle gagnera encore en importance.

Plus que jamais, la Suisse compte sur vous !

Cari concitadine, cari concitadini,

Con grandissimo piacere do un cordiale benvenuto a tutti gli svizzeri di lingua italiana.

Vi ringrazio del vostro impegno qui all'estero in favore della Svizzera.

Esso lascerà un'impronta indelebile nel tempo.

Chars amis da lingua rumantscha,

Er a Vus in cordial bainvegna qua en il Park da Battersea.

Il Cusseigl federal stima zunt fitg Voss engaschi per la Svizzera en l'ester ed el As di in grazia fitg per suenter.

Liebe Landsleute,

wenn Tausende von Schweizern im Herzen Londons zusammenkommen ist das ein grosses Ereignis!

Zeigt das, dass vielleicht gerade im Ausland die Schweizer noch mehr fühlen, was Heimat bedeutet, als wenn sie in der Schweiz selbst leben.

Mit grosser Freude bringe ich Ihnen daher, liebe Mitbürgerinnen und Mitbürger, die Grüsse des Bundesrates.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear Swiss,

We are proud of our Swiss citizens who live abroad.

Who live in Great Britain.

Because you are ambassadors for our country.

Ambassadors for Switzerland

When you are liked, our country Switzerland is liked.

I know the reasons why you live in Great Britain are very different.

Some because they married a British person, some because they got a job here and some just because they were fascinated by the British way of life.

The Swiss living in Great Britain have been well-known and some have and had a remarkable reputation in Great Britain.

For example John Webber, who was in the 18th century the painter of the famous Captain Cook.

The painter of Captain Cook

He was originally a Hans Wäber, and he painted all the exotic islands Captain Cook discovered.

Or the Ticinesi from the Val di Blenio who emigrated to Great Britain in the last century.

These members of the Unione Ticinesi worked first as waiters and cooks.

And then opened their own restaurants.

Restaurants with the Italian style cooking.

So it was the Swiss and not the Italians who introduced pasta and pizzas to the British.

The Swiss introduced pasta to GB

Think about that, the next time you eat in an Italian restaurant in London.

But there have also been big entrepreneurs in Great Britain and well respected representatives of Swiss firms, and diplomats, of course, like Ambassador Muheim.

Because London has always been an important post.

And let's not forget the Swiss artists who have accepted the challenge of facing the high quality competition here in London and elsewhere in Great Britain.

May I say, that we are all proud of you.

Not necessarily just when your name appears in the newspaper.

But mainly when we hear a British person saying : "Oh, I know a Swiss who works with me. A really nice person."

That is the best public relations our country can get.

The other question is, of course : Can you still be proud of your home-country - of Switzerland ?

It is not sacrilege to ask a question like that.

Because many things have changed in the world.

In Europe.

And in Switzerland.

So we have to be self-critical.

That is the only way to improve.

And every anniversary is an occasion to reflect.

It is sometimes said, that our country is in a crisis.

I cannot but disagree.

No crisis, but structures must be improved

It is true that there are things in Switzerland which must be improved.

It is true that there are structures which have to be changed.

But we are tackling these problems - we are bringing in new legislation, new ideas, new projects.

We have the courage to change the situation.

Following a saying by a Canadian politician who told me once : "You see, we do not have problems, we just have solutions".

And if we are reflecting on our internal values, on our structures and on our position in the

world, that should be regarded as a sign not of weakness but of strength.

But we should do all that with a positive attitude.

Just like the gymnasts from the Turnfest in Lucerne I mentioned before.

Who faced their difficult exercise in an upright position, facing forward, with courage - but always with a smile.

Tackle the problems
with a smile

Let's follow their example.

Let's do our duty with more joy and more optimism.

Many things would be easier !

We managed to overcome fascism and communism in this century - now we have to overcome pessimism.

A positive attitude must also be our attitude towards Europe.

Switzerland is not an island of Saints - as a German Minister once said.

No, we are in the middle of Europe.

On the spine of Europe as far as traffic is concerned.

So we are part of Europe.

We are one of the main trading-partners of the EC.

That is the case whether we are a member of the EC or not.

The thing to discuss is the way we integrate politically.

This can be through membership of the EC.

This can be by creating the European Economic Area or this can be by extending our bilateral agreements with Brussels.

What we certainly do not want is isolation.

No isolation in Europe

The "Alleingang".

At the moment we are still negotiating, together with our EFTA-partners, a European Economic Area.

Whether this will bring us to a successful conclusion or not we do not yet know.

But there is certainly no reason to rush forward and to apply for membership as Austria has done and Sweden will do next monday.

Because joining the EC is a long process - a process which the Swiss people, too, must be able to follow.

Joining the EC is a long process

Because it is the Swiss people who will finally have to decide about membership in Brussels.

So political leadership is needed to guide them to a political integration in Europe.

We need a political strategy, and we need clear political objectives which can be discussed in depth.

But the way to Brussels must be taken in an upright position - with self-confidence.

Because Switzerland can offer something

Switzerland can offer a lot to the EC

- from a political, economical and cultural point of view.
- and also infrastructure-wise if you think of our passage through the Alps.

On the one hand we must stop thinking that the EC is a threat to Switzerland.

EC no threat for Switzerland

And on the other hand we must stop thinking that Switzerland is a special case.

Switzerland not a special case

So we must take our chance.

And I am quite sure that we will eventually join the EC.

But we should not apply now at this moment.

Because even the EC is not ready for it.

The EC of the 12 has first to sort out the economic, social and political differences between North and South.

There is a new situation with all the countries of the East which also want to become members.

So the EC will change and has to change.

Not only by getting bigger, but also by becoming more democratic and less centralized.

The EC needs new strength to sort out all these problems.

So let's give time to the EC.

To sort out these problems.

But also we take our time with the most important decision of membership.

After history of 700 years existence we will not give away easily our country's rights, independence and standard of living.

I say this out of a feeling of responsibility.

Not from a position against the EC - not at all.

I reckon that this particular position of Switzerland is not easy to understand.

But I know that the British feel best what we mean by our position towards the EC.

British and Swiss :
similar attitude
towards Europe

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Probably because both countries and both cultures love combining tradition and courage.

Love combining independence and solidarity with others.

And love combining freedom and responsibility.

So both the British and the Swiss love to join a club.

But only if they can keep their own way of live.

We may be different the Swiss and the British - but you see we have much in common.

And we attract each other.

The Swiss come to Great Britain to learn English, to learn another way of life.

As I did 25 years ago in Liverpool and London.

The British came to Switzerland to show us how to ski and how to climb mountains.

The British showed us how to ski and climb

In the meantime we have learnt it.

And we are very happy still to welcome many British people to Switzerland.

Our country seems to be a refuge especially for politicians - in older times and now.

As Sir Winston Churchill, who spent his honeymoon in the wild, romantic area of the Riederalp.

Or as for the members of Parliament in the Anglo-Swiss-Parliamentary group who with their Swiss-colleagues, enjoy in Davos the ski-week year after year.

Which is good fun by the way.

Another example, of course, are the visits of the former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, to the Lake of Zug.

We are quite sure that many good ideas were born on the shores of that lake.

I don't know whether the poll-tax was also amongst them.

But lets leave it like that.

I do not want to get involved in British politics.

I have enough with my own problems.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

I would just like to thank you for coming.

To thank you for the support you give our country.

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I would also like to thank very much the British guests who have shown by their presence their sympathy for our country.

I would like to thank very much the Ambassador Mr. Muheim, his people and the Federation of Swiss Societies in the United Kingdom for preparing this fantastic Swiss Fair here in Battersea Park.

And I am very glad that you, my dear Swiss living abroad, will soon be able to participate directly in the shaping of our country's future.

From the beginning of next year you will take part in Swiss votes and elections at Federal level.

And please : do take part, do vote.

So in our country's sevenhundred and first year of our country it is about time that you get the rights you deserve as Swiss citizens.

As for the 700th anniversary I give the last word to "The Times", where a newspaper commentator wrote on 13th June 1991 :

"Perhaps the Swiss constitution is inimitable. But those states now being torn apart by ethnic or religious divergences such as Yugoslavia or the Soviet Union should study a model that has been tested so thoroughly. Federal Germany took a leaf out of the Swiss book when it enshrined local democracy in 1949. Switzerland may suffer the doubts of success. But seven centuries of

productive independence in the centre of Europe is no bad record".

It was a British person not a Swiss who wrote that.

But it is up to us Swiss to maintain this good record.

I wish you a nice afternoon.