

Switzerland in the foreign media: 4th quarter of 2017

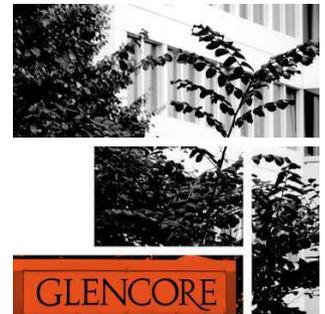
Paradise Papers: Switzerland cited from different angles

Switzerland is mentioned on several accounts in the Paradise Papers, documents leaked from Bermuda-based law firm Appleby, and published by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ). Various well-known Swiss personalities and companies involved in offshore financial arrangements or corruption cases are sometimes the topic of negative commentary. This has mostly

«Glencores ‘paradiesische’
Geschäfte»
(*Handelsblatt*, Germany)

focused on commodities trading company Glencore, and on the Swiss-Angolan banker Jean-Claude Bastos de Morais, CEO of the Quantum Global Group in Zug. The undeclared

Swiss bank accounts of people of Spanish origin in particular have also attracted media attention. Switzerland is not itself the centre of this attention. Although Switzerland is still associated with the list of global tax havens, a change is under way in the media, which tends to also mention Switzerland’s progressively distancing itself from a model based on banking secrecy and increasing adaptation to international financial and tax cooperation.

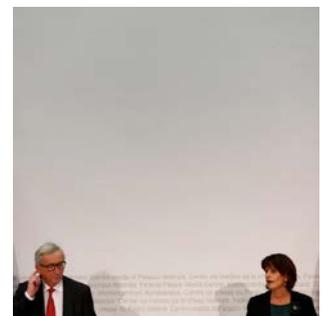


Glencore and the Paradise Papers
(© *Le Monde*)

New developments in Swiss-EU relations

The press covered various stories in connection with Switzerland’s relations with the EU. A number of articles covered the talks that took place in Bern between the President of the Confederation, Doris Leuthard, and the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, on a future framework agreement between the two parties, and the decision of the Federal Council regarding Switzerland’s cohesion contribution in favour of Eastern and Southern European countries. Switzerland’s presence on the EU’s grey list of tax havens was then mentioned by several media outlets, although no comment was made about this in particular. The media took up comments by Ueli Maurer, who professed no concern. Finally, the reaction of the Federal Council to the decision of the EU to limit recognition of equivalence for the Swiss stock exchange to one year sparked a variety of articles. They took up the declarations of the President of the Confederation regarding the measures envisaged by the Federal Council, including calling into question the billion for European cohesion and abolishing the stamp duty for Swiss banks.

« Une mesure de Bruxelles sur la
Bourse provoque l’ire de la Suisse »
(*Le Figaro*, France)



Jean-Claude Juncker and Doris Leuthard
in Bern, November 2017
(© *Reuters*)

The village of Albinen’s project to pay newcomers to live there

The decision by the village of Albinen in the Canton of Valais to offer a financial incentive to all newcomers while boasting the advantages of its natural surroundings caught imaginations worldwide, including on social media. The measure is intended to counteract the trend towards depopulation of certain areas in favour of urban centres. The media chose to concentrate primarily on the monetary aspect, conveying the stereotype of a Switzerland endowed with plentiful financial resources. The coverage also reinforced the image of a country with idyllic untouched landscapes. Above all, this story showed the potential impact of what was essentially a piece of local news, especially when shared on social networks.

«You won’t believe how much
this tiny Swiss village will pay
you to move there»
(*USA Today*, USA)

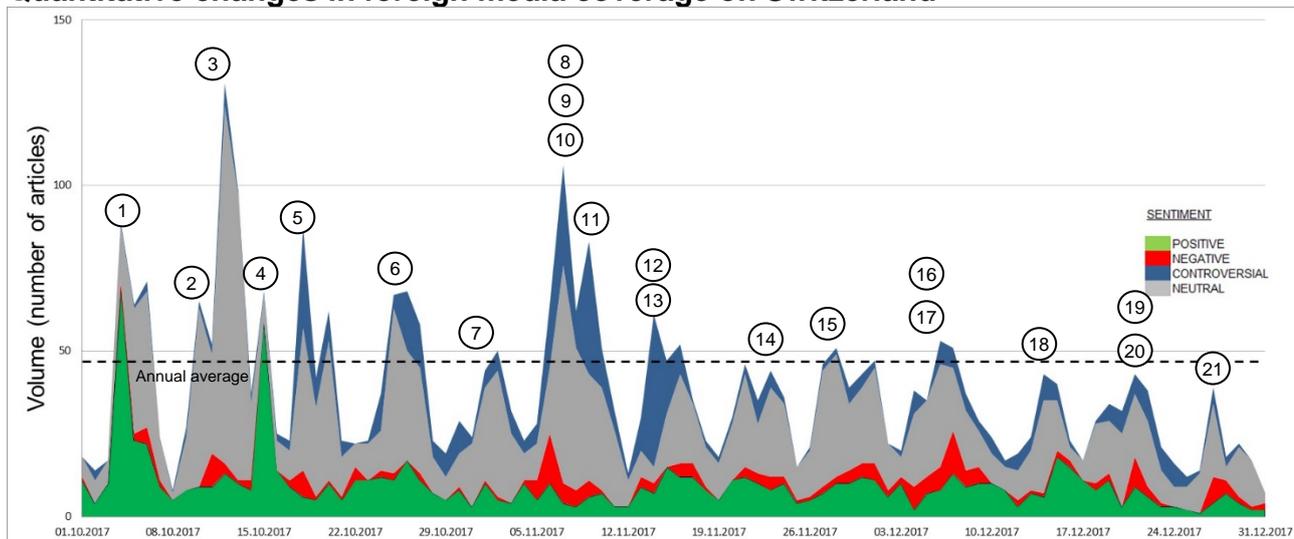


The Swiss Stock Exchange
(© *Die Presse*)



The village of Albinen (VS)
(© *Spiegel online*)

Quantitative changes in foreign media coverage on Switzerland



Evolution of the volume and sentiment of foreign media coverage of Switzerland (volume = number of articles per day in the reference media analysed (01.10.2017–31.12.2017)). A spike can correspond to multiple events.

(1) Swiss chemist Jacques Dubochet awarded Nobel Prize. (2) Arrest of two suspected terrorists in Chiasso. (3) FIFA: criminal proceeding by the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland against Jérôme Valcke and Nasser Al-Khelaïfi. (4) Roger Federer secures Shanghai Masters 1000 title. (5) Trial of Swiss spy begins in Germany. (6) FIFA: Nasser Al-Khelaïfi interrogated on corruption charges by the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland. (7) Gurlitt exhibition opens at Bern Museum of Fine Arts. (8) Paradise Papers. (9) Tariq Ramadan accused of sexual assault. (10) Franco-Swiss counter-terrorism operations. (11) Swiss spy sentenced in Germany. (12) €300m agreement between HSBC and the French national financial prosecutor (PNF). (13) Credit Suisse fined USD 135 million in US. (14) Jean-Claude Juncker visits Bern. (15) Village of Albinen (VS) offers financial incentive to all newcomers. (16) USD 321 million repatriated to Nigeria. (17) Switzerland on EU grey list of tax havens. (18) Road accident in Gotthard Tunnel. (19) 1MDB scandal: Swiss Financial Market Supervisory Authority (FINMA) concludes enforcement proceedings against J.P. Morgan. (20) Federal Council reacts to EU decision to limit recognition of equivalence for the Swiss stock exchange to one year. (21) Swiss cruise ship crashes into bridge in Duisburg, Germany.

A closer look: Nobel prize winner Jacques Dubochet and Swiss innovation

The awarding of the Nobel Prize for Chemistry to Switzerland's Jacques Dubochet received a great deal of attention in the international press. Dubochet and two British and American researchers won the prize for their research into cryoelectron microscopy. The scientists' contribution to this molecular imaging method was the topic of many articles stressing Switzerland's research and innovation potential. Although not directly mentioned, Switzerland's cutting-edge scientific infrastructures, education and research institutes, and in this case the University of Lausanne, were also highlighted. In general, Swiss research and innovation-related topics regularly attract the attention of foreign media, but do not usually result in these kinds of peaks in coverage. This award was exceptional because of the prestige surrounding the Nobel Prize, which always generates a lot of media interest. The attention is temporary, however. The mainstream media tends to lose interest after the event.

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.
Contact: FDFA, Presence Switzerland, Monitoring and Analysis, Bundesgasse 32, 3003 Bern tel. +41 58 462 01 83, email prs@eda.admin.ch, <http://www.dfae.admin.ch/presencesuisse>