



IFIL Seminar on Switzerland's urban and rural settings (Bern & Surrounds) **Thursday 26 & Friday 27 April 2012**

In order to learn from other cultures we must know ourselves and where we come from. Now IFIL offers opportunities to broaden your knowledge of the country and society you live in. Rural idyll and sophisticated cities – this seminar examines these two faces of Switzerland and the space between where they meet.

Switzerland has long been known and admired for its picturesque, unspoilt landscapes and highly liveable cities. But what of the space in between where rural and urban boundaries merge? Policy areas including agriculture, transportation, environment, housing, tourism, energy and social policy have an impact on space within a country. Over two days the study group will investigate the contrast between urban and rural settings and the relationships between them. A key goal is to develop an understanding of the principles of sustainable development policy that could determine positive futures for the economy, society and environment in both town and country.

An overnight stay will be made in rustic lodgings in Emmental countryside where the group will enjoy an evening meal together.

Organiser Profile

I am an Australian/Swiss – born in Australia and recently awarded Swiss citizenship through marriage. I have had the privilege of living, working and traveling in a number of cultures other than my own. My work with the department of International Affairs at the University of Basel and its Global Perspectives Programme revolves around cross cultural exchange. I love the unexpected places that cross cultural encounters can take you – sitting in a small boat in crocodile infested estuaries fishing with indigenous Australians, sharing a plate of home-cooked *gyoza* with dinner table conversation conducted through Japanese translation software or eating snake with a group of small time gangsters in Guangzhou.

Since moving to Switzerland I have enjoyed discovering the many corners of this compactly diverse country. Leading the IFIL 2011 Swiss Study Trip is an excellent opportunity to deepen my understanding of Swiss society and continue development of intercultural competencies.

Lucinda Tanner, October 2011



Thursday 26 April 2012

9:30 Introduction

11:00 **Electorate Trends**

What are the differences in voting trends between rural and urban areas ? What are the reasons for these differences?

Can the Swiss population achieve the degree of joint, coherent and harmonised cooperation needed to ensure sustainable development?

Presenting:

Political commentator [Lukas Golder](#), GfS Institute

12:00 Picnic lunch

14:00 **Growing Switzerland**

Three-quarters of the Swiss population now resides in the country's agglomerations, which extend from their core towns and cities far out into the surrounding areas. The trend towards continued urban spread and faceless, poorly structured residential developments is problematic. As urban areas grow, decisions must be made on how additional land will be incorporated into the urban make-up.

How might things look for Switzerland in 2030?
What is Switzerland's vision for the urban future?
What are the alternatives to urban sprawl?

Presenting:

Urban designer, Mr. Stefan Kurath, [urbaNplus](#) <www.urbanplus.ch>

15:30 **Balance of Wealth**

The main trends that we are currently seeing in spatial development are leading to a «metropolisation» of Switzerland that would place the major cities at far too great an advantage relative to the rest of the country.

State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO supports the balanced development of the economy.

The goal is to develop a dynamic and cohesive Switzerland – a Switzerland that builds on the vision of its citizens and the vitality of its economic forces while ensuring the balanced distribution of wealth across all parts of the country.

How can this be achieved?

Presenting:

Mr. Mark Reinhard, The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs SECO <www.seco.admin.ch/>

Evening Sleep in the Hay



Friday 27 April 2012

10:00 **Tour of Burgdorf**

A walking tour of Burgdorf where the topics of sustainable growing (building areas, developing areas) of the city, sustainable mobility, renewable energies and environment will be explored. Tour leaders will show examples of sustainable processes conducted in Burgdorf and their results .

Guided by:

Ms. Susanne Szentkuti, Projektleiterin Mobilität/Energie/Umwelt, Baudirektion Burgdorf

12:30 lunch

14:00 **Agriculture Forum**

Around 1850 nearly 60% of the Swiss population worked in agriculture, but by 1888 the figure had fallen to 36% and by 1914 it was 25%. Despite further decline, agriculture today, is the only economic sector with its own Federal Office.

The last two decades have seen an relentless expansion in urban spaces primarily at the expense of agricultural land.

What does the future hold for agriculture?

How will modern agriculture be influenced by multi-functionality?

What role does Switzerland's farming heritage play in the national identity?

Forum:

Mr. Dominique Kohli, The Federal Office for Agriculture FOAG <www.blw.admin.ch>

Ms. Jeanette Zürcher, Schweizerischer Bäuerinnen- und Landfrauenverband (SBLV) <www.landfrauen.ch>

16:00 **How Switzerland Uses its Land/Sustainable Development Policy Forum**

Topography, the mountains especially, influences and restricts the way settlements are built and distributed throughout Switzerland. This is why various uses and activities such as living and working, agriculture, transport and leisure activities compete with each other on about one third of the total surface area.

Sustainable development is a constitutional mandate for the Confederation and the cantons.

The strategy of the Federal Council requires all policy areas – environmental, social and economic – to be focussed on principles of sustainability. The formulation and implementation of the policy is a shared responsibility between the Confederation, cantons and communes, politics, industry and society.

Networking and coordination are required. It is only together, in partnership, that both town and country can really make the most of their respective resources.

Forum:

Dr. Martin Tschopp, Federal Office for Spatial Planning, ARE <www.aren.admin.ch>(tbc)

17:30 Debrief & program end