

Switzerland in the foreign media: 2nd quarter 2022

Ukraine war: greater focus on Switzerland's neutral status

Global media interest in Swiss neutrality has risen sharply against the backdrop of the Ukraine war. Regarding the initially much-discussed topic of Russian oligarchs and the handling of their assets, critical foreign media, especially in Europe, painted Switzerland's neutral status as an opportunistic means for furthering economic self-interest. The longer the conflict lasts, the broader the range of topics raised by the global press. For example, Switzerland's refusal, based on its neutral status, to allow other countries to re-export Swiss-made military equipment to Ukraine drew a considerable amount of attention. Foreign social media on Switzerland's role in this

"Sanktionspraxis, Bündnisfreiheit, Waffenlieferungen: Es sind viele Spiegel, die sich die Schweiz gerade vorhalten muss"

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Germany)

context was often highly critical. The Swiss position on security policy also came under scrutiny with the announcement by Finland and Sweden of their intention to join NATO. In this context, and with frequent references to Switzerland's internal political debate, foreign media outlets discussed the extent to which the Swiss understanding of neutrality should be adapted to reflect the new global peace and security order. President of the Swiss Confederation Ignazio Cassis appeared in a number of guest contributions in Western international media, also helping to give visibility to Switzerland's position on its neutrality and how this is implemented. At the other end of the scale, Russian media has accused Switzerland of losing all credibility as a neutral country by adopting the sanctions against Russia in full. Switzerland's election to the UN Security Council in June, however, resulted in some more nuanced reporting – such as on the distinction between neutrality law and neutrality policy.



Swiss-made military vehicles like the Mowag Piranha 5 may not be sent to Ukraine. (© *Copenhagen Post*)



Pálvi Pulli, head of security policy at the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), talks about Switzerland's relationship with NATO in a widely-read Reuters article. (© *Reuters*)

Ukraine Recovery Conference (URC): Lugano Declaration

"Un evento que reunió ayer, a orillas del lago de Lugano, a dirigentes de máximo nivel de Ucrania, la UE, el Reino Unido y diversas instituciones y organismos internacionales"

(El País, Spain)

positive tweets about the event. Some media outlets also covered the adoption of the seven Lugano Principles and Switzerland and Ukraine's differing positions on the handling of frozen Russian assets.

The URC2022 has been attracting some global media interest, mainly focusing on the content and themes of the event. In addition, several high-profile URC2022 participants increased visibility on social media with positive

"Die Konferenz in Lugano sucht Perspektiven für das zerstörte Land. Bei der Verwendung von Oligarchengeldern zeichnet sich ein Konflikt ab"

(Handelsblatt, Germany)



Ignazio Cassis with the Ukrainian prime minister and the EU Commission president on the shores of Lake Lugano. (© *Rzeczpospolita*)

World Economic Forum: put to the test in a changing world

"Given the multiple crossroads facing the global economy, this would be a particularly good time for Davos to fulfil its considerable potential"

(Gulf News, UAE)

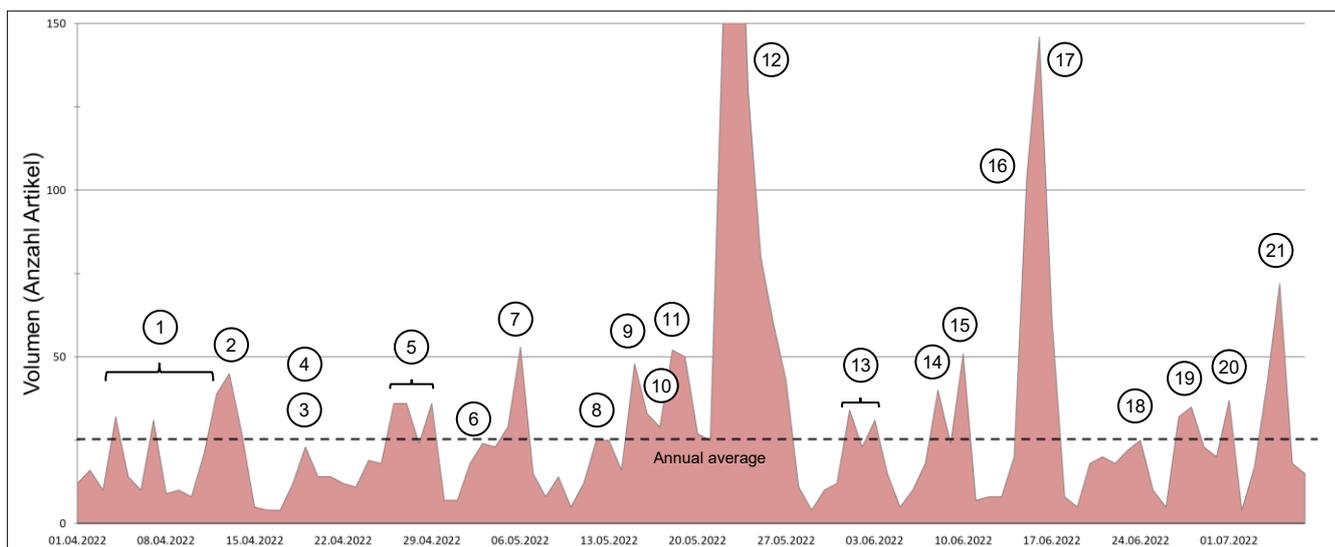
of Switzerland once again highlighted the country as a place for dialogue on global challenges.

A considerable number of foreign media outlets reported on this year's World Economic Forum in Davos, which took place in situ after a two-year gap. The number of reports was slightly lower than previous editions, however. The reporting focuses on the Ukrainian President Selensky's speech and Russia's non-participation. Coverage



Coverage of the World Economic Forum, which takes place in May, is often illustrated with images of snow-free Davos. (© *Süddeutsche Zeitung*)

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, 01.04.2022 – 07.07.2022). A spike can correspond to multiple events. The numbered events have been selected on the basis of their volume and significance.

(1) Ukraine war: Swiss neutrality and sanctions implementation (2) Abduction of head of the Swiss Commission for Vaccination (3) Ukraine war: Swiss neutrality (4) President Ignazio Cassis in Japan (5) Ukraine war: Switzerland blocks Germany's ammunition delivery to Ukraine (6) UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression criticises Swiss banking law (7) Cocaine found in Nespresso factory (8) Ukraine war: neutrality and sanctions implementation (9) Reports on the voting proposals of 15 May (10) Ukraine war: Swiss neutrality (11) Reports in the run-up to the World Economic Forum (12) World Economic Forum in Davos (13) Ukraine war: Switzerland blocks delivery of tanks by Denmark to Ukraine (14) Blatter and Platini trial (15) Election of Switzerland to the UN Security Council (16) Closure of Swiss airspace (17) SNB raises interest rates (18) Gold imports from Russia to Switzerland (19) Ruling against Credit Suisse (20) 'Marriage for all' comes into force (21) Ukraine Recovery Conference 2022 in Lugano

Focus: respect for Swiss monetary policy in international media

Foreign media have been increasingly focusing on Swiss monetary policy in view of rising inflation, which is impacting Switzerland as well. At the start of the year, the subject of inflation in Switzerland – relatively low by European standards – was painted in a positive light in a number of foreign media reports. Media outlets in Switzerland's

"Die Geldpolitik der Schweiz unterscheidet sich wohltuend von der Europäischen Zentralbank"
(FAZ, Germany)

were given as two key reasons. The SNB's decision to raise interest rates also generated a particularly high media resonance abroad, with most reports expressing surprise and overall praise for Switzerland's courageous monetary policy. Then in early July, the subject of Swiss inflation began mainly to appear

"The national bank's hawkish shift blindsided investors"
(The Times, UK)

in the German-language media, reporting a 3.4% rise in June compared to the same month the previous year – the highest increase in Switzerland since 1993. However, according to the media, Swiss inflation is still significantly lower than other European countries, mainly because of state regulation in the agricultural sector and the country's already high cost of living.

"Auch wenn die Inflation derzeit geringer ist als im Rest Europas – die Schweiz bleibt trotzdem ein hochpreisiges Pflaster"
(Der Standard, Austria)

Monitoring the image of Switzerland in the foreign media covers all the reporting on Swiss-related topics in the leading media of 19 countries, including Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Russia, 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 Section, Bundesgasse 32, 3003 Bern, tel. +41 58 462 34 63, prs@eda.admin.ch, www.eda.admin.ch/praesenzschweiz