

My 1st of August speech

(Edited version of my video recording)

Ladies and Gentlemen, Swiss compatriots

Our country celebrates its 712th birthday today. 1291 was an important year for Switzerland. For that was the year in which the peoples of the three founding cantons came together, swore an oath of allegiance and declared "Let us set down in writing our promise to stand together. We shall not tolerate any foreign judges or foreign lords in our country in the future. We want to make the rules in our own country, we want to choose our own governors and judges. Let the tasks of governing and judging be entrusted to our own people!"

Our ancestors knew this would be no easy matter. Which is why they insisted their own judges should have sterling characters. They knew the job called for someone special, not just anyone. Above all, they did not want anyone who, once elected, would then impose even worse rulings on their own people than the foreign judges of earlier times!

Those who brought the confederation into being knew that government is a very difficult, very demanding responsibility, and that those entrusted with this task must, above all, take care to place the interests of their own people at the fore. Seen from today's perspective, that means the Swiss people's interests should be given top priority!

Our country has not always followed these principles. The temptation to give way to foreign, non-Swiss interests instead of upholding our own has been great on many occasions. We have sometimes found ourselves torn to and fro between the European superpowers – formerly Spain, France, Italy and Germany. But although these superpowers once had a strong influence on our country, we have always reverted over the centuries to our own resources. And that is why we are able to celebrate our country's birthday today!

History now seems to be repeating itself: not everyone has our country's and people's interests at heart. Once again, there is a great temptation to say, "Yes, we can go ahead and give up this little country. Let us join all the European organisations, the European Union, for example."

But scarcely had Switzerland joined the political UNO than it found itself caught between the interests of the superpowers (USA and England on the one hand, France, Germany and Russia on the other)!

We would do well to remember the content of that original founding oath, namely that we want to rule ourselves. But what about our judges? The Swiss Federal Court recently decided the Swiss people may no longer decide who should be accepted for naturalisation. The court claimed the decision is not a political one! That others should decide! That naturalisation is a purely administrative act. All of which means the naturalisation procedure would be nothing more than a paper tiger, comparable with the allocation of a registration number or a dog licence. That's how an important issue is devalued and made EU-conform. Switzerland is being groomed for entry to the EU. Poodles to foreign interests are at work here!

It is naive to believe our judges have nothing but our national interests at heart. So we should be prepared to say 'No' whenever necessary. Every country represents its own interests. And legitimately so. Switzerland must protect its own interests too. We would do well to be strong and deliberate in acting on behalf of our country and its future.

We must look out for our country, safeguard our rights of freedom. Switzerland has special qualities which have ensured our prosperity to date. Our democratic freedoms rank high amongst these qualities.

Today our country celebrates its 712th birthday and I for one am sure that if we Swiss think more about the founding of our country in 1291 and why it came about, things will start to go better again for us and the country.

So let us hold onto our Switzerland, our independence and our freedom. We need them!

I wish our country a very happy 712th birthday and a bright future!