

2018

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Olivier Curty, State Councillor,  
Minister of Economic Affairs

# FRIBOURG WELCOMES YOU WITH OPEN ARMS

The Canton of Fribourg is young, dynamic, open, bilingual, and boasts of a broad cultural program, breathtaking natural beauty, and an exceptional historical heritage. From the crisp air of our mountains to the soothing peacefulness of our lakes – not to mention the relaxing atmosphere of our medieval cities – all goes together to make our Canton a region where it is not only good to live, but ideal to work or study. Indeed, this same quality of life has become one of the main criteria taken into consideration in the choice of enterprises seeking a location to set up their business, while at the same time contributing to retaining those which are already established in our Canton. Moreover, among the expats hailing from the academic world or from the business community, the popularity of our Canton is steadily on the rise.

As a consequence, “Live – Learn – Love” go hand in hand with happiness in the 2018 edition of Fribourg Network Freiburg which spotlights the quality of life in our Canton. Above and beyond its museums, monuments, festivals, theaters, award-winning restaurants, lower-altitude mountain resorts, while not omitting its clubs of rock, jazz, or alternative music, the Canton of Fribourg benefits from a favorable socio-economic environment.

The Canton’s bilingualism, evolving into trilingualism (notably in its institutions of higher learning), along with State government entities close to the people, a flexible labor market, an excellent healthcare system, and not least, an aggressive cantonal government policy in the support of innovative enterprises represent but some of the strong points attracting companies active not only on a regional level, but also those active on the national or international levels.

The proximity of three major airports (i.e., Geneva, Basel-Mulhouse and Zurich), all of which are located within an hour and a half from the capital of Fribourg, be it by train or national motorway, is but one more significant asset. As for the Swiss capital of Bern, it is a short 20 minutes away by rail or by road.

Fribourg’s education and training system with its university, its four universities of applied sciences, and its numerous offerings for apprenticeship training, enable its youth to develop professionally, while providing our economy with the skilled manpower that it needs. Finally, our three innovation parks and their competence centers round out a very stimulating offer for businesses.

In the pages that follow, we have given the podium to those who experience Fribourg’s quality of life on a daily basis and are well placed to certify our claim: entrepreneurs, students, expats, and in general terms, enthusiastic fans of Fribourg, be it by origin, by affection, or by adoption.

We wish you a good read!

# “FRIBOURG, SWITZERLAND'S BEST KEPT SECRET”\*

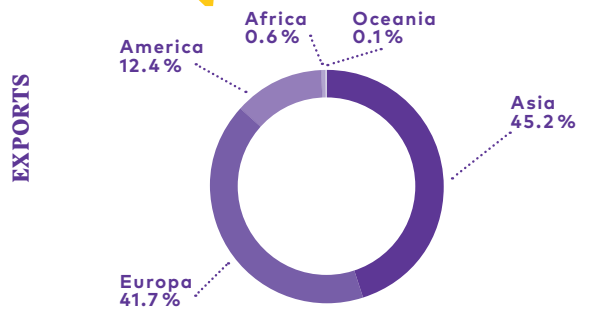
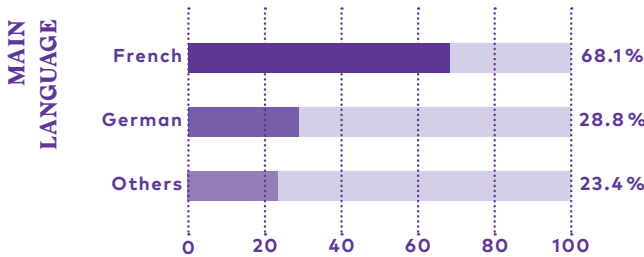
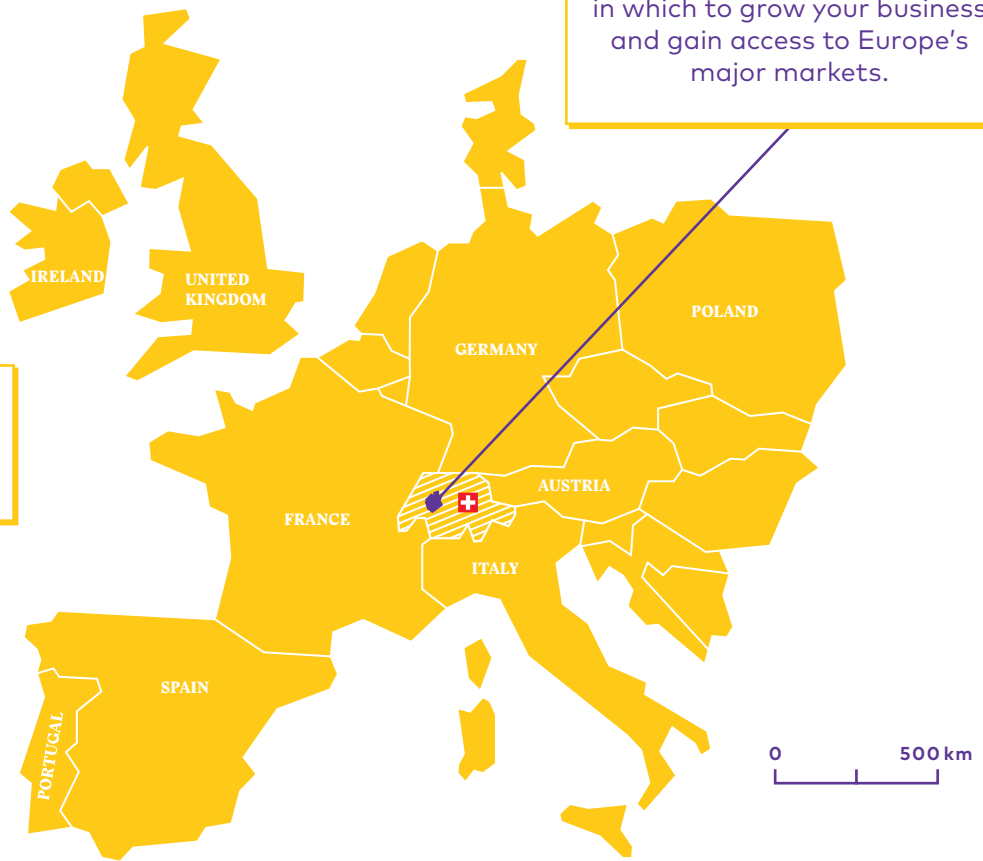
\* Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, Government Minister, United Arab Emirates

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- BLUEFACTORY**  
→ [www.bluefactory.ch](http://www.bluefactory.ch)
- LE VIVIER**  
→ [www.vivier.ch](http://www.vivier.ch)
- MARLY INNOVATION CENTER**  
→ [www.marly-innovation-center.org](http://www.marly-innovation-center.org)

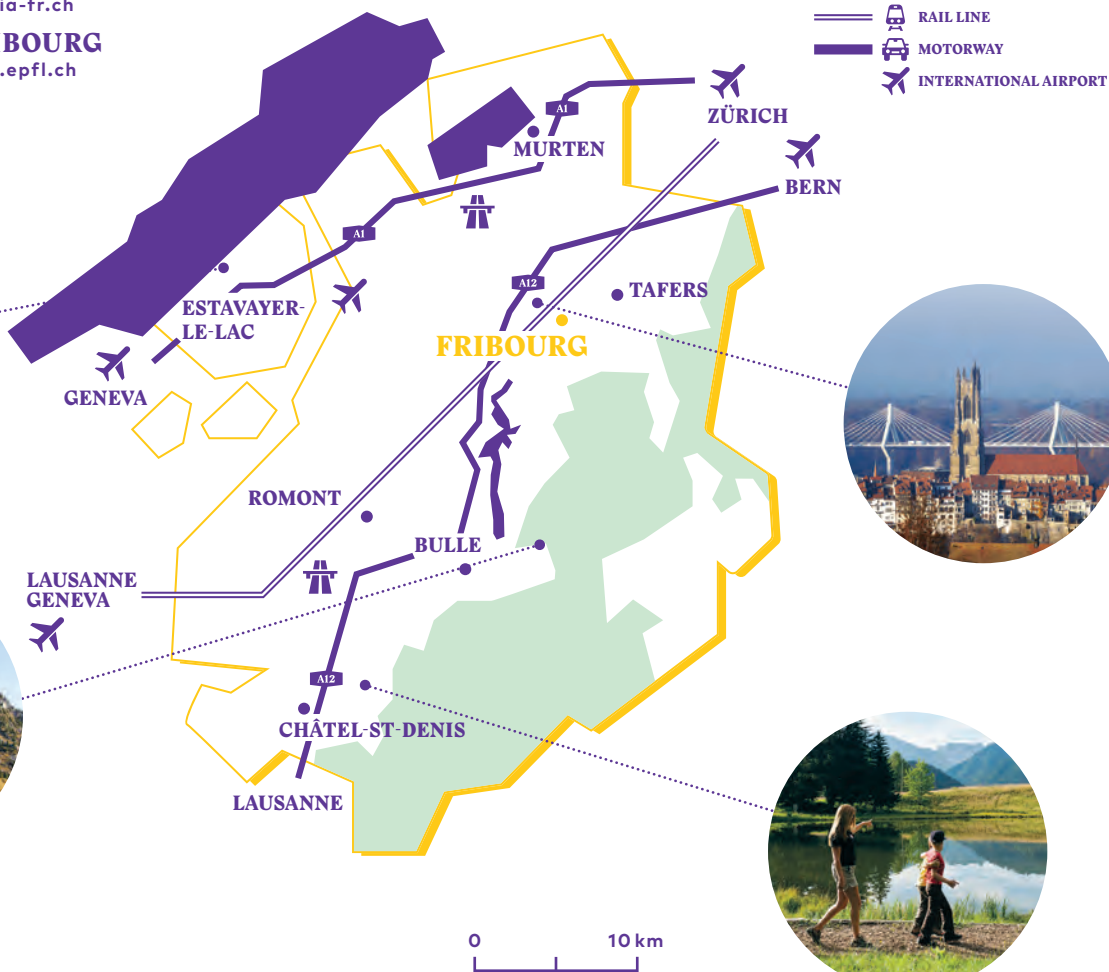


TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS

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- SWISS INTEGRATIVE CENTER FOR HUMAN HEALTH**  
→ [www.sichh.ch](http://www.sichh.ch)
- SMART LIVING LAB**  
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  - ▶ Cluster Energie & Bâtiment
  - ▶ Cluster Food & Nutrition
  - ▶ Robust and Safe Systems Center (ROSAS)
  - ▶ Digital Printing Competence Center
  - ▶ Plastics Innovation Center

UNIVERSITY

- UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG**  
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**“The Fribourg Development Agency is here to assist you!”**

Jean-Luc Mossier  
Managing Director Fribourg Development Agency

**TESTIMONIALS**



→ [www.promfr.ch](http://www.promfr.ch)

# FRIBOURG IN MOTION



A picture speaks a thousand words, but what about a video? Together with the Fribourg Development Agency and the association Fribourgissima Image Fribourg (see eBook), we have produced a series of eight short videos that give a real sense of the excellent quality of life to be had in the canton. Discover the landscapes, dynamism and spirit of Fribourg in these one-minute clips! To view, simply download the FNF eBook or go to the link below.

→ [2018.fribourgnetwork.ch/en/videos](https://2018.fribourgnetwork.ch/en/videos)



Fribourg, the fine art of living well



Hospitality, Fribourg-style



Fribourg – Open to world



Family life in Fribourg





Fribourg – Where mobility matters



Fribourg, multicultural and cosmopolitan



Fribourg – Educating the next generation



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ENERGY



WARMTH



COMFORT



EFFICIENCY



WATER



MOBILITY

# AGRI & CO CHALLENGE FRIBOURG LAUNCHES AN INTERNATIONAL CALL FOR PROJECTS



The acquisition of the St-Aubin Innovation Space site means that the canton of Fribourg now has ample land (100 hectares) and the necessary infrastructure to host the winners of the Agri & Co Challenge.

It is perhaps not surprising that the canton of Fribourg, a major player in the Swiss agrofood sector, has launched the Agri & Co Challenge, an ambitious international call for projects targeted at businesses in the food, agriculture and biomass industries. "The canton of Fribourg will use the Agri & Co Challenge to expand its network of innovative and sustainable firms, foster synergies between different economic sectors, and introduce new value chains, especially with emerging markets", explains Olivier Curty, the Cantonal Minister of Economic Affairs. The Agri & Co Challenge judging panel will include representatives from leading industry names – and initiative partners – Nestlé, Cremo, fenaco and Micarna.

Winners of the Agri & Co Challenge can choose from one of two options: "Relocation" and "Remote cooperation". Under the first option, winning companies will be offered premises free

of charge for two years at the St-Aubin Innovation Space. They will also each receive a cash prize of CHF 30 000, as well as bespoke mentoring and coaching. As for the second option, winning companies that do not wish to relocate but are nonetheless interested in breaking into the Swiss market are given the opportunity to find out more about the agrofood ecosystem in the canton of Fribourg and Switzerland generally, with a view to forging long-term partnerships with local stakeholders.

The 15 most promising projects will share prize money of almost CHF 500,000. The closing date for applications is 31 May 2018. The winners will be announced on 7 November 2018 during the official Canton of Fribourg Innovation Award ceremony.

→ [www.agricochallenge.org](http://www.agricochallenge.org)

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# **LIEBHERR**

## LIEBHERR MACHINES BULLE

# “DIRECT, STRAIGHTFORWARD AND EFFECTIVE”

Established in 1979, Liebherr Machines Bulle Ltd (LMB) has become one of the canton's iconic companies. With a 1,350-strong workforce, LMB specialises in the development and manufacture of diesel and gas engines, fuel injection systems, hydraulic components and splitter boxes. Joint interview with Claude Ambrosini and Dr. Thomas Kunze, members of the management board.

### Why Switzerland, and more specifically Fribourg?

**Claude Ambrosini.** Dr. Hans Liebherr (*ed.: who founded the eponymous group in 1949*) love the Gruyère region and regularly stayed here. The arrival of the motorway between the late 1970s and 1980s meant that the idea of building a factory in Bulle was no longer impractical. Of course, there were the favourable tax conditions too, but that was not the deal breaker: Mr. Liebherr enjoyed a genuine relationship of trust with Gaston Dupasquier, the then mayor of Bulle. The handshake between the two men to seal the deal was long and heartfelt. Dr. Liebherr realised that he had just set up a company in a region whose people reminded him so much of his fellow Swabians. Switzerland's great economic and political stability was also a decisive factor, as was the magnificent view that the site enjoys over the Fribourg Prealps! I could well imagine that Mr. Liebherr's children marvelled at the stunning landscape which greeted them every morning when they opened their shutters!



Thomas Kunze is head of the R&D department of Liebherr Machines Bulle, a world leader in the manufacture of combustion engines and hydraulic applications.

### Mr. Kunze, can you tell us a little about yourself?

**Dr. Thomas Kunze.** I was born in Saxony, in East Germany. At the time of German reunification, in 1989, I was studying in Dresden. I remember it as an extremely tense and emotionally charged period. For close to 20 years, I held a number of senior-level posts with an international company specialising in the manufacture of hydraulic components. In 2014, I had the opportunity of joining LMB, a company whose long-term vision when it comes to technology, quality and customer satisfaction greatly appeals to me.

### After four years living and working here, what do you think about the region?

**Dr. T. K.** My wife and I really enjoy living here. We got to know our neighbours very quickly, and we have made friends here. There is a lot of kindness and goodwill about. [...]

*Read the rest of the interview in eBook.*

→ [www.liebherr.com](http://www.liebherr.com)

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→ [www.fribourgnetwork.ch](http://www.fribourgnetwork.ch)

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 blueFACTORY, Fribourg-Freiburg, Castles,  
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 Cream, Dynamism, Efficiency, Exports,  
 Fondue, Technology Park, Kaiseregg,  
 Gottéron, Gastlosen, Growth, Gruyère  
 Cheese, Hiking, Innovation, International,  
 Mountains, Leisure, Lifestyle, Equilibre,  
 Lyoba, Moléson, Lakes, Mount Vully,  
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 of Applied Sciences, Museums, Nature,  
 Network, Skiing, Francomanias, Poya, Sports,  
 Tradition, University, Vanil Noir, Proximity,  
 Competitiveness, Gastronomy, Fitness,  
 Chocolate, Management, Added Value,  
 Family, Sciences, Technology, Sun, Snow,  
 Friends, Old Town, Chalet, St Nicholas,  
 Landscapes,  
 Gault&Millau,  
 Education,  
 Beaches,  
 Bad Bonn,  
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 Wellness,  
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# Fribourg / Switzerland: In the Heart of Quality of Life



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OPPORTUNITIES**  
*Gugler Electronic*

The RF1 robot, developed by Fribourg-based JNU Automation, hard at work in the Echarlens cheese cellars: it flips, tends to, salts and moves whole cheese rounds weighing as much as 45 kg and measuring up to 75 cm in diameter. Gruyère AOP is Switzerland's greatest cheese export: in 2017 alone, 11,800 tonnes of the famed Fribourg speciality were dispatched around the world.







1

# MAKING OUR LIVES BETTER

Quality of life is a complex concept that covers aspects as diverse as personal development, the environment, purchasing power, physical health and working conditions. Many companies and institutions in Fribourg work every day to make our lives better, whether it be through trailblazing initiatives, innovative projects or ingenious products.



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## **AMAG Bulle**

Rue de Vuippens 55, 1630 Bulle  
Tél. 026 916 13 11, [www.bulle.amag.ch](http://www.bulle.amag.ch)



The packaging of the new "Swiss Milk Creations" range features images of the traditional Fribourg "poya" (droving of livestock to high mountain pastures) and the breed of cow typical to each of the three regions.

## CHOCOLAT VILLARS BRINGING A TASTE OF FRIBOURG TO THE WORLD

"The quality is second to none. Swiss milk is the magic ingredient behind lots of great-tasting products: Gruyère double cream, cheeses like Appenzeller, Emmentaler, Gruyère and Vacherin fribourgeois and, of course, our milk chocolate!" Clearly, Jean-Pierre Geneslay, the Managing Director of Chocolat Villars, is incredibly proud of his company's Swiss heritage. In 2017, Villars launched a new range of chocolate bars made from milk specially sourced from the cantons of Fribourg, Bern and Lucerne. As he explains with gusto, "Each region has its own unique qualities: the milk from Lucerne is full-bodied and velvety, the milk from Bern is smooth and milky, while milk from Fribourg is creamy with a hint of caramel. Like this, we make sure that each chocolate bar has its own distinct flavour!"

The milk from Fribourg is sourced by Cremo, the chocolate-maker's partner in this venture, from a total of 60 local farms and, for the first time, is 100% traceable. The beet sugar, too, is also

produced and processed in Switzerland. The same applies to the finest Poire Williams, kirsch, absinthe, whisky and gin that go into Villars' new range of liqueur chocolates. "These projects were two years in development. We sought input from historians, visited alpine farms, and met with producers and other contributors. This is all part of our eternal mission to showcase Swiss quality, remain an important player in the local economy, and help safeguard traditional know-how. The next challenge Villars has set for itself is to share this incredible expertise with the rest of the world. "We already export our 350 chocolate varieties to more than 60 countries around the globe. And if the positive feedback from our distributors is anything to go by, our philosophy of using only 100% Swiss premium products and traditions is paying dividends!"

→ [www.villars.com](http://www.villars.com)

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[www.brieglipark.ch](http://www.brieglipark.ch)

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COMET

# SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

"Most of what we do is invisible to the naked eye", notes Ines Najorka, Communications Director at COMET. That is an understatement. The company, which is based in Flamatt, is among the world's leading providers of solutions that make our lives safer and better. "Because even minute defects can have a major impact on product safety, we have developed x-ray solutions that make objects 200 times thinner than a single human hair." COMET's x-ray and CT (computed tomography) technologies help to detect flaws in components for the electronics, aeronautical and automotive industries. They are also a common feature in airports,

where they are used to inspect aviation pipelines and screen baggage. Likewise, for surfaces that have been treated using the company's e-Beam technology, the results are imperceptible. Thanks to Comet's solutions, the famous Tetra beverage cartons, for example, are now sterilised by electron beam not harmful chemicals. This process has led to a 40% drop in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and slashed energy consumption by half. Comet's third core technology is radio frequency, which is used in the manufacture of memory chips and sensors.

→ [www.comet-group.com](http://www.comet-group.com)

## SCOUT24 MAKING EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING A CORE VALUE



"A real culture of trust": according to Regula Sandi, Corporate Communication Manager at Scout24, is this phrase which best sums up the philosophy of Switzerland's leading online marketplace. "When it was created over 20 years ago, Scout24 was a start-up. Today, even though the company may have a workforce of 250, it has kept its start-up mentality." Employee well-being is a key concern for Scout24 management. The company's headquarters in Flamatt is famed far and wide, not least for its contemporary architecture and vibrant façades, its open-plan layout which encourages interaction among

employees, and its in-house (and free) gym. Its Bixtro restaurant (see *photograph*) offers fresh, high-quality dishes, but at knockdown prices. Another factor in employee satisfaction at Scout24 is the high degree of flexibility the company affords them: "We not only allow our staff to work from home, we actively encourage it." It's not surprising then that the Fribourg firm has been awarded the "Great Place to Work' label."

→ [www.scout24.ch](http://www.scout24.ch)



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## BIOFACTORY COMPETENCE CENTER/PALL CORPORATION JOINING FORCES TO LAUNCH UNIQUE FACILITY

Fribourg's bioFactory Competence Center (BCC) has joined force with US firm Pall Corporation to launch a unique continuous bioprocessing facility in Fribourg, according to the Director of the BCC, Professor Ian Marison. "Pall is a world leader in continuous bioprocessing and has supplied the BCC with all the equipment", Marison explained. "We have worked together with Pall for the last two years and have designed a range of training courses for Pall and their clients." Next year, the BCC will initiate a series of public training courses that will focus on continuous bioprocessing for making biopharmaceutical compounds.

"With continuous processing, as soon as some material has completed a given step it can be moved to the

next step", said Gareth Leach, Vice President of Global Product Marketing and European Regional Marketing at Pall Life Sciences in Fribourg. "It's more efficient, faster and improves the level of control and reduces the footprint of a facility. The industry, historically, is accustomed to producing "batch" wise, so the idea of the BCC courses is to help bring an understanding of continuous processing into the open", Leach added. One advantage of continuous bioprocessing is that factories can be a lot smaller, which lowers manufacturing costs. "I think production costs could potentially be up to five times cheaper this way, not least because the capital investment needed to build a factory is considerably reduced", Marison said. The products made can include biopharmaceuticals designed

to improve the quality of life regarding the treatment of cancers, autoimmune diseases, and neurological diseases, such as Alzheimer's.

The process also boosts productivity, according to Marison. "Continuous bioprocessing offers a much higher productivity, with reduced material costs, which potentially makes it possible to produce 10 times as much product in the same time. Most current reactors are up to 20,000 litres in scale but with a continuous system it should be possible with a 2,000 litre one."

→ [www.bcc.ch](http://www.bcc.ch)  
→ [www.pall.com](http://www.pall.com)



# Dazzling!

A resort unique in Switzerland is about to open its doors: an 18-hole golf-course remodelled by Robert Trent Jones Jr., prestigious apartments with 2<sup>1/2</sup> to 5<sup>1/2</sup> main rooms designed as permanent and holiday homes, a luxury hotel, hotel residences, a wellness spa of 3,000 sq.m, hitherto unseen, 3 restaurants, and a beach club. Introducing the new Golf Resort La Gruyère, quite simply dazzling!

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## PARTICLE VISION DUST DETECTIVES

Already widely used in forensics, the analytical methods used by the Fribourg firm Particle Vision is a world first in the field. "In some ways, you could say we are dust detectives", explains Juanita Rausch, Co-Director of the company based in the Fri Up business incubator. The experts at Particle Vision, however, go much further. Using an extremely powerful microscope, they are even able to distinguish the particle type and determine their provenance. "There are over 200 fundamental types of particle." As a result, it

is also now possible to assess, with great precision, the impact that these particles have on our quality of life. "Take pollen, for example. Even when there is much of it in the air, the only real health risk that comes with it is an allergic reaction. However, the same can definitely not be said of heavy metal particles, which are often emitted by road traffic!"

→ [www.particle-vision.ch](http://www.particle-vision.ch)

SWISSPOR  
SUSTAINABLE  
LEADERSHIP



Quality of life begins at home. Take swisspor, the leading provider of insulation and waterproofing solutions in Switzerland: it is constantly striving to develop products that reduce the amount of energy buildings use. The group's new facility in Châtel-St-Denis (see photograph) manufactures advanced polyurethane insulating panels. As Laurent Caillère, Marketing and Communications Director, explains:

"Our products offer considerably more added-value than those of our rivals", adding "We manufacture a total of 300,000 m<sup>3</sup> of panelling every year. In addition, swisspor also has the highest number of products (in excess of 100) of any insulation manufacturer in Switzerland carrying the eco-bau "eco" label. This is not the only example of the group's sustainable leadership: since 2013, all of its six manufacturing

facilities in Switzerland are powered by 100% green electricity generated from renewable sources. Furthermore, the roofs of the two facilities in Fribourg are fitted with around 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> photovoltaic panels, effectively making them the largest solar plant in the canton.

→ [www.swisspor.ch](http://www.swisspor.ch)

## SWISS LIVING CHALLENGE

# WINNER OF THE 2017 SOLAR DECATHLON IN DENVER COLORADO

The U.S. Energy Department Solar Decathlon brings together thousands of students, in pursuit of the same goal: to design and build a perfectly functional, full-sized, energy-efficient, solar-powered home. The Swiss team that took part in the 2017 competition, held in Denver (Colorado), swept all before them. In the eight contests out of a possible 10 that they entered, they took first place in six before being crowned the undisputed winner. You could say, they nailed it!

The prize-winning NeighborHub was the brainchild of a group of over 250 students from the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture (HEIA-FR), the Geneva School of Art and Design (HEAD) and the University of Fribourg, and was two years in development. The judging panel was won over by their bold and innovative idea for a modular community centre. As a delighted Anne-Claude Cosandey, Operational Director of the EPFL Fribourg and member of the Swiss Living Challenge

executive committee explains: "The win is a fitting reward for a multidisciplinary team that included four higher education institutions, 250 students, 43 of whom travelled to Denver, 150 supervisors from academia and industry, as well some 50 institutional and private partners."

In autumn 2018, the NeighborHub will open at Fribourg's blueFACTORY innovation quarter and, in keeping with the students' original mission, will become a fully working community centre. "The structure will be used for research and demonstration purposes by the Smart Living Lab, our ambitious centre of expertise on the homes of tomorrow", adds Cosandey.

- [www.swiss-living-challenge.ch](http://www.swiss-living-challenge.ch)
- [www.smartlivinglab.ch](http://www.smartlivinglab.ch)



The mission of NeighborHub is to provide a space where people can meet and interact. Residents can get advice and take part in interactive events and talks on a variety of subjects like energy, waste management and biodiversity.

## FRIBOURG FIRMS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE



A peak inside the NeighborHub.

The size of the Swiss Living Challenge project required first-rate coordination. To this end, nine students took over responsibility for coordinating activities in fields as varied as engineering, architecture, external communication and general management. Baptiste Gex, from the EPFL, was in charge of relations with private partners. "The project received a lot of positive feedback from the firms that supported it in a variety of ways, whether through funding, materials, supervision or coaching." Some of these private backers are more than happy to share their story: "Working with the academic community was a very positive experience. It was a great pleasure to be part of such an innovative project and to share in the students' infectious enthusiasm", notes Jean-Marc Ducret, Managing Director of **JPF-Ducret**. The Fribourg company lent the team a helping hand by constructing the building's timber frame, particularly the machining of the prefabricated components. Same story from **Riedo Clima**, which shared

its plumbing expertise: "Students were really interested and totally immersed in the project. We were really impressed at how quickly they absorbed and applied the instructions the professionals gave them. Also, we had a very amicable and constructive working relationship", notes Florim Ademi, project manager at Riedo Clima. The company **Portes Brodard** developed and produced fixed and moving components for the façade of NeighborHub, as per the students' specifications and principles. "For the doors, we developed a manual gas-spring assisted system, making it completely energy-independent. The pre-assembled system meant that students were able to install it simply and quickly. They were so enthusiastic, and both I and the company learnt a great deal from them!", explains Yves Gremaud, special projects manager at Portes Brodard. Finally, Groupe E lent a helping hand when it came to energy efficiency, technical equipment, and the installation of solar

panels, power connections and electrical appliances. "Besides the educational aspect of the project, this partnership was an opportunity to explore a number of issues surrounding the challenges we face in the future, such as self-generation, neighbours trading energy among themselves and energy storage sharing. We have already started to give some serious thought to these rapidly-evolving issues", explains Alain Sapin, Director of the Electrical Energy Department at **Groupe E**. "NeighborHub could become a life-size laboratory where we can test and evaluate these various decentralised production and distribution models."

- [www.groupe-e.ch](http://www.groupe-e.ch)
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Who doesn't enjoy a massage? Well, luckily for Micarna's 1,400 employees in Courtepin, they can treat themselves to an on-site massage, completely free of charge. Micarna is one of the largest meat producers in Switzerland, selling its wares primarily to the large food retailer Migros, but to several other companies, too. "The work is physically demanding because it involves moving heavy loads around, often in cold conditions", explains Véronique Rolle, HR Director at Micarna. "This is why we have long made health promotion a priority, and we now work with specially trained ergonomics coaches." The number of physical ailments among the workforce has fallen dramatically and occupational safety is even better than before. Nonetheless, Micarna is not content to rest on its laurels. The next issue it has pledged to tackle is psychological stress. Unsurprisingly, the company has been officially named a "Friendly Work Space". This label is awarded to employers who have shown outstanding commitment to workplace health management.

This is not the only award bestowed on the company. It also received the canton of Fribourg's "Migration and Employment" prize for its Maflü programme. Devised in response to the refugee crisis, Maflü was a pilot project aimed at offering refugees an opportunity to gain work experience. This is followed up with work placements,

language courses and pre-apprenticeships. "Within the next couple of years, our first intake of refugees is set to complete their apprenticeships with us", Rolle notes. Micarna has since made the pilot a permanent programme, and former refugees are now part of a workforce that boasts some 70 nationalities. "A major factor in its success has been the excellent collaboration we enjoy with the canton."

At Micarna, apprentices are also given a great deal of responsibility early on, "As part of our Mazubi programme, they run their own firm within the larger Micarna operation, which includes managing the budget, turnover and quality control." The trainees, though, are by no means the sole beneficiaries, "Our apprentices have been behind the launch of a host of innovative products. Every year, the new hires arrive with their own set of fresh ideas!"

It is not only the apprentices, refugees and the workforce in general who reap the rewards of Micarna's commitment and dedication. Consumers benefit from great-tasting, quality products, too.

→ [www.micarna.ch](http://www.micarna.ch)



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## UNIVERSITY OF FRIBOURG

# CANTONAL UNIVERSITY, GLOBAL REACH

Founded 130 years ago, the University of Fribourg is an integral part of life in the canton. By actively strengthening cohesion between the fields of economics, politics, culture, science and religion, this august institution helps to sustain the high quality of life that Fribourg offers its citizens. What is more, the sphere of influence of a number of its institutes extends well beyond Switzerland. A case in point is the International Institute of Management in Technology (iimt), which offers excellent continuing education programmes (MBA, CAS), as Astrid Epiney, the University's Rector, points out. "The iimt works closely with firms in the technology sector, such as Swisscom (telecommunications), Groupe E (energy) and banks." Fribourg University is also active on the policy front through its Institute of Federalism, a think tank on all matters related to this partic-

ular political system. Its work also includes advising foreign governments and NGOs. Professor Epiney adds, "It is not about exporting the Swiss model. Federalism is a highly adaptable concept that can be fashioned in a multitude of different ways." Another area of specialisation is multilingualism. It somewhat makes perfect sense that a university based in a region where French- and German-speaking communities live side by side would have a particular interest in the cultural dimensions of multilingual settings. "The Institute of Multilingualism is considered a national centre of excellence", carrying out basic research and advising on identity and cultural issues. The Swiss Centre for Islam Society focuses on the role that faith plays in forging the identity of a section of the Swiss population. Its mandate, conferred by the Swiss Confeder-

ation, is to analyse how individuals can live out their Muslim faith while upholding the rules of a constitutional state like Switzerland. In doing so, the Centre fosters mutual respect as well as the cohesion of a society in which different religions and beliefs coexist. Astrid Epiney welcomes this move, "The Centre helps to prevent a particular section of the community becoming marginalised. Ultimately, everyone, as well as the economy, will reap the benefits of the resulting stability." The jewel in the University's scientific crown is the Adolphe Merkle Institute (*go to page 37 to read more about its Director*). Established 10 years ago, this centre of research in nanotechnologies, the only one of its kind in Switzerland, is considered among the best in the world, and works very closely with industry.

→ [www.unifr.ch](http://www.unifr.ch)

The Miséricorde campus of Fribourg University takes its name from the former cemetery that once occupied the site. It is considered the finest example of 1930s architecture in Switzerland.



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**EISENHORN****THE ALL-IN-ONE HOME GYM** 

Stunning, sleek and sophisticated, EISENHORN (see photograph) is a complete fitness studio rolled into one machine. The training device, which is made in Plaffeien, gives every single muscle a workout. "With EISENHORN, we have succeeded in creating a machine that offers a maximum choice of exercises with minimum space requirements", explains its inventor, Mike Schrag. His claims are also backed up by fitness coaches, doctors and physiotherapists. Even hoteliers have caught on to the machine's potential: "They are now able to offer their guests a room with its own private workout space", Schrag continues. Thanks to its simple, sleek and attractive design, EISENHORN is not hidden away in the basement or the garage, unlike conventional gym equipment, but set up in users' living rooms. "In this way, exercise becomes part of the daily routine and people work out in their favourite place at home, and not where the bulky equipment is", notes Schrag. The machine can even be used on the go, "We have already fitted the deck of a yacht with the EISENHORN."

→ [www.eisenhorn.com](http://www.eisenhorn.com)

**GUGLER ELECTRONIC****NEW CLEANROOM OPENS DOOR TO NEW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES**

Gugler Electronic specialises in the assembly of advanced electronic components, which are destined primarily for use in sensors, industrial coffee machines and medical devices. As Managing Director Hermann Gugler explains, "When it comes to product safety, customers demand ever higher standards. This is why we set up an ISO class 8 cleanroom and have successfully completed various certification procedures. These measures open the door to new business opportunities in assorted markets, such

as the medical technology sector." Are there any other factors that have contributed to the success of the Fribourg company, which was set up in 1990? "A well-qualified workforce and cutting-edge production equipment", not to mention very short decision times and immediate responsiveness to customer demands.

→ [www.gugler-elektronik.ch](http://www.gugler-elektronik.ch)

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Fribourg's St Nicholas Cathedral stands, in all its Gothic splendour, on a rocky spur overlooking the Sarine river.





2

# FRIBOURG AS SEEN BY...

Whether they are born and raised here or they have made Fribourg their adopted home, business people, locals and expats explain what the canton means to them, and share some of the places that occupy a special place in their heart.

Is there something or somewhere in Fribourg that occupies a special place in your heart?  
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[www.fribourgnetwork.ch/myhighlight](http://www.fribourgnetwork.ch/myhighlight)



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**DANIEL DUCREY****THE PERFECT PLACE TO RAISE A FAMILY** 

If it had not been for a new job on another continent, Daniel Ducrey might still be in Fribourg. After three years away, he returned to Switzerland in 2015 to take over the reins at Steiner, the leading general contractor in Switzerland and his employer since 2009. With company headquarters in Zurich, it was with a somewhat heavy heart that the newly-minted CEO had to abandon his original idea of making his home again in the canton of Fribourg. Although Ducrey is enjoying life in Zurich, and loves its architecture, he confesses that his favourite building "is still Fribourg's Saint Nicholas Cathedral".

Equally, he is "glad that my children were lucky enough to grow up in a bilingual canton and in a beneficial environment" as regards their education and personal development. The Steiner CEO is also convinced that the level of education offered by the canton "will rise even further when the University of Fribourg launches its Masters in Medicine".

Daniel Ducrey's favourites  : see photograph and eBook

→ [www.steiner.ch](http://www.steiner.ch)

Fondue moitié-moitié (half-Gruyère, half-Vacherin Fribourgeois) in the picturesque medieval town of Gruyères.

**MONIQUE ANTIGLIO****CLOSE TO HOME, BACK IN BUSINESS** 

Monique Antiglio has spent her entire life in the canton of Fribourg, but it is by choice and not simply because she inherited the family firm. "Everything that is important to me and my family is close at hand: the lake, the mountains, culture and sports activities. I really notice the difference during my business trips to Shanghai." For the President of Frewitt, it is this proximity which makes both her professional

and personal life considerably easier. "Time management is tricky when you are a working parent. Not having to commute long distances between your home, work, school or sports club is a real blessing." It is also crucial to striking a healthy balance between professional and family commitments. "When our girls were still teenagers, I didn't have any time to cook. Every lunch time, I would travel back

home with meals prepared by the company's catering service." These sit-down family meals "were only possible because home was not far from the office!"

Monique Antiglio's favourites  : see eBook

→ [www.frewitt.com](http://www.frewitt.com)

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## CHRISTOPH WEDER

# GREEN SPACES AND GOOD FOOD

When Christoph Weder and his family arrived from the United States in 2009, his future home in Switzerland had to satisfy three criteria: "It had to be close to where I work (the prestigious Adolphe Merkle Institute, which he leads), German-speaking so that my children would have no problem settling in, and green spaces right outside the front door." For the specialist in polymer chemistry, the

last criterion was important because "when you arrive from a country with an enormous amount of outdoor space, it is hard to imagine living somewhere without a garden." The canton of Fribourg, specifically the municipality of Düdingen, ticked all the boxes. "At an affordable price, too!" The Weder family particularly appreciate the fact that they are surrounded by nature but do not

have to forgo metropolitan pleasures like good restaurants. "Fribourg is a gastronomic heaven. This also comes in handy when you have to organise and host business lunches and dinners."

Christoph Weder's favourites ❤️: see eBook

→ [www.am-institute.ch](http://www.am-institute.ch)

## MARCO CROTTI

# THE DYNAMISM OF A STUDENT CITY



Fribourg's lakes – ideal for a spot of stand-up paddle boarding (Lake Neuchâtel, Estavayer-le-Lac), or any other water sport for that matter.

Marco Crotti moved from his native Ticino to Fribourg to attend university. When he finished his studies in the late 1980s, he may have left his adopted canton, but he did take a part of Fribourg with him... his future wife! "Around 10 years ago, we decided to move back with our three children" to the cantonal capital, specifically Fribourg's Old Town "where we lived when we were younger", recalls the Managing Director of UBS Fribourg. "I felt like I had come home. It's such a great place to live, with its mix of modernity and medieval stonework!" Marco Crotti particularly appreciates the welcoming

and hospitable nature of the Fribourg people. "As someone from a Latin culture, this is a major compliment", he jokingly explains. However, what he particularly loves is "the really youthful vibe in Fribourg", largely thanks to its considerable student population. "That really stood out for me, even during my own student days. These young people bring added energy to the city, giving it a slightly 'underground' and charming feel."

Marco Crotti's favourites ❤️: see photograph and eBook

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**FRÉDÉRIK KONDRATOWICZ**  
**A “SMALL, BUT  
 MIGHTY CITY”**



The Bourg quarter, with its commanding cathedral and, in the background, the Poya bridge.

“Fribourg is a small, but mighty city. It has everything!” More than 30 years since he set foot in the canton’s capital, Frédéric Kondratowicz is “still bewitched” by his adopted city. Originally from Picardy, France, the chef has worked in Paris and Auvergne. In 2006, he took over the now legendary Hôtel de Ville (16 points and two toques in the Gault&Millau guide). “My first 30 minutes on Fribourg soil was spent

on the restaurant’s veranda, with its amazing view over the historic Old Town and the cliffs. So, you can say that I’m back where I started!” However, before coming full circle, the chef, whose reputation extends far beyond the canton’s boundaries, managed two of Fribourg’s other fine-dining restaurants: L’Aigle Noir and l’Auberge de Zaehringen. For Kondratowicz, his much-loved Bourg district “perfectly encapsu-

lates Fribourg: resolutely urban yet surrounded by a virtually untouched natural landscape.” In his spare time, the culinarian takes full advantage of the countryside which is right on his door step, enjoying a spot of horse riding along the “magical and energising” bridle paths of Pierrafortscha.

Frédéric Kondratowicz's favourites ♥ : see photograph and eBook

→ [www.restaurant-hotel-de-ville.ch](http://www.restaurant-hotel-de-ville.ch)

**ANNETTE HEIMLICHER**

**WHERE BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT WORK IN HARMONY**



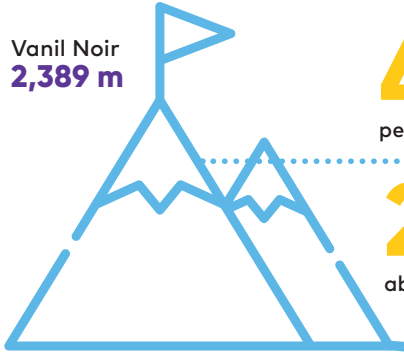
Annette Heimlicher grew up in Fribourg. Yet, it took a 10-year absence for the CEO of Contrinex to truly grasp the great many advantages that the canton had to offer. “Everything is on a manageable scale here. People are approachable, political leaders included. Company bosses in other cantons are always amazed at how easy it is to get a face-to-face meeting with those in charge of economic affairs.” Heimlicher believes that it is precisely this accessibility “which ensures that swift progress is made on key issues”. The business leader also singles out the harmony that exists among the canton’s eco-

nomie players. “There is a genuine, shared desire to drive the canton onwards and upwards. Take, the BCF (the Fribourg Cantonal Bank), for example. It is extremely business-friendly and attuned to our needs.” However, the canton’s strengths extend well beyond its conducive business environment. Quality of life here is also good: “Fribourg is a little Eden!”

Annette Heimlicher's favourites ♥ : see eBook

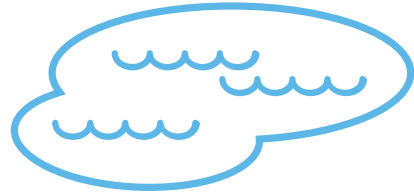
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# THE CANTON OF FRIBOURG

→ [www.fribourgregion.ch](http://www.fribourgregion.ch)



25

museums across the canton

365 steps



76 metre-high bell tower

cathedral (Saint Nicholas)



Gault&Millau restaurants

40

**TED MCNAMARA****CANTON OF FRIBOURG – SMALL BUT PERFECTLY FORMED** 

The Maison Cailler in Broc is one of Switzerland's most popular tourist attractions, drawing in almost 420,000 visitors every year.



"If I compare the canton of Fribourg now to what it was like when I arrived 20 years ago, the change is nothing short of amazing, both economically and demographically", notes Ted McNamara. "Of course, it has changed for the better, though I have to admit that I get a little bit nostalgic sometimes!" Although said somewhat jokingly, it was precisely Fribourg's "human scale" which won over the Floridian from the moment he arrived. This former executive, who has worked for international firms like Tupperware, Atmel and Actuate, feels so much at home here that he has said that he will never leave, even though

his grandchildren live in Florida. "In the US, everything is huge, distances are massive, and it's stressful." In contrast, Ted McNamara revels in the fact that "everything is local", albeit with a certain cosmopolitan flair. "Take restaurants, for example. You can go for a pho at the tiny Vietnamese eatery, Le Lotus, sample the dish of the day at Ben & Léo, and indulge in proper fine-dining at the Trois Tours. What more could you ask for?"


Ted McNamara's favourites  : see photograph and eBook

**PIERRE-ALAIN MORARD****TRADITION UNLIMITED** 

"The canton of Fribourg is a miniature version of Switzerland", claims Pierre-Alain Morard, Director of the Fribourg Tourist Board (UFT). "All of the things that are synonymous with Switzerland are here: lakes, towns, mountains, chocolate and cheese." So, why does a canton with so much to offer need his professional input? "The problem that we in Fribourg have is that we are so accustomed to having

it all that we often forget to make the most of our region's best features!" Yet, this modesty also works to the canton's advantage. According to Morard, it is part and parcel of one of the most important qualities that his compatriots have: authenticity. "The people of Fribourg are really in touch with their roots, with their traditions, with nature." They are also very close to one another. "In Fribourg,

people, including politicians, are very approachable. Everyone shares the same ambition: pull together to drive the canton forward." One particular UFT slogan sums it up nicely: "Fribourg: Tradition Unlimited."

Pierre-Alain Morard's favourites  : see eBook

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ELAINE SHEERIN

# THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

"My husband is from Fribourg, but he often jokes that I know his home canton better than he does!" Born in Belfast, Elaine Sheerin has been working as a translator with local company Transit TXT for almost 20 years. While the canton shares some features with her native Northern Ireland such as its relatively small size, she feels that Fribourg could teach her home country a thing or two "about public transportation and bureaucratic efficiency!" As a translator, it is not surprising that she also greatly admires the canton's bilingualism. Despite her initial shyness, Elaine quickly felt at home. "People are extremely open and welcoming, even to newcomers."

As for the cantonal capital, "It may not be particularly large, but it has a lot to offer. You have the best of both worlds here: the buzz of a big city, but with a more relaxed pace of life." The self-confessed food lover and aficionado of Fribourg's local specialities jokes, "Even though I've been here for some time, I won't be able to call myself a real "Fribourgeoise" until I've enjoyed a full Bénichon feast!"

Elaine Sheerin's favourites : see eBook

→ [www.transit-txt.ch](http://www.transit-txt.ch)

MATHIEU JATON  
 EYES ON THE STARS,  
 FEET ON THE GROUND



The La Gruyère Golf Resort, on the shores of Lake La Gruyère, is set in one of the most picturesque parts of Switzerland.

Mathieu Jatón's schedule is as full as that of any head of state. "Two days ago, I was at the opening of the Comptoir gruérien (November 2017). Tomorrow, I'm heading off to Japan." Most of the time, the Director of the prestigious Montreux Jazz Festival divides his time between Lausanne, his adopted home, and Attalens, the Fribourg village where he grew up and where his parents still live. "In a fast-evolving world, it is really important to hold on tightly to your roots!" When he is in the canton, Jatón feels like he is "in a bubble, in a special place where people come first, where authenticity is still the order of the day." This authenticity "is especially important for someone who works in a world of glitz and glamour." Despite the fact that he oversees a very tony and cosmopolitan event, Jatón, who succeeded festival founder Claude Nobs in 2013, still has great affection and respect for "traditions that are rooted in the land, such as Bénichon (harvest festival in Fribourg) and the désalpe (cows' descent from their high alpine pastures at the end of summer). "I am also a complete purist when it comes to fondue!" The addition of mushrooms or other weird ingredients are anathema to the man from Attalens. "Either 100% cheese or nothing."

Mathieu Jatón's favourites : see photograph and eBook

→ [www.montreuxjazzfestival.com](http://www.montreuxjazzfestival.com)

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SLAVA BYKOV

# THE FRIBOURG LEGEND WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD



Catching a HC Fribourg-Gottéron game in the BCF Arena is a must for many locals.

He had his pick of NHL teams, but it was Fribourg where the Russian ice-hockey star Slava Bykov decided to park his skates in 1990. "The fall of the Berlin Wall and the opening up of Russia's political system meant that professional athletes were finally able to take up opportunities abroad. "I was approached by prestigious Northern American clubs, but in the end I put my family first: if I played outside of Europe, I would have to spend a lot of time travelling back and forth, and be away from home for long periods." So, five-time world champion and Olympic gold medal winner, Viatcheslav (Slava) Bykov plumped for Switzerland, "which I really liked when I was here in the 1980s playing in competitive matches". He signed with the "Dragons" of Gottéron, and soon his wife and their two young children joined him in Fribourg. So began a love affair "both professionally and personally" between the man from Chelyabinsk and the canton. For seven years, he sported the number 90 jersey of Fribourg Gottéron, and together with his fellow countryman, Andrei Khomutov, made up an unforgettable double act.

The love affair between Bykov and Fribourg endured long after he left the Dragons, initially to play with Lausanne Hockey Club, before going on to coach CSKA Moscow and the Russian national team. "I am someone who is very loyal. Why should I move if I am happy where I am?" His children went to school in the canton. Now grown up, his son Andrei is a star player with Fribourg Gottéron. It was also in the canton, more precisely in Marly, where Bykov obtained his Swiss passport in 2004. Almost 30 years since he arrived, he considers himself "a real Dzodzet" (patois word for a man from Fribourg)". He is particularly touched by the attachment that the people of Fribourg have for traditions, "I love the village fêtes, fairs and Bénichon (*ed.: harvest festival*)." When his friends and family come to visit, he always takes them out to sample local specialities. Above all, though, "I love giving them a glimpse into my day-to-day life, letting them breathe in the Fribourg air: it's really quite something!"

Slava Bykov's favourite ❤️: see photograph

→ [www.fondation-bykov.ch](http://www.fondation-bykov.ch)



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**PAOLA GHILLANI**  
**GOOD FOOD**  
**CAN MAKE LIFE**  
**BETTER**



The 2,002-metre-high Moléson, shown here with the Château de Gruyères in the foreground.

Whenever she can, Paola Ghillani packs her bags and heads off to the canton of Fribourg to visit her family and friends. The daughter of Italian migrants, she made a name for herself as the Director of the Max Havelaar Foundation (1999-2005). Now based in Zurich, Ghillani spent part of her childhood and all of her adolescence in the Gruyère region. "This is where I go to when I really need to recharge my batteries", confides the founder of Paola Ghillani & Friends, a company which advises on sustainable corporate management. As well as the landscape "which is surprisingly untouched for such a

highly-developed region", it is the traditional local produce that really gets her pulse racing. She firmly believes that it is precisely in food production that the sustainable development potential of the canton lies, "As both a farming region and an incubator of innovative start-ups, Fribourg has what it takes to become a centre of excellence in this field!"

Paola Ghillani's favourites ❤️: see photograph and eBook

→ [www.paolaghillanifriends.com](http://www.paolaghillanifriends.com)

**STÉPHANE SCHLAEPPEY**

**FRIBOURG – FOODIE HEAVEN** 

When he was appointed director of a hotel in the canton, Stéphane Schlaeppy only intended to stay around for a couple of years. Nearly 20 years on, the hotelier, who originally hails from the canton of Neuchâtel, is now firmly ensconced in German-speaking Fribourg, "so that my children can grow up bilingual." On a professional level, Fribourg also has much to offer the Director of the four-star Cailler hotel. "Our

central location means that we are able to attract customers, particularly conference guests, from all over Switzerland." They are precisely the kind of client who jumps at the chance to sample regional produce and specialities like fondue and meringues with double cream – absolute musts for visitors to the canton. According to the hospitality professional, "Fribourg restaurants tend to favour simple, traditional dishes,

made from quality local produce." At the same time, "the density of "starred" restaurants in the canton is pretty impressive (31 Gault&Millau restaurants)." Clearly, the canton of Fribourg caters for all tastes..

Coups de ❤️ de Stéphane Schlaeppy: voir eBook

→ [www.hotel-cailler.ch](http://www.hotel-cailler.ch)

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At an altitude of 1,046 m, Schwarzssee is a favourite with families, walkers, fishing enthusiasts and swimmers.



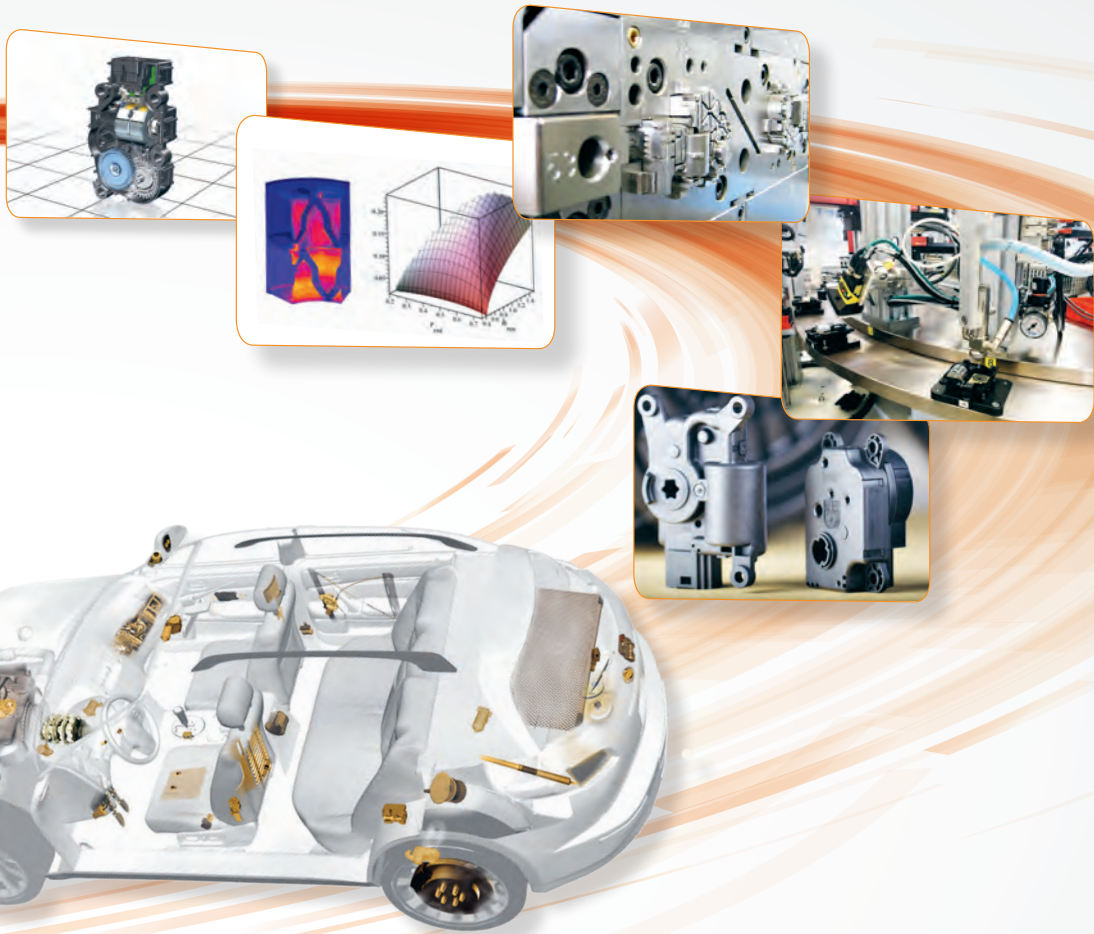


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Every August, the streets of the cantonal capital come alive with the colourful sights and sounds of the Rencontres de folklore internationales de Fribourg.

## FRIBOURG FESTIVALS

# EMBRACE DIVERSITY, UNLOCK SUCCESS

"As soon as celebrities touch down in Fribourg to attend one of its festivals, they immediately lose their airs and graces and become down-to-earth and likeable... just like the people of Fribourg themselves!" It may be seven years since Thierry Jobin took over the reins of the Fribourg International Film Festival (FIFF), but he remains pretty awestruck by the unaffected and collegial atmosphere that permeates the canton's cultural scene, something he had never experienced before. Clearly, it also rubs off on the foreign artists who travel to the canton. According to the FIFF Artistic Director, "All the cultural institutions pull together". So, it is not uncommon to see the directors of various cultural events dining out together to discuss a new joint project. "Major projects take no more than two to

three months to get off the ground here. This would be inconceivable anywhere else."

Not surprisingly, this collaborative environment is reflected in the canton's packed festival calendar. As well as the FIFF, every year Fribourg plays host to a wide range of acclaimed cultural events, including Les Francomanias (music), Belluard Bollwerk International (contemporary arts), Murten Classics (classical music), Les Georges (music), les Rencontres de folklore internationales (traditional dance and music from around the world) and Bad Bonn Kilbi (alternative rock). Every time he travels to other prestigious film festivals abroad, the lasting impression that the FIFF has on visiting directors and actors never ceases to amaze him, "At the

last Busan International Film Festival in South Korea, every single person I met who had previously attended the FIFF wanted to share cherished memories of their time in Fribourg, where in some cases they had met for the first time." That is the magic of Fribourg: a closeness that helps bring people together and fosters dialogue.

- [www.belluard.ch](http://www.belluard.ch)
- [www.fiff.ch](http://www.fiff.ch)
- [www.francomanias.ch](http://www.francomanias.ch)
- [kilbi.badbonn.ch](http://kilbi.badbonn.ch)
- [www.lesgeorges.ch](http://www.lesgeorges.ch)
- [www.murtenclassics.ch](http://www.murtenclassics.ch)
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## FOOD TOUGH ON FOOD SAFETY

Farmland in Le Châtelard vividly captured here by famous French photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand.



Eating healthily is a good thing but knowing where the food on your plate comes from is even better! As Jacques Bourgeois, the head of the Swiss Farmers' Union, explains, locally sourced, quality produce is extremely important to the people and the authorities of Fribourg, just as it is elsewhere in Switzerland. The man from Fribourg takes food safety very seriously: "A whole raft of measures has been introduced to make sure that food products are unimpeachable and of high added value." Consequently, Swiss farmers have to comply with some of the most stringent regulations

in the world – environmental compatibility, animal welfare, ban on GMOs, economical use of crop protection products and antibiotics, to name but a few. As the National Councillor readily admits, total food self-sufficiency in Switzerland is illusory. Nonetheless, foodstuffs should be sourced from domestic producers, wherever possible. "In Switzerland, every second food product is made here. Given demographic trends and the growing scarcity of natural resources, the challenge will be maintaining the status quo."

→ [www.sbv-usp.ch](http://www.sbv-usp.ch)

## LABOUR MARKET

# EDUCATION AND BILINGUALISM: AN UNBEATABLE DOUBLE ACT

Take a densifying business landscape, add a generous helping of first-rate youth training opportunities, sprinkle with bilingualism, and what you get is a cantonal labour market with "enormous potential", according to Gregory Pelle, Director of the Fribourg division of New Work employment agency. Unemployment figures back up his claims: the canton of Fribourg boasts the most dynamic labour market in Western Switzerland; in many sectors, particularly construction and accounting, "employers

have long offered highly appealing job prospects". (see eBook) The arrival and expansion of attractive companies "makes Fribourg a more interesting proposition for applicants, even those from outside the canton." In any case, employers do not have to look very far when it comes to finding the right employee, "Given the quality of the education and training in the canton, all the talent they need is right on their doorstep!"

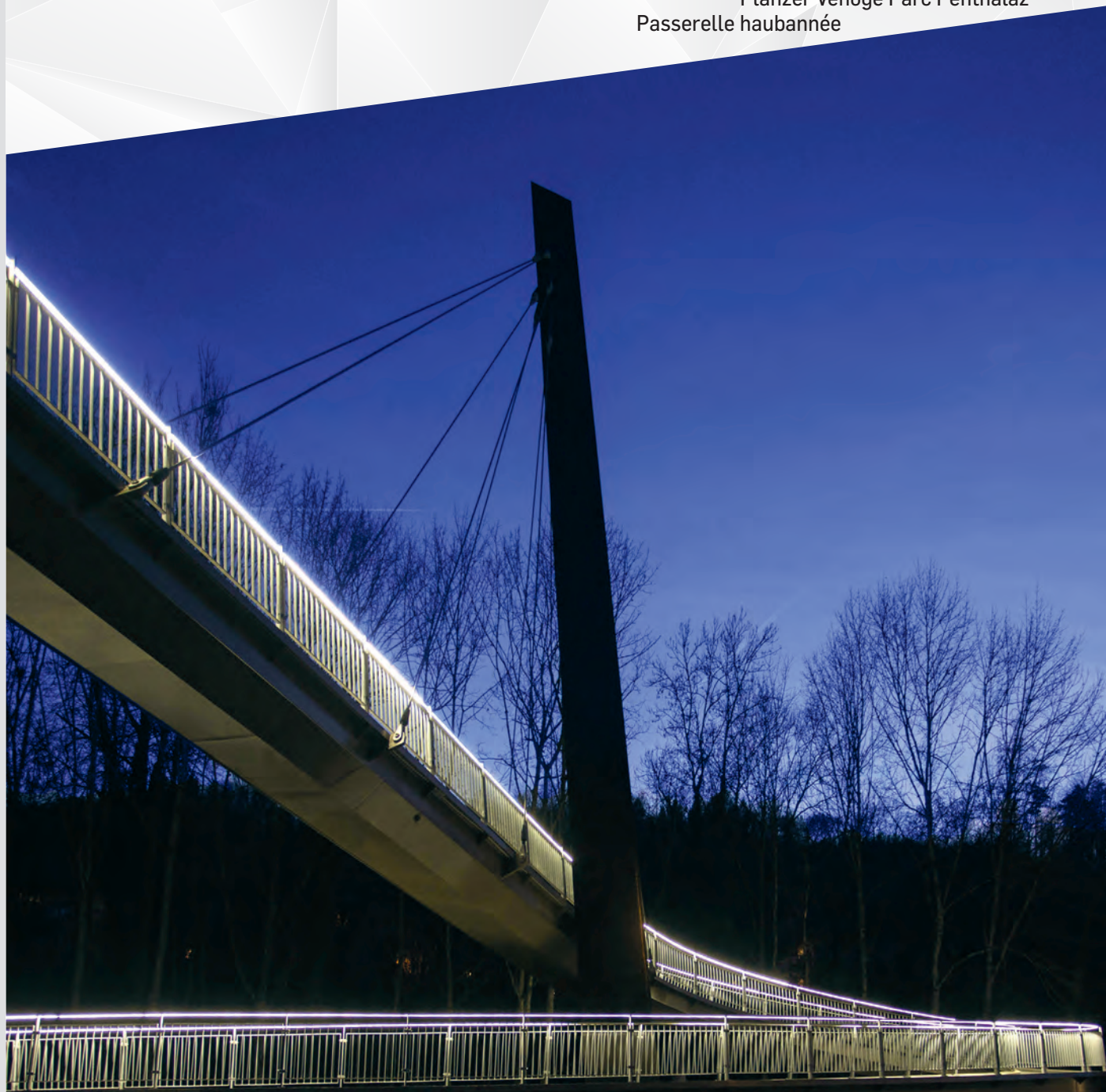
→ [www.newwork-hr.ch](http://www.newwork-hr.ch)



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## THEATRE

# FRIBOURG – A FLOURISHING CENTRE OF CULTURE

When it comes to population size (300,000 residents), the canton of Fribourg is on a par with Nice (France), Karlsruhe (Germany) and Bari (Italy). When it comes to cultural life, however, Fribourg is in a different league to its European counterparts. For proof, you need look no further than the impressive number of theatres dotted across the region. For lovers of theatre and other performing arts, the canton of Fribourg has much to offer.

Take the *Équilibre* auditorium (see *photograph*) in Fribourg city centre, for example. While not everyone appreciates its avant-gardist architecture, the 700-seat auditorium successfully draws in the crowds with its diverse and inclusive programme, ranging from theatre, dance and concerts, right up to

contemporary circus and even opera. As Laurent Bourgknecht, the Administrative Director, explains, "Our theatre is a state-of-the-art and incredibly flexible performance facility. Performing arts professionals, from Switzerland and elsewhere, frequently come to us in search of inspiration." Fribourg can rightly be proud of *Équilibre*. For a city this size, the theatre has enjoyed incredible success."

For theatre-goers who prefer a more intimate setting, there is *L'Arbanel*, in Treyvaux. According to Dominique Rappilly, a member of the booking team, "The artists and audience who come here appreciate its welcoming and special atmosphere. Our theatre, with its wooden beams and red bricks, is a real beauty!" Like the *Théâtre des Osses* and *Nuithonie*,

in Greater Fribourg, *L'Arbanel* is renowned far and wide for the quality of its productions. Further south, in the heart of verdant Gruyère, is the 750-seat *CO2*, the largest auditorium in the canton. It offers an events calendar that includes headline acts as well as novel, new talent. "Unlike other theatres, we are not primarily in the business of developing our own productions, though it does happen from time to time", explains Dominique Rime, head booker at *CO2*. No matter, the public is clearly spoilt for choice!

### Some theatres in and around Fribourg:

- [www.arbanel.ch](http://www.arbanel.ch)
- [www.bicubic.ch](http://www.bicubic.ch)
- [www.co2-spectacle.ch](http://www.co2-spectacle.ch)
- [www.equilibre-nuithonie.ch](http://www.equilibre-nuithonie.ch)
- [www.kulturimpodium.ch](http://www.kulturimpodium.ch)
- [www.latuffiere.org](http://www.latuffiere.org)
- [www.theatreosses.ch](http://www.theatreosses.ch)



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The close and excellent cooperation that exists between the State and the business sector helps safeguard the quality of the basic vocational education and training dispensed in Switzerland”, notes Jean-Nicolas Aebischer. This successful working relationship is embodied in the Swiss “dual” VET system, which combines classes at a vocational college and on-the-job training in a company. Once they have completed their compulsory education, young people can choose between one of two routes: attendance at an upper-secondary school (with a path to university) or an apprenticeship. Students who pass the Federal Vocational Baccalaureate can continue their education at a University of Applied Sciences (UAS). Traditional universities and

UAS are different-but-equivalent institutions. They are separated by a “permeable membrane” that allows talented young students to move from one to the other via a range of one-year preparatory courses (see eBook). In summary, the Director of the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture declares, “Thanks to its upper-secondary schools and traditional universities, coupled with a great many training companies, VET colleges and four Universities of Applied Sciences, the canton of Fribourg is a fine example of the extensive opportunities that are open to talented young people.”

→ [www.heia-fr.ch](http://www.heia-fr.ch)

**PROXIMITY TO GOVERNMENT**  
**DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION**

In Switzerland, three levels of government share power: the Confederation, the cantons and the municipalities. The canton of Fribourg is divided into 137 municipalities, all of which exercise control in a range of areas, including education, social protection, energy, land-use planning and taxation. Yet, they also liaise with the cantonal government as a matter of course. “We work closely with the canton on matters like commercial or industrial zoning and road infrastructure projects. The relationship between the canton and the municipalities

is a complementary one”, explains Nicole Schwab, Mayor of Kerzers (population: 5,000). She is also quick to stress the advantages of such political decentralisation and the close working ties between the cantonal and municipal governments, “It helps that we don’t see people only at meetings but that our paths cross at informal social gatherings, too.”

→ [www.kerzers.ch](http://www.kerzers.ch)



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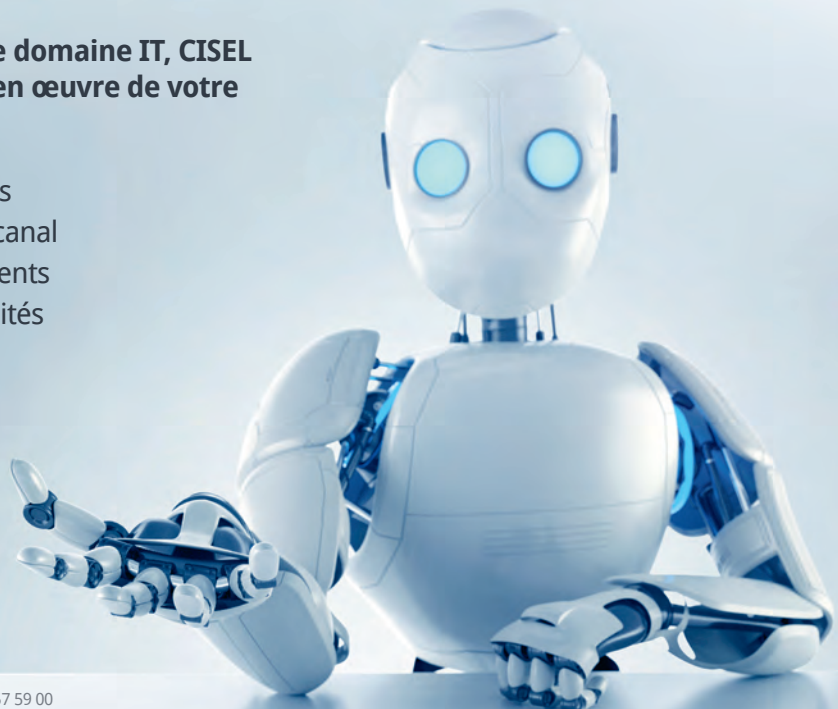
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## SWISS POLITICAL SYSTEM

# LEGITIMACY AND STABILITY – THE MAGIC FORMULA

"Switzerland's political system has three main distinguishing features: semi-direct democracy, federalism and iron-clad stability." Dominique de Buman, who has been elected President of the National Council for 2018, stresses the importance of citizen participation in political affairs, "The fact that the people are called on to express their opinion during referendums and to elect their political leaders bolsters the legitimacy of our institutions", explains the Fribourg parliamentarian. As for referendum and initiative rights, which allow the electorate to voice its disagreement with parliament or to put draft legislation to the vote, "they ensure public and transparent debate."

For the Christian Democrat, the stability of the Swiss political system "is primarily down to two factors: proportional representation, which means that the winning candidates adequately reflect voters' preferences, and a high degree of public satisfaction. It stands to reason, therefore, that when you are content with how things are, you don't feel the need to cause a political tsunami." According to de Buman, this high level of

contentment is due to "the remarkable balance that exists between social justice and favourable economic conditions". One of the positive outcomes of this political stability is that "leaders are actively and heavily involved in priority policy areas (e.g. education) on which the prosperity of our country depends."

The Fribourg politician also extols the virtues of federalism "as a means of catering to the aspirations of as many taxpaying citizens as possible." It is a known fact that "political leanings vary from one region to the next, particularly when they do not share the same language." Thanks to decentralisation and the subsidiarity principle, which is designed to ensure that decisions are made efficiently and as close as possible to the citizen, "each region can prioritise those points they consider crucial. This leads us back to the idea of legitimacy and satisfaction, and therefore finishing off where we had started!"

→ [www.debuman.ch](http://www.debuman.ch)



In 2018, Switzerland will have two presidents from the canton of Fribourg: Dominique de Buman (photo), aged 62, who is the new President of the National Council (lower house), and Alain Berset (aged 46), who takes over the one-year rotating Presidency of the Swiss Confederation.

## TECHNOLOGY CLUSTERS

# FRIBOURG – A HUB FOR INNOVATION

Investing heavily in innovation and activities with high added value is the strategy shared and pursued by businesses, academia and policymakers in Fribourg. The canton already has three technology clusters which offer their cutting-edge infrastructure and services to start-ups and high-tech firms.

## BLUEFACTORY



The grand opening of the "Blue Hall" in 2015 was an important milestone in blueFACTORY's nascent history.

The innovation quarter blueFACTORY, on the site of the former Cardinal brewery in Fribourg's city centre, is home to around 30 start-ups, innovative companies and technology platforms (public-private partnerships). Eventually, the rapidly growing and low-carbon quarter will house a mix of business, services, culture, housing, green spaces and car-free areas. As the Managing Director, Philippe Jemmely, explains: "blueFACTORY is jointly run by the city and canton of Fribourg, and is a member of Switzerland Innovation, a national innovation network spread over five sites nationwide", adding "By fostering synergies with Fribourg's higher education providers, blueFACTORY acts as a catalyst and develops, above all, specialised expertise in areas like buildings of the future, biopharma and mobility (hydrogen storage, materials, smart and secure systems). However, industrialisation, in the narrow sense of the term, is not the name of the game here."

→ [www.bluefactory.ch](http://www.bluefactory.ch)

## LE VIVIER



This building is the nerve centre of the Le Vivier complex and is home to, among others, a start-up incubator.

The location of the Le Vivier technology park could not be more ideal; easy access to road and rail networks yet far enough away from the noise and traffic that comes with large conurbations. Surrounded by countryside, and only 20 km from Fribourg and 40 km from Lausanne, Le Vivier is home to high-tech and innovative companies. "Le Vivier, which is run by the CPA Group – a Swiss high-tech holding of five industrial companies and an incubator – specialises in automation, robotics, mechatronics, 3D bioprinting and power electronics", explains Christophe Fragnière, Chairman of the CPA Group board. In addition to its modern infrastructure, which is adapted to its occupants' needs, Le Vivier promotes industrial synergies and operates in its own wholly unique environment.

→ [www.vivier.ch](http://www.vivier.ch)

## MARLY INNOVATION CENTER



The Marly Innovation Center is one of the largest technology parks in Switzerland.

As many as 140 companies have already set up shop in the Marly Innovation Center (MIC), one of the largest technology centres in Switzerland. The 370,000 m<sup>2</sup> site, formerly home to Ilford, offers businesses a versatile and extensive infrastructure, including chemical laboratories, workshops, office space and meeting rooms. According to Mathieu Piller, Co-Managing Director, "The key to success is complementarity, diversity, interaction, innovation and quality of life", adding "Alongside what we currently offer, ongoing and future projects include new commercial premises, a business centre, a restaurant and the creation of a proper eco-district, including, work, residential, commercial and recreational spaces. This will create up to 1,500 jobs in the long term."

→ [www.marly-innovation-center.org](http://www.marly-innovation-center.org)

## PLATINN

# A PLATFORM THAT IS THE ENVY OF EUROPE



"Helping companies to escape their isolation" by providing them with the tools "to teach themselves" is how Christoph Meier, platinn's Director, describes the simple yet effective concept underpinning their innovation platform. Based in Fribourg, platinn is primarily a coaching provider. Its staggering achievements in Western Switzerland have led other parts of Switzerland, and even Europe, to follow its lead! (see eBook) We home in on the stumbling blocks that stop companies exploiting their innovation potential to the full." Thanks to a vast network of partners, platinn is extremely responsive to industry

needs. Its partners include some 60 accredited coaches, who provide bespoke services in four areas of expertise: business, partnerships, organisation and fund-raising. Every year, some 200 firms in Western Switzerland, two-thirds of which are new ventures, benefit from the platform's support. "All of the cantons involved in this project have enjoyed good returns on their investment."

→ [www.platinn.ch](http://www.platinn.ch)

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## BUSINESS SUPPORT

# PROMOTING BUSINESS GROWTH, THE FRIBOURG WAY

The diversity and density of Fribourg's business landscape comes as no surprise to Denis Galley. For the member of the governing board of the Fribourg Cantonal Bank (BCF), the canton has a great deal to offer companies looking to set up business in the region. "The canton has come up with an outstanding range of instruments designed to support start-ups and SMEs. They include Fri Up, the official support service for new businesses, Seed Capital Fribourg, Capital Risque Fribourg SA, and the Fribourg section of the SME Guarantee Cooperative for Western Switzerland (CRC PME). Each can be brought in at different levels depending on the stage of development that the company is at." Take Capital Risque Fribourg SA, for example. With a share capital of CHF 7.5 million – funded in part by the BCF – it provides financial support to innovative companies that are either starting out or looking to expand their operations. In other words,

companies that will create jobs in the canton. Supporting and guiding companies is written into the bank's DNA: "The Fribourg Cantonal Bank Act stipulates that part of the Bank's mission is to contribute to the growth of the cantonal economy." As well as the BCF's attractive credit solutions, entrepreneurs benefit from Fribourg's proactive policy to attract business investment to the canton. Measures include making it easier for companies to acquire land and premises, assisting them with the relevant administrative formalities, and helping them find suitable partners like the BCF.

→ [www.bcf.ch](http://www.bcf.ch)



The headquarters of the Fribourg Cantonal Bank has been one of the city's landmarks since it opened in 1982. It was designed by the world-renowned Swiss architect, Mario Botta.



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## HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

# WORLD-BEATING HEALTHCARE



The cantonal hospital has a 120-strong A&E team that are on hand to treat patients at any time of the day or night.

"Switzerland has one of the best health systems in the world", declares Anne-Claude Demierre, quickly pointing out that international studies have also reached the same conclusion. According to the Cantonal Minister of Health and Social Affairs, "Health is a top policy priority" and "the country allocates 10% of its GDP to health spending", which puts it well above the OECD average. Furthermore, Switzerland, where basic health insurance is mandatory for all, has the second-highest density of physicians – 3.8 for every 1 000 inhabitants – among OECD countries. All medical personnel in Switzerland, including physicians, have received "a recognised and first-rate education". In this regard, the canton of Fribourg is no exception. The canton "provides wide-ranging medical services, ensuring that its residents receive the treatment they need close to their home." In addition to the bilingual Fribourg Cantonal Hospital (HFR), which is spread over five sites, the canton boasts a solid network of mental healthcare providers, as well as home help and home care services, general and specialist medical practices, and two private clinics.

→ [www.h-fr.ch](http://www.h-fr.ch)

## SWISS EMPLOYMENT LAW

# LIBERALISM AND INTEGRATION

"Swiss employment law has the reputation of being liberal", explains Basile Cardinaux, Chair of Social Insurance and Employment Law at the University of Fribourg. How does this liberalism manifest itself? "The absence of a minimum wage and relatively weak protection against dismissal." According to Cardinaux, this lack of protection has certain advantages for employers in Switzerland and, by extension the canton of Fribourg, "Firms can go on hiring sprees when business is booming", and be completely

confident in the knowledge that they can terminate the employment contract fairly quickly should business take a downturn. Added to this is the low unemployment rate "and a highly permeable" Swiss labour market. No-one is excluded, whether they are young, mothers or non-Swiss nationals. "It's a real integration machine!"

→ [www.unifr.ch](http://www.unifr.ch)

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## MUSIC VENUES

# SPOTTING THE NEXT BIG THING



Many international and local legends – here, Fribourg musician and song-writer, Gustav – have graced the stage of the mythical Fri-Son rock club.

For a canton the size of Fribourg, the number of music venues it has is pretty staggering. To begin with, there is the legendary rock club, Fri-Son. Over the last 35 years, this repurposed warehouse, with its awesome exterior murals created by a group of talented graffiti artists, has become a testament to the live music scene, and is one of the biggest concert venues in Switzerland. "Alternative music is in the club's DNA", explains Émilien Rossier, Fri-Son's General Secretary. "We're constantly on the look-out for undiscovered talent." Indeed, the club's bookers have a proven track record for talent-spotting: legendary bands like Nirvana (see eBook), the Beastie Boys, Motörhead, Muse and even Placebo, as well as singers such as Stromae, had yet to make it really

big when they performed at Fri-Son. As well as concerts, the club hosts an eclectic range of special events, including cutting-edge DJ sets, roller discos, and table-tennis tournaments. Companies can also hire the club for private parties.

Fribourg caters to jazz buffs, too. The La Spirale cellar club in Fribourg's historic Old Town is renowned as a purveyor of extraordinary blue note performances, but Gilles Dupuis, the club's booking agent, is quick to point out that the venue also embraces other musical genres, particularly soul, funk, blues, world music and French chanson. While La Spirale is primarily a showcase for fresh talent, quite a few well-established stars – Dave Holland, Richard Galliano and Mike Stern, to name but a few – have

graced the club's intimate stage. The canton is also home to Bad Bonn, a live music venue that can only be described as sui generis (one of a kind)! Those lucky enough to find it – there is a reason why its strapline is "Where the hell is Bad Bonn?" – will discover a club like no other and a programme packed full of surprises. "We are a real backcountry rock club", proudly proclaims Patrick Boschung, the club's administrator. Also, the annual springtime Bad Bonn Kilbi is considered to be one of the best festivals in Switzerland.

#### Some of Fribourg's music venues:

- [club.badbonn.ch](http://club.badbonn.ch)
- [www.ebull.ch](http://www.ebull.ch)
- [www.fri-son.ch](http://www.fri-son.ch)
- [www.laspirale.ch](http://www.laspirale.ch)
- [nouveaumonde.ch](http://nouveaumonde.ch)



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**MAXWELL TECHNOLOGIES**  
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The main reason why Maxwell Technologies chose to base its operations in Rossens, a village in the heart of rural Fribourg, was its direct motorway access. "This was a crucial factor because we export our CONDIS® high-voltage capacitors around the globe", explains Patrick Gaillard, High Voltage Business Development & Marketing Manager. Founded in Fribourg in 1903 (see eBook), the company, which is in Californian hands since 2003, operates in a high value-added niche market, and counts industry giants like ABB, GE and Siemens among its customers.

Maxwell Technologies is currently expanding its Fribourg plant. "We benefitted from the incredible support of the authorities and the Fribourg Development Agency." However, as Gaillard points out, it was not about receiving preferential treatment but rather receiving valuable guidance when it came to applying for building permits, for example. Another reason for choosing Rossens was its proximity to talent pools like the Fribourg School of Engineering and Architecture and the Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), one of the most acclaimed universities in the world.

→ [www.condis.ch](http://www.condis.ch)

**POPULATION AND MIGRATION OFFICE**  
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When companies want to hire highly-specialised executives and staff, they are sometimes compelled to look outside Switzerland, and even beyond Europe; headhunting IT experts from India or CEOs from North America, for example. In such instances, they can call on the Cantonal Population and Migration Office (SPoMi) for assistance. As Thierry Ruffieux, head of the Foreign Labour Section of SPoMi, explains, "The HR departments of companies based in the canton contact us when they need to organise residence permits for some of their future employees.


We help them through the process and, depending on the state of the labour market at that time, we can even grant exemptions." The SPoMi, which is in charge of implementing legislation governing the employment of foreign nationals, also works with the Fribourg Development Agency to help link up employers with potential foreign investors and, in more recent times, with asylum seekers looking for paid work as a pathway to integration.

→ [www.fr.ch/spomi](http://www.fr.ch/spomi)



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**Fri Up - Start-up Support**  
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P.O. Box 235, 1705 Fribourg,  
T +41 26 425 45 00, [www.friup.ch](http://www.friup.ch)

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[www.edufr.ch](http://www.edufr.ch)

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## BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

**Fribourg Chamber of Commerce and Industry**  
Rte du Jura 37 B, P.O. Box 304,  
1701 Fribourg, T +41 26 347 12 20,  
[www.ccif.ch](http://www.ccif.ch)

**Fribourg Employers' Association**  
Rue de l'Hôpital 15, P.O. Box 1552,  
1701 Fribourg, T +41 26 350 33 00,  
[www.unionpatronale.ch](http://www.unionpatronale.ch)

**Fribourg Industrial Group**  
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## OTHER

**Official Website of the State of Fribourg**  
[www.fr.ch](http://www.fr.ch)

**Websites for Expatriates Living in the Canton of Fribourg**  
[www.expats-fribourg.ch](http://www.expats-fribourg.ch)  
[www.expatsconnections.ch](http://www.expatsconnections.ch)  
(Expat Connection Fribourg)  
[www.fewgroup.org](http://www.fewgroup.org)  
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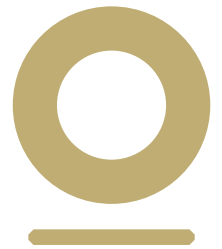
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