

## 8. URBAN SPRAWL AND COUNTRYSIDE: LIVING WITH A COMBINATION INSTEAD OF AN OPPOSITION

Laurent Thévoz, Monique Ruzicka Rossier

**U**rban sprawl and the transformation of countryside are two unstoppable dynamics in Switzerland and many other nations. They

Hierbei seien die kommerziellen Interessen des Hoteliers und die Ansprüche der Öffentlichkeit gleichermassen berücksichtigt.

32\_NZZ 9.3.2007

Les zones construites progressent d'un mètre par seconde en Suisse, ce qui correspond à 3000 terrains de football par an.

30\_LT 11.7.2007

modify the use of countries' territories and raise the question of limiting public intervention, faced with social trends and the paradoxical discourse seeking to "freeze time" with demands such as "hands off my landscape". The challenge is to

find a combination in order to deal with urban sprawl and the evolution of the countryside with its natural heritage collectively, rather than opposing the two problems.

Urban sprawl sweeps away landscape, versus a concentrated development of the city over the city.

L'addition de plans d'aménagement communaux, trop souvent sans concertation intercommunale, ne constitue pas une politique d'aménagement du territoire!

29\_LT 1.3.2007

Partisans of the Swiss Law on Town and Land Planning consider this law unsustainable. They note that almost a quarter of the buildings in Switzerland are built on agricultural zones, where the construction of one third of the new dwellings also takes place. In a more urban context, Geneva is currently experiencing a housing crisis, with different political parties divided by two questions:

1. Should we use the countryside areas currently classified as zones devoted to agriculture?

2. Which population should we build for?

Faced with this dilapidation of space, the director of the Federal Office of Territorial Development clarifies that the Confederation does not have many options to stop urban sprawl. In 2007, the Swiss Government (Conseil Fédéral) proposed to repeal the Lex Kohler, a law placing restrictions on the acquisition of land by foreigners. In reaction to this form of liberalisation, an initiative comity

Umfragen zeigten, dass die Wiederansiedlung von Wolf, Bär und Luchs in den Städten und Agglomerationen auf weit grössere Akzeptanz stösst als in ländlichen und vor allem in den Berggebieten.

31\_NZZ 6.1.2007

## 8. Urban Sprawl and Countryside: Living with a Combination Instead of an Opposition

---

lead by Pro Natura has suggested freezing construction zones for 20 years. The main objective of this moratorium is to stop the rural landscape from being swept away by urban sprawl.

### *The wolf as a political figure, or when flora and fauna threaten Swiss landscape*

The arrival of the wolf in Switzerland highlights the lack of agreement about the type of Alpine landscape desired by the Swiss population. Should these areas be transformed to promote wildlife, or rather should the general occupation of the territory be maintained?

The increasing number of sheep has the advantage of providing farmers in mountain areas with a steady income and maintaining the present state of the landscape, a vital element of our tourist industry and collective imagination. Unfortunately, they are also the preferred prey for wolves. The increase in sheep

All dies zusammen wird dafür sorgen, dass der Wolf in der Schweiz bleiben wird. Die Antwort darauf kann nur lauten: Anpassung und Herdenschutz.

31\_NZZ 6.1.2007

conversely increases the number of wolves. This paradoxical situation generates public debate currently confined to Alpine regions between locals who defend their livelihood and city-dwellers in favour of wildlife preservation. The latter outcome would equally become a problem for city-dwellers, since they would be deprived of "their" Alpine landscapes.

This new plain-mountain or city-country opposition will intensify over time, taking on a new importance when the wolf, not respecting any urban-rural boundaries, begins to wander into the plains neighbouring heavily populated areas. Currently confined to a limited number of people, the debate will take on national importance, preluding to a popular initiative for or against the wolf.