

Now Switzerland hit by sex abuse scandal

By Tony Paterson

IN BERLIN

THE CHURCH sex abuse scandal unravelling at Roman Catholic-run schools and institutions across Europe has reached Switzerland where senior churchmen admitted that 60 cases were under investigation.

Abbot Martin Werlen, of the Benedictine Abbey of Einsiedeln, said reports of abuse had been submitted to the Swiss church authorities in the wake of the disclosures in Ireland, Germany, Austria, Poland and Holland.

He said the Swiss Catholic Church was investigating the cases. "We find it important that the victim himself determines what steps to take," Abbot Werlen said. The Abbot, who is a member of a bishop's conference investigating the allegations, has indirectly crit-

icised the Catholic church in other countries for appointing bishops to investigate abuse cases.

Abbot Werlen has proposed setting up an independent organisation to deal with such cases which would not be directly attached to the church. "There should be an independent body that victims can go to," he insisted. He said that investigations still had to show whether all the allegations of abuse in Switzerland were genuine.

In Germany, priests holding a service in a Catholic church in the Bavarian town of Bad Tölz were shouted at by outraged members of the congregation on Sunday for defending a fellow priest who had been convicted of sexually abusing adolescents.

It emerged last week that the convicted priest had been on duty in the Pope's then diocese of Munich-Freising during the 1980s.