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Spring session of the CSA

A new Director of the SSA

At its ordinary spring meeting in Berne on 14th March 1987, the Commission for the Swiss Abroad (CSA), chaired by former National Councillor Professor Walther Hofer, dealt in particular with the question of the introduction of the right to vote by post for the Swiss abroad; with the wishes of expatriate Swiss in the field of

social security and sickness insurance; and with the promotion of training for young Swiss people living abroad. The «parliament of the Swiss abroad» also elected Dr. Rudolf Wyder as the new Director of the SSA, as successor to Marcel Ney who retires after nineteen years at the head of the Secretariat.

Movement in parliament

The CSA noted with satisfaction the parliamentary initiatives addressed to the Federal Council, which call for the introduction of a postal vote for Swiss abroad. It hopes that through this measure a long-felt

wish of many Swiss living abroad can finally be realized. In the field of social security, it is above all the problem of gaps in social security contributions as a result of long periods abroad that still awaits a solution. A parliamentary motion is pending in this question too. In addition, problems in the field of sickness insurance arise – particularly for frontier commuters and returning emigrants.

Support for training

The new Federal law on the promotion of training for young Swiss abroad, approved

by the Council of States in the March session, is welcomed by the CSA. This is intended to replace the law of 1974 on the support of Swiss schools abroad.

SSA

Rendez-vous in Weinfelden

The 65th Assembly of the Swiss Abroad will take place in the small town of Weinfelden in Thurgau from 21st to 23rd August 1987. It is to be devoted to Switzerland's social security and health insurance system. Experts of the Swiss Confederation and of the Organization of the Swiss Abroad will be at the disposal of participants, to answer questions. The Assembly will close with an excursion to the Untersee and a visit to the famous charterhouse of Ittingen.



Handing over the baton:
Rudolf Wyder, Marcel Ney.

Rudolf Wyder

Dr. Rudolf Wyder is the new Director of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad (SSA). On April 1st, 1987, he succeeded Counsellor Marcel Ney as head of the house at Alpenstrasse 26 in Berne.

Thirty-eight years of age, Rudolf Wyder studied contemporary history, the history of architecture and international law at the University of Berne, where he obtained his doctorate (D.Ph.). From 1977 to 1982 he was the General Secretary of the Europa Union Switzerland, following which he worked as a public-relations consultant in the private sector. Dr. Wyder took over the position of Deputy to the Director in the SSA in December 1985.

Marcel Ney retires

After the Schürch/Bovey era, the Secretariat in the Alpenstrasse went through a difficult time. President Louis Guisan tried three times to recreate stable relationships, with new, full-time directors.

This did not meet with success until the beginning of 1968 with the entry of Marcel Ney – but then it succeeded well. An extensive task awaited the new Director. The article governing the Swiss abroad (Art. 45 bis) became embodied in the Federal constitution in 1966. Now the implementing statutes had to be prepared, for only these would give reality to the concerns of the Swiss abroad.

Ney worked out a detailed and comprehensive memorandum. The direction was shown, the main fields were determined: welfare, military obligations, political rights.

The work of the Director of the Secretariat for the Swiss Abroad (SSA) was by no means limited to the legal aspect, although this was familiar to the Berne lawyer. It was imperative, in many hours of painstaking, detailed effort, to strengthen

the information and advisory work of the SSA for the benefit of the Swiss abroad.

Simpler and speedier travel connections and the growing communications density called for frequent, carefully-organized journeys by President and Director to the places where our expatriate Swiss live, whether to their centres or to outlying areas where there are Swiss who have never been visited. Marcel Ney organized all this with skill – and with enjoyment.

The organization and carrying-out of the annual assemblies of the Swiss abroad constituted important activities of the Director of the Secretariat. And did Marcel Ney accomplish this, his complex mission? Indeed he did.

In his early years with the Organization of the Swiss Abroad, before he married his charming Dorothe, he once happened to mention that the Swiss abroad were, after all, his family. If we want to pass judgement upon Marcel Ney's work, we must begin with these simple but eloquent words.

Not only did he devote his work

to the Swiss abroad but also his entire personality, his heart. And, in this, his whole being and nature came to his aid.

Marcel Ney is a diplomat and a gentleman of style – one is tempted to say: of the old style. In earlier times, one would have said of a man of his character: «Il est un Monsieur».

He livened up every scene with his charm. His presence and bearing opened all doors. No wonder, then, that from the moment he took office, relations with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs improved in less than no time.

To conclude, it is fitting that, on behalf of his colleagues, of the Secretariat and of his three presidents, we should pay tribute to Marcel Ney's friendliness, loyalty towards his co-workers and to his exemplary demeanour. In this circle he has forged personal contacts to friendships which will outlast his retirement. Marcel goes. We can describe his time in the Organization of the Swiss Abroad as the «Ney epoch».

Philippe Garraux, Attorney-at-Law
member of the Bureau of CSA